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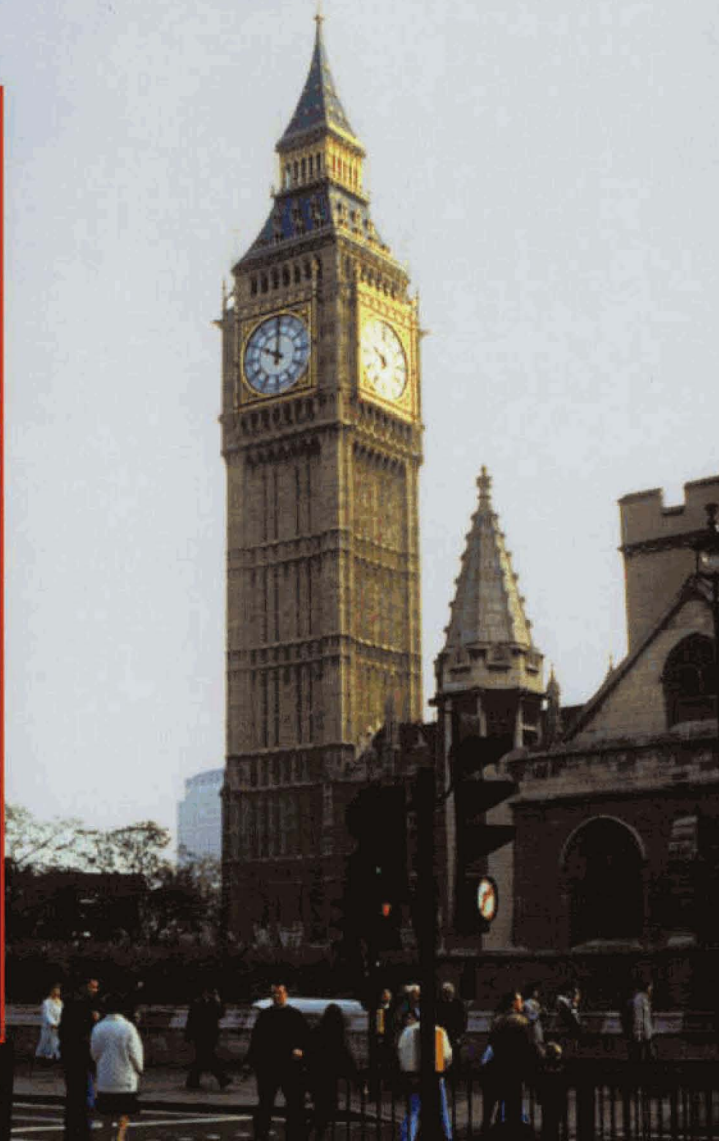
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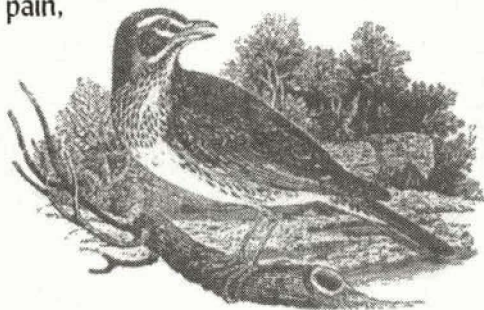
## *The Broken Pinion*

I walked through woodland meadows  
Where sweet the thrushes sing,  
And I found on a bed of mosses  
A bird with a broken wing.  
I healed its wound, and each morning  
It sang its old sweet strain,  
But the bird with the broken pinion  
Never soared as high again.

I found a young life broken  
By sin's seductive art,  
And touched with Christ-like pity,  
I took him to my heart.  
He lived with noble purpose  
And struggled not in vain,  
But the life that sin had stricken  
Never soared as high again.

But the bird with the broken pinion  
Kept another from the snare,  
And the life that sin had stricken  
Raised another from despair.  
Each loss has its compensation —  
There is healing in every pain,  
But the bird with the  
    broken pinion  
Never soars as high  
    again.

— H. Butterworth



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THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST SALUTE YOU (ROMANS 16:16).

## IN CHRIST

J. C. Choate  
Editor-in-Chief



The Bible teaches that we are born, physically, without sin. We are pure, innocent, and safe. Christ said that we as adults, having reached the age of accountability, knowing right from wrong, and having thus become sinners (Romans 3:23), must now be converted and become as little children in order

to enter the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 18:3).

We who are sinners need to be saved because we have become transgressors of God's law (1 John 3:4). Paul reminds us that "*...the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life*" (Romans 6:23).

But how can we escape sin and death? How can we be forgiven, delivered, and transferred to a state of salvation? Christ says that if we will believe and be baptized, He will save us (Mark 16:16). When Peter preached to a large crowd of people, and they became believers and wanted to know what else they should do, he told them that they must repent and be baptized *for the remission of their sins* (Acts 2:38). We are told that the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved (Acts 2:47).

It is our last step of initial obedience to the Lord — baptism — which transfers us out of the world and into Christ and his church. Baptism alone is nothing, of course, and will do nothing for us, unless it is preceded by faith in God and Christ, by turning from our sins — which is repentance — and by confessing our faith in Christ as the Son of God. Then on being baptized — buried in water to wash away our sins, in compliance with the Lord's instructions — we

are told that baptism *saves us* (1 Peter 3:21). The *water itself* does not save us but *Christ* saves us *because* we have been baptized according to His will. As Peter said in 1 Peter 3:21, baptism is not for the purpose of putting away the filth of the flesh, or to take a bath, but it is done to bring about a good conscience before God.

The question then comes, “How can one have a good conscience before God unless he does what God has asked him to do?” Of course such a thing would be impossible, so *it is necessary that the penitent believer be baptized.*

Another way of putting it is this: when one is baptized scripturally — buried in water and brought forth from the water to walk in newness of life (Romans 6:3,4) — he experiences the new birth of water and of the Spirit, *being born* again, spiritually (John 3:3-5). Paul explains it like this: “*Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new*” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

To have salvation and to be a new creature, one must be *in Christ*, and there is just one way

to *enter Christ*. The Apostle Paul said, “*Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life*” (Romans 6:3,4).

That’s what Paul was saying in 2 Corinthians 5:17, that newness of life is *the result of being new creatures or new people in Christ*. Again, he said, “*For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ*” (Galatians 3:26,27).

For example, when one *puts on* a coat, is he *in* the coat or *outside* the coat? Of course, he is *inside the coat*. So when one is baptized *into Christ*, that means he is *in Christ*, not *outside of Christ*. It further means that one is *a child of God in Christ*, not *outside of Christ*.

Those who say that they were saved at one point in time, and then *later* they were baptized, are saying that they were saved *outside of Christ* or *without Christ*. How can that be? If

the scriptures teach that one must be *in Christ* to be saved, and that it is baptism which puts one *into Christ*, then that means that it would be impossible for one to be saved before baptism!

Again, Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 12:13 that we are baptized *into one body*, and he says in Colossians 1:18 that the *body is the church*. In Ephesians 1:22,23 he shows that *the church is the body*, and finally in Ephesians 4:4 he states that there is only *one body*.

But if the *one body is the church*, that means there is but *one church*, and if we are **baptized** *into* that body or that church, then there is only one way to *enter* the church: *by being baptized!* It's all so very logical!

Putting the points together, when we *obey* the Lord in baptism, we *enter Christ and his church*, being born of the water and of the Spirit, and at the same time Christ adds us to His church.

In a physical relationship, that is, once we have been born into a physical family, we will *always* be in that family. **We cannot be un-born.** We may be a faithful and loyal member of

our family and receive the benefits thereof, or we may live in such a way as to be disinherited, but we will always be the son or daughter of our father and mother.

The same is true spiritually. Once we enter Christ and His church or family, we will always be in Christ and we will always be members of that one family — but, we will be either *faithful or unfaithful*. As a child of God, faithful unto death, the Lord has promised to give us a crown of life. (Revelation 2:10).

If we are unfaithful we may be disfellowshipped in this world by the local congregation of the family, and we may finally be eternally lost if we do not repent (Matthew 25:46). If we will repent of our sins and return to the Lord we will be forgiven and may again receive the benefits that come to those who belong to the Lord. Read the story of the prodigal son in Luke 15 to better understand this spiritual family relationship.

**Are you in Christ?** Are you a member of *His church*? Are you a *faithful* child of God? If not, it is a sad fact, but *you are lost*. Please hear the Lord's invitation to come to him before it is too late. †



# MINISTERS — WHO ARE THEY?

**Byron Nichols**  
Managing Editor

Have you noticed that the term “minister” has become the commonly used identification of those who formerly were identified simply as “preachers” or “gospel preachers”? It is noticeable in the majority of advertisements in newspapers and brotherhood publications, in telephone directories, in church bulletins, on business cards, in introductions, and in conversation. Some may ask, “Is there a problem with this?” I believe there might be.

It is not necessary to get into a detailed analysis of each Greek word used in the New Testament and translated in English as “minister,” either as a noun or a verb. Suffice it to say that the Greek words generally denote the concept of a servant, an attendant, a worker, or the action carried out by such a person or persons. In other words, New Testament “ministers” were basically people engaged in some kind of service. Even casual reading of the New Testament introduces one to the fact that every Christian, every disciple of Jesus Christ, is intended to be a “minister,” a servant. For the sake of brevity, let me just refer you to Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12. These great chapters show quite clearly that the whole church is made up of parts that are intended to function, serve, work, or “minister” as a unit. Each part is different, but each has a function to fulfill. In doing his/her segment of the work, each member of the church, the body, is working (ministering) as a minister.

Many times today the preacher is identified as **the** minister of the Main Street congregation (or whatever name is appropriate). If **every** Christian is a minister, the preacher is not **the** minister of that congregation with which he works, or else the others in that congregation are failing to be what Christ expects them to be. It is highly unlikely that there is a congregation anywhere with only one minister. Even if such a situation were found, it might

not be the preacher who was the minister — it might well be some other person in the group who more completely measured up to the biblical designation of a minister of Christ.

The terms “minister,” “ministry,” and “ministering” are used in a variety of ways in the New Testament. It is very true that there are many references to preachers as ministers, but non-preachers are just as accurately and appropriately identified as ministers. It is noteworthy that diverse **groups** of Christians were sometimes called ministers. Such is the case in Hebrews 6:10, where the writer is speaking to a large group of Christians in general, and he refers to their having “ministered” unto other folks. Peter, in writing to a large and diverse group of Christians, referred to the ministering and serving of them all (1 Peter 4:10). Paul indicated, in Romans 15:27, that the Gentile converts in Macedonia and Achaia would be ministering, acting as ministers, as they gave of their money to help relieve the financial needs of poor Jewish Christians in Jerusalem.

Women were clearly called ministers in the New Testament. Examples include Peter’s mother-in-law in Matthew 8:15; many women in Matthew 27:55; and several women in Luke 8:3.

It is interesting to find that people can even be ministers without realizing it. Paul tells us that governing authorities are actually ministers of God (Romans 13:1-7). I think it is pretty obvious that some of them are not aware of that fact, but it is a fact, nevertheless.

With few exceptions, the New Testament speaks of ministers and ministering in a broad sense, including and involving **all Christians**, not just those who minister primarily by preaching the Word. *Every Christian is to be a minister.* Each one is to serve (minister) in every way that is approved and intended by God, both males and females, young and old, greatly talented and not so talented. Most of us will never be a preacher in the usual sense of the word, and there is nothing wrong with that, but each and every Christian is to be a minister of and for Christ.

There is certainly nothing unscriptural or wrong for the preacher to be referred to as a minister, for such he is, but since all who are truly Christians are ministers as well, wouldn’t it be better, wiser, and more biblical not to restrict the term minister just to those who are public ministers of the Word?

Again, it is true that there are different Greek words that are translated “minister” in the New Testament, and there are slightly different meanings for these words at times. However, it is indeed fair and accurate to summarize the use of “minister” in the New Testament to refer to those who are **servants** in some way for someone or some cause. May every Christian be busy serving the Lord as His faithful minister. †



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We, personally, receive no payment from the proceeds of the magazine for the many hours spent on its preparation, preferring instead to reinvest available money in the printing of further editions and also other study books. If you would like a catalog of available titles, please write us in Winona.

**JCC**

## Thou Shalt Call and I Will Answer

Oh, my Father, in the morning,  
In the dawning of my days,  
Thou shalt call and I will answer  
With a song of ringing praise.

In the happy dreams of childhood,  
In the years of growing joy,  
Thou shalt call and I will answer,  
In Thy work my hands employ.

Through the burning of  
the noonday  
When I stumble in the heat,  
Thou shalt call, oh loving Father,  
And my tongue will answer Thee.

Though so weary from  
the burden  
In the sultry afternoon,  
Thou shalt call and I will answer  
For my rest comes sure and soon.

Oh, my Father, in the sunset,  
When the warmth dies with  
the light,  
Thou shalt call and I will answer,  
Unafraid to face the night.

Thou shalt call me through  
the darkness  
When my work at last is done;  
I will hear the wings of angels  
Sent from Thee to bring me  
home.

### *Chorus:*

Thou shalt call me, oh my Father,  
Endless work there is to do;  
Take my hands, my feet, and use  
them,  
Let me live and die for You!

— Betty Burton Choate  
**Still Moments**

# Worshipping Jesus

Ray Hawk

When the book of John opens, we see the preexistent nature of Jesus: *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God . . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us"* (John 1:1,14).

Because Jesus is God, He was worshipped as deity. When the wise men came from the East, they asked, *"Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him"* (Matthew 2:2). Later, when they arrived at the house where Jesus was, they *"worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh"* (Matthew 2:11).

Why should anyone worship Jesus? When He was being tempted, Jesus told Satan, *"Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve"* (Matthew 4:10). Is Jesus God? If not, we

*must* not, we *cannot* worship Him. If He *is* God, we not only *may* worship Him, we *owe* it to Him.

If Jesus is God, He would accept worship given to Him. If He is not God, it would have been blasphemous to give Him adoration reserved for Deity alone. Why did people in the first century recognize

**If it was right in the first century for people and angels to worship Jesus, it is right for us to do so today.**

Jesus as Deity and offer worship to Him while some today, who wear His

name, refuse to do so? Some have even gone through their song books and eliminated any and all selections that address worship directly to Jesus!

