

# The Gospel Preceptor

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

Volume 4, Number 8

Published Monthly

August, 2021

## Jereboam's Spirit Lives Today

**Jerry C. Brewer**

When Jereboam erected his altar at Bethel, it served a short term purpose to make worship convenient for the ten northern tribes, and a long term purpose of consolidating and perpetuating his own kingdom (1 Kings 12:26-29). The innovations he introduced in worship were of no concern to him. It mattered not that they violated God's law given through Moses. The only thing that mattered to Jereboam was his desire for power and to please his people in order to achieve that end.

In the 3,000 years since Jereboam's arrogant repudiation of God-ordained worship, men have not changed. Jereboam's spirit lives on today. Even among the people of God there are those today who would change and desecrate the simple worship of the New Testament church in the name of "renewal." Like children in the market place, change agents pipe the tunes of "contemporary worship" while spiritual dunces dance themselves silly. Saying, "Worship is a celebration," modern Jereboams perpetuate themselves in power by entertaining the masses which fills their pews with biblical illiterates. Their ovine followers get what they want and the modern Jereboams maintain their power and influence over them.

### **Worship is Not "Celebration"**

True worship was defined by Jesus Christ in His conversation with the Samaritan woman at Sychar. "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). Jesus' definition of true worship is really no different than that which God expected in the Old Testament. Even then, true worship had to be "in spirit"—from a sincere heart (1 Sam 15:22), and "in truth", or as God's word directed and directs (John 17:17). Whatever is not authorized as worship in the word of God is not acceptable to Him (Col. 3:17). On the other hand, the form of worship may be authorized, but is rejected if it is not "in spirit."

Like Jereboam, who made two golden calves for his people to worship and told them, "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem; behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt" (1 Ki. 12:28). His heirs today could not have introduced their innovations without redefining what New Testament worship is. Today's Jereboams call it "a celebration" in order to institute practices foreign to God's word. What the denominational world calls "worship" today is nothing more than show business in Sunday clothes. True worship is a solemn rendering of homage to the Eternal God who made and sustains us, not a noisy, raucous, hand-clapping, laughing, shouting, experiential, holly roller event that panders to the participants' base instincts. Of this kind of foolishness, brother Lester Kamp wrote,

Brethren, the world is lost in sin and is steeped in the love of pleasure. The world cannot be saved by entertainment, by 'playing' them in. The world must be taught the gospel (Rom. 1:16). God has chosen the 'foolishness of preaching' as the means by which the world can be saved (1 Cor. 1:21); He has not chosen 'plays' and other forms of entertainment to convert the world. Entertainment is not going to keep the church saved either. What is needed in the church is 'all the counsel of God' (Acts 20:27). We need to stop

‘playing’ and return to ‘preaching’ (“And They Rose Up To Play,” *Matters of The Faith*, Vol. 4, No. 3, Oct.-Dec., 1998, p. 3).

Strong says *proskuneo*, the word which is translated *worship* means, “...to kiss, like a dog licking his master’s hand; to fawn or crouch; to prostrate oneself in homage (do reverence to, adore); worship” (*Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, Greek Dictionary of The New Testament*, p. 61). This word is rendered as *worship* 35 times in the New Testament, and in every instance the concept is reverence toward God, characterized by solemnity and emptying of oneself, as Moses did at the burning bush in Midian. “Worship” is not synonymous with “celebration” or entertainment, but a time for prostration of sincere hearts before God with thanksgiving for His great love. The word *celebration* and, variants thereof, is found only three times in all the Bible (Lev. 23:32, 41; Isa. 38:18) and in none of these refers to God-ordained worship.

Our town—and the world for that matter—is filled with the abomination of “entertainment” in place of true worship and in their festering, fermented ignorance, parents, elders, preachers and “youth ministers” think they’ve discovered something new in concerts and drama. But all they’ve simply imbibed the spirit of Jereboam to consolidate their positions and please tickling ears. If folks are “fiddled into the church” we have to keep on “fiddling” or they will “fiddle out.” True worship is not entertainment and entertainment is not true worship.

---

## The Emotions of Jesus

**Charles Pogue**

In the beginning of his Gospel account, the apostle John informs us, “the Word [Jesus—the Second Person of the Godhead] was made flesh, and dwelt among us” (John 1:14). Paul says that Jesus “was made in the likeness of men” (Phi. 2:7). As a man, Jesus experienced the same emotions and acted upon some of the same motivations as the rest of us. Many verses of Scripture implicitly show that Jesus was a man of emotions, but there are also some which explicitly tell us the emotions Jesus felt when He acted or reacted to certain situations.

### **Compassion**

“But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd” (Mat. 9:36). Surely, that compassion involved more than just Jesus’ sympathy toward the people because of their physical ailments. It is interesting that just two verses earlier Matthew reminds us of the nay saying Pharisees who claimed that Jesus cast out devils through the prince of the devils. With the widespread teaching of both the Pharisees and the Sadducees, Jesus must have felt compassion for the common people, because those two groups were as much or more a detriment than a help.

While we detest error today we, too, can have compassion upon those who have been deceived by those who are recognized as religious leaders, but who are in reality false teachers, and will cause many to be lost. Let us, like Christ, put our compassion into action and teach those who have been deceived by wolves in sheep’s clothing.

### **Love**

In Mark 10, a rich man came to Jesus wanting to know what he needed to do to inherit eternal life. When Jesus reminded him of “the commandments,” the man acknowledged he had kept those from his youth. At that point, Mark records, “Then Jesus beholding him loved him” (10:21). Jesus knew the hearts of men, and He knew the man would be grieved, because he was rich, and the rich will hardly enter the kingdom of heaven, because they love their riches more than God.

Many of the parables Jesus told had something to do with money in one way or another. The pursuit of money can cause much sorrow in this life, and prevent those who love it from entering heaven. What a contrast between the man in the account and Jesus. The man loved money; Jesus loved the people. Consequently, the Lord wasted no occasion to warn the people about the deceitfulness of riches. We must love people

enough to warn them about anything they would love more or place ahead of God and following the requirements of the Gospel of Christ.

### **Anger**

By contrast, Jesus could also manifest anger. Again, in the Gospel of Mark, we read: “And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other” (3:5). Toward whom was this anger directed? The Pharisees, who were watching and waiting for Him to heal the man, so they would have what they considered to be a real charge against Jesus in regard to the Sabbath.

We have already noted that Jesus had compassion on the people (Mat. 9:36). He had compassion on the man with the withered hand. The Pharisees, who were fitly described by Jesus as hypocrites, rejected Jesus and caused others to reject Him, thus, they deserved the righteous indignation or anger of Jesus.

As hard as it is to understand, it is true that there are false teachers in the religious world today who teach error, know they teach error, and thus deliberately hinder people from coming to obedience to the Gospel of Christ. They are like Elymas in Acts 13 who specifically and deliberately sought to turn Sergius Paulus away from the faith. Such people are surely setting themselves up to receive the wrath of God in the day of judgment.

### **Grief**

Jesus knew and experienced grief, as did, and does, any other human being. Jesus showed His grief when He went to Bethany, to the home of Mary and Martha when Lazarus had died. John 11:35 simply says, “Jesus wept.” More especially, Jesus grieved over the spiritual condition of those who had violated God’s law. In Mark 3:5, after we read that Jesus looked around with anger, Mark says Jesus was grieved because of their hard heartedness.

Maybe the most telling incident of the grief of Jesus was when He came into the city of Jerusalem shortly before His death. Matthew records Jesus saying, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!” (Mat. 23:37). Luke writes about the same occasion, “And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it” (Luke 19:41). At the beginning of his Gospel account, Luke describes the mission of John to include turning the hearts of the fathers to the children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just. Those words describe a spiritual condition that is not what it ought to be. That same spiritual condition among the leaders of the Jews, combined with their envy and jealousy, led to the crucifixion of the Lord.

There is no doubt that it grieves the heart of the Lord today when He sees there are those who trample underfoot the “new Jerusalem,” the church of Christ. Many are as hard hearted as those Jews of old, resisting the law of the King, despising His commandments, and making havoc of the glorious bride of Christ. The Lord’s people are scattered and divided, because many are not content to follow the doctrine of Christ, and go about to establish their own standards. They grieve the Lord as much, if not more, than did the Jews of old.

### **Gladness**

When Jesus heard that Lazarus was sick, He deliberately waited two days in the place where He was. He was not going down to Bethany until after Lazarus had died. He knew He was going to raise Lazarus from the dead, and He would use that incident to show who He was. John 11:15 says, “And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him.” Jesus was glad to have the incident, because He could use it as an opportunity to teach. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John make many references to Jesus teaching the people. Not only did Jesus teach the people gladly, twice we are told that the people, specifically the common people, heard Him gladly.

Many members of the Lord’s church do not share Jesus’ joy for teaching those who

need to hear the truth. “Let someone else do it, I have already done my share,” or “I am not qualified to teach anyone,” are often excuses for an unwillingness to teach the Gospel. We must always be concerned that there are many lost who need the soul saving message of the Gospel.

Jesus experienced the same feelings and emotions that we do. He was both fully God and fully human. As the Son of God, Jesus revealed the divine message that saves men’s souls. As a human, He left us an example of how to cope with the disappointments in life, how to react under difficult circumstances, and that we are to rejoice when one sinner comes to repentance and obedience to the Gospel. It is helpful for us that the New Testament gives us specific information about the emotions and motivations of Christ. Those references help us in life’s situations.

---

## Fight—But be Sweet

George E. Darling, Sr.

Quite often I hear the old bromide slithering off the tongue of some back-boneless member of the church, “You need to learn how to disagree without being so disagreeable!” This usually happens after you have locked horns with some of the denominational preachers of the town, or called some brother to tow that has stepped out of line doctrinally. One would almost wonder if such a statement was from the scriptures and if he should not be ashamed to get right in and dig the devil's in any of their false doctrines. According to some it would be perfectly alright to just smile sweetly and do nothing to stir up his opponent.

I'll go along with this attitude if we are disagreeing over which is the best road to take to California; but where it is a matter of doctrine, where it affects the church and the souls of men are jeopardized, and will be misled for possibly centuries to come as a result of it, I can't understand how any Christian can say, “We can disagree but we don't have to be disagreeable.”

Important issues demand **hard hitting**, and hard hitting makes things disagreeable. Ask Elijah on Mt. Carmel. The issue was between idolatry and the God of heaven. It was not something to smile sweetly about and not get ruffled. Of course old Elijah handled the situation in an uncouth manner when he dealt with those devils in such a way that they knew they had been **dis**-agreed with. In fact he was getting down right sarcastic when he called out to the poor deluded “fire worshippers” and said: “Cry aloud; for he is a god: either he is musing, or he has gone aside, or he is on a journey, or peradventure, he sleepeth and must be awakened.” Surely Elijah knew they were honest and sincere! They continued their ceremonies, crying, cutting themselves till the blood gushed out. Brother you can be sure that Elijah's speech did not make for conciliation. He wasn't trying “to get along with” these false teachers. It was war unto the death as far as Elijah was concerned. And brethren, you know Elijah must have been doing something right. God blessed him, when he took the whole bunch down to the brook Kishon and “Slew them there.” I doubt very much if the prophets of Baal thought Elijah was trying to be agreeable.

Certainly Elijah was not orthodox according to my “Disagree but don't be disagreeable” brethren. Those false prophets didn't like it to be sure, and ungodly Jezebel. and a threat upon him.