In the first century a leper came to Him *"and worshipped him"* (Matthew 8:2). The leper was not confused, for he was not alone in this worship. On another occasion a ruler did the same thing (Matthew 9:18). In fact, one time those who worshipped Him stated, *"Of a truth thou art the Son of God"* (Matthew 14:33). At another occurrence a

## GOD

woman worshipped Jesus and petitioned Him for help (Matthew 15:25). Notice, she petitioned Him, just as we do in prayer. Others also worshipped Him (Matthew 18:26; 20:20).

After Jesus was raised from the dead He met with some of the female disciples, and they bowed down, "*held him by the feet, and worshipped him*" (Luke 24:52).

When one opens the book of Hebrews, it boldly states, "*For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he said, And let all the angels of God worship him.*

*"And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom"* (Hebrews 1:4-8).

How many times does God have to say something for it to be so? *Once!* How many examples do we have of the brethren, after the beginning of the church, coming together and breaking bread? *One!* (Acts 20:7). How can we make that a **binding** example, but ignore so many examples of Jesus accepting worship? If it was right in the first century for people and angels to

worship Jesus, it is right for us to do so today. If not, why not?

**He is my Lord.** Thomas cried out, "*My Lord and my God*" (John 20:28). Is He yours?

**He is my King.** He is Lord of lords and King of kings (1 Timothy 5:15; Revelation 17:14; 19:16). Is He your King?

**He is my Savior** (Luke 2:11; John 4:42; Acts 5:31; Ephesians 5:23; Titus 2:13). Is He your Savior?

**He is my head** (Ephesians 1:22,23; Colossians 1:18,24). Is He your head?

**He is my God** (John 10:28; Titus 2:13). Is He your God?

**He is my High Priest** (Hebrews 3:1; 4:14; 5:5; 6:20; 9:11). Is He your High Priest?

**He is my husband**, because I am in His bride or wife, the church (Romans 7:4; Revelation 21:2,9). Are you married to Him?

**He purchased me with His blood** (Acts 20:28). Did He purchase you?

I find that it was right for the apostles to worship Jesus. That gives me an approved apostolic example as my authority to worship Him today.

**Thank you, Jesus, for loving and saving me!** †

**Ray Hawk preaches for the Campbell Street church in Jackson, Tennessee, U.S.A.**

GOD

# The Limitations of Unconditional Love

David W. Chadwell

Perhaps the most perplexing reality about God is His unconditional love for humans. When Adam and Eve failed in their relationship with God, His love lived on (Genesis 3). When the people of Noah's world were so vile that they exclusively thought and meditated on evil, God's love lived on (Genesis 6:5). It lived on through Israel's inexcusable failures in the wilderness, their incredible wickedness in the period of the judges, their idolatry in the period of the divided nation, and their wickedness which necessitated the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities.

God's unconditional love did not exist for Israel alone. Jonah painfully learned that God loved the cruel, idolatrous Assyrians. God's selection of Israel as His nation never stood as the proof that He did not love the other peoples. In fact, God chose Israel as His people **because** He loved all humanity. Israel was to be the responsive, attentive people through whom

## GOD

He would bring a Savior for the world.

When the Gospel of John explains God's incredible act of sending a part of Himself, His Son, to live on earth as a human, it states, "*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son . . .*" (John 3:16).

It is a fact that God loves people. All people. Wicked and righteous people. People of every culture. People of every background. No one is too small, too unimportant, too guilty, too sinful, too weak, too disgusting, too troubled, too disturbed, or too anything else to be excluded from God's love.

For all people after the crucifixion and resurrection, what is the message of God's unconditional love? The message: *God is never too offended by anyone's evil or wickedness to forgive the person who repents and places his faith and life in the crucified Jesus.* He is the loving, joyful Father of all prodigal sons who will come to themselves and return home. It is never too late, too bad, or too awful for God to forgive. He is the God of beginning again for any person who will accept the atonement of His crucified Son. He is the God of total forgiveness, perfect cleansing,

and complete sanctification, who loves the penitent person without reservation or qualification.

What is *not* the message of God's unconditional love? Merely by **existing**, does God's unconditional love remove the accountability and responsibility of a person? Because it exists, does His unconditional love mean a person can ignore his or her own sins and rebellions?

God's unconditional love *does not* destroy the accountability, responsibility, or sins of *an unrepentant person*. In fact, God's unconditional love does not specifically help an unrepentant person. That love stands as the unlockable door of opportunity for forgiveness, mercy, and grace to the penitent person who turns to Christ. However, in spite of the fact of that love, *the condition and accountability of the person who refuses to repent and accept God's sacrifice made in Jesus remains unchanged.*

**God's unconditional love** — the supreme gift for the penitent who enters Christ! and the gift forever out of reach of the person who refuses Christ! †

David W. Chadwell is a preacher and writer in Fort Smith, Arkansas, U.S.A.

***What must I do to be lost? Absolutely nothing!***

God

# Korah's Rebellion

Jeril (Polly) Cline



## GOD

Moses' father, Amram, and Korah's father, Izhar, were brothers (Exodus 6:18-21). That made Korah and Moses first cousins. Their grandfather, Kohath, was a son of Levi.

From the day that God struck down all the first-born in the land of Egypt, He sanctified to Himself all the first-born in Israel. But, in substitution for the actual first-born sons of Israel, God had chosen the tribe of the Levites to stand before Him. The Levites belonged to God. *"They shall be Mine; I am the Lord"* (Numbers 3:12,13).

The tribe of Levi had been brought near and set before Aaron, the priest, that they might serve him and perform the duties for him as well as for the whole congregation before the tabernacle, to do the service of the tent of meeting (Numbers 3:6,7).

The Levites were appointed over the tabernacle of the testimony. They were over all its furnishings and over all that belonged to it. They were the ones who set it up and took it down. They camped around it that there might be no wrath on the congregation of Israel, for no "layman" was to come near it (Numbers 1:50-53).

Because Moses and Korah were Kohathites, they shared the same camp ground, the south side of the tabernacle (Numbers 3:29).

Korah was responsible for some of the most holy work. The duties of the Kohathites involved the ark, the table, the lampstand, the altars, and the utensils of the sanctuary (Numbers 3:17,19,27-32).

But to Moses and Aaron and his sons was granted the responsibility to perform the duties of the sanctuary (Numbers 3:38). They, and they alone, could touch the holy things. It was only after they finished covering the holy furnishings of the sanctuary that the sons of Kohath (Korah among them) could come to carry them to their new location (Numbers 4:15).

Though God had honored the Levites, Korah included, and had given them a work to do to His glory, it was not enough (Numbers 16:9). Not for Korah and two hundred and fifty leaders of the congregation, chosen in the assembly, men of renown.

Hear his words of rebellion. Ask yourself if they sound familiar. From women who desire a different role, to men who refuse elders' authority . . . from those who want to "showcase" their talent, to those who have a more "progressive" idea:

*"You have gone far enough, for all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is in their midst; so why do you exalt*



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*yourselves above the assembly of the Lord?"* (Numbers 16:3).

The meekest man on earth fell to the ground and appealed to God.

*"The Lord will show who is His, and who is holy, and will bring him near to Himself, even the one whom He will choose, He will bring near to Himself"* (Numbers 16:5).

The only appeal we can ever make is to the Lord. He, and He alone, knows what He wants and what is pleasing to Himself. It is only those who are willing to do it *His way* that He can bring near to Himself, for it is *His will* that draws us near to Him. Without that will, we drift away — farther and farther from what is *pleasing to Him* — into the storm-tossed sea of what is *pleasing to us*.

It is ironic that chapter 15 of Numbers closes with instructions concerning the tassels on the corners of the garments of the sons of Israel. They were to be a reminder of all the commandments of the Lord, *"so as to do them and not follow after your own heart and your own eyes . . ."* (verse 39).

To ignore what God desires because we desire something else is to blaspheme (wipe our feet off on) His Most Holy Name, the very opposite of what we profess to desire.

Is it any wonder that God still

recalls Korah's rebellion in Jude 11?

Korah had great influence. Some of the finest leaders in God's camp stood with him against Moses, and they swayed the people of God to stand with them against Moses in the very doorway of the tabernacle (Numbers 16:19).

*Though it may be that only one or two stand with God, He is not swayed from His will.*

Korah and the other two leaders, Dathan and Abiram, died before the Lord. However, their sons did not die (Numbers 26:11). And fire came forth from the Lord and consumed the two hundred and fifty men of renown (Numbers 16:31-35).

Because the people wrongly blamed Moses and Aaron for the death of those "good men" (verse 41), God desired to kill the whole congregation! As it was, only 14,700 died, besides those who died on account of Korah (verse 49). (This congregation was many times larger than our largest congregations of today. Size never justifies actions.)

How is it where you are? The Lord knows those who are His. They are the ones He is able to bring near to Himself because they follow His will. †

**Jeril (Polly) Cline is a writer and preacher's wife living in Blue Ridge, Georgia, U.S.A.**

# Evolution Versus The Genesis Account

**Max Patterson**

There are those who want to hold on to the Bible and the theory of evolution. Thus, a doctrine called "Theistic Evolution" was invented. That is, they teach that God created the world, all right, but He created it by the process of evolution. However, there are many problems and contradictions between the Genesis account and this preposterous theory. Listed here are just a few:

1. The book of Genesis states that plants came into existence before the sun was made (Genesis 1:11-14). Evolution, on the other hand, suggests that the sun had been shining for millions of years before the first plant appeared.

2. The book of Genesis states that birds were created on the fifth day of creation, and that creeping things, including insects and reptiles, were created on the sixth day (Genesis 1:21-24). Evolution teaches that birds developed long after insects and reptiles appeared.

3. The book of Genesis teaches that man was created specifically by the Lord from the dust of the earth (Genesis 2:7; 3:19; 1 Corinthians 15:45). Evolution claims man descended from some ape-like creature.

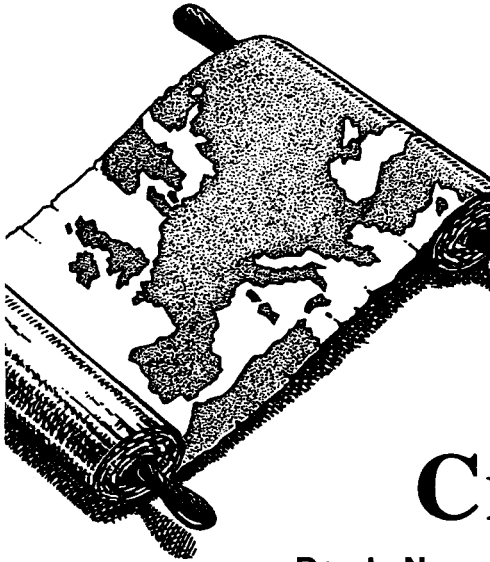
4. The book of Genesis notes that fruit-bearing trees were created before fish (Genesis 1:11). Evolution contends that fish evolved long before fruit-bearing trees.

5. The book of Genesis clearly speaks of a universal (worldwide) flood (Genesis 7:10-12, 17-20). Evolution denies there was ever any such universal flood.

When it gets right down to it, I had rather believe what God said than what some man has postulated. We can never go wrong, or be wrong, on the side of The Book. †

**Max Patterson is the preacher for the Hillcrest congregation in Neosho, Missouri, U.S.A.**

# What Does the Bible Say About the Creation?



**Don L. Norwood**

Our God who created the universe is an eternal being; He has existed always and is all-powerful. The Psalmist was inspired to write, *“Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever You had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God”* (Psalm 90:2). *“Of old You laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands”* (Psalm 102:25). Therefore, the Bible begins with these words, *“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth”*

(Genesis 1:1). God the Word actually was the agent of the creation (John 1:1-4,14; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:2; Psalm 33:6-9).

The Lord created heaven and earth (universe) in six days and rested on the seventh day (Exodus 31:17). These were ordinary days just as the days are now, as is shown clearly in a comparison of 2 Peter 3:3,4 with Genesis 8:22. Consider also the fact that the Hebrew word “yom” (translated “day” in the English language) is a regular daylight day as we know it. Then study

## EVIDENCES

Genesis 1:5 very carefully. The lighted portion of morning and evening was called day. The darkened hours were called night (see Psalm 74:16).

On day one of the creation, light was brought into being. The Lord separated the light from darkness.

On day two He created the firmament (open expanse of sky) and divided the waters above from those below the firmament. God then called the firmament heaven.

On day three He collected the waters under the firmament and separated them so that dry land could appear. He called the land earth and the waters seas.

On the fourth day the Lord placed the sun and moon in the firmament to light the earth and to regulate signs, seasons, days, and years (Genesis 1:14).

Then on the fifth day the Lord created the sea creatures and the fowls to fly above earth in the firmament of heaven.

On the sixth day God created the living creatures who would inhabit the earth. The greatest of this creation was mankind, made in the image of God and given rulership over all living creatures on the earth (Genesis 1:27,28).

On the seventh day, He rested from His labors (Genesis 2:1-4).

If we can believe that God had the power to create all things from the substance of nothing, we should have no problem believing that He could also create them instantaneously, day by actual day, as He described in His revealed word. †

**Don L. Norwood has been doing mission work in India for 22 years, and he serves as the preacher for the church of Christ in Mason, Texas, U.S.A.**



*We cannot be purer than our thoughts, higher than our ideals, nor greater than our dreams. Therefore we must think correctly, foster noble ideals, and rise on wings of imagination to the highest things of truth and experience.*



*Our faith deals with what God says – not with what learned men say.*



*Life is God's gift to us. What we do with it is our gift to God.*

# The Origin of the Universe



**Betty Burton Choate**

The Bible says simply, "*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth*" (Genesis 1:1) God created everything by verbal command, from nothing. Christians believe this, because we believe that He is all-knowing and all-powerful. Admittedly, we have not seen God, but the existence of the Universe itself demands a cause and an origin. Since the only alternate explanation that has ever been conceived is the Theory of Evolution, Christians choose to place their faith in God and His power, rather than in blind chance and mutations.

Of course, many in the world today scoff at the idea of God and religion. They insinuate, or openly declare, that humanity has evolved past the lowly state of needing "a god" and the crutch of "religion". All answers to all questions concerning all things that exist can be supplied by science — they say. But, invariably, the answers they give only create more questions, bringing the sincere searcher to an insurmountable wall each time, with "probables" and "perhaps" and "think-so's" as the solutions that are offered.