Go back and ask neither did old idolatrous, It meant war from then on his life; but God was with another God-blest character, Micaiah, as he is called before Ahab and Jehosophat. He and Ahab were in disagreement, but Micaiah didn't try to be agreeable with Ahab. His message was a disagreeable message. When Zedekiah smacked him on the cheek, it was disagreeable. When he called him a liar it was disagreeable, but God blessed Micaiah's prophecy and it all came true to the letter.

When the Jews said to Jesus, “Thou bearest false witness of thyself; thy witness is not true,” they were calling him a liar! This would indicate they were not in agreement. Jesus in turn called them “Bond servants of sin” and then accused them of trying to murder Him because He had told them the truth. To make the disagreement more dis-

agreeable, He added, if you are of your father the devil...”

Try to figure out from that whether Jesus was trying to be agreeable with those fellows. They called Jesus a Samaritan, (the dirtiest thing they could think of). That sounds as though two cannot walk together unless they be agreed, and **be disagreed** if each actually believes what he is affirming. No sir, when Jesus was dealing with misleading men who persisted in doing wrong, their disagreement was not agreeable.

Stephen, before the High Priest and the Jews gives us another little incident that the Holy Spirit records as being a disagreement that came to be almost **dis**-agreeable. They were in opposition to the cause he represented. He gave them a great summary of the history of Israel. Now read the **conclusion** of his sermon! That speech was **not intended** to be agreeable!

Brethren, if a man is worth arguing with, then he is worth arguing with, with all I your might. If an issue is worth discussing, it is worth giving it everything you have. If you do that, you may not be agreeable. In fact, you may be downright disagreeable, but at least you have tried, and that earnestly, to let the opposition know they are wrong. They may bite you and stone you like they did Stephen. They may crucify you like they did Christ, but you'll be in good company. I've been preaching the gospel for thirty eight years and I have never seen so great a tendency on the part of the members of the church to compromise the truth.

---

## Period of the Church

Gene Hill

A Biblical understanding of what the church is, who makes up its membership, and what its responsibilities are is crucial if we are to be adequately prepared for the Second Coming of Christ and the judgment of mankind that follows.

The church is that religious organization one reads about upon the pages of the New Testament planned from eternity (Eph. 3:8-12) with the purpose to contain all those heeding the Gospel call (2 The. 2:13-14; Rom. 16:25-27) in loving obedience (Heb. 5:8-9) upon which obedience the Lord adds them, as the saved, to His church (Acts 2:47). It is the church Jesus promised to build (Mat. 16:18-19) which began on the Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ (Acts 2:1-47). This church is not a Jewish synagogue. It is not the Roman Catholic Church. It is not any Protestant denomination (Mat. 15:8-9). It is not an afterthought or replacement for any previous plan of God which man somehow was able to thwart.

This lesson deals with the church beginning in Jerusalem on the Pentecost following the crucifixion of Christ, which beginning is recorded in Acts 2. It continues through Revelation and, by implication, unto the Second Coming of Christ.

The mission of the church is gleaned from the Great Commission passages of Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-16, and Luke 24:46-47. It is one of instruction in the Gospel (Mat. 28:19; Mark 16:15) that required repentance and remission of sin be preached in His name beginning in Jerusalem (Luke 24:46).

The parable of the Sower should also be considered (8:11-15), as this passage gives us some insight into our work. Jesus tells us the seed is the Word of God and the soils are representative of the hearts of the various people with whom we will come in contact. Furthermore, we learn we are to sow only the Gospel seed, that we will not convert the world, that evangelism is our task, and our audience is accountable for its own response (Mat. 13:10-18).

Jesus, in His last instructions before ascending into heaven, informs the apostles they are to be His witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and then into all the world. The record of Acts gives more than ample testimony to the faithfulness of the apostles of Jesus in carrying out this command. However, for this to happen, and it be self-sustaining, the church, yet to be established, had to be structured in such a way that it would be able to continue the work of evangelism (28:20).

The church—that is the blood-bought body to which the Lord added the souls of those

being saved (Acts 20:28; 2:47)—is pictured as a kingdom over which Jesus is now reigning (Mat. 16:18; Dan. 7:13-14; Acts 1:9; 2:22-36). The kingdom of heaven, as any kingdom, has a ruler or king sitting on His throne (2 Sam. 7:12-13; 1 Chr. 17:11-15; Acts 2:29-36; 5:31; Phi. 2:9-11; 1 Tim. 6:15). This heavenly kingdom has a territory which is all the world (Mat. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16) and every nation (Isa. 2:2-3; Rom. 16:25-26). It also has subjects—all nations (Isa. 2:2-3; Acts 10:34-35), every creature (Mark 16:15-16), and whosoever will (Rom. 10:13; Rev. 22:17). Christ the Lord is our King (Jer. 23:5-6; Mat. 2:2; Luke 1:31-33), on His throne (Isa. 9:6-7; Acts 2:22-36), and is now reigning in actuality (Acts 2:30-33; 1 Cor. 15:24-26). The Word of God is its law (Psa. 19:7; Jam. 2:12), a perfect law (Jam. 1:25; John 12:48), all-sufficient for God's ends (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3; Eph. 3:1-4).

Jesus is the head of the church which is His body (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18, 24). There are no other positions of overall leadership of a single individual in the church of the New Testament. The local congregation consisting of saints, a plurality of bishops overseeing the local church, along with those serving as deacons is the only structure authorized by God to carry out His work here on earth (Phi 1:1). The only references we find regarding *church* are only mentioned in regards to a local congregation (as is the one in Philippi), to congregations in a district (1 Cor. 16:1-2), or to the church as made up of all the saved (Acts 20:28). There is no other hierarchy or government authorized.

The very first congregation of that church purchased by God's blood (20:28) is described in Acts 2:41-47. In verse 41 we see it founded and partially organized. It begins its work of teaching to bring spiritual maturity to its members in verse 42. We see love for one another (1 Pet. 1:22) expressed by physical needs being seen to (Acts 2:43-45). Both evangelism and edification are pursued as demonstrated in verses 46-47 with the inevitable conversions taking place. We see Peter and John vigorously pursuing their apostolic mandate by going into the temple and preaching the Gospel with the results expected (3:1-4:4) in spite of being arrested. This then is the work Christ assigned to the apostles and which work has been passed down to us (Mat. 28:20).

As we contemplate this religious organization started and purchased by Christ, and we begin to see it functioning under the hands of the apostles, we wonder how congregations would organize themselves after the passing of the apostles and the cessation of the miraculous. Acts, as well as the epistles, gives us ample information to guide our efforts going forward through time to the coming of our Lord with His mighty angels (2 The. 1:6-10).

Inevitably, in any organization needs will arise that require additional hands to assist in carrying the burden. In Acts 6, we see such an occasion. Regardless of the reasons for which a want arose, the fact is that more efficiencies were needed to see that the needs of everyone were met (5:34-37; 6:1). Whether or not the seven men chosen were in fact the first deacons, it is the case that they "served tables" (6:2-7). This was merely the ongoing effort in organizing local congregations.

The Holy Spirit has provided for the church in all times and places a plan for governing and ordering the affairs of the local congregation. As stated previously, there is no organization larger than the local church yet smaller than the church universal and such being the case the only appropriate conclusion is that each local church is self-governing with no higher earthly authority to direct its affairs.

It is not until the first missionary journey of the apostle Paul (13:2-14:28) that we see the first elders being appointed (14:23) to a leadership capacity. The Holy Ghost has provided qualities which must be possessed by any man to be appointed for the work of an elder (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Tit. 1:5-9). We see the need for men to possess these qualities when we recognize the practical work they do (Acts 20:17-28; 1 Pet. 5:1-4).

They serve in submission to Jesus as the head of the church (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18) and in His capacity as Chief Shepherd and Bishop (1 Pet. 2:25; 5:4). They serve in an oversight capacity to a congregation (Acts 14:23; 20:17; Tit. 1:5) with a plurality of men serving (Acts 14:23; Tit. 1:5). Their Head, Jesus, and His headquarters, is in heaven (1 Pet. 3:22; Acts 2:29-36). Each congregation is autonomous or self governing with no

authorized oversight or interference from any outside, much less superior, authority (1 Pet. 5:2).

A local church (congregation) is authorized to do only that and all of that which is specifically stated or implied by what is revealed in Scripture (Col. 3:17). They are to see to the physical needs of their own members (Acts 2:44-45; 4:34-35). A local congregation is able to assist any church member (Gal. 6:10), as they are able (2 Cor. 8:1-6), regardless of locale (Acts 11:27-30; Rom. 15:22-29; 1 Cor. 16:1-2). They also have the authority to help any person in need (Gal. 6:10). The church is to have a teaching program for the body to edify and bring itself to spiritual maturity (Acts 2:42; Eph. 4:11-16; 1 Tim. 4:6-16; 2 Tim. 2:2). Each member is to participate in this and all other efforts of the local church (Heb. 10:19-25).

A local church is to see to the spiritual purity of its own membership. By taking heed to the doctrine (1 Tim. 4:16), we are able to discern truth from error (Mat. 7:15-20), to try the spirits (1 John 4:1) to see if they are in fact faithful (Rev. 2:2). Spiritual and mature brethren also have the ability and obligation to see that members are walking in the faith, living pure lives (1 Cor. 5:1-13), and if not, to exhort them to return to faithfulness (Jude 23). Should they not desire to do so, then we are mark and avoid (Rom. 16:17), or to note and have no company with those walking disorderly all the while admonishing him as a brother (2 The. 3:6-15). The purpose of this effort is not to be vindictive but to see whether the sinful will destroy the works of the flesh (1 Cor. 5:5; Col. 3:5ff).

As head of the church, the Lord has given instructions to all those that would believe on Him, through the words of the apostles (John 17:20-21), what the mission of the church is (Mat. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:45-49; Acts 1:8). Evangelizing the world, therefore, is what the church is to be doing. What happens when a local congregation faithfully carries out its responsibility to teach and preach God's will?

Persecution by evil-minded, ignorant individuals can result simply because the Gospel is faithfully preached (Mat. 10:32-42; 2 Tim. 3:12). The events of Acts 3, 4, and 5 provide insights as to how the church in any age is to conduct its affairs. Those guilty of sin need to be clearly charged not only with their conduct but also the consequences (3:11-18). Repentance needs to be specifically called for on the part of the guilty (3:19-26). Not only will the guilty not like it (4:1-3), they will also attempt to suppress the message and silence the messengers (4:5-18). The faithful have no recourse but to stand firm (4:19-22) and continue the Lord's work (4:31).

This same lesson applies to brethren that seek to maintain a faithful walk in the Lord. Paul warned the Ephesian elders that their congregation would face false teachers not only from without, but even from among their own selves would some men arise seeking to draw away disciples after them (20:29-30). Paul faced false brethren that persecuted him (2 Cor. 11:26; Gal. 2:4). Peter and Barnabas at one time caused problems (2:11-21).

We also see how the church is to handle problems of internal discipline and how the Lord views even secret sins (Acts 5:1-11). There arose a need in the congregation to raise funds to support members in financial need, and the brethren rose to the occasion (4:34-37). Ananias and his wife Sapphira conspired to appear to be more generous than their covetous hearts would allow in selling a parcel of land and representing the money donated from proceeds as if it were the whole amount (5:1-2). The inevitable discipline was swift and sure, resulting in their deaths (5:3-10), with far-reaching effects on both the congregation and the community at large (5:11-16).

There is a greater lesson here for any congregation and the church at large as well, one that would appear to be obvious. Whereas Peter, being inspired by the Holy Spirit, was able to discern the thoughts and the intents of the heart (5:3), the only way we have of determining the thoughts of the heart is by the words we hear or the actions we see (Mat. 7:15-20; 12:33-37; Gal. 5:19-21; Col. 3:5-9). When we see or hear actions identified by the Holy Spirit as works of the flesh, then we are not merely justified to judge them as carnal; we are commanded to do so (Eph. 5:11; John 7:24). How serious is the issue of congregational faithfulness? We can see how relatively little time can

pass before congregations find themselves in spiritually dire circumstances. It is commonly accepted that the apostle John is the author of the Revelation letter having written it in about a.d. 96. The dating of Acts 2 in which the church was founded is about a.d. 33. Assuming these dates to be correct, then a period of 63 years has passed. The Ephesian church had its beginning under the hand of Paul in about a.d. 54-55 as recorded in Acts 19. This gives us a period of about 41-42 years for the Ephesian church to become as described in Revelation 2:1-7. Some of the brethren addressed by Paul in Acts 20:17-38 may have still been alive and serving. Even though doctrinally correct (Rev. 2:2-3, 6), the church had left its first love. One writer speculates that the first love may have been the burning of the books in Acts 19:19-20, after which the Word of God grew and prevailed. It may also have been their love manifested towards Paul in Acts 20:36-38. He also suggests the love they expressed towards the saints (Eph. 1:15) (Hailey 122). Whatever the first love actuality was, it was clear that what they had become was not what they had been, and the Lord admonishes them to repent and return to that first love.

What can a local congregation do to acquire and maintain their good standing with the Lord? It is reasonable to believe that the answer to the question would be applicable to any congregation of the Lord's people at any time up to and including the Lord's second return.

The Ecclesiastes writer provides the answer (Ecc. 12:13; John 14:15; 4:23-24). The clear-cut answer for church soundness from her founding until Christ returns to receive the kingdom unto Himself and to deliver it back to God is to remember Who we worship and why.

We must understand why it was necessary for an innocent Lamb to be sacrificed for us; then we will be a long way towards the same sort of heart possessed by the Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8:26-40). When we can appreciate God's gracious gift to us as much as did Paul, our worship will become deeper and richer (Rom. 5:15-18; 6:23). The heart that appreciates God's great gift of salvation will truly worship God as completely as He expects and desires. Paul expresses the sort of devotion this kind of worship must have (Gal. 2:20).

If I eagerly look forward to each opportunity to gather together with other saints of the Lord to offer up prayers, songs of praise, listen to preaching that magnifies and extols God, pay into the treasury a portion of God's physical blessings to me, participate in communion with the Lord as I examine my own faithfulness in light of God's Word, how would I ever become unfaithful? The answer is that I would not (2 Pet. 1:5-11).

What would be the effect on my desire to spread the good tidings of God's grace to those around me so they too might share in the blessedness to be obtained by a heart set on God and His Will? Would it not be equal to or even greater than the brethren of the first century church, especially when we have a more complete revelation than they at any given time?

If a congregation were truly in possession of such a spirit of humility, thanksgiving, and spiritual awareness as this, would there be much of an ongoing need to exhort brethren to be faithful to congregational gatherings? Would there be a need to actually recruit Bible class teachers, or would we instead have an eager waiting list of well-qualified and mature Christians?

If the churches of Asia admonished by Jesus in the Revelation letter had kept this focus, would there have been a need for a call to repent? If brethren in our own time truly accepted the testimony of the Holy Spirit, would there ever be a breach in fellowship occurring at all, much less continuing on for years with no end in sight?

There are a few thoughts in regards to the church and its progress into the future which we might consider. The Parable of the Sower teaches us that the Word of God is a seed to be sown in the hearts of men in which it will have varying degrees of success at growing and bearing spiritual fruit (Luke 8:11-15; Mat. 24:35). That the seed will not pass away and will produce today what it did in the first century provides hope for the future of the church, as long as there are honest and good hearts to receive the Word. It may well be that should the Lord delay His return long enough that the church could



become cold in its prayer vigils and many formerly faithful fall away (18:1-8; 2 Pet. 3:1-13; Mat. 24:12-13). Realizing the dangers, we should continually study and lay hold on the faith.

Every Christian in each congregation of God's people must make a determination as to whether or not they will continue to watch and wait for the Savior (Mat. 25:13; 1 The. 5:5-6). May the faithful of the Lord be vigilant until His return!

### **Works Cited**

All Scripture quotations are from the King James Version unless otherwise indicated.

Hailey, Homer. *Revelation: An Introduction And Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1979.

Reprinted from the 43rd Annual Bellview Lectures, *The Church*, Pensacola, Florida, June 8-12, 2018, Ed. Michael Hatcher.

---

## **Is God Hardening You?**

**Nathan Brewer**

When it was time for the children of Israel to leave Egypt, God told Moses that it would happen, with difficulty, through words and signs. "Thou shalt speak all that I command thee: and Aaron thy brother shall speak unto Pharaoh, that he send the children of Israel out of his land. And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt," (Exo. 7:2-3).

The Egyptian king did not want to lose his slave labor, so when Moses spoke God's words about freeing the Israelite captives, those words stiffened Pharaoh's resolve to keep them in captivity.

It took several appeals to Pharaoh, along with 10 plagues, for him to finally relent. Each time, Pharaoh's heart was hardened. Sometimes the Bible says Pharaoh hardened his own heart, other times it says God hardened Pharaoh.

That's because God provided the material—words and signs—but the recipient was Pharaoh. Both were involved in the hardening process. God said and did things Pharaoh did not like, and in response, Pharaoh became more determined not to do what God wanted.

The same process is repeated each time any of you learn God's will about something, then decide you don't like it and become more determined not to obey.

For instance, drinking alcohol. The Bible says drunkenness will cost you your soul (Gal. 5:19-21), but many of you want to drink alcohol, so you harden your heart a little bit more each time you hear God's will on the subject.

Same goes for the truth about Christ's church. The word of God says nothing about the body of Christ being made up of denominations or community churches. And if someone presents that information to you, along with the truth about what the church of Christ really is, if you don't want to hear it, your heart becomes a little more hardened to the truth.

Most of you think forgiveness comes by just believing, or by praying for Jesus to save you, but it does not. You have to obey the Gospel in faith, repentance, confession and baptism to be saved. But you may not like hearing that since it's not what your parents or your preacher told you. So, you turn away from the New Testament evidence with your heart hardened a little more.

Pharaoh did not want to hear what God had to say. God's words, and the signs He wrought—boils, hail, turning water into blood, darkness, and all the rest—only served to anger Egypt's leader. God's will was not Pharaoh's will, so hearing God's will just made Pharaoh mad.

What about you? Does hearing God's word make you want to do His will, or does it make you even more determined to live in rebellion to the Creator? Beware. Pharaoh lost his life while chasing the Israelites through the Red Sea. A hardened, rebellious heart toward God today will cost you your soul.

# Hell is a Reality!

Dub McClish

## Introduction

A few years ago, major radio station in Dallas sent a reporter into the streets with the question, “Who’s going to hell?” Ninety-eight percent of the five hundred people surveyed could not think of anyone they knew who might be bound for the lake of fire. This should not come as a surprise when we think of the philosophical climate that generally prevails. Those who once believed in the Bible as the Word of God have had that faith destroyed in the past few decades by the combined forces of infidel theologians and atheistic scientists and professors. Atheism (both actual and practical) has logically followed infidelity toward the Bible.

The result was predictable. Sensual, secular men and women now dominate the “influencer class.” They have found the rationalization they desired to live like brute beasts. If the Bible is not the Word of God, men are without restraint of principle or threat of punishment. It is no wonder that so many men deny the reality of Hell, either openly or tacitly. Besides these Hell-deniers, there are those religionists (e.g., “Jehovah’s Witnesses”) whose doctrinal scheme includes a denial of eternal punishment. At least one of our brethren has adopted this view and has written a large book to propagate it (*The Fire that Consumes*, Edward Fudge). Surely these few observations indicate the dire need for emphasis on the Bible doctrine of Hell.

## Heaven is a Reality

The Bible teaches the reality of an eternal dwelling place for the souls of redeemed men in the presence of God. At His ascension, the Lord went to prepare this place for His servants and promised to return to take them there (John 14:1–3). Paul called the reward of his righteous labors “the crown of righteousness” (2 Tim. 4:8). Peter described Heaven as an incorruptible, undefiled, unfading inheritance (1 Pet. 1:4). The book of Revelation contains several descriptions of Heaven. The Bible closes with a picture of Heaven (Rev. 22:1–5).

## Hell is a Reality

The Bible just as surely teaches the reality of Hell as it does that of Heaven. Jesus said considerably more about eternal punishment, damnation, and the judgment that will usher the ungodly into Hell than He did about Heaven. Every time he commanded men to repent (Mat. 4:17; Luke 13:3; et al.), He was warning them to avoid Hell. He denounced entire cities as Hell-bound (Luke 10:10–16). He warned the apostles to fear God who had the power to cast them into Hell (Mat. 10:28). At the judgment the wicked shall be cast into the furnace of fire where there is wailing and gnashing of teeth (Mat. 13:49–50). His great commission warned unbelievers of their damnation (Mark 16:16).

Paul taught that those who know not God and have obeyed not the Gospel will, at the coming of the Lord, “...suffer eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might” (2 The. 1:9). “Swift Destruction” will be brought upon false teachers, according to Peter (2 Pet. 2:1). Jude taught that “the blackness of darkness hath been reserved forever” for evil men and angels (Jude 13). A major theme of the book of Revelation is the final overthrow of Satan and all of his servants, who will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where they will be tormented for ever and ever (Rev. 20:10).

It is important to note that Bible doctrine on both Heaven and Hell is rooted in the perfect justice and mercy of God (Rom. 11:22). Just as surely as God is merciful, so surely does Heaven exist. Just as surely as God is just, **so surely is Hell a reality.**

Strangely, many want to hold on to the reality of Heaven, while denying Hell. However, this denies logic and consistency as well as Scripture. Inspired teachers, including the Lord, spoke with great certainty about both Hell and Heaven—often in the same contexts (e.g., Mat, 8:11–12; 18:8; 25:46; 2 The. 1:7–9). Were they inspired and truthful only when speaking about Heaven? The doctrine of Hell is the necessary counterpart and corollary of the doctrine of Heaven. Denial of the reality of Hell is tantamount

to denying the inspiration of the men who taught its reality, including the Christ of God. He cannot be the Savior of men or the Son of God if His teaching is faulty on this or any subject.

### **The Population of Hell**

Hell is so much depicted as a reality in the Bible that its populace is described in considerable detail. Such terms as “unrighteous,” “unbelievers,” “wicked,” and “disobedient” are used, but more specifically,

“...neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with men, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Cor. 6:9–10).

There is a similar list (only longer) in Galatians 5:19–21 of those who will be in Hell. Those who will be cast into Hell include

“...the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters and all liars...” (Rev. 21:8; cf 22:15).

John summarized the entire populace of that dreadful, eternal realm by saying that all whose names were not found written in the Book of Life will be cast therein (Rev. 20:15).

Imagine every evil, wicked, cruel, selfish, base, reprobate, false teacher—and tyrant who ever lived, plus all of those who have themselves been misled into sin and error and **there you have the populace of Hell**. Now try to imagine being **confined** with the likes of such monsters of evil as Mohammed, Stalin (and all of the Communist dictators), Hitler, Khomeini, and Khadafi, **with no escape for all eternity**. Even if there were no torment of fire, the torment of association would be unbearable.