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Most people espousing the Theory of Evolution go back to “the big bang” or even to “cosmic dust” to explain how the process began. The only problem with these answers is that they begin with something. Which raises other questions: Where did the *something* come from? *Who* or *what* created it?

A theory to answer these questions is now being offered. Serious, learned scientists are now suggesting that *the Universe sprang into existence spontaneously in a perfect vacuum!*

At least they are getting closer to the truth! Now they think that, out of nothing, everything came into being. All they have omitted is **GOD!** Three simple little letters would put their studies on track!

Many life-like looking dolls are manufactured today. Common sense tells us that we could watch such a fabrication for a million years or a billion years, and it would never progress one iota closer to life and humanity than it was on the day it came from the assembly line. In fact, very shortly the second law of thermodynamics — deterioration — would transform it into a bundle of rotted rags.

Or take a bolt — just a simple steel bolt. Place it gently on a table and then sit down to watch it for a billion years or so. Would it eventually s-l-o-w-l-y and gradually

change? Would it maybe become longer? or thicker? or more complicated? Would it someday evolve into a wonderful working machine that actually does something? No. The second law of thermodynamics would take over and turn it into a rusted and useless semblance of itself — nothing but a ruined bolt.

Now the *real* test: Create a perfect vacuum, sealed away from the outside world, with not a germ or a bacterium or an atom of any kind inside. The important thing is to watch to see how long it takes for the perfect vacuum to explode into a full-blown living Universe, perfectly balanced and intricately interwoven so that each dependent part develops at just the right time to sustain all the other billions of interdependent parts! Is it possible to really believe that an unknowing, non-existent nothing directed its own creation from non-existent matter, to become the gigantic, orderly, intricately designed Universe at which we marvel today? Could *nothing* ever sit there and become *something*, unless there was a *Primal Cause*?

**Consider this:** They would ridicule our faith in God. But what kind of faith does it require to believe the proposals of Evolutionists? †

**Betty Burton Choate is the wife of J.C. Choate, Editor-in-Chief of *The Voice of Truth International*.**

# Christianity Is Based Upon Valid Public Miracles

Roger E. Dickson

Man-made religions are often based upon the claim of a few spurious or non-public happenings which are claimed to be miracles. On this point, Luke presents in the book of Acts an overwhelming defense that gives an adequate answer for the origin and growth of Christianity. It is not a religion based upon the "claimed" miracles of a few believers. It is not a religion based upon the secret occurring of supposed miraculous works of a few early fanatics. The nature and demonstration of the Supernatural which permeates the beginning of the church is overwhelming. The miracles surrounding Jesus and the early work of the disciples were not done in secret. Paul affirmed before King Agrippa, "*For the king, before whom I also speak freely, knows these things; for I am convinced that none of these things escapes his attention, since this thing was not done in a corner*" (Acts 26:26).

Paul rests his case on this fact: Neither the miracles of Jesus nor those of the early evangelists were done in secret. Therefore, these miracles prove the authenticity of the messengers as spokesmen from God. Such miraculous works were beyond denial. Thus, we must make a decision concerning this Jesus and the response He stimulated among so many people. If we accept Him for who and what He said He was, He will generate the same response in our lives.

**The Miracles of Jesus Were Witnessed By All Men.** The disciples affirmed that the foundation of Christianity was Jesus. This Jesus was proved to be of God by the miraculous works which came from God. Peter proclaimed, "*Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know*" (Acts 2:22). Those to whom Peter was speaking in Jerusalem could not deny that Jesus had worked wonderful deeds among them. God had "*anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good*

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*and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him"* (Acts 10:38).

**The Miracle of Pentecost Was Manifested to the City of Jerusalem.** On the Day of Pentecost "*suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they (the apostles) were sitting*" (Acts 2:1-4). "*And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them (the apostles) speak in his own language*" (2:6). The great sound was heard by many in Jerusalem. The multitudes heard the apostles speaking in languages which they had never before studied (2:7,8). This miraculous beginning, therefore, was not something that was secret. It was known to all.

**The Miracle of the Crippled Man in Jerusalem Was Known By All.** Miracles were manifested for a purpose. We do not know the reason the crippled man at the gate Beautiful was left unhealed by Jesus until Acts 3, when Peter and John went up to the temple for the "*hour of prayer.*" It was on this occasion that Peter said to the cripple, "*In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk*" (3:6). The man arose, walked, and leaped, while praising God. "*And all the people saw him walking and praising God*" (3:9). They all ran together in order to find some explanation for what had happened. From this miracle, therefore, Peter had an audience for preaching that Jesus was the Christ and the Son of God. Peter and John are thus confirmed to be valid speakers for Jesus.

**Miracles Publicly Proved the Witness of the Apostles to all Men.** The apostles had been promised the authority to command the supernatural power of God. Jesus had promised, "*But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you*" (Acts 1:8). As Luke's defense of Christianity unfolds, the working of this power in the lives of the apostles is most evident. From the very beginning of Christianity, the apostles were proved to be God's messengers. From the day of Pentecost "*fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles*" (2:43). "*And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people*" (5:12). "*Yet none of the rest (of the disciples) dared join them, but the people esteemed them highly*" (5:13). As a result of this great miraculous testimony of God, "*believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women*" (5:14). The people "*brought the sick out into the streets and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them*" (5:15). Many from the surrounding cities brought their sick, "*and*



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*they were all healed” (5:16).*

Though we do not have the personal experience of miracles today, our faith is based upon the testimony of those who personally saw and heard. For this reason, Luke is writing the defense of the book of Acts to Theophilus on behalf of all Christians (see 1:1-3; Luke 1:1-4). †

**Roger E. Dickson is the director of International School of Biblical Studies in Cape Town, South Africa.**



# What Is That in Thy Hand?

What are you holding, Moses?

Only a shepherd's rod,  
A simple staff for humble toil,  
But wondrously used by God.

And you, O psalmist David,  
What are you holding now?

A sling and stones from a babbling brook  
To make a giant bow.

A widow at the offering box,  
By poverty distressed,  
Her sacrifice, just two small coins,  
Seen of God and blessed.

What's that in your hand, Christian?

What do you possess?  
Tho' great or small may be its worth  
The Lord its use can bless.

—Carol Richardson

# The Book of 1 Thessalonians for adults

Use the Morse Code to decipher the following Bible Verse.

--- -- .- .-.-      -      . . . .      .      . . . . --- -- .- .- .-  
 --- -- .- .-.-      .      . . . . --- --      --- --  
 . .      - .      . . . .      .- .      .      .-      . . .      .  
 .-      - .      . . .      .-      . . . .      --- --      . . .      - .      . . .  
 . .      - .      . . . .      --- --      . . . .      .      -      --- --  
 --- --      - .      .      .-      - .      --- --      -      . . . .      .      .- .

-1 Thessalonians 3:12a

## MORSE CODE

A • —	H • • • •	O — — —	V • • • —
B — • • •	I • •	P • — — •	W • — —
C — • — •	J • — — —	Q — — • —	X — • • —
D — • •	K — • —	R • — •	Y — • — —
E •	L • — • •	S • • •	Z — — • •
F • • — •	M — —	T —	
G — — •	N — •	U • • —	



“I can’t believe that we are having problems in our marriage. For so long things went so smoothly . . . but not now. It started a while back over something about which we disagreed. We had a fuss and went to bed mad. The next day wasn’t much better. Now time has passed and a wall has developed between us that we can’t knock down. We’ve apologized about it, (several times), and tried to ignore it, but it still comes up all too often. Maybe we could talk to someone about it . . .”

Have you ever expressed these or similar feelings? Many have. However, most marriage problems, fortunately, do not fester to the point of needing a divorce court to settle them.

If you realize one day that your marriage needs some help, to whom, or where will you turn? Are you reluctant to open your problems to an outside party? Here is good news: The greatest and best marriage counselor that can be found anywhere is freely available to all. This is a sample of the priceless advice you will receive:

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“It is not good that the man should be alone. Therefore shall a man **leave** his father and his mother, and shall **cleave** unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh.”

“The husband is the head of the wife. Husbands love your wives . . . as your own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. Let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.”

“Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives. Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning . . . but let it be the hidden man of the heart . . . even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.”

“Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heir together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.”

“Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one to another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous; Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but contrariwise blessing.”

In case you are wondering, these are various passages from Genesis 2, Ephesians 5, and 1 Peter 3. The point is this: There is no question in the problems of life for which the Bible has no answer.

Study it. God's Word will carry you through.



**Glenn Colley is the editor of *The Words of Truth* and is the preacher for the church in Jasper, Alabama, U.S.A.**

## THE WORD OF GOD



# DEVELOP AN INQUIRING MIND

T. Pierce Brown

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Those of us who preach and write need to make sure of **what** we preach and teach: *only those things authorized by our Lord*. Those who hear and read must take heed in two areas: **what** they hear, and **how** they hear (Mark 4:24; Luke 8:18).

Perhaps the most fundamental principle of learning is to develop an inquiring mind. I am persuaded that most normal little children have an inquiring mind. They want to know everything from "Why do rats have four legs?" to "What makes

water wet?" I also think it probable that our social system, family style, teaching techniques, and other things may tend to stifle or pervert this inquiring mind. Therefore, we need to deliberately stimulate it, not only in our Bible classes, but at home, school, and anywhere else.

In every class or situation where it can be done appropriately, the teacher should teach the students to ask the following kinds of questions about any situation in or out of the Bible: **who, when, what,**

## THE WORD OF GOD

### **where, why, how, and so what?**

Not every one of these questions is pertinent in every kind of situation, of course, but if teachers will ask, then let the students know why they are asking, and encourage the students to ask these kinds of questions in their own study and in all other situations, they will find that their teaching has automatically become more productive because they will have stimulated individual private learning, and it will multiply the class efforts many-fold.

A word or two of caution needs to be given. First, never discourage the asking of any kind of serious question. If the student wonders, "Where did God come from?" do not ever reply something like this, "That's silly! Of course God did not come from anywhere. He always was!" If a person asks, "How do you know there is a God?" do not ever reply, "Any fool can tell by the evidence there is a God," or "A person with faith does not raise that kind of question! You must just take it by faith!"

Preachers can preach a whole series of sermons on almost any subject using these questions. They make excellent development of such subjects as baptism, the Lord's Supper, church music, giving, the items of worship, and our service to God. What simpler, more powerful and easy-to-be-remembered lessons

can be found on baptism than a series including "What is Bible baptism, and how do you know?" "Who is to be baptized?" "When?" "How is a person to be baptized, and why in that way?" "Why is one to be baptized?" "Does every 'why' question have an 'in order to' as well as a 'because of'?" "Do you need both? Why?" One can do the same kind of thing with any of the above subjects and any number of others and have simply powerful, and powerfully simple lessons.

But the main point I am trying to emphasize now is that preachers and teachers need to teach their students and audiences to raise these questions themselves about any subject they study. Whenever you preach a sermon or teach a lesson with this format, tell them what you are doing, and encourage them to do likewise in all cases.

If we can help all others develop an inquiring mind, not only about what God has said, but about persons, jobs, and our relationships, thousands of problems could be solved more readily.

Preachers, teachers, readers: In every class or situation where you can, encourage an inquiring mind and help others to develop it. †

**T. Pierce Brown works with the Lord's church in Cookeville, Tennessee, U.S.A.**

# The Bible Invites Your Investigation

Charles Pugh III

The following noteworthy commendation was given the people of Berea by the historian, Luke: *"These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so"* (Acts 17:11). The religion of Jesus Christ has always invited honest examination and commended such when it occurs. And, when the fair-minded investigate thoroughly the claims of Christianity, the truth of the Christian faith becomes evident to them.

History records many examples of those who were either skeptical or indifferent to the claims of Jesus Christ, but who, upon honest investigation of the New Testament, became believers. In an old work entitled, **The Young Man's Guide Against Infidelity**, and dated 1848, the author tells about one, Count Struensee, prime minister of Denmark in the latter eighteenth century, who endeavored to spread

his philosophy of atheism and infidelity.

However, he studied Burnet's examination of the arguments for Christianity, and ultimately the doubts were removed which had formerly occupied his mind. He stated, "I never imagined that Christianity was founded upon such strong evidences . . . After a calm examination, I have found them to be unexceptionable, and none, if they only take proper time . . . can ever examine them without being convinced of the truth . . . The more I read, the more I grow convinced how unjust those objections are with which Christianity is charged."

The invitation to investigate is still open. "Present your case," says the Lord. *"Bring forth your strong reasons . . ."* (Isaiah 41:21). *"'Come now and let us reason together,' says the Lord"* (Isaiah 1:18). †

**Charles Pugh III preaches for the church of Christ in New Martinsville, West Virginia, U.S.A.**

# You and the Bible



**Bobby Key**

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Many people claim to believe at least a part of the Bible. However, the majority of even religious people do not believe that God's Word alone is sufficient to guide us religiously. Some say the Bible is not true, while others say that it does not contain *all the truth* we need to serve God. As the result of these attitudes, men have written creeds to supply that which they believe to be deficient in God's Word.

Of course, the Bible will not help us unless we believe it. The Hebrews writer said, "*For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it*" (Hebrews 4:2). "*For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God . . . It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe*" (1 Corinthians 1:18,21).

The Bible itself claims to be the truth. It contains all that we need to know, all that we need to believe, and all that we need to do to make us complete in Christ (2 Timothy 3:15-17). The Bible, unread, will not profit anyone. To hear the Word and not do it will not save your soul. Study carefully the following:

The Word of God is *pure*; however, it will purify only those who *obey it* (1 Peter 1:22). The Word of God is *perfect*; however, it perfects only those who *do it* (James 1:22-25). The Word of God is *powerful to save*; however, it saves only those who *believe and obey it* (Romans 1:16). The Word of God *endures forever*; however, it will cause only those who do God's will to *abide forever* (1 John 2:17; Matthew 7:21). The Word of God is *life-giving*; however, it gives life only to those who *live it* (John 3:3-8; Luke 8). The Word of God is *complete*; but our beliefs and practices must conform to its teaching in order for us to be *complete* (2 Timothy 3:16,17).