### **Conclusion**

Our nation and world were much healthier morally and spiritually when there was a widespread belief in the reality of Hell. May God’s people with greater zeal help men recapture this conviction. Further, may we help more and more to believe and obey the Gospel so as to avoid Hell.

---

## **“Master, Thus Saying Thou Reproachest us Also”**

### **Lee Moses**

The Lord has certainly never been a respecter of persons (Acts 10:34-35). Upon one occasion, Jesus Christ accepted an invitation to dine with a Pharisee, a highly respected member of the community (Luke 11:37; compare with Acts 5:34). But upon reclining to dine, being aware of the false doctrine held by this Pharisee, Christ presented a caustic rebuke of the man’s sect (Luke 11:39-44). There was also a lawyer present at the occasion; and the lawyers, holding the responsibility of interpreting, teaching, and making decisions based on the Law of Moses, were closely associated with the Pharisees. As such, the lawyer took offense at Christ’s rebuke of the Pharisees, and responded, “Master, thus saying thou reproachest us also” (v. 45).

The lawyer demonstrated a certain amount of perceptiveness in this observation. Jesus had rebuked the Pharisees for specific charges, including hypocrisy, misplaced priorities, self-exaltation, and causing others to stumble. But though the charges were fairly specific, the application was not limited to those to whom the charges were specifically made—The application was to any and all who were guilty of those charges.

God has provided mankind with the Bible. Contrary to the assertions of some, the Bible is a book that is relevant, necessary, and applicable to each man and woman who has lived or is yet living today. Some people read the epistles of Paul and assume that the instructions therein apply only to the churches or individuals to whom they were directly addressed. However, neither Paul nor the Holy Spirit who inspired him intended that his instructions be limited to the churches to whom they were directly addressed. God commanded that the epistles were to be circulated among the differ-

ent churches: “And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea” (Col. 4:16). Paul taught the same doctrine “every where in every church” (1 Cor. 4:17). So all the churches were bound by the instructions given to other churches. This is yet true of the church today. The church is built upon the foundation of the doctrine taught by the apostles and prophets (Eph. 2:19-20; 1 Tim. 3:14-15). Does it not then follow that all who seek to be a part of the church of Christ, the body of the saved (Acts 2:47; Eph. 5:23; 1:22-23), must be built upon the doctrine that includes Paul’s epistles? (1 Cor. 3:10-11; 1 Pet.2:5).

Some read the seven letters to the churches of Asia (Rev. 2-3) and see that very specific problems were being addressed. Thus some might once again conclude that the application of these letters is limited to those churches. But note that each letter concludes with the admonition, “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches” (2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22). Do you have an ear? That is, do you have the capacity to hear or read these things Divinely revealed to the seven churches of Asia, and to understand them? Then you are commanded to **hear** them. And this hearing is not limited to perceiving what someone else’s problem is. The beatitudes are pronounced regarding the book of Revelation, “Blessed is he that readeth, and they that **hear** the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein”; and, “Blessed is he that **keepeth** the sayings of the prophecy of this book” (1:3; 22:7; emphases added). When anyone **hears** the word of God, he also has the responsibility of applying that word to himself. James warned,

But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed (Jas. 1:22-25).

Jesus spoke of the secure salvation of “whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them [**continue** to come, hear, and do, LM]” (Luke 6:47-48). “Whosoever” means anyone in anyplace and anytime. But one who does not hear and do Jesus’ sayings cannot have the solid rock of salvation as his foundation (v. 49). Jesus’ “sayings” obviously includes His teaching done while on earth (Matthew-John), but it also includes His teaching done through His apostles and the few other Divinely-inspired writers (John 16:12-13; 1 Cor. 2:16). It is each person’s responsibility to hear, apply, and obey the New Testament. Jesus said, “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day” (John 12:48). From the time His word was given until the last day the earth shall stand, His word is the one unchanging standard to which all men and women must conform their lives. Even in the Old Testament can lessons be found that need to be applied today (Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:6, 11).

Can one not look at the letters written to first century churches, and see that the same issues need to be addressed today? The spectre of denominationalism, which hangs over the religious world today, was addressed by Paul (1 Cor. 1:10-13; 3:3-4). As homosexuals today attempt to thrust their agenda upon this country’s population, the Scriptures remain that address this subject (Rom. 1:26-27, 32; 1 Cor. 6:9-11). Although materialism continues to claim souls, this was a problem Christ addressed in the first century (Rev. 3:16-18). As television and other media sources attempt to bombard our senses with sensual images, the Christian’s defense is found in the New Testament (Eph. 6:11-17; Philp. 4:8). And the greatest problem that has ever beset mankind still exists today—how one can be saved from his sins. The answer is to be found only in the New Testament of Jesus Christ (Rom. 1:16; 6:16-18).

Many rebukes are found in the New Testament. Although they may be directly addressed to other churches or individuals, one must examine his own life as he reads the Scriptures. The word of God is intended to prick the heart of each man and woman that he might correct that which is amiss in his life (Psalm 119:59-60; 2 Corinthians

13:5; 2 Timothy 3:14-17; Hebrews 4:12; 2 Peter 1:3-4). As Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for several sins of which they were guilty, the lawyer saw that he was guilty of the same sins, and thus stood rebuked as well. In this sense, the lawyer demonstrated a perceptiveness which it would serve us well to emulate.

But while the lawyer in a sense demonstrated his perceptiveness, he in another sense demonstrated his naïveté and ignorance by attempting to correct Jesus: “Master, thus saying thou reproachest us also” (Luke 10:45). The lawyer perhaps expected a retraction or apology from Jesus, but there was none forthcoming. Instead, Jesus rebuked the lawyers even more scathingly than He did the Pharisees (vv. 46-52). Each man or woman living today needs to be perceptive enough to realize when a Biblical rebuke applies to him. However, he must not be so naïve as to think that the Lord will change His mind with regard to applying either the application or the punishment to anyone.

For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you (1 Pet. 1:24-25).

---

## What Must I do to be Saved

Nana Yaw Aidoo

### Introduction

God is love (1 John 4:8) and as such, He desires that all men would be saved (1 Tim. 2:3-4; 2 Pet. 3:9). However, even though God desires the salvation of all men, not everyone will be saved. In fact, the Bible teaches that the majority of men will be lost (Matt. 7:13-14). And the reason why this is so is not God’s inability to save (far from it) but the three-letter word, **sin** (Isa. 59:1-2; Eccl. 7:29).

### What is Sin?

The New Testament defines sin in about four different ways. First, it teaches that violating our consciences constitutes sin (Rom. 14:23). Second, we learn that to know the right thing and yet to not do it is sin (Jam. 4:17). Third, we see sin as the breaking of law (1 John 3:4) and finally, we are taught that all unrighteousness is sin (1 John 5:17). What these definitions as a whole teach is that man is helpless on His own to be right with God.

### Forms of Sin

All sin can be grouped into two forms. First, positive or doctrinal sins and second, moral sins. Positive sins are those sins that are committed when men violate positive law. They might not necessarily be immoral. This form of sin can be seen in such passages as Leviticus 10:1-3 and 2 Samuel 6:1-8. Moreover, moral sins are those sins that are committed when men violate moral law. Examples are fornication, lying, abortion etc. (cf. Pro. 6:16-19).

### Spiritual Consequences of Sin

Even though sin might lead to physical consequences, our focus in this article is on the spiritual. Some spiritual consequences of sin are;

1. It separates us from God (Isa. 59:1-2).
2. It makes us fall short of God’s glory (Rom. 3:23).
3. It leads to spiritual death (Rom. 6:23)
4. It enslaves us (John 8:34)
5. It will keep us from heaven (1 Cor. 6:9; Gal. 5:21).

### Everyone Has a Guilty Charge

As if the foregoing consequences are not enough, the Bible tells us that we are **all** guilty of sin (Rom. 3:23). Thus, since we have all sinned, and are deserving of or have earned (that is the meaning of the word “wages” in Rom. 6:23) sin’s consequences, the most important question today ought to be; **what must I do to be saved from sin?** People in the day of the apostles, realizing the enormity of sin and its spiritual conse-

quences asked this very important question (cf. Acts 16:30). It is a tragedy that rather than ask this question, men of today are bothering their souls with questions of relative unimportance.

### Good News

There is good news however. The good news is that we have the opportunity to be saved from sin because of the man Jesus Christ (1 Tim. 2:5) who is also the Son of God (John 10:30). Through His death, burial and resurrection, He made provision for **all** not just a select few (Titus 2:11) to be saved from both the guilt of sin and its spiritual consequences. This is why the death, burial and resurrection of Christ are the foundational principles of the gospel (1 Cor. 15:1-4). Therefore, since we can receive “so great a salvation” because of Jesus Christ, we need to ask what to do.

### What Must I do?

Please permit me at this point to quote some passages of Scripture.

First, Mark 16:15-16. “And He said unto them, 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.”

Second, Acts 2:38. “Then Peter said unto them, repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for (unto—ASV) the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”

Third, Romans 10:9. “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.”

By summing up (Psa. 119:160 ASV) the foregoing passages of Scripture, we learn that in order to be saved from the guilt and the spiritual consequences of sin, we must **hear the gospel, believe it, repent of all our sins, confess our faith in Jesus Christ and be baptized unto the remission of sins.**

Concerning baptism, the Bible teaches that at that point we contact the blood of Christ since we are baptized into His death (Rom. 6:3), which is where He shed His blood. We are therefore cleansed from our sins not by the water but by the blood of Christ (Rev. 1:5). Upon arising from the watery grave of baptism, we receive salvation from sin (1 Pet. 3:21), we get to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:4), we become new creatures (2 Cor. 5:17) and we are added by the Lord Himself to the church of Christ (Acts 2:47; Acts 20:28). Furthermore, if we would remain faithful to Christ in His church, we shall receive eternal life as our victor’s crown (Rev. 2:10).

### Conclusion

We then, *as workers together with Him*, beseech *you* also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.) (2 Cor. 6:1-2).

## ***The Gospel Preceptor***

Published Monthly at Elk City, Oklahoma

Editor & Publisher.....Jerry C. Brewer

### Staff Writers

Nana Yaw Aidoo – Accra, Ghana                      Ron Cosby – Disney, Oklahoma  
Harrell Davidson – Obion, Tennessee   Gene Hill – Indianola, Mississippi  
Dub McClish – Denton, Texas                      Lee Moses – Union City, Tennessee  
Doug Post – Gore, Oklahoma                      David Ray – Yukon, Oklahoma  
Jess Whitlock – Maysville, Oklahoma

## **The NIV and Mechanical Music in Worship**

**Jess Whitlock**

“Thus saith the Lord, stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, we

will not walk therein” (Jer. 6:16). God’s prophet of old admonishes us to seek the “old paths,” but so many today cry out for change. Change has become the way of the world. It is demanded. Change has affected our nation to the point that America has slid down the slippery slope to Sodom and Gomorrah. The authority of God is being ignored and blasphemed. God is being rewritten (even in books purporting to be His Word). Changing the word of God is nothing new. God said to Adam and Eve in Genesis 2:17 concerning the tree of knowledge that “in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” and Satan in Genesis 3:4 rewrote the word of God by saying to the woman, “ye shall **not** surely die...” Satan added to the word of God, thereby contradicting what God said in the beginning.

If I wanted mechanical instruments of music in worship to God (which some of my brethren seem to want), then the *New International Version* (NIV=Non-Inspired Version) would be the “Bible” of choice for me. Note what the Bible says: “...speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Eph. 5:19 ASV). Now, read it in the NIV: “Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord.”