Dear reader, you have an obligation to the Bible. Follow Paul's exhortation and "*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom*" (Colossians 3:16). Remember, the Word of God treated so lightly now will judge us in the great day of all days (John 12:48). †

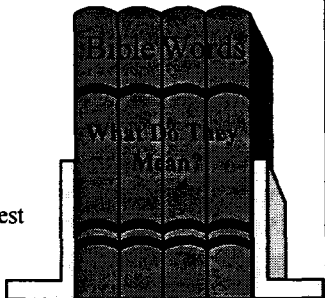
**Bobby Key is the editor of *Four State Gospel News* and lives in Miami, Oklahoma, U.S.A.**



It Helps to Enrich Your  
**Bible Word Power**

BY FENTER NORTHERN

**A**re you sure you are understanding the richest meaning of the Bible? Test your comprehension of the following words used in the context found in Hebrews, Chapter 1. (KJV). After making your choices, turn the page for the correct answers.



1. **sundry** *adj.*— A: every Sunday B: occasionally  
C: many portions D: variety
2. **divers** *adj.*— A: variety of ways B: underwater C: different  
D: swimming
3. **appointed** *v.*— A: honor. B: laid down, i.e. designated C: appraise D: dignify
4. **heir** *n.*— A: a wealthy person B: a poor person C: one who is to  
receive an allotted possession D: a relative
5. **made** *v.*— A: brought forth B: carved out C: invented D: fashioned
6. **worlds** *n.*— A: universe B: heavens C: planets D: the ages.
7. **brightness** *n.*— A: vivid B: intelligence C: the ray from a  
luminous body of light D: facial expression
8. **express image** *adj./n.*— A: rapid delivery B: engraved likeness C: to  
speak one's mind D: send by mail
9. **upholding** *v.*— A: bear up B: support a viewpoint C: to  
be responsible for another D: to remain constant
10. **power** *n.*— A: dynamite B: explosive  
C: authority D: mighty strength or ability
11. **Purged** *v.*— A. removed from office B: deliverance from in purgatory  
C: to make clean by having removed all impurities D. to empty
12. **excellent** *adj.*—A: surpassing B: attractive C: above average  
D: finished a project well.
13. **sceptre** *n.*— A: regal power B: throne C: a king's rod emblematic  
of his rule D: a king's army
14. **anointed** *v.*— A: consecrated into divine office B. gave oath of office  
C: designated D: elevated
15. **oil** *n.*—(Gk. elaion) A: fuel for a fire B: to lubricate C: cooking grease D: olive  
oil used for medicinal and ritual purposes
16. **perish** *v.*—(Gk. apollumi) A: to be destroyed B: to shrivel C: to faint D: to decay

*Answers to*  
***"It helps to Enrich Your Bible Word Power"***

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1. **sundry**—(Gk. polumeros) C: many portions. God had spoken in past ages in parts. God revealed to each prophet or inspired writer a portion of his will. Paul about inspired men: "We know in part." See I Cor. 13:9ff)
2. **divers**—(Gk. polutropos) A: variety of ways. God spoke to Moses from a burning bush (Ex. 3:2); to Job from a whirlwind (Job 38:1); to Balaam from the mouth of a donkey (Nu. 22:28).
3. **appointed**—(Gk. tithemi) B: lay down or designate. In this context to divinely will all things to Jesus by virtue of birthright as his Son.
4. **heir**—(Gk. kleronomos) C: one who is to receive an allotted possession. Jesus is heir of all and therefore include all believers in the blessing. (See Gal. 3:26-29)
5. **made**—(Gk. poieo) A: brought forth. Jesus was the existing Word that spoke the worlds into existence at the creation of all things. (Heb. 1:3; Col. 1:16)
6. **worlds**—(Gk. aion) D: the ages.
7. **brightness**—(Gk. apaugasma) C: the ray from a luminous body of light. God is the source, Jesus is the ray shining forth from God.
8. **express image**—(Gk. karakter) B: engraved likeness. Jesus is the exact copy of the father; like a stamp that leaves its exact image when applied to paper.
9. **upholding**—(Gk. phero) A: bear up. Jesus' word, not only created all things, but supports them.
10. **power** *n.*—(Gk. dunamis) D: mighty strength or ability. The word of God is stronger than death. Its power created life long before death ever came into the world. It will remain after death. Jesus resurrection is proof.
11. **purged**—(Gk. katharismos) C: to make clean by having removed all impurities. The sacrificial blood of Jesus was received in heaven as a perfect atonement for man's sins.
12. **excellent**—(Gk. diaphoros) A: surpassing all. (See Phil. 2:9-11)
13. **sceptre**—(Gk. rhabdos) C: a king's rod emblematic of his rule. This rod of rule has been given to Jesus until he returns all things to the Father. (See Gen. 49:10; I Cor. 15:25-28)
14. **anointed** *v.*—(Gk. chrio) A: consecrated into divine office. (See Da. 7:13-14)
15. **oil** *n.*—(Gk. elaion) D: olive oil used for medicinal and ritual purposes (Ex. 30:30-32; Jms. 5:14-15)
16. **perish** *v.*—(Gk. apollumi) A: to be destroyed. Although the heavens and earth will be removed (Jerusalem, the temple, the priesthood, the sacrifices, all of old Judaism as they knew it would be destroyed, yet they should trust in that which lasts—Jesus' word..

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**Vocabulary Scale**

- 7-10 correct.....Good  
11-13 correct.....Bible Student  
14-15 correct.....Bible Scholar

**Ron Bryant**

The Cross of Christ is central in the Gospel. The whole scheme of redemption hangs on the fact of the death of Christ for the sins of man. Yet, the preaching of the cross was offensive to the hearers of the first century. A crucified Messiah was a contradiction to the mind-set of both Jew and Gentile in that period of time.

To preach a crucified Messiah was to stir the prejudice of the Jews and to move into an arena of argument (see Acts 26:23). The

Jews demanded a victorious Messiah, heralded by signs, who would restore the glories of the kingdom of David and Solomon. To the Jew the cross was the sufficient and decisive refutation of the claim that Jesus was the Messiah. On this point a Jew had to unlearn before he could learn. The Jews wanted signs but they needed to get their eyes opened to "the sign" (Romans 1:3,4).

The Gentiles also had to unlearn in order to learn, but in a different way. They were ready to weigh the "pros" and "cons" of almost any new system, but lacked the presuppositions that would have led them to simple



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faith in Christ. Both Jews and Gentiles had presuppositions that served as barriers to their receiving a "crucified Savior."

But the preaching of Christ was not accommodative; Jesus was not preached as a conqueror to please the Jews, nor as a philosopher to please the Gentiles. He was preached as the crucified Nazarene.

To preach "Christ crucified" is not of man! It is of God! It is in the Cross that God's greater vision comes into operation in the salvation of mankind. God's power and wisdom (1 Corinthians 1:18-31; Romans 1:16,17) show themselves in a way which is not in keeping with the preconceived standards of men, and in every point God's way transcends such standards. To those who are being saved, the preaching of the Cross is both the wisdom and the power of God (1 Corinthians 1:18-31). †

**Ron Bryant preaches for the Camelback Church of Christ in Phoenix, Arizona, U.S.A.**

**...looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 12:2)**

## Christ in the New Testament

In *Matthew* He is the **king of the Jews**. In *Mark* He is the **servant of God**. In *Luke* He is the **perfect son of man**. In *John* He is the **Son of God**.

In *Acts* he is the **ascended Lord**.

In *Romans* He is our **righteousness**. In *1 Corinthians* He is the **firstfruits from the dead**. In *2 Corinthians* He is **made sin for us**. In *Galatians* He is the **end of the Law**. In *Ephesians* He is our **armor**. In *Philippians* He is the **supplier of every need**. In *Colossians* He is the **pre-eminent one**. In *1 Thessalonians* He is the **returning Lord**. In *2 Thessalonians* He is the **world's merciful judge**. In *1 Timothy* He is our **mediator**. In *2 Timothy* He is the **bestower of crowns**. In *Titus* He is our **great God and Savior**. In *Philemon* He is the **Father's partner**.

In *Hebrews* He is the **rest of faith and fulfiller of types**. In *James* He is the **giver of wisdom**. In *1 Peter* He is the **theme of the Old Testament prophecy**. In *2 Peter* He is the **long-suffering Savior**. In *1 John* He is the **word of Life**. In *2 John* He is the **target of the anti-Christ**. In *3 John* He is the **personification of truth**. In *Jude* He is the **believer's hope**.

In *Revelation* he is the **victorious Lamb**. †

— from *The Words of Truth*

## DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

### **Who is Jesus?**

Before Jesus began His public ministry, God sent John the Baptist to prepare the way for Him. John preached, *"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"* and he baptized many people (Matthew 3:1-6). *"Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also was baptized; and while He prayed, the heaven was opened. And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, 'You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased'"* (Luke 3:21,22).

Before Jesus was baptized, John knew Him as a righteous man, but he did not know Him as the Christ or Messiah. *"And John bore witness, saying 'I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'Upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.'" And I have seen and*

*testified that this is the Son of God'"* (John 1:32-34).

### **Peter Meets The Savior**

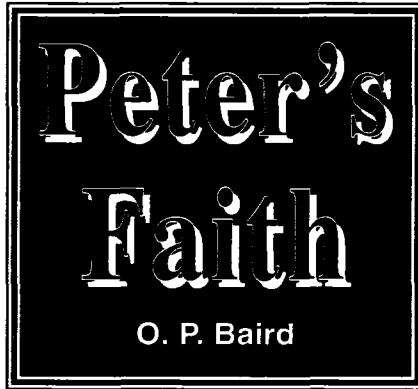
*"Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples. And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, 'Behold the Lamb of God!'"*

*The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus . . . . One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his own brother Simon,*

*and said to him, 'We have found the Messiah' (which is translated, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus. Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, 'You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas' (which is translated, a Stone)"* (John 1:35-37,40-42). The names "Peter" and "Cephas" both mean "rock", as a stone or detached boulder, not a ledge of rock.

### **Peter's Confession of Faith**

The teaching of Jesus and His miraculous signs convinced His dis-



## DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

ciples that He was the Christ, but it did not convince all who heard Him.

*“When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, ‘Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?’ So they said, ‘Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.’ He said to them, ‘But who do you say that I am?’ And Simon Peter answered and said, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’ Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven’”* (Matthew 16:13-17). That same faith brings the blessing of God today, but, just as in Peter’s time, people of the world have different opinions about who Jesus was.

Later Jesus was teaching in Capernaum to a large gathering of people. The multitude of people turned and went away because they did not understand His teaching. His disciples didn’t understand either but, when Jesus asked them, *“Do you also want to go away?”* Peter answered, *“Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Also we have come to believe and know that you are the Christ, the Son of the living God”* (John 6:67-69). The disciples were limited in understanding, but their

faith in Christ caused them to trust Him and accept as truth all that He taught. Faith in Christ has the same effect now.

We have the words of eternal life today. When Jesus left His disciples He sent the Holy Spirit to give His Word to them. They have given His Word to us in the New Testament Scriptures. Our faith comes through that Word (Romans 10:17). On the night before His crucifixion, Jesus said to His disciples, *“I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you”* (John 16:12-15).

Do we have the faith expressed by Peter at Caesarea Philippi and Capernaum? If we do, we will believe in Christ and trust Him completely, and keep our hearts open to all that He teaches, because He is the Christ, the Son of the living God. †

**O. P. Baird is a former missionary to Korea and now lives in Searcy, Arkansas, U.S.A.**

# Is It Too Far To Jerusalem?

W. Douglas Harris

*“Is it too much for you to go up to Jerusalem”* (1 Kings 12:28; read the entire chapter for the background).

This chapter records the division of the kingdom of Israel after Rehoboam’s accession to the throne. Rehoboam had followed the advice of the younger men in his realm rather than that of the older men in redressing the grievances of the people. As a result, ten tribes revolted and summoned Jereboam from exile in Egypt to be their king. Jereboam established his government based on idolatry. Fearing that the people might desert him if they returned to Jerusalem (the place authorized by God) to worship, he set up golden calves at Dan and Bethel. Then he soothed their consciences by proclaiming that it was too inconvenient for them to go back to Jerusalem to worship at the temple. This appeal to the flesh and the love of ease was deadening and dangerous, both then and now.

## **Ancient Appeal of Jerusalem**

Jerusalem was always important to the Jews — it held a special charm and appeal to them. It was

their capital city, seat of government, place of worship, and was called *“the city of the great king”* (Matthew 5:35). In captivity Daniel prayed toward Jerusalem, and when Nehemiah in captivity heard of the city’s state of disrepair, he wept (Daniel 6:10; Nehemiah 2:3). The Jews’ general love and attitude toward Jerusalem is expressed poignantly in Psalm 137:5,6.

In a figurative sense, Jerusalem is just as important today to the restorers of the New Testament church as it was to the ancient Israelites. Peter referred to Jerusalem by inspiration as *“the beginning”* (Acts 11:15). The events of Acts 2 mark the beginning of many things: the preaching of the Gospel as established facts as well as commands to be obeyed, the new covenant ratified by the blood of Christ, the Gospel plan of salvation, baptism in the name of Christ for the remission of sins, obedience to Christ’s commands concerning the Great Commission, the birth of the church of Christ, worship as authorized by Christ, the binding and

## DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

loosing authority of the apostles of Christ, and the reign of Christ on David's throne.

The word "Jerusalem" is used in a metaphorical sense to picture the true will of God today. Since the Gospel was first preached in Jerusalem, when the same Gospel is preached today unchanged, it is described as "the-old-Jerusalem" Gospel.

### Too Far For Many Today

Many in Christendom today find it too far to Jerusalem — they are not willing to go back before Catholicism and Protestantism, abandoning all human creeds and catechisms, to make the New Testament their exclusive guide and thus to restore the church that had its beginning in Jerusalem. Many are not willing to turn their backs religiously on relatives, forsake practices held dear for generations, and go all the way back to Jerusalem and follow the inspired pattern for the church.

Many find it too far to Jerusalem to attain religious unity on the seven-step plan of Ephesians 4:4-6 — **one** Lord, **one** faith, **one** Spirit, **one** body, **one** hope, **one** baptism, **one** God. This is the Jerusalem Gospel. There is no other basis or plan that will work. It will never be attained in sectarian division. Some find it too far to Jerusalem to restore the scriptural action in baptism. Effusion — sprinkling or pouring

— for baptism is the easy, convenient, and unauthorized action. The Jerusalem Gospel teaches that baptism is a burial in water (Colossians 2:12; Romans 6:3,4).