The change of the word *melody* to *music* opens the door for **generic** music, i.e., vocal music, instrumental music, or even a combination. That moves the piano or organ right into the text. For centuries it could be shown the Greek word *psallo* gave no credence to mechanical music, since the instrument is named in the text—“your heart.” I am aware of almost a dozen congregations in Texas and Oklahoma that now have brought in the instruments of music. In at least half of those churches, the NIV text was brought into the church buildings **first!**

The literal Greek text of Ephesians 5:19 reads as “singing and praising with heart your to the Lord.” **The instrument is the heart.** It is **not a mechanical** instrument of music. Melody is heart-made; **not** brass-band produced and **not** piano-made or organ-manufactured.

In the parable of the prodigal son Luke used the Greek word *sumphona* which is translated “music” in Luke 15:25 (cf. KJV, NKJV, ASV (1901) and even in the NIV). That Greek word is **not** the word that Paul used in Ephesians 5:19. He used a form of the Greek word *psallo*. That word definitely means to **sing**. (Rom. 15:9; 1 Cor. 14:15; Heb. 2:12; Jam. 5:3; Acts 16:25; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Matt. 26:30; Mark 14:26).

Remember that when the NIV translators (or should we say mistranslators?) decided to change the word *melody* to *music* they did not use any italics. Of course, they do not use italics anywhere in their **mistranslation**. Why not? This dishonest method allows them to add words, subtract words, and change words without anybody knowing what they are doing. In this instance they wanted the generic word *music* so that anyone, in all good conscience, could introduce mechanical instruments of music and believe they had Bible authority to do so. “But they said, we will not walk therein” (Jer. 6:16d).

---

## The Church and its Salvation

**Ron Cosby**

We introduce our thoughts with the words of Jesus and the record of the Holy Spirit on the subject.

And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven. And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it (Mat. 16:17-18).

Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls...Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved (Acts 2:41, 47—KJV).

With the information in these texts, the reader can logically conclude that the church and salvation go hand in hand. Other passages enhance the reader's understanding that the church is the saved and the saved is the church. With this information before him, the reader is justified to conclude that the statement, "Be saved and then later join the church of your choice," is false instruction. He could also discern it is false to say, "The church does not save; **so it is not important which church you join.**" Before anyone forms a false conclusion concerning what has been introduced, we quickly add this thought: One can be saved without being a member of a denomination, **but he cannot be saved without being a member of the church of Christ!** When we say, "the church of Christ," we speak of the very church that Jesus successfully established (Mat. 16). It is the church of Christ because He built it, and because it is His. The church of Christ is the God-designated spiritual entity in which Luke proclaims that "the being saved ones" were added by the Lord.

### **Making Clear a Few Principles**

Because of the possibility of misunderstanding, we address three principles. First, a distinction must be made between those who are safe and those who are saved. Children, as well as those who are literally childlike in mind, are safe. They have no sin; therefore, they do not need to be saved.

A distinction must also be made between the salvation of those after Christ's death on the cross and the salvation of those before the Gospel dispensation. Before the death of Christ, penitent believers such as Noah, Ruth, and the thief were saved according to the law under which they lived. Neither Noah, Ruth, or the thief lived under the law of Christ (Gal. 6:2; Acts 2:38).

Furthermore, a distinction must be made between those who are saved and those who have fallen from grace. Sadly, not all members of the church of Christ will be saved because some "are severed from Christ" (Gal. 5:4). Being a member of the church has never eternally insured salvation in the New Testament, any more than being an Israelite insured salvation in the Old Testament (1 Cor. 10:1-12).

### **Being Members of the Church yet not Member of Any Denomination**

How is it possible for one to be saved as a member of the church, yet, not join any denomination or spiritual organization? The Holy Spirit gives us a clear answer (Acts 2:1-47). On the Day of Pentecost, those who had murdered the Lord of Glory were told of their guilt before God (2:22-23). The apostles preached the Gospel to all who would hear. The message pricked their hearts and they immediately cried out unto salvation (2:37). The clear answer to their inquiry for forgiveness was "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins" (2:38). Those who obeyed were added to the church (2:41, 47). Superior Greek Manuscripts correctly include the word *ἐκκλησία* (*ekklesia*).

Luke has recorded that **the Lord** added the "being saved ones" to the church. Obviously, this means that the church is the saved, and the saved is the church. At the very moment a sinner is saved, he is immediately added to the church by the Lord of Glory Himself.

### **Jesus Died for the Church**

Paul proclaims that Jesus died for the church.

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it; that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word, that he might present the church to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish (Eph. 5:25-27).

A sane person does not throw away millions of dollars for nothing. Jesus did not throw away His precious life for a worthless, non-essential church. In the Lord's value system, the church was worth His blood, and His blood is worth all that is in all the worlds.

What could God give that would cost Him? The one and only thing He could give, He gave. He gave Himself: "...knowing that ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things,



with silver or gold, from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers; but with precious blood, as of a lamb without spot, even the blood of Christ (1 Pet. 1:18-19). Our sins cost God dearly. Only the shed blood of Jesus could blot out the sins of the soul because nothing else could accomplish what needed to be accomplished for man to have eternal life. Jesus' blood was a steep price to pay.

Consider why it took the blood of the only begotten Son of God. What is the one thing that Deity cannot manufacture, make, create, or bring into being? This question has nothing to do with those that ask, "Can God create a square circle?" or "Can God create a rock too heavy for Him to lift?" Looking around, we observe trees, mountains, riches, such as money and gold, human beings, and an entire universe. God can and did create these. But what is it Deity cannot make? Deity cannot make Deity. He cannot create Himself.

When we apply this thought to Jesus' sacrifice, we understand that the only thing that cost God is that which He could not manufacture—Himself. If the cost of a soul had been dollars, He could simply have had them appear out of thin air or make His own printing press. If a soul's cost had been an entire galaxy, He could have simply spoken it into existence. However, to sacrifice Himself would be to give the one thing He could not manufacture or speak into existence. It is the one thing that truly cost Him!

Thus, **precious** in 1 Peter 1:19 takes on a much greater meaning—precious because of its extreme rarity. Billions of diamonds could be created by God, but they would no longer be rare. Billions and billions of galaxies have been created by God. Jesus is indeed unique—one of a kind. He is the only begotten Son of God. Diamonds lose their value in the midst of supply. Galaxies lose their value in the midst of the knowledge of their vast numbers. The precious blood of the One Who died for you and me cannot be duplicated. He is the rarest of them all. The following exchange from Burton Coffman helps us to see the value of Jesus' death.

Once, as this writer traveled southward on the Missouri-Pacific from St. Louis to Little Rock, a Unitarian noticed my reading the New Testament; and he said: "You Christians have your arithmetic all wrong. How could the atoning sacrifice of one man wipe out the sins of billions of men?"

The reply was: "Indeed, you are right. The sacrifice of one man would not even wipe out that one man's sins, much less the sins of all men. Your mistake, Sir, is in your failure to see that Jesus Christ was in no sense whatever only one man. He was and is The Son of God, God manifested in the flesh; and that Holy Being's atoning sacrifice was more than sufficient to wipe out the sins of all the myriads of men who ever lived."

Furthermore, with this **precious** blood **He purchased the church**. "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). Clearly, the church and salvation are coupled.

### **God Illustrates the Concept of the Church and Man's Salvation**

God's written examples help men to grasp the idea that sinners are lost outside His chosen realm of salvation. Over the centuries, God has repeatedly designated and recorded various realms wherein men ought to be, so they could be saved from impending natural disasters. When God destroyed the world with a flood, Noah built God's designated realm of physical salvation: The ark (Gen. 6). Though Noah admonished the people of his day to enter the ark, they refused. By refusing God's ark of salvation, all on the outside perished. All on the inside were saved.

A second realm of physical salvation occurred in the days of Joshua when they destroyed Jericho. God's spies warned Rahab of the coming destruction upon all in the city. Based upon her faith, the only way for her to escape death was by following the instructions which the messengers of God gave her. She could escape harm by placing the scarlet thread in the window of the house and staying inside.

Behold, when we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by...And it shall be, that

whosoever shall go out of the doors of thy house into the street, his blood shall be upon his head, and we shall be guiltless: and whosoever shall be with thee in the house, his blood shall be on our head, if any hand be upon him (Jos. 2:18-19).

Such temporal preservations stand as ordained analogies of the spiritual deliverance in the church.

These illustrations bring to our attention a vital point. When one is added to the church by the Lord, he has a moral, ethical, and spiritual obligation to avoid joining another so-called “God-serving entity,” whether that be a denomination, or spiritual club, or church. However, he must seek the assembly of the highly-prized people of God and attempt to unite, associate, serve, and worship with them (Heb. 10:25ff; Acts 9:26). After all, since the being-saved-one is added to the Lord’s church, what could possess him to join a man’s church? Nothing! A church that even they acknowledge has nothing to do with your salvation. To do such would be like Noah entering the ark and then jumping ship into the Titanic. To do such would be like Moses sprinkling blood on his door post and then taking a chariot to Pharaoh’s house for supper. To do such would be like Rahab tying a scarlet thread on her window and then running over to her neighbor’s mansion to watch the action from their window.

Jerry Martin’s words need to echo through the hearts of men: “When men today learn that the Lord promised to build His church and they have had a part in building up “another” church they ought to fall on their face sore afraid” (1).

Being added to the church is equivalent to the sinner being baptized into the one body by the instructions of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13). When the sinner is baptized into Christ (Col. 2:11-13—KJV), it is equivalent to being translated into the kingdom (1:12-14). Being added to the church is equivalent to being built and fitly framed together in the temple of God, which is His kingdom and household (Eph. 2:19-22; John 3:3-5). Salvation is in the kingdom, the temple, the household of God.

#### **Works Cited**

All Scripture quotations are from the American Standard Version unless otherwise indicated.

Martin, Jerry, “The Church of Christ Is Not a Denomination.” *Defender*, 42.01 (1993): 1-2.

Coffman, James Burton. “Commentary on Isaiah 53:4.” *Coffman Commentaries on the Old and New Testament*. Abilene, TX. Abilene Christian University Press, 1983-1999. 18 Jan. 2018.

Reprinted from the 43rd Annual Bellview Lectures, *The Church*, Pensacola, Florida, June 8-12, 2018, Ed. Michael Hatcher.

---

## **The Characteristics of the Gospel**

### **P.D. Wilmeth**

Almost 2,000 years have come and gone since the gospel was first preached. Since that time many changes have been wrought and much that is styled “the gospel” is not the gospel. Many are the adulterations pawned off on the human family as that which was first delivered to the world. Many people have very vague ideas about what the gospel is and what it is not. In order to consider some of the earmarks of the gospel, I direct your attention to the following passage:

I marvel that ye are so quickly removing from him that called you in the grace of Christ unto a different gospel: which is not another gospel: only there are some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we or an angel from heaven should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema. As we have said before, so say I now again, if any man preacheth unto you any gospel other than that which ye received, let him be anathema. For am I now seeking the

favor of men, or of God? or am I striving to please men? If I were still pleasing men, I should not be a servant of Christ. For I make known to you (“certify to you” KJV), brethren as touching the gospel which was preached by me, that it is not after man. For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came to me through revelation of Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:6-12 ASV).

This passage contains some interesting marks which identify the gospel for us, and it is those to which we direct our attention.