Many find it too far to Jerusalem to practice the kind of music authorized by Christ and His apostles — vocal music (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16).

The majority of the religious world find it too far to Jerusalem for the scriptural design of baptism, scriptural designations for the church, the scriptural creed of the church, and scriptural worship, including the weekly observance of the Lord's Supper.

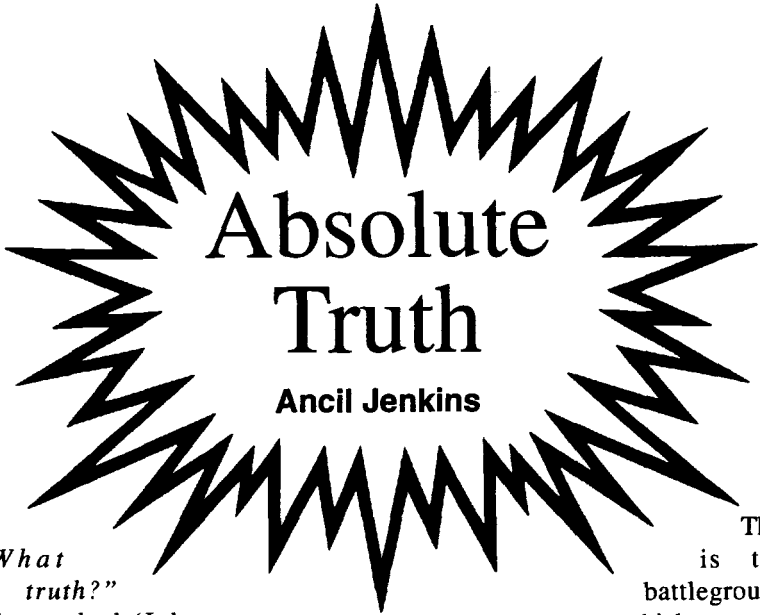
### Conclusion

Have you obeyed the Jerusalem Gospel? From Acts 2:22-47 we learn what was required in Jerusalem by the inspired apostles of Christ. Their audience heard the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ proclaimed. They were indicted for slaying Christ. Cut to the heart, they cried out, asking what they needed to do to be saved; and as believers in Christ, they were told to repent and be baptized for the remission of their sins. This was "the beginning."

**Is it too far for you to go to Jerusalem?** †

**W. Douglass Harris is the editor of the *Caribbean Messenger* and lives in Decatur, Alabama, U.S.A.**





# Absolute Truth

Ancil Jenkins

*“What  
is truth?”*

Pilate asked (John 18:38). Pontius Pilate repeated a question people have asked for centuries. One aspect of the study of philosophy is to understand what is true and how man comprehends it. To the Christian this question should not be a great problem. The Bible says, *“As it is, you are determined to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God”* (John 8:40). Jesus answered, *“I am the way and the truth and the life”* (John 14:6). *“Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth* (John 17:17).

How basic to Christianity is the acceptance of absolute truth residing in God, His Son, and His Word!

This is the battleground upon which we confront His enemies—relativism, liberalism, and humanism. These concepts do not and cannot allow the thought that truth is knowable and unchangeable.

I was not much surprised to see a recent survey of how few people accept the possibility of absolute truth. Only about 19% of the general population strongly believe this. Of those who claim to be “born again,” the numbers increase only to 25%. (**The Barna Report: What Americans Believe**, p.85.)

These figures show why reaching the secular world with the Gospel is difficult. Since eight out of ten do not strongly believe it is

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possible to know truth absolutely, they will probably reject the Bible since it claims to be truth. If the Bible is not accepted as truth, one cuts himself off from the only viable source of knowledge of God, Jesus Christ, or His Gospel. This should put our personal teaching into a new perspective. Preliminary to our teaching, we must establish a common acceptance of truth.

Yet, we must also earn the right to teach absolute truth. It is inconsistent to preach absolute truth if we do not believe it. How many more professing Christians believe in absolute truth than the average person? According to the survey, only 6%! If these figures are correct, it means that *three out of four who claim to be Christians do not believe strongly in absolute truth.* Thus, many religious people will affirm that it really doesn't matter

what one believes. Serving God becomes simply a matter of individual choice and interpretation. Such individual faith does not foster any church loyalty.

Most tragic is the resulting lack of assurance. If nothing is absolutely true, **is forgiveness real? Does prayer have any effect? Is there a heaven?** Unless one is able to believe and commit to these absolute truths, life has little comfort and meaning.

We need to believe in the absolutes: God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the Bible. On the basis of this faith, we must commit our lives to them. Such a commitment will lead us to live and act in life-changing ways. †

**Ancil Jenkins is the preacher for the Sunset congregation in Miami, Florida, U.S.A.**

### The Bible

- ✓ is God's own letter to man.
- ✓ is the source of our information concerning eternal life.
- ✓ is our guide for daily living.
- ✓ is the final word in matters of religion.
- ✓ tells of the Truth which will set us free from sin.
- ✓ gives me strength and comfort.
- ✓ tells me how to live happily.
- ✓ is the center of our education.

**With such a book as this available to us, we certainly should be diligent to know its contents. Are we studying the Bible?**



## What Can We Learn From The Pharisees?

Cecil May, Jr.

The Pharisees were the conservatives of their day. They believed the Bible. Their very name implied separation from sin and uncleanness. They were scrupulous in keeping the law and conscientious about honoring their religious traditions.

Nevertheless, Jesus rebuked them for several things. Many talked a better religion than they practiced (Matthew 23:2,3), judged others harshly and excused themselves (Matthew 23:4), and were too

wedded to their traditions, binding them on others as though they were God's laws and honoring them even when they contradicted God's law (Matthew 15:1-9).

Jesus also indicted some of them because:

**They trusted their own obedience instead of the One they were obeying.** Jesus addressed a parable to some who "*trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others*" (Luke 18:9). The Pharisee "*prayed with himself*"

## DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

(Luke 18:11). He bragged to God about what he had done: "I fasted, prayed, gave alms." He received nothing from his prayer, because he asked for nothing. He felt he needed nothing.

**They pared down the law to what they could keep.** Fasting, praying, and giving were specific and measurable. Things that could be quantified they handled well. In tithing they included every tenth mint leaf and every tenth dill seed. They were not wrong to do those things. Jesus told them, "*These you ought to have done*" (Matthew 23:23).

**They left out the tough parts.** They omitted justice and mercy and faith (Matthew 23:23). They were absorbed with formalities and forgot people.

We need to be careful about that ourselves. We could do the same. Baptism is an essential part of our response to God's offer of grace. The Lord's supper every Sunday, singing without an instrument, and congregational church

government are important if we are to be obedient to God. Jesus would still say, "*These you ought to have done.*"

However, if we do these things and think we do not need grace, if we are confident these things alone set us apart from sinners, we need to remember "*the weightier matters.*" Do we faithfully show mercy? Do we visit the fatherless and widows, feed the hungry, and clothe the poor? Do we do all the good we know to do? Do we treat every brother as a brother, regardless of the color of his skin? Do we love the unlovely? Do we readily forgive those who offend or mistreat us? Would we act as a loving neighbor even to those of a different race or religion?

If we consider those things too, perhaps we will be more merciful and faithful. At least we should be motivated to pray, "*Lord be merciful to me, a sinner.*" †

**Cecil May, Jr. is president of Magnolia Bible College in Kosciusko, Mississippi, U.S.A.**

The true saint delights to spend himself for God's interests in other people, and does not care what it costs.

The nearer the time comes for departure from this life, the greater our regret for wasting so much of it.

— Selected

# Reproving

Tom Kelton

The Scriptures are profitable for reproof (2 Timothy 3:16). They confront and rebuke misconduct and false teaching. According to French, to reprove is “so to rebuke another, with such effectual wielding of the victorious arm of the truth, as to bring him if not always to a confession, yet at least to a conviction, of his sin.”

Two aspects of reproof are evident in the Scriptures: reproof of sinful conduct and reproof of erroneous teaching. Paul instructed Timothy, who was trying to clean up the church at Ephesus, “*Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort*” (2 Timothy 4:2). Timothy was to preach and apply the Scriptures so that people would turn from sin — even though the time would come when most people would not tolerate such preaching (verse 3).

Hebrews 4:12,13 also speaks of reproofing sin. Verse 12 pictures God’s Word as a two-edged sword that cuts deep into a person’s being to expose and judge his innermost thoughts and motives. Verse 13 says, “*There is no creature hidden*

*from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.*” God penetrates our hearts with His Word and lays us open before His eyes.

When the Word is faithfully and accurately preached, Christians will be convicted of their sins and either repent or leave. Few people will allow themselves to be exposed to the reproof of God’s Word if they have no desire to obey the Lord. Jesus said evil doers hate the light and don’t come to it so their deeds won’t be exposed (John 3:20).

Christians who have been taught by preachers about “reprove, rebuke, and exhort” will have a thorough grasp of biblical truth and not be like undiscerning infants, but will be like strong young men who can easily recognize false teachings, and avoid being “*children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming*” (Ephesians 4:14). †

**Tom Kelton is a writer and preacher living at Pharr, Texas, U.S.A.**



## (Where Everyone Is Important)

Roy D. Baker

*"While He was talking to the multitudes, behold, His mother and brothers stood outside, seeking to speak with Him. Then one said to Him, 'Look, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, seeking to speak with You.' But He answered and said to the one who told Him, 'Who is My mother and who are My brothers?' And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, 'Here are My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is*

*My brother and sister and mother'" (Matthew 12:46-50).*

This section of Scripture teaches a marvelous lesson on spiritual relationships. Jesus had recently come forth filling the whole country around Galilee with excitement and wonder at His teaching and His mighty miracles. His fame spread over the land. Multitudes followed Him wherever He went.

Almost no one understood Jesus when He began His public ministry. John wrote that His own brothers did not believe in Him (John 7:5). Mark tells us that when

## THE CHURCH

He came back to Nazareth, His own people went out to take custody of Him, saying, "*He is out of His mind.*" That's saying, "He's insane!" Our text states that His mother and brothers were standing outside, wanting to talk to Him, but they couldn't reach Him for the large crowd. The Bible doesn't say why they wanted to talk to Him. Not being able to reach Him, they relayed the word along until someone whispered in His ear, "*Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak to You, Jesus.*"

His answer to the message was to let them know that He, in the deepest sense, was related not only to those who, humanly speaking, were the most closely related to Him, but also to those who believed and obeyed the Word of God brought to them by Jesus. He looked toward His disciples and shocked them with a question: "*Who is My mother and who are My brothers?*" Jesus lifted His language from the physical/fleshly to the spiritual. "*Here are My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother.*" In other words, He was saying that anyone who does the will of God is His family.

In no way was Jesus implying His ingratitude for His earthly fami-

ly. To the contrary, He was expressing gratitude for them, and yet, as dear to Him as was His mother, He was also saying that there is a spiritual relation just as dear and just as strong. Let none think He lightly esteemed His mother who had borne Him and nursed Him and followed Him with anxious heart. If one should think so, go with Him to the cross; see Him there forgetting His suffering, the anguish, and the pain of that torture-stake so that in His anxiety He might provide for the comfort of His mother throughout her remaining days on earth.

As faithful and devoted as He had been to His mother and home relatives through all the years, His attitude toward His Father in heaven and His Messianic calling caused fleshly kinship to be relegated to a subordinate place. It furnished Jesus the opportunity to teach a lesson in spiritual relationships. He used this occasion to make a point — if we put ourselves at the disposal of God, we are part of His family.

What an honor, what a privilege it is to know that those who hear the Word of God and obey it are the nearest relatives to Jesus! This spiritual relationship outranks in tenderness the natural and fleshly relationship, and it is more vital than any blood relationship. Human ties are physical and temporary.

## THE CHURCH

The ties of Christ are spiritual and eternal. Jesus includes in the family of God all believers in Him; He binds them together with strong cords of love and sympathy. *“For whosoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother.”*

Obedience to God’s will is the spiritual test of our discipleship. Jesus calls those who obey the Father’s will by the endearing names of brother, sister, mother. Why? Because those who obey Him do what the Father requires. One believes, which is the first step and the beginning of obedience; he repents of past sins, confesses Jesus as the Christ, and is baptized for remission of sins, putting him/her

into Christ. Those who obey these commands are then added to the church, which is the family of God. They are members of His Body and members one of another.

We are part of God’s great family, and in no way is one member more important than the other as far as God is concerned. Jesus said, “My mother, my brothers? All of you are part of My family if you listen and do the will of God.” We are part of this spiritual communion we call the community of saints, a community of believers, the family of God. †

**Roy D. Baker is Director Emeritus of Bear Valley Bible Institute of Denver, Colorado, U.S.A.**

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### Spiritual Inventory

1. Can I give a scriptural reason for what I do and teach religiously? (1 Peter 3:15; 1 Peter 4:11).
2. Do I worship in spirit and in truth? (John 4:24).
3. Do I wear any religious name that cannot be found in the Bible? (Acts 11:26; Matthew 4:16).
4. Is the church that I’m a member of mentioned in God’s word? (Romans 16:16; Matthew 16:18).
5. Have I refused to obey the simple commands of Christ? (Luke 6:46; Acts 2:38).
6. If claiming to be a Christian, do I engage in worldly practices? (2 Corinthians 6:17).
7. Do I absent myself from the worship of the church? (Acts 20:7; Hebrews 10:25).

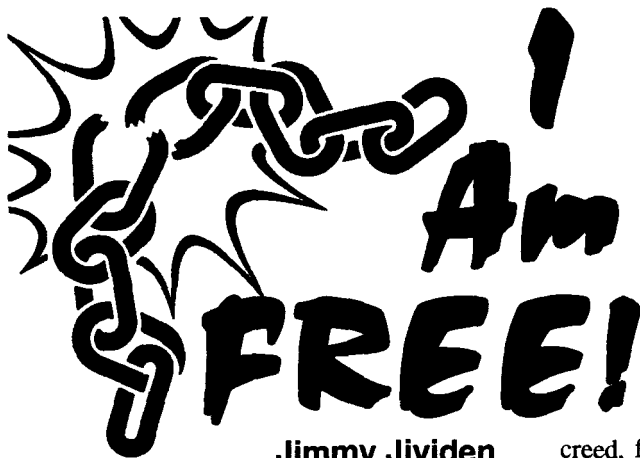
— Johnny Ramsey



## THE CHURCH

In the mass confusion of contemporary religion I am thankful that I can be a part of a group that knows true freedom in Christ.