### **It is the Original Gospel**

One of the most powerful motives playing upon us in this age is the desire to be “up to date.” Advertisers understand the secret of this persuasive appeal and present their goods as “the latest thing.” The “latest model” always has a ready sale. We dislike being considered “back numbers” and to be “up-to-date” is one of men's most dominant desires.

With many, the question is not, “Is it true?” but, “Is it new?” Paul said, “I marvel that ye are so quickly removing from him that called you in the grace of Christ unto a different gospel, which is not another gospel” (v 6). Even in Paul's day, there were those who were leaving the original gospel for another, which was not another gospel.

Anything which had its origin this side of the New Testament or outside of the New Testament is a human product and is not the gospel preached by Paul and the other apostles. Every creed written by man falls under this grave indictment.

Let us ask for the original gospel. No longer do the masses ask, “Is it true,” but, “Is it new?” But the original gospel has its unmistakable trademark. Let us heed the warning, “Accept no substitutes.”

### **It is the Pure Gospel**

Galatians 1:7 says, “Which is not another gospel: only there are some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.” A perverted gospel is an adulterated gospel. It cannot save. The gospel that Paul preached was pure, and was not an admixture of doctrines and commandments of men.

Power can be perverted. For example, bread is God's power to satisfy hunger. It is the “staff of life,” but a measure of poison intermixed with it will destroy its saving, life-giving power, and turn it into a power of destruction. The bread still retains all its qualities, but the poison makes it unfit for human consumption. Water has power to quench thirst. But, take a glass of sparkling, pure water and add a handful of salt to it and what happens? Instead of quenching thirst, it will create thirst. Before the salt was added, it was pure water with the power to satisfy thirst. But with addition of foreign matter it became a creator of thirst.

So it is with the gospel. It is God's power to save (Rom. 1:16-17), but mixed with human philosophies, doctrines and tenets of men it becomes a destroying agent. Mere belief is not sufficient to save anyone. Just believing whatever one wants to believe does not save. Neither is mere eating sufficient to nourish one physically. It is **what** one eats. So it is with the gospel. The gospel preached, believed and obeyed makes a Christian.

The man who adulterates the gospel is a greater enemy to my soul than the man who pollutes a drinking fountain or poisons my food. Paul said, “Let him be anathema.”

### **It is the Adequate Gospel**

Jude said, “Beloved while I was giving all diligence to write unto you of our common salvation, I was constrained to write unto you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3 ASV). In Galatians 1:23, we learn what this “Faith” was and that Paul preached the same thing. “But they only heard say, he that once persecuted us now preacheth the faith of which he once made havoc.”

These passages teach us that the gospel—just as it was delivered “once for all unto the saints”—is adequate for all time. It is for universal diffusion, for every land, tongue, and clime. This gospel was not made subject to alteration or change. The die was cast perfectly. The cloth out of which it was made was divine and divinity cut it. Human

hands dare not change it. The man who does so is under the “anathema” of high heaven.

Many men—and not a few women—have claimed direct revelations from God since those words were written. But granted that is so—which, of course, it is not—one of us could accept their testimony if they told us to do one thing which we cannot read in the inspired word of God. Thus we see that the gospel of Christ, as it was given 2,000 years ago, is **still** adequate for the needs of man in our day.

### **It is the Certified Gospel**

Paul wrote,

For I make known to you, brethren, (The King James Version says, “I certify you brethren”) as touching the gospel which was preached by me, that it is not after man. For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came to me through revelation of Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:11 ASV).

A “certified” gospel is one that has Christ back of it.

We today believe in purchasing “certified” goods. We demand certified food, milk, meat and clothing. We demand those things be guaranteed and that they are genuine. Yet, in religion man believes **anything** will do. He is not concerned so much with the genuine gospel as he is in what he “feels” in his heart or what his Mama taught him. Look for the trademark in religion. Has it ever occurred to you that to be genuine, it must be “certified?”

### **What the Certified Gospel Includes**

First, in becoming a Christian, you will follow a “certified” plan. You will be led to believe in Christ with all your heart, which is demanded of every saved person. Jesus said, “Except ye believe I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins” (John 8:24 ASV). We are also told that they that, “cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Heb. 11:6 KJV).

The certified gospel will then lead you to repent of your sins as it commands. “I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3 KJV). And Paul said, “The times of this ignorance, God winked at, but now commandeth all men, everywhere, to repent” (Acts 17:30 KJV).

From Matthew 10:32, Romans 10:8-10 and Acts 8:37, we learn that this certified gospel requires us to confess the sweet name of Jesus as God's Son.

Then we are commanded by this certified gospel to be baptized in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, for the remission of sins (Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). We also learn that we are buried with Christ in baptism (immersed in water) that like as He was raised up from the dead, we also should walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:3-4). When you do those things, you have obeyed a certified plan of salvation—certified by Christ Himself.

### **A Member of the Certified Church**

When you do those things listed above, you are made a member of the “certified” church of which you read in the New Testament, for the Lord adds the saved to His church (Acts 2:47). No one has the right to “vote” on your membership. Voting members in is no part of the certified gospel.

When you become a member of the “certified” church of Christ, you become a “Christian”—nothing more and nothing less. The name “Christian” is found but three times in the New Testament and has God's certification behind it (Acts 11:26, 26:28; 1 Pet. 4:16).

Having obeyed the certified gospel, you become a member of the certified church, wear the only certified name for Christ's followers—“Christian”—and, as such, engage in worship acceptable to God and certified by Him in the New Testament.

Do you believe and follow the “certified” gospel? Can you read in the New Testament what you did in becoming what you are religiously? Is your religious activity “certified” by the New Testament?

---

**Links to Bible Study Resources**  
**The Scripture Cache**  
**Northpoint church of Christ**  
**Precept Upon Precept You Tube**  
**Spiritual Perspectives - Gary Summers**  
**Biblical Articles & More - Gary Grizzell**  
**False Doctrines of Man**  
**Yukon, Okla. church of Christ**  
**Berea church of Christ, Rives, TN**  
**South Seminole church of Christ**

---

## Thief on the Cross

**J.D. Tant**

Our present subject is the “Salvation of the Thief” on the cross—provided he was saved. Was the thief saved? If not, why not? If he was saved, why can not we be saved like him?

Grant the thief was saved, which I do not believe, as I have no testimony concerning his salvation yet I shall show that if he was saved. We have two promises of going to heaven without dying where we have one of being saved like the thief.

With all the characters in the Old Bible who were saved, including Abraham, Isaac, Joseph, Job, Moses, and David, not one stands out so prominent in the sectarian plan of salvation as the thief. In all their meetings they mention the dying thief on the cross ten times to where they mention Abraham or Joseph once.

Some good people think they believe the Bible, and will sing: “Where he leads me I will follow all the way.” They start with Jesus in Capernaum, his home, and will follow him sixty miles down the Jordan river, singing as they go, “Where he leads me I will follow all the way,” until they get to the Jordan, and when they see Jesus going down into the water with John the Baptist, they will forsake Jesus, and run back up the bank after the thief. Then they sing: “The dying thief rejoiced to see that fountain in his day, and there may I, though vile as he wash all my sins away.”

Notwithstanding the Bible tells us that when the side of Jesus was pierced there came out blood and water (John 19:34), and notwithstanding Jesus said, “Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (John 3:5); notwithstanding the God of heaven said of Jesus that he came by water and by blood (1 John 5:6); and notwithstanding God says there are three that bear witness on the earth: the Spirit, the water and the blood (1 John 5:8), still the religious world continues to argue, “Lord, we will forsake you when you say you came by water, for we will follow the thief who went to heaven above high-water mark, rather than to follow you who had to go down into the river and be baptized of John to fulfill all righteousness

Why it is that many good people suffer of religious hydrophobia, and fear water, and would rather follow the thief than the Son of God is hard for me to understand.

In examining the salvation of the thief, I beg to call attention to the diagram. You will notice three different religious ages. The way in which people worship God in one age oft the world is not accepted in another age. During the first 2,500 years of time people worshiped God under the patriarchal age. Each man, as Job, Jacob or Noah, built an altar and offered up animal sacrifice, and God accepted their worship.

After this time we come to the Mosaical age under which people worshiped God through the Levitical priesthood. Instead of each father offering sacrifice for his family wherever he pleased, all the Jews must go to Jerusalem three times a year, and God accepted their sacrifice only through the tribe of Levi. This age of religious worship continued until the death of Christ.

Christ referred to John and said that he was the greatest born of woman, but the least in the kingdom of God was greater than John the Baptist. How was it possible for John the Baptist to be the greatest born of women, and at the same time the least in Christ's kingdom be greater than he? I can illustrate that by school work. A graded school may teach from the first to the tenth grade. We are discussing the seventh grade work. I pick out a boy and say he is the greatest boy in the seventh grade, but the least in the eighth grade is greater, or brighter than he. This you can understand as you know the lowest study in the eighth grade is higher than the highest study in the seventh grade. "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). The kingdom of grace would be as far above the law of Moses as the eighth grade is above the seventh grade. So the Son of God could well say that John the Baptist, in the seventh grade or under the law of Moses was the greatest prophet among men, but the least in the eighth grade, in the kingdom of grace, would be greater than he.

One says, "What does that have to do with the salvation of the thief?" If baptism is essential to salvation as taught by Jesus in Mark 16:16, why was not the thief baptized? The reason is that the thief was dead and buried forty days before any man on earth was commanded to be baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Forty days after the thief died Jesus gave the commission to go to all the world and teach "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." The apostles waited ten days at Jerusalem before they began to preach that doctrine.

But this is not all. The religious world can hardly see where it will force them to go when they rub out baptism in order to save the thief who lived and died under the law of Moses, or an abrogated law. We can take up a citizen of Germany, Cuba, or Old Mexico, and find them doing things which would not violate the laws of their governments, yet the same things done here would violate the laws of our country. It would be a poor lawyer who would argue that things allowed in their governments would be allowed here. Likewise is it a poor preacher who argues that because the thief was saved under the government that did not have the great commission we can be saved who will not obey the commission under Christ.

The religious zeal of many to do away with baptism for the remission of sins as taught by the Holy Ghost in Acts 2:38, may force them into greater troubles than they imagine.

I talk to men who say, "I want to be saved like the thief. He was saved without baptism, therefore I want to be saved without it." We want to be liberal in our teaching, so we grant the request and rub out baptism. But this is not all. Moses said in the eighteenth chapter of Deuteronomy, that God would raise a prophet like Moses and we must hear that prophet in all things. For 4,000 years no man was required to hear that prophet. Even the thief died before Jesus was declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection (Rom. 1:4). As the thief died under the law of Moses where people had to hear him instead of Christ, and as many people desire to be saved like the thief was saved that will force us to rub out hearing Christ and go back to hear Moses. But, in order to my salvation I must believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (Acts 8:38). For 4,000 years no man was required to believe that Christ was the Son of God. While Christ was on earth he said to the Jews, "You believe in God, believe also in me." This shows they had not previously believed in Christ. But some claim they want to be saved like the thief who went to heaven without being baptized. But as the thief was saved under the old law where did they not have to believe in Christ it forces you to rub out the doctrine of faith in Christ. But it does not stop here. Jesus said we must preach

repentance in his name, beginning at Jerusalem (Luke 24:47-49). But as the thief died 50 days before Peter told them to repent in the name of Christ for remission of sins (Acts 2:37), it then forces you to give up the doctrine of repentance in the name of Christ. But Jesus required us to confess him before men (Matt. 10:32). The eunuch confessed him (Acts 8:37). Paul says this was done with the mouth unto salvation (Rom. 10:8-10). But under the law of Moses they confessed their sins (Mark 1:5).