It is a group where I am not required to believe any human creed, follow any human tradition, or support any



**Jimmy Jividen**

clergy. I am free to follow the Bible only.

It is a group in which I am not required to participate in any form of worship, ecclesiastical organization, or religious practice that is not authorized by Jesus Christ Himself. I am free to follow Jesus only.

It is a group in which I am not required to give fellowship to or approval of religious teachings and moral conduct which are contrary to the will of God. I am free to follow my conscience which has been sensitized by the teachings of the Scriptures without having to compromise my convictions.

It is a group in which I am not required to accept without question either the **status quo** of the past or the novel visions of the future. I am free to open the Bible myself and ask, "What saith the Scriptures?"

It is a group in which I am not required to be affiliated with or give support to any human institution. I am free to be the church of Christ as planned by God, founded by Jesus Christ, and filled with the Holy Spirit.

I have thrown off the chains of human ecclesiastical traditions. I have broken out of the prison house of clergy oppression. I have refused to be enslaved by either the subjective human experiences of self or others.

I have issued my declaration of independence from human religions and have committed myself to follow Jesus Christ and Him alone. I will dwell in the fellowship of other children of God who, like myself, are blood-bonded to one another in the church of Christ. †

**Jimmy Jividen is a writer and preacher in Abilene, Texas, U.S.A.**

## THE CHURCH

# The Advisability of Autonomy

Tom Holland

God's will is good, acceptable, and perfect (Romans 12:3).

God has a will for His saved ones, the church, to be organized for maximum effectiveness in His service. God's will may be ascertained by a diligent study of the New Testament.

An examination of inspired Scripture shows that some modern types of church organization are conspicuous by their absence. One cannot read about popes in the New Testament. One does read that Christ is the head of the church (Colossians 1:18). Church government by a hierarchy is not a part of God's revealed plan but has originated with man. Presiding bishops, conferences, religious conventions, have come from human endeavors without Divine authority.

God's plan for church organization reveals the autonomy of the local congregation. The church at Philippi had bishops and deacons (Philippians 1:1). This congregation was a self-governing congregation under the authority of Christ.

Surely we appreciate the wisdom of God in His plan for church organization. If all the congregations in a given area go into apostasy, a particular congregation does not have to "follow the crowd."

Churches of Christ have no earthly headquarters. The congregations of God's people are not under a presiding bishop. Ecclesiastical organizations which overtly or subtly attempt to set policy of "renewal" or "restructure" for the Lord's church operate apart from the authority of Christ.

Let each congregation once more get involved in dedicated service to God so that sincere worship is given Him and the message of salvation is faithfully proclaimed. Then the church will grow again as it did during the era when God's people were content with congregational autonomy. †

**Tom Holland is a writer and preacher in Brentwood, Tennessee, U.S.A.**

# Verse Search

Supply the missing information from the gospel of John, chapter thirteen.

1. What did Jesus know? (V. 1)
2. What was taking place at this time? (V. 1,2)
3. Who had entered Judas Iscariot's heart? (V. 2)
4. Jesus, knowing that \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ into His hands, and that \_\_\_\_\_  
had come from \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ to  
\_\_\_\_\_..." (V. 3)
5. What momentous act of servitude did Jesus begin to do? (V. 5)
6. Who said, "You shall never wash my feet"? (V. 8)
7. Why did Jesus say, "You are not all clean"? (V. 11)
8. Why did Jesus wash their feet? (V. 12-15) Did Jesus tell the disciples that they should wash each others' feet as a part of a worship service? Do we have any example of Christians in the New Testament washing each others' feet as part of a worship service?
9. Why did Jesus tell them beforehand that He would be betrayed? (V. 18,19)
10. Was Jesus troubled about the impending betrayal? (V. 21)
11. When Judas had gone, what did Jesus say? (V. 31)
12. What new commandment did Jesus give His disciples? (V. 34)
13. If we love one another, what will people know? (V. 35)
14. We are to love one another, " \_\_\_\_\_"  
(V. 34)
15. What did Peter ask Jesus? (V. 36)
16. Jesus answered, " \_\_\_\_\_ you cannot follow me now, \_\_\_\_\_" (V.36)
17. Peter declared that he would \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus (V. 37).
18. What did Jesus foretell that Peter would do? (V. 38)

*[See inside of back cover for answers.]*

# Up Or Down?

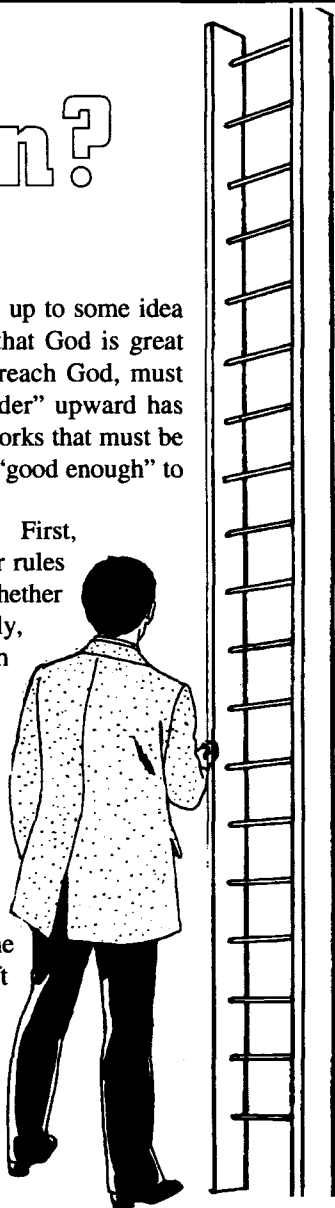
**John Reese**

The religions of the world try to climb up to some idea of Perfection or "God." They recognize that God is great and exalted. Man, therefore, in order to reach God, must climb up to Him in some way. The "ladder" upward has many rungs, that is, many rules and good works that must be kept. Thus, people try to make themselves "good enough" to come into God's presence.

There are at least two great problems. First, they have little way of being *sure* that their rules are the right rules. How can they be sure whether their ladder is going up or down? Secondly, people keep falling. The ladder is so high that sooner or later even the most skilled climber slips and falls. He breaks the rungs — the rules. Since this imaginary ladder seems to be the only way to reach God, this kind of religion leaves people feeling sad, guilty, and far from God.

The fact is that their way never works. Try a little experiment: Take hold of your toes and try to lift yourself one inch off the ground. You cannot do it! If you cannot lift yourself an inch, how are you going to lift yourself all the way to heaven?

The Christianity of the Bible is different from human religions. It confronts our sinfulness and weakness. It shows us that we cannot take ourselves to heaven. It says that none of us is "good enough" to



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come to the holy, majestic God. *"There is no one righteous, not even one . . . for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"* (Romans 3:10,23). Therefore, the only hope for mankind is for God to come down and save us!

In His great mercy, God did this very thing. He sent a part of Himself, His own Son, from heaven to earth. *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God . . . The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth"* (John 1:1,14). †

**John Reese works with World Bible School in Austin, Texas, U.S.A.**



When men speak ill of you, live so that nobody will believe them.



Sometimes the Lord calms the storm; sometimes He lets the storm rage and calms His child.



If Christ is kept outside, something must be wrong inside.



When we put our cares in God's hands, He puts His peace in our hearts.

### Ten Reasons for Going to Hell

1. It requires no effort at all to get there.
2. You can associate freely with bad company there.
3. You won't have the constant watchful eye of God over you.
4. You won't be expected to attend Bible study or worship.
5. You won't have to give any thing of yourself or your money to God.
6. Purity and goodness will not be expected of you.
7. No faithful Christian will be there to urge you to follow God's way.
8. You should not be lonely. Friends and loved ones who followed your example will also be there.
9. There will be no worry about judgment. All will be over. You will only have to serve your sentence for eternity.
10. There will be no worry about Christ coming again. He will not come again — ever!

— Pat Hardcastle

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# Was Saul of Tarsus Saved on the Damascus Road?

Ken Tyler

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It has been urged by many preachers that Saul of Tarsus was saved in the midst of the light on the road to Damascus before he ever went into the city. But friends, if you will only study his conversion carefully you will see that this is not right.

The conversion of Saul is found in Acts 9. He reviewed what took place in his conversion in Acts 22 and 26. Saul was on his way to Damascus for the purpose of arresting Christians and bringing them bound to Jerusalem (Acts 9:2). When he came near Damascus there shined round about him a light from heaven (Acts 9:3). He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying, "*Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?*" (Acts 9:4). Saul then asked, "*Who art thou, Lord?*" The Lord answered, "*I am Jesus whom thou persecutest*" (Acts 9:5). Saul, who was trembling and astonished, then asked the most important question in the world: "*What wilt thou have me to do?*" The Lord told him to arise and go into the city, and there

he would be told what he must do (Acts 9:6).

Acts 9:8 points out that Saul was blind and had to be led by the hand into Damascus. Acts 9:9 says that he was three days without sight and neither did eat nor drink. Acts 9:11 further shows that in Damascus he was praying. (I might mention here that this showed his penitent spirit.)

There was a disciple in Damascus by the name of Ananias. The Lord sent Ananias to Saul to tell him what to do (Acts 9:6,11). Ananias was leery of Saul because he knew of his persecution of Christians. However, the Lord told him Saul was a chosen vessel (Acts 9:13-15). Ananias then went to Saul, restored his sight, and told him what to do (Acts 9:17-18). According to Saul (Paul) in Acts 22:16, Ananias asked him, "*And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.*"

The story is plain. Saul was

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"And one Ananias. . . came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, 'Brother Saul, receive thy sight. . . And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord'" (Acts 22:12-16).

**not saved on the Damascus road, but in Damascus** when he obeyed what Ananias told him to do, to **arise and be baptized and wash away his sins.**

Remember, the Lord Himself had said to Saul, "*Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do*" (Acts 9:6). It was *in the city* that he would be told what to do. Ananias told him, he obeyed it, and he was saved.

It would indeed be a strange conversion if Saul actually had been saved in the midst of the light on the road to Damascus. If that was the case, **Saul himself did not know it**, for he asked the Lord what he must

do; and if that was the case, **Jesus did not know it**, for he told Saul to go into the city and there he would be told what to do; and if he was saved on the road, he was the most miserable *saved* man anyone ever read about because he was blind, did not eat or drink a drop, and was praying for those three days. Does that sound like a saved man? **No!** Penitent Saul was saved when he arose and was baptized to wash away his sins. I pray you and I will practice the same. †

**Ken Tyler preaches for the congregation in Arab, Alabama, U.S.A., and has preached in several campaigns in Trinidad, West Indies.**

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# CONVERSION

**Bill Dillon**

What exactly is conversion? Why is it necessary? What actually happens when a person is converted? The correct answers to these questions are given in the Bible.

The essence of conversion is change. Many conversions are found in nature. Wood becomes paper; a piece of coal becomes a diamond through the process called conversion.

In religion, conversion means a change from a life of sin to a life of righteousness. In Matthew 18:3 Jesus said, *“Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.”*

When any man or woman is about to be converted, a kind of famine comes into that life. Not a famine of food, but a famine of meaning and purpose. The conscience begins to be troubled as Almighty God, through His Word, presses upon the soul, and this leads to the question, “What can I do about my sin?”

The soul feels spent. We have reached the end of ourselves. Worldly pleasures and activities become void of meaning. Eventually, there is no rest or peace until we come to terms with the will of God.

Being aware more and more of the numerous dangers and snares of life, the frailty of our being, and the inevitability of our death, we start to wake up to spiritual realities and realize our undone condition apart from God and Christ. We are condemned. We need to be converted.

Conversion involves:

1. A change of heart. This is produced by faith (Acts 15:9).
2. A change of allegiance. This is evidenced by confessing Christ to others (Romans 10:10; Acts 8:37).
3. A change of state. This change in relationship occurs in baptism (Galatians 3:26,27).

Conversion is necessary because sinners unconverted are unsuitable and



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unacceptable to God. Sinners must be converted into saints. That is such a tremendous task that only God can accomplish it!

If I am to be converted and to know the Lord, if I am to be changed, I must humbly seek the Lord and keep His commandments. The Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, has made the long journey into this world to save us (Romans 5:8). He hung on the cross of Calvary and suffered grievously so that He could pardon all who repent and obey His Gospel.

Have you been converted?



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## Wanted

**The great want of this age is *men*:**

**Men who are not for sale;**

**Men who will condemn wrong in friend or foe – in themselves as well as others;**

**Men whose consciences are as steady as the needle to the pole;**

**Men who will stand for the right though the heavens totter and the earth reels;**

**Men who can tell the truth and look the world right in the eye;**

**Men who neither brag nor run;**

**Men who neither flag nor flinch;**

**Men who can have courage without shouting it;**

**Men in whom the hope of everlasting life still runs deep and strong;**

**Men who know their message and tell it;**

**Men who know their business and attend it;**

**Men who are not too lazy to work, nor too proud to be poor;**

**Men who are willing to eat what they have earned and to wear what they have paid for;**

**Men who are not ashamed to say NO with emphasis.**

– Raymond P. Murray

# Message From The Cross: Forgiving

Royce Frederick

*“ . . . when they had come to a place called Golgotha, that is to say, Place of a Skull, they gave Him sour wine mingled with gall to drink. But when He had tasted it, He would not drink. Then they crucified Him . . . ”* (Matthew 27:33-35).

This time, the Master Teacher was not sitting on a beautiful mountain side by the Sea of Galilee, nor in a portico of the magnificent temple in Jerusalem. There was no crowd of adoring followers eagerly listening to every word. Instead, He was being murdered in public. His friends had fled. The religious leaders had called Him an enemy of God. And the Roman governor had authorized His execution while declaring, *“I find no fault in this Man”* (Luke 23:4; see verse 14; John 18:38; 19:4,6). What would He say this time? *“Then Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do’”* (Luke 23:34).

It can be very difficult to forgive injuries — even after many years. But Jesus forgave these people **while** they were murdering Him. He desired **life** for those who gave Him **death**. God does not want any person to be lost eternally (Ezekiel 33:11; 2 Peter 3:9; 1 Timothy 2:4).

Jesus had told the crowd in Galilee, *“ . . . love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you ”* (Matthew 5:44). He told us — then He showed us.

He also warned, *“ . . . if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses ”* (Matthew 6:12,14,15; see Romans 12:14-21; James 2:13; Colossians 3:13). To enter heaven, we must be **forgiven and forgiving.** †

**Royce Frederick is editor of International Gospel Teacher and works with the Central Church of Christ in Lufkin, Texas, U.S.A.**

# Who Is A Christian?



**E. Claude  
Gardner**

No person can determine by his wisdom who is a Christian. However, the Bible defines and describes a Christian.

“Christian” is broadly used to describe a nation as being Christian, and to include any person who claims to follow Jesus.

It is important to understand who is a Christian *in the Bible sense*. This will determine whether we seek to teach New Testament Christianity to members of other religious groups — Protestants, Catholics, Jews, or Muslims. If all who are sincere and devout are pleasing to God, then we should be unconcerned with their status with God and forget about trying to evangelize them. It follows that we would not have any gospel message to bring them.

Furthermore, if persons are *Christians*, we have fellowship or participation with them. If they are Christians *as defined by the New Testament*, there can be joint participation with them in worship, campaigns, and religious projects. The Bible says that all “*who walk in the light*” of truth have fellowship with each other and with Christ (1 John 1:7).

It would be wonderful to be brothers to all who are good, decent people who are trying to serve God in their own way. How painful it is to be separated from respectable people who are honorable and religious.

The plan of unity given in the Bible (Ephesians 4:3-6) is the divine way

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of being united in Christ. Regretfully, there are religious people who reject or attempt to circumvent these seven basic points: *one body* (church), *one Spirit*, *one hope*, *one Lord*, *one faith* (belief), *one baptism*, and *one God*. To accept one of the seven is to accept all seven.

We dare not judge by human insight who is a Christian. God gives the answer. He has revealed the plan of salvation whereby one becomes a Christian, which is by obeying Christ. A Christian is one who has been saved from past sins by coming to Jesus on conditions He and the inspired apostles gave.

Jesus simply stated, "*He that believeth and is baptized (immersed) shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned*" (Mark 16:16). Peter commanded, "*Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit*" (Acts 2:38). Numerous other verses teach that these commands are necessary. If one command can be waived or diluted, then this can be done for the others. Both repentance and baptism are essential.

Many religions teach that one becomes a Christian by "faith only," "accepting Jesus as your personal Savior," or by praying for forgiveness. Even so, the words of Jesus stand, and we therefore must teach that a penitent believer must be baptized for the forgiveness of sins in order to become a Christian. How can there be partnership with those who have not obeyed Jesus?

A Christian is one who has come to Jesus in obedience (Acts 2:38,41), and when this is done, he is added to the church because he has been saved by Jesus. "*And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved*" (Acts 2:41). In New Testament times there were no saved people outside the church. Becoming a Christian or being saved results in belonging to the church and not to a denomination, because none existed until several hundred years later. It is like a physical birth — when a baby is born, it becomes a member of the family at the same time. Likewise, when one is "born again" (John 3:5) he enters God's family, the church. Those who have obeyed the Gospel of Christ have fellowship as brothers and sisters in Christ.

A Christian is one who wears the name of Christ. He is a "Christian" — Christ-like. Being a follower and disciple of Christ, he honors Christ as Savior, founder, and head of His church. He rejects all human and non-biblical names as being divisive and unscriptural. It is right to be a Christian **only** (1 Peter 4:16).

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A Christian lives a life in harmony with the life and teachings of Jesus. Although not perfect, he seeks to imitate the Lord in all of his relationships of life. He will be dedicated in worship, prayer, and Bible study. He will be a good citizen in the community, in the family, in business, and in the church (Titus 2:11,12; Matthew 7:12).

A Christian will be faithful and some day, by God's grace, he will hear Jesus announce, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant" (Matthew 25:21).

Jesus taught, "For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister and mother" (Matthew 12:50). Today we can enjoy fellowship with all who "do the will" of the Father (Matthew 7:21). †

**E. Claude Gardner is President-Emeritus of Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson, Tennessee, U.S.A.**



### Neglect

There's a dusty Bible I mean to read;  
There's an hour I'll keep to pray;  
And I'll turn each dream to a golden deed  
When I get the time — someday.

So we have thought and so we've said,  
Yet how sad it is to relate  
That, busy with less important things,  
We waited until too late.

— Anonymous

## How Can I Be Saved?

*"For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved"* (John 5:17).

Jesus said, "***I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me***" (John 14:6) "...if you do not ***believe*** that I am He, you will ***die in your sins***" (John 8:24). "...do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. ...how shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? or do you not know that as many of us as were ***baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?*** ...our old man [of sin] was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.... Therefore, ...reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6).

The gospel of Jesus Christ is that He died for us, that He was buried, and that He was resurrected. Salvation comes only as we turn to Jesus for forgiveness.

**Next: Is Christ's blood necessary?**

# The Ultimate Tragedy

David Pharr

If you were to fall away (that is, leave the church and go back to your former way of life and/or former religion—back into sin and disobedience), what would be your condition? As a defense against pressure and temptation, you need to know the awful consequences of falling away.

There are many passages which describe the end of those who fall away, but the following texts are enough to show us how dreadful it is to forsake God. Please read each of them carefully.

**John 15:4-6.** This is part of an illustration Jesus used. As a branch must remain attached to the vine, so every Christian must remain attached to Christ. Fruit-bearing is an evidence that the "branch" is still abiding in the "Vine." Notice the consequences in verse 6.

**Hebrews 10:26-31.** The willful sin named in verse 26 refers to the deliberate decision to leave Christ and the church. When one does this he has forsaken the only sacrifice for sins and can no longer have any hope of being saved

(unless he repents). Verses 28-31 show that to be lost eternally is worse ("*sorer punishment*") than being killed without mercy.

**2 Peter 2:20-22.** The plain fact is that when one who has been a Christian forsakes Christ, forsakes Christ's church, and forsakes the truth, he puts himself in a worse position than a heathen who has never known the Lord. The illustrations of the dog and sow in verse 22 emphasize the ugliness of backsliding into sin.

A brother was once asked, "If you should ever leave the church of Christ, where would you go?" He answered, "To hell!" Either the Bible is right or it is wrong. God does not lie. What the Bible says about the necessity of faithfulness in Christ's church, of loyalty to the truth, and of purity of heart and life is true without exception. Excuses and self-approving rationalization cannot change it. God's will does not change. When people turn away from God they face terrible consequences.

When a member of the church

## SALVATION

goes back into willful sin and ceases to be faithful, the rest of the church must withdraw fellowship from him. Notice Paul's instructions about this in 2 Thessalonians 3:6,14,15. Read also 1 Corinthians 5:1-13, where he deals especially with a brother who was living in fornication.

When a person can no longer have the fellowship of God's people, *he no longer has fellowship with God*. Such a one has no hope until he repents and comes back to the right way. To die while in a fallen-away condition means being lost forever.

You may be thinking that you could never turn your back on Christ and His church. This should certainly be your prayer and your purpose. But remember that 1 Corinthians 10:12 says, "*Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.*" Always realize that such a possibility exists. Be on guard, therefore, against temptations, against discouragements, and against anything that might cause your love and loyalty to grow weak. If there is the slightest temptation to backslide, come to grips with it at once. While you are talking to God, the devil will not be "talking" to you. †

**David Pharr is the preacher for the Lord's church in Clinton, Tennessee, U.S.A.**



THE CLOCK OF LIFE IS WOUND BUT ONCE,  
AND NO ONE HAS THE POWER  
TO TELL JUST WHEN THE HANDS WILL STOP,  
AT LATE OR EARLY HOUR.

THE PRESENT ONLY IS OUR OWN,  
LIVE, LOVE, TOIL WITH A WILL;  
PLACE NO FAITH IN "TOMORROW,"  
FOR THE CLOCK MAY THEN BE STILL.

TO LOSE ONE'S WEALTH IS SAD INDEED,  
TO LOSE ONE'S HEALTH IS MORE;  
TO LOSE ONE'S SOUL IS SUCH A LOSS  
AS NO MAN CAN RESTORE!

— AUTHOR UNKNOWN



# A MASSIVE MISSION

Lewis G. Hale

It is so easy to casually read the Great Commission: *“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature”* (Mark 16:15). Christ was speaking to men who had witnessed His death for the sins of the world. They were also witnesses of His resurrection. They are now charged with the mission of going throughout the world and telling this story to every creature. We cannot be sure they were totally aware of the magnitude of their mission. We have strong evidence that

they did not realize it included the Gentile world. Peter learned that when he was sent to preach to Cornelius and his household. Even when the Jewish leaders agreed to receive Gentiles, they wanted it on their terms. They insisted that Gentiles first become “Jews” (by being circumcised), and then they could be received into the Christian faith.

Are we aware that the Great Commission is still in effect? It will be until the end of the age (Matthew



## CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION

28:20). It is just as necessary that we preach the Gospel to every creature as it was for the apostles. Men are still lost. The Gospel is still God's power to save. "*How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?*" (Romans 10:14). What is the solution? "*So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*" (Romans 10:17).


When churches are content to "keep house for God," meet to sing a few songs, pray a few prayers, hear a sermon on current events, take communion, give a token offering, go home and put religion on the

shelf for another week, they unquestionably have no notion of the massive mission with which they are charged.

Our assemblies are an essential part of God's plan. Worship is vital. God is to be praised. But God is also to be honored by the proclamation of the Gospel to lost men. Men may refuse to hear. That is between *them* and God. They may hear and refuse to heed. That is still between *them* and God. But the responsibility to *help* them hear is *ours*, between *us* and God.

Be aware of your mission and fulfil it. †

**Lewis G. Hale has preached for many years for the Southwest congregation in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, U.S.A.**

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- ❖ *If I wanted to I could help make this church the most wide-awake and working church in all the world.*
  - ❖ *If I wanted to I could visit members who are sick or homebound and find other ways of helping them.*
  - ❖ *If I wanted to I could attend Bible classes regularly and encourage others to do the same.*
  - ❖ *If I wanted to I could show more devotion in worship and receive much more good from the services myself.*
  - ❖ *If I wanted to I could profit more from the sermon by not resenting the truth when it reveals some of my weaknesses.*
  - ❖ *If I wanted to I could tell others about Christ and His church and lead them to Him.*

*Of course this all depends on what I want to do! I could be an honored servant of the greatest of all kinds — if I really want to.* — Author Unknown

# THE CRISIS

**Batsell Barrett Baxter**

In all of our work for Christ, we are undertaking a major self-examination of every activity, every program, every expenditure. Every decision must be made in view of our prime objective and task, the saving of souls. Every activity must be reevaluated and every activity must justify itself afresh or be dropped.

We must make personal commitments of dedication and of willingness to sacrifice for the salvation of souls. All of us must be willing to dedicate ourselves, our talents, our time, and our substance totally, to the cause of evangelism. We need to go back and reexamine the dedication of the apostles, especially the apostle Paul. Only when Christians throughout the world are really in earnest about bringing the Gospel of Christ to the millions of people around us, and to the billions in our world, will our evangelistic efforts become effective.

Ours is a time of crisis in leadership. Elders, deacons, preachers, editors, speakers on radio and television programs, teachers, and all others who occupy places of influence must lead the way in this evangelistic crisis. Leaders must lead if others are to follow. *We have often become so busy doing other things — important and good things — that evangelism has been crowded out.* Elders and preachers and leaders in other phases of the Lord's work have often been so busy that they did not take the time to get out and talk to people about their souls or do very much to encourage and support those who did. Each one of us needs to examine himself and ask the question, "Who have I brought to Christ in the last 12 months?"

With all of our wonderful church buildings, with all of our fine Bible school programs, and with everything else that we have done, the contours of darkness have still continued to close in upon us. We have been too busy about secondary things, and *the first thing has been neglected.*

There have been too many chiefs and not enough Indians. There has been too little dedication. *Our real crisis is a crisis of ineffectiveness growing out of a failure of will, a failure of dedication.* †

**Before his death, Batsell Barrett Baxter was a well-known radio and television evangelist, as well as a professor of Bible at David Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tennessee, U.S.A.**

# Make It Plain

Dan Jenkins

God's words to Habakkuk, "*Write the vision, and make it plain . . .*" (Habakkuk 2:2), should be the attitude of every worker in the kingdom of God. Far too much that we do in His service is not characterized by simplicity or plainness.

Preachers need to make it plain. Contrast the clarity of the message of Paul to Agrippa, to Felix, and to all of his listeners, with the lack of this quality in lessons that are taught today. Much of the preaching being done every week in our pulpits would be just as acceptable in synagogues and "Christian" assemblies that no longer believe in Christ.

Have you ever wondered just how it was that the preaching of the early Christians turned peaceful cities upside down, led to the disfavor and often even the arrest of the preachers, but the preaching done by many today makes them the most popular men in town? How was it that first century preaching stirred the hearts of the listeners and caused them to leave their former religions, while much of the preaching today allows the listener to leave, never knowing that a change is required in his life?

Personal workers need to make it plain. When we study with others, they need to see clearly that they are lost. They should understand the necessity of leaving former religions behind them when they come to the Lord. They should realize, without doubt, their obligation in attendance, giving, personal work, and morality. There is no other way they can carefully count the cost. Personal workers who fail to *make it plain* render it impossible for the sinner to *make a true decision*.

**Make it plain!** This should be the aim for every religious conversation, sermon, Bible class, and home study. Ours is to *reveal* truth, not to *conceal* it! †

Dan Jenkins preaches for the church in West Palm Beach, Florida, U.S.A.



**All men are born equal.  
The tough job is to outgrow it!**

# WHEN THE MEANS BECOME THE END, INSTITUTIONALISM OCCURS

One of the meanings given by Webster's Dictionary for institution is "established method or custom." The Lord has established an organization, an institution, called *the church*. It will, when functioning properly, produce an orderly and adequate propagation of the faith. The Lord's plan will bring converts and help them grow spiritually (cf Matthew 28:18-20). It would not be possible to achieve His objectives unless His church is operating under the organizational structure set forth in the New Testament.