So when a man forsakes Christ and follows the thief for salvation it forces him to give up every command the Son of God has bound upon us as essential to salvation. He leaves the gospel and goes back under the law, and Paul says such a character has fallen from grace (Gal. 5:4).

But after all, how do you know the thief was saved? Paul says, He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption (Gal. 6:8). The thief had sown to his flesh and was put to death for his crime.

One says, "Did not Christ tell the thief that he should be with him in paradise that day?" (Luke 23:43). This was literally fulfilled; but three days after Christ went to paradise where the thief went with him he came out of paradise, and when the woman wanted to touch Him, Christ said, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father" (John 20:17). If God is in heaven, and Jesus did not go to God while in paradise, nor for forty days after he came out of paradise may you not be mistaken after all about the salvation of the thief.

**But here is the argument:** The thief went to heaven without being baptized. Therefore I can go to heaven without being baptized.

#### **Parallel**

Enoch went to heaven without dying. Therefore I can go to heaven without dying.

Elijah was translated and went to heaven without dying. Therefore I can be translated and go to heaven without dying.

Each of the arguments is as strong as can be made on the thief, and all are unscriptural, sophistry and untrue.

Then let's abolish the devil's doctrine of following the thief for salvation, and let us accept the Lord who said, "**He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.**"

---

### **Orders For Mail**

**Jerry C. Brewer 308 South Okla. Ave.**

**Elk City, Oklahoma, 73644**

**FREE - BOOK and POSTAGE**

**"The Thing That Hath Been...": The Cycle of Apostasy  
Volume 2, Enlarged and Revised By Jerry C. Brewer**

---

## **When Ye Pray**

**Leslie G. Thomas**

We are praying the wrong kind of prayers when we endeavour to reverse the proper relationship between God and man. Properly speaking, God is the Creator, man is the creature. If this is true, as we glibly assert, then our prayers should respect and exemplify that relationship.

But how often are we found praying as if God lives to provide us with what we want; so that, instead of seeking divine guidance, our obvious efforts are to obtain divine reinforcements. Prayers which are "thing-centered" or "self-centered," rather than "God-centered" are wrong kinds of prayers.

---

# **The Book Is Ready And Mailed to You!**

## **“The Thing That Hath Been...”: The Cycle of Apostasy Volume 2, Enlarged and Revised By Jerry C. Brewer**

- The book is FREE and single postage are FREE.
  - Persons requesting multiple copies are asked to pay postage.
  - Five or more copies will be sent Priority Mail.
- 

### **Orders Emailed**

**[jbbbbbrewer@gmail.com](mailto:jbbbbbrewer@gmail.com)**

---

### **Orders Mailed**

**Jerry C. Brewer  
308 South Ave. Oklahoma  
Elk City, Oklahoma 73644**

---

### **“Mainstream Churches” are Sinful**

The time for recognizing division has come—again. The steadfast, doctrinally sound remnant of the church, in widely scattered (and mostly small) pockets across our land, must mark mainstream churches of Christ as the apostates and sinners they are. God's Word commands us to “have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (emph JCB). The multitudinous “ministries” of the “Social Gospellers,” their flirtation with the world, and their embrace of doctrinal error aims to “gain thereby the recognition of the conflicting sects about us, to become popular, and be considered orthodox and really one of the branches of the church,” to quote one of them. Such a statement is nothing short of heresy, and the Biblically ignorant masses in mainstream churches of Christ are no longer merely bidding Godspeed to apostates—they themselves are apostate.

These “Mainstream Churches” are **not** in “**ERROR.**” They are plain vanilla “**SINFUL!**”

---



---

# “What Saith The Scriptures?”

---

## Harrell Davidson

Brother Don Guinn, from Corning, California sent the following comment and question to the writer of these lines. He said:

"Dear Brother:

\_\_\_\_\_ of Sunset School of Preaching teaches that all Christians are baptized with the Holy Spirit. Could you comment on this please?"

We left the name of the apostate brother off the comment that brother Guinn sent. It is gross error to so teach that which is ascribed to a teacher at said School of Preaching. The false teacher in mind wrote a manuscript in which he took the position that brother Guinn mentioned. It is not a matter of hearsay. The evidence is in hand. The false doctrine that all Christians are baptized in the Holy Spirit belongs to the charismatic movement that is still prevalent in some quarters among our own brethren and in many denominational religious bodies.

The teacher at Sunset said the following on page 45 of his manuscript,

The thesis of this author, based on the preceding verses, is that the statement, 'Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit' is simply the promise of the outpouring of the Spirit by Jesus on the day of Pentecost one time for all, henceforth available for all men whom God calls (through the gospel, 2 Thess. 2:14). The Spirit then empowered whom He willed to the degree He willed (1 Cor. 12:4-11).

Please notice what brother Luke recorded in Acts 1:2-5

Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

Verse 2 of the text before us clearly indicates that Jesus had given commandments to the apostles regarding the Holy Spirit which is a clear reference to Luke 24:49. Jesus commanded them saying, "And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." In verse 4 of Acts 1 Jesus told the apostles and no one else to "...[W]ait for the promise of the Father..." The promise of the Father is further identified by John the Baptizer as being the baptism in the Holy Spirit that only Christ could administer in Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16 and John 1:32-33. In each case John was inspired to tell of the baptism in the Holy Spirit that would be administered by Christ. No one else in Holy Scripture is identified as being able to administer this baptism.

This was neither for the 120, nor the multitude that was assembled together when this event occurred in Acts 2:1-4. In fact, Jesus taught the apostles things regarding the kingdom about 40 days (cf. Acts 1:2-5 above quoted). There were ten days that intervened between this teaching and the day of Pentecost and it is quite obvious that during this time the 120 met and Matthias was selected to replace Judas who by transgression fell (cf. Acts 1:15- 20). Acts one closes by showing that Matthias "was numbered with the eleven apostles" (Acts 1:25).

Acts 2: begins by saying, "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, **they** were all with one accord in one place" (Emph. HDD). The antecedent of the pronoun *they* in Acts 2:1 refers back to the 12 apostles in Acts 1:25. It is unmistakably clear that Holy

Spirit baptism was intended for only the apostles. The apostles were the only ones to which the promise was made.

Additionally, if the baptism in the Holy Spirit was for all on Pentecost and thereafter there would have been no need of the spiritual gifts that were bestowed only through the laying on of apostles' hands as promised in Mark 16:17ff and fulfilled in Acts 2, Acts 8 and other instances.

The Scriptures have thus proven that the brother at Sunset School of Preaching is/was teaching false doctrine. There could be volumes more written regarding this that we have included in Davidson's Notes on The New Testament—the Book of Acts, John and also the Synoptics, but this is sufficient to show the truth and expose the error.

---

## Gethsemane—Then the Cross

**Elbridge B. Linn**

This is a lesson for those who are in pain, or who have suffered the pangs of an ailing body, perhaps for years. It is a helpful word to all who are in trouble—who find themselves bearing a cross which seems at times to be entirely too heavy.

Many times have loving disciples of our Lord lingered by faith near the cross, as He suffered in the agony of atonement. Often, we have looked upon a lifted-up Christ, and been drawn to God by Him. One cannot speak too much of the Christ of the cross, for he is the hope of the world. But many have missed a wonderful lesson from the cross in failing to follow Jesus through the garden the night before. **Gethsemane came first, then the cross!**

After Jesus had taught the disciples to eat the supper in His memory, they left the upper room, and went out unto the Mount of Olives, where there was a garden called “Gethsemane.”

Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death, abide ye here and watch with me. And he went forward a little, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt (Matt. 26:38-46).

Three times Jesus repeated his prayer while the disciples slept. And finally He saw the betrayer approaching and awakened the disciples.

Gethsemane prepared the Lord to bear the cross. It was there, when He had bowed his will unto the Father's, that an angel came and ministered unto Him. There, probably more than at any other time in His life, do we see the humanity of Jesus. But when He had passed through Gethsemane, we marvel at His unflinching courage in the face of His foes, His serene silence in answer to slurs and blasphemies, His patient endurance of the cruel buffetings.

The disciples slept, while Jesus prayed; and when the enemy came out of the city to take their Master, they were scattered as sheep without a shepherd. Even as it was then, so is it today. When people refuse, or fail, to watch with their Lord in Gethsemane, they cannot bear their own crosses, nor share the glory of His. Only when the meaning of Gethsemane—“My Father, thy will be done”—comes to be the motive of our lives, can we bear our crosses!

The Apostle Paul had some physical ailment which he referred to as a “thorn in the flesh.” He prayed three times that the Lord would remove his affliction, but the Savior replied, “My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.” Then, Paul showed that he had truly passed through Gethsemane, where one says, “Thy will be done,” for he declared,

Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore, I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong (2 Cor. 12:9-10).

Gethsemane came first, then the bearing of his cross.

Sometime ago, while engaged in a meeting in a certain city, I was taken into the home of a Christian lady who was an invalid. For years, she had been afflicted with arthritis, and had not walked a step. Her hands, her feet, and her knees were stiff and drawn.

As I sat there, and with growing wonder and admiration heard her tell of her life, my heart kept saying over and over again, "Gethsemane." It was difficult for this little Christian mother to say years ago, "Father, thy will be done" but now the cross is much easier to bear. Whereas others might have snapped under the strain, and many others might have been driven by the pain into cynicism, she smiled almost constantly, wrote beautiful poetry about her family and her life, and ever sang the praises of her God. Just before we left, she said, "Oh, I'm so thankful to God for the health that I do have." Yes, it's true! Gethsemane makes the bearing of the cross easier.

Christ-following demands cross-bearing. We are not better than our Master. His cross was not only the wooden beam to which they nailed Him at last, but also all His sufferings for mankind. And He said, "Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." The crosses that come to us are many and varied. A feeble and ailing body which ties you to one place and robs you of many joys—that is a cross. The unfaithfulness and ingratitude of friends and of those you have done your best to serve—these are crosses. How often the ill deeds of loved ones make a cross! To have your home made desolate by death, so that each day you "long for the touch of a vanished hand and the sound of a voice that is still"—surely here is a cross!

But God will not be far away. He strengthened His Son in Gethsemane. His grace was sufficient for Paul. We are told to "come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need (Heb. 4:16). We have also this encouraging word:

For verily not to angels doth he give help, but he giveth help to the seed of Abraham. Wherefore it behooved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren, that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted." (Heb. 2:16-18).

The Apostle Peter urges us to cast "all your care upon him; for he careth for you" (1 Pet. 5:7). Paul gives great consolation when he says, "In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus" (Phil 4:6-7).

May these thoughts from God's word help you to pass through Gethsemane where you say, "Thy will be done, O God," that you may better bear your cross. For, of certainty, there is a cross after every Gethsemane! This is truly expressed by Ella Wheeler Wilcox in her short poem entitled, *Gethsemane*.

All those who journey, soon or late  
Must pass within the garden's gate;  
Must kneel alone in darkness there,  
And battle with some fierce despair.  
God pity those who cannot say:  
"Not mine, but thine," who only pray,  
"Let this cup pass," and cannot see  
The purpose in Gethsemane.

---

## The Old Jerusalem Gospel (Acts 2:14-47)

**Kent Bailey**

The gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1:16). Within this divine scheme is revealed the righteousness of God (Rom. 1:17). The covenant of Moses

revealed that God was and is a righteous being, however it took the scheme of Redemption, as revealed in the Gospel, for accountable humanity to be made righteous. The phrase “righteousness of God” in verse 17 therefore does not speak with reference to a personal attribute of God, but rather, such is indicative of the plan of God to make sinful humanity righteous.

The first Pentecost following the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ was the first occurrence of the Gospel being preached. This was the appointed time for the beginning of the New Covenant. It was the day that the kingdom, which had been both prophesied and promised in the Old Testament, was inaugurated. This was also the day upon which the coronation of Christ took place in being crowned King over this kingdom.

Salvation was the theme. Deliverance from the bondage of sin was announced as well as preservation in Christ was offered to those who, not only would obey the conditions of pardon, but also remain steadfast to the truth of God.

The place foretold by the Old Testament prophet Isaiah was that of Jerusalem (Isa. 2:3). From this ancient city, the word of the Lord would go forth offering deliverance from sin to those held in bondage. In consideration of such facts, the gospel of Christ is thus **The Old Jerusalem Gospel**.

As we consider this crucial message we note that on that day: Salvation was preached (Acts 2:14-15). The inspired record states that Peter stood up with the eleven and addressed those assembled. He could address them in one common language. The apostles had earlier addressed them in their native languages, not because such was a necessity, but rather, as a miraculous sign (1 Cor. 14:22).

In this specific sermon we note the first proclamation of the Gospel as the Great Commission began to be executed. The reign of Christ over men transpired and the magnitude of this occasion is clearly stated.

**Salvation had been prophesied (Acts 2:16-21).** The events that took place on this particular Pentecost did not happen by accident. They were the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. Such was a demonstration of God's eternal scheme (Joel 2:28-32; Isa. 2:1-2; Micah 4:1-3).

**Salvation was personified (Acts 2:22-24).** Peter, within this sermon, uplifted the incarnate person of Christ. He argued that Jesus had been approved of God among them. The term approved (*apodeiknumi*) speaks with reference to proving by demonstration. It was by a divine demonstration of miracles, wonders, and signs that Jesus was demonstrated to be the Christ.

**Salvation was portrayed (Acts 2:25-36).** By the term portrayed, we refer to that of giving a word picture. Here we note Peter's description through the language expressed by David in the Old Testament. Only Christ could have fulfilled such depictions.

**Salvation was presented (Acts 2:37-38).** As believers, who had been convicted of the sin of crucifying Christ, they confessed their faith in Jesus as the Christ. This awareness of guilt in their lives brought about a desire as believers in Christ to be forgiven of their sins. This conviction of sin in their lives cause them to inquire regarding conditions that they must obey in order to be forgiven. By the inspiration of God Peter told them to repent and be baptized by the authority of Christ for (unto in order to) the remission of sins. The terms of faith in Christ, repentance of sin, confession of Christ, and baptism for the remission of sins are the conditions alien sinners must obey in order to receive salvation.

**Salvation was provided (Acts 2:41).** Those who obeyed the saving gospel of Christ enthusiastically accepted the truths that they had learned. Our text refers to this as gladly receiving the word. The NT Greek term *apodechomai* means literally to welcome. These individuals welcomed the word of God that moved them to obey what they had learned. Such indeed brought about salvation from sin.

**Salvation was perfected (Acts 2:42-46).** Salvation from sin obligates the child of God to bring their life into complete submission unto Christ in growth and also in

faithfulness to the New Testament pattern.

**Salvation was placed (Acts 2:47).** If it is the case that (A) baptism is for (unto in order to) the remission of past alien sins, and (B) that remission of past alien sins is found within the New Testament church, and (C) that one must come to understand that the design of baptism is for the remission of sins in order for such to be valid, then (D) then one must also understand that remission of sins is found within the confines of the New Testament church for one's baptism to be valid. Such is indeed the case with all of the above stated premises, therefore the conclusion must follow as being true (Acts 2:38, Acts 2:47; Rom. 6:17-18; 1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 1:22- 23).

The Old Jerusalem Gospel is God's exclusive appointed means of salvation from sin. We must believe the facts of such and obey the conditions found within in order to be recipients of divine forgiveness. Have you obeyed this saving message of Christ?

---

## Counseling Preacher Mania

**W.R. Craig**

It seems, these days, that a great many of “our” preachers want to be experts in everything except preaching the Gospel! We have “experts” running around the country promoting (for a fee, of course) such things as, “How to Increase Contributions” in “Three Unusual Days,” “How to Increase Attendance with “Busing,” Showing movies in the church “building” (recently the attraction was *King Kong* 'bring your own popcorn and pop), Special programs for different age groups, “divorced folk and singles.” And so on it goes, ad infinitum!

Just now a favorite “expert field” among many of “our” preachers is called *Counseling*. They advertise themselves as *Counselors* and specialists in Mental Heath. It has become a mania for a great segment of men who purport to be “Gospel” preachers. Brother Idus England recently addressed himself to the problem—and a problem it is—as follows:

In the May 6, 1980 *Daily Oklahoman*, an article titled, “Lawsuits Send Clergy Scurrying for Malpractice Insurance,” points up a new low in America's attitude toward religion and an equally low base of operations for “clergy.” The suit was initiated by a Catholic couple whose son had sought help from a Protestant church before committing suicide. The couple sued the church and its “pastor” for wrongful death, negligence, outrageous conduct, and “clergy” malpractice.

The thing that is so alarming about all this is the attitude back of it that would prompt such people to do such things, and the attitude of “clergy” who are more concerned about social ills than they are about preaching the Gospel. (Of course, if they were preaching the Gospel, they would not be “clergy”).

There is another point here that strikes closer to home than many realize. Many of “our own” people disagree with me, but so be it! A lot of “preaching” brethren have spent more time in qualifying themselves to be **counselors** (in some cases to meet civil and state requirements) **than in studying the word of God to preach the Gospel! The work of a preacher is still, “Preach the word”** (2 Tim. 4:2). And the Gospel is still “the power of God unto salvation” (Rom. 1:16).

Some feel that we cannot properly teach folks with problems, unless we have experienced their problems. But one does not have to be a reformed drunk, immoralist, or thief to know that the Bible condemns these things. Nor does he have to have a PhD in philosophy or psychology to know what the Bible teaches as to man's **real** needs! We are not knocking education, as such, but we pray for the time when all preachers, regardless of their educational backgrounds, will learn that **their work is to make the soul right with God**. Then the person taught can usually, (1) correct his **own** problems, (2)

learn to live with them as long as they do not conflict with his Christian living (such as consequences of past mistakes) or, (3) seek professional help from those who deal with these problems that have a scientific angle.

Any problem that a preacher cannot solve with a “**Thus saith the Lord,**” he should leave alone. And for those “clergy” (brethren, or whoever) who involved themselves outside the “**work of an evangelist**” (2 Tim. 4:5), let them buy their own “Malpractice Insurance” and face the possible consequences.

**Amen!** When preachers get back to doing what God intended for them to do, and leave the “doctoring” to those who really know how to do it, then everybody will be better off! The same holds true for all the other “experts” and “promoters” who sail under the false colors of **preaching the word**, but who are, in reality, nothing more than religious racketeers!

---

## The Word of God

**Terry Joe Kee**

From my earliest memories of the church and worship services, I am reminded of the need to respect the Bible. I remember as a child going with my family to Newbern, Tennessee and assembling with the church there. The class I was in used a little card which had a picture on one side and a Bible story on the other. I do not remember who the teacher was but I remember the importance given to the Word of God.

As a teenager I studied in a Bible class taught by those who loved the Bible and encouraged us as students to study. I remember his instructions to put our lesson book in a place where we would know where it was and to bring it to class with us. We were never encouraged to bring that book without our Bibles.

As I remember those preachers I heard as a young man, I am reminded of godly men who respected the Bible and encouraged every member to study it daily. I learned not to put the words of man above the Word of God (cf. 1 Cor. 4:6). My plea for folks not to take my word, but to search the scriptures to see if the truth is being taught, is what I have been taught from my childhood. Our faith is not to stand in the wisdom of man, but in the Word of God (1 Cor. 2:1-5).

The Bible is worthy of daily study and meditation (2 Tim. 2:15; Psa. 1:1-3). It is the Word of God that must light our path and be a lamp to our feet (Psa. 119:105). God’s Word is His instrument to reprove, rebuke, and exhort us (2 Tim. 4:2). It is this inspired volume which is given by God for teaching, reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness (2 Tim. 3:16). Only by the Word of God can we be made perfect or complete (2 Tim. 3:17). Only with this Book of books can we know Jesus (John 5:39). These things were written that we might believe in Jesus as God’s Son (John 20:30,31). Without this Word, there is no faith (Rom. 10:17) and therefore we cannot please God (Heb. 11:6).

Since the Bible is so precious, and without it we have no direction and therefore no hope, we must not put it up on a shelf. We cannot live without it. It must be preached and lived. How can we bring a neighbor to Christ, without how to live without the Word? What hope do you have without the Word of God? How do you know of God’s grace without the Word of His grace? The Word of God is what has made us who we are and it is what will carry us home.

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

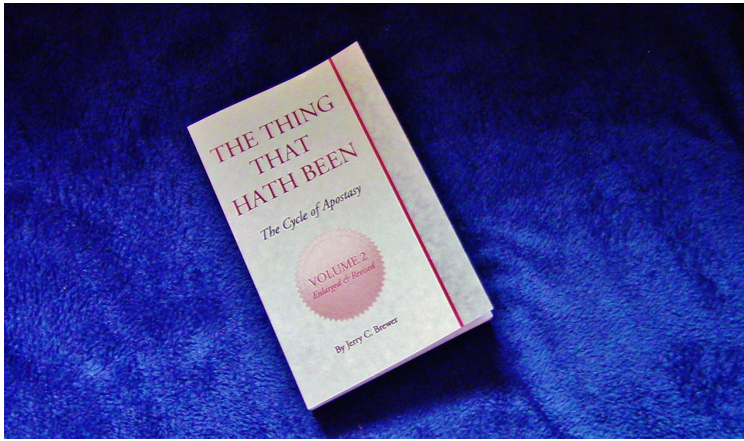
**Volume 1 is now posted on our Website of the:**

**[www.thegospelpreceptor.com](http://www.thegospelpreceptor.com)**

**Volume 1 may read it there, or download it FREE at this page:**

**<https://thegospelpreceptor.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/The-Thing-That-Hath-Been-for-PDF.pdf>**

# “The Thing That Hath Been...”



The thing that hath been, it *is that* which shall be; and that which is done *is* that which shall be done: and *there is* no new *thing* under the sun. Is there *any* thing whereof it may be said, See, this *is* new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us (Eccl. 1:9-10).

Apostasy is the bane of God's people as Israel in the shadow of Sinai.

And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for *as for* this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which *are* in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring *them* unto me...And he received *them* at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These *be* thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt...To morrow *is* a feast to the LORD. And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play (Exo. 32:1-6).

## “The Thing That Hath Been...”

**Volume 2, Enlarged and Revised**

**By Jerry C. Brewer**

This book explains why the people of God, “sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play” in the 20th Century and are obsessed to “mainstream churches of Christ.”

**There is absolutely no charge for this book!**

**There is absolutely no postage for this 344-page book!**

**There is absolutely no excuse for you to not order this book!**

**There is absolutely no excuse for you to remain, “...have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove *them* (Eph. 5:11).**

**Email to [jbbbbbrewer@gmail.com](mailto:jbbbbbrewer@gmail.com) send your mailing with your address. **Waiting For?****

# **ORDER TODAY!**