The problem of "institutionalism" occurs *when means become ends*; that is, when the *support* of the "institution" is more important than *the reasons for its existence*. When means become the mission, then the true mission is lost and "institutionalism" has occurred.

Institutionalism's gradual decay causes individuals, committees, and congregation to lose sight of the pri-

mary goal of the church's Founder (Luke 19:10). The succeeding generations, therefore, are unable to identify with those principles that formed God's original purpose for its existence. When the church substitutes the *servicing of programs* for the *servicing of God's purpose*, it fails to achieve the real purpose and loses the spirit and vision of the Founder. Organization in the church is necessary, but this should not blind us to our reason for existence.

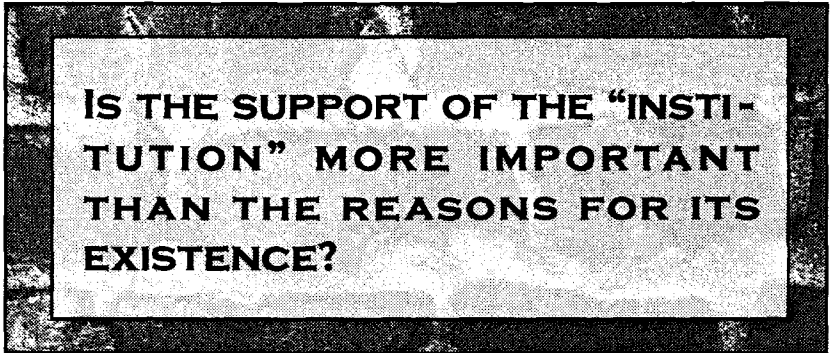
Someone has well said, "The church which seeks to save its own life will lose it, just as surely as the person who seeks to save his life will lose it." Too often, programs lose sight of the Spirit and purpose of Christ. If the program is achieving what the Lord intended, we need to be loyal to the *purpose* of the program and not simply to the program itself. When great emphasis is placed on coming to church assemblies or Bible School *for support of*

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*various programs, and sight is lost of what the programs are to be achieving, religion becomes institutionalized. Only forms remain.* When religion loses its moral and spiritual sensitivity, the real heart of religion is dead.

Of course, through organized programs people can be trained, led, and supervised in the work Christ gave the church to do. *Those who claim to be committed to Christ but*

going through routine forms, church attendance, and worship one or more times a week and some other involvements, while others will demonstrate the zeal and characteristics of the early church as seen in the book of Acts. But when institutionalism occurs, the real spirit and purpose of the church are lost. Thus a congregation becomes encrusted with cold, lifeless formalism—institutionalism.



**IS THE SUPPORT OF THE "INSTITUTION" MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE REASONS FOR ITS EXISTENCE?**

*will not involve themselves in programs of work are usually lacking in commitment.* Good and properly directed programs of work do not have to become ends instead of means to the proper end.

Perhaps we should point out that it may be difficult to sharply identify these various stages that a church goes through as it departs from a sincere commitment to Christ's purpose. A majority may conform to institutionalism by

One of the major problems we face in overcoming this situation today is that most of us see it as normal! We simply perpetuate the problem, not even realizing that it is a problem. And as we look at our ineffectiveness in reaching the lost and inquire for answers, **they are not found in our traditional form of unevangelistic religious education.**

I am reminded of several statements by Jesus relative to conditions He found prevailing while He

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was on earth: "And he said unto them, 'Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition'" (Mark 7:9); "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law: judgment, mercy, and faith; these ought you to have done, and not to leave the other undone" (Matthew 23:23); "All therefore whatsoever they bid you

Does the church actually have more than one mission? Is there confusion between means and what is to be the end?

Is Bible study an end or a means to the end; and if an end, what end? What is the goal of Bible study in the modern church today? Does it have a greater goal than achieving good moral living and getting everybody back next Sunday, and perhaps making the budget? (I would not minimize the

**WHAT IS THE GOAL OF BIBLE STUDY IN THE MODERN CHURCH TODAY? DOES IT HAVE A GREATER GOAL THAN ACHIEVING GOOD MORAL LIVING AND GETTING EVERYBODY BACK NEXT SUNDAY?**

*observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works; for they say, and do not" (Matthew 23:3).*

Have we become as blind as the Pharisees about the very heart of Christianity? If we were to ask many today, "What is the real mission of the church?" we would get a variety of answers. Some would say that it is to preach the Gospel to the lost, to edify the church, to do benevolent work and to glorify God.

importance of these.) How does it relate to the accomplishment of the *real mission* of Jesus and His church, of evangelizing the world with the message of the Gospel? (Luke 19:10).

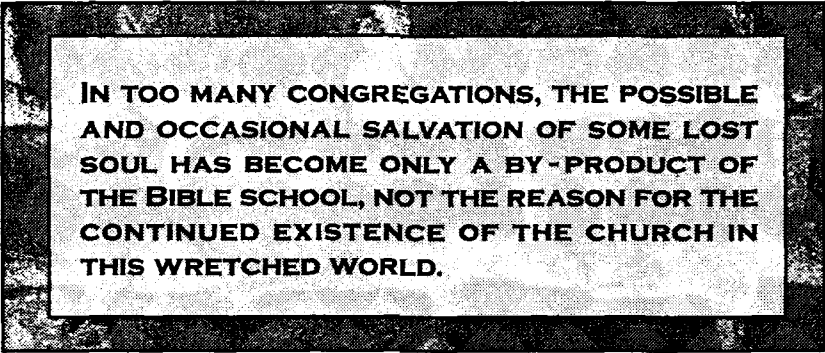
Perhaps one of our greatest strengths has helped create one of our major problems. We have put great stress on Bible study at the church building, and this should be stressed, as well as doctrinal sound-

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ness. However, there is far more said about coming to *Bible study* and coming to *worship services* than there is about *accomplishing the mission of the church* — evangelizing. In too many congregations, the possible and occasional salvation of some lost soul has become only a by-product of the Bible school, not the reason for the continued existence of the church in this wretched world. *A byproduct is a substance derived secondarily in*

enough that he was attending the assembly? Was there no concern about the sad fact that after 16 years he was still lost? What had happened to that church's spirit of evangelism?

Education directors admit that it is difficult to find enough Bible teachers for classes. Someone has said that teachers are not taught, they are "caught." They are hemmed up in a hall somewhere and have their "arm twisted" to



**IN TOO MANY CONGREGATIONS, THE POSSIBLE AND OCCASIONAL SALVATION OF SOME LOST SOUL HAS BECOME ONLY A BY-PRODUCT OF THE BIBLE SCHOOL, NOT THE REASON FOR THE CONTINUED EXISTENCE OF THE CHURCH IN THIS WRETCHED WORLD.**

*the manufacture of another.* **Evangelization is not our primary concern.** The *first* concern is having Bible study at the church building. **Do we love the Word but not the Work?**

I once knew a man whose wife was a Christian. He regularly attended Sunday Bible class with her, but after 16 years he said that *no one had spoken to him personally about obeying the Gospel!* Was it

teach a Bible class which most have no desire to teach.

As a result, the number of people that can be or are presently being trained to teach the lost numbers only *two to three percent*. **Perhaps if we had studied American history during the regular Bible class period on Sunday morning, we would have had only two to three percent fewer soul winners than we have today!** Isn't

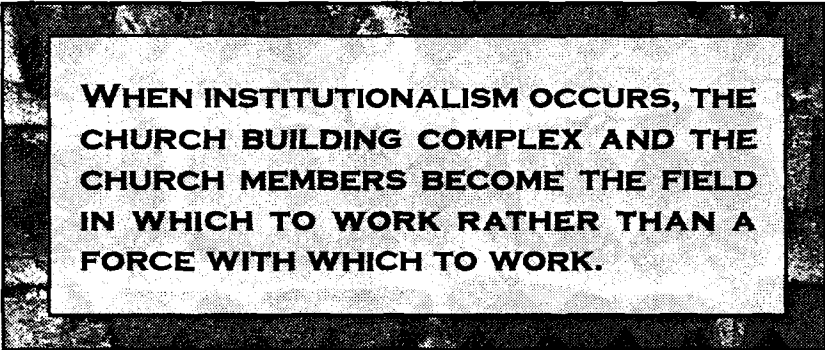
## CHURCH GROWTH

that thought shocking?

The problem is that *the means is accepted as the end, and the good takes the place of the best.* And the question is, **does it make any real difference to a church captive to this culture if the converts double over the previous year or decrease?** Because of this misplaced emphasis, there is hardly enough said about seeking the lost to cause the flame of divine love for souls to

of apostasy—it is a *departure from the spiritual purpose of God and His Son.*

The Bible school should be an *equipping ministry* (Ephesians 4), **equipping the church for the work that it has been charged with doing.** When institutionalism occurs, our base becomes the field of operation. That is, the church building complex and the church members become the field in which



**WHEN INSTITUTIONALISM OCCURS, THE CHURCH BUILDING COMPLEX AND THE CHURCH MEMBERS BECOME THE FIELD IN WHICH TO WORK RATHER THAN A FORCE WITH WHICH TO WORK.**

burn in most hearts (cf John 3:16).

This system hardly produces enough preachers and teachers to perpetuate itself. And most are content to do the preaching and teaching to those who are already “faithful” members. Is this the picture we see in the Scriptures of the early church?

The only kind of apostasy with which we are familiar is departing from certain *doctrinal truths.* However, institutionalism is a form

to work rather than a force with which to work. The church takes on an inward focus, and the mission cannot be accomplished.

Does this not describe the situation in the typical congregation of churches of Christ throughout the United States today, and also in many foreign countries? It is not what God planned. †

**Clayton Pepper works with Restoration Radio Network in Nashville, TN, U.S.A.**



# I Cannot Hold It In!

**Craig Phillips**

*"...because the word of the Lord was made to me a reproach and a derision daily. Then I said, 'I will not make mention of Him, nor speak anymore in His name.'*

*"But His word was in my heart like a burning fire shut up in my bones; I was weary of holding it back, and I could not" (Jeremiah 20:8,9).*



The gospel has been given into our hands. I cannot hold it in! *Why?*

## ***Because love demands a warning!***

A man is caught in a burning building. His eyes are stinging; his lungs are being seared by the heat and the smoke. He's searching, searching, and finally he finds a passage out of the building. Oh, it feels so good to be able to breathe! Thank God!

But then he hears screams of

others inside the burning building. He thinks to himself, "I know the way out; they've not found it yet. I've got to help them or they'll burn to death." So he returns to the flames and the smoke, to save those who could not save themselves.

The Bible teaches, "*And it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment*" (Hebrews 9:27). "*...all have sinned and fall*

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*short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). “...when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thessalonians 1:7,8).*

*“How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?” (Romans 10:14).*

If your house was on fire, and if your family or friends didn't realize the danger, would you just let them stay inside and die? No! You would shake them and plead with them — do anything to get your loved ones to leave such a place of death.

*I cannot hold it in! Why?*

### ***Because responsibility demands our speaking!***

As God told Ezekiel, God tells us: *“You shall speak My words to them, whether they hear or whether they refuse, for they are rebellious” (Ezekiel 2:7).*

*“Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore hear a word from My mouth, and give them warning from Me: When I say to the wicked, ‘You shall surely die,’ and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life, that same wicked man shall*

*die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand” (Ezekiel 3:17,18).*

I have an over-powering responsibility to the lost because Jesus, who suffered for us, sweat blood for us, agonized for our salvation, has commissioned us to go and tell others how they can be saved from their sins.

Someone says, “That’s not my talent...” “I’m too busy...” “I have other work...”

The story is told of a general coming back to camp, wounded and exhausted, from the front line of battle. Near his tent he saw what appeared to be an able-bodied man. He called, “Soldier, what are you doing here?”

“Well, sir, I’ve been shining the Captain’s boots,” was the reply.

“Shining the Captain’s boots?” demanded the General.

“Yes. I’m making sure everything is nice and clean for his return.”

“Soldier, you’re needed on the front line,” insisted the General.

“But, sir, that’s just not my talent. I’m afraid of battle.”

“Soldier, let me ask you another question. Do you have two legs?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Anything wrong with your arms or your ears or your eyes — or your mind?”

“No, sir.”

The General turned to his assistant and said, “See that this man is

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executed!”

The soldier looked shocked, and protested, “General, you are a hard man!”

Jesus has suffered much for His people, and He has asked each one of us to use the talents He has given us, to reach the lost. In the parable of the talents, when the fearful servant hid his talent in the ground instead of using it, he protested to his master, “*Lord, I knew you to be a hard man.... I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.*”

Jesus’ response differed very little from the General’s. He said, “*You wicked and lazy servant...!*” Then He instructed His angels to “*cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth*” (Matthew 25:24-26,30)

This parable reveals that not only is Jesus our Savior but He is also “a **hard man**”. He has given us a task to do and He expects us to complete it.

Someone says, “But it’s so hard. People don’t want to listen.”

Don’t make Jesus weep over your irresponsibility. People are rebellious. Many times we go and no one *wants* to hear. We must go again and again. We will face disinterest. We will face distractions. But we must not let Satan discourage us so that we quit trying.

As a young Christian, wanting

to share the gospel, I developed a friendship with a man whose background in the world had been much like mine. Salvation was precious to me, and I wanted so much for my friend to know the wonderful peace and hope I had learned.

I would go to my friend’s house and try to talk to him, but he wasn’t interested. But I couldn’t forget his need for the gospel, so I kept calling and going by to see him. One day, as I parked in front of his house, I could see another friend through the window. He turned and said something, and my friend came to the window to look out. When he saw my truck, he threw his hands up in a gesture of anger and exasperation. That gesture cut through me like a knife, because it told so clearly how much he hated my efforts to share the truth with him.

I started the motor and drove off, unable to hold back the tears.

But I went back, and I kept talking, reasoning with him that he was throwing away his life and his soul the way he was living, and that God loved him and wanted to help him change.

Today that friend is a preacher of the gospel. He has done mission work in the New England states, and is presently studying further in a training school to better prepare himself to reach others. It chills my heart to think what would have happened if I hadn’t gone back, if I had

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let his gesture of anger drive me away.

*For the sake of the souls we love, we cannot afford to be discouraged by any attitude we encounter.*

Jesus often compared the work of evangelizing to the farmer. He plants the seed. He wears blisters on his hands. He sweats in the hot sun. The wind blows dust in his eyes. The insects sting and bite him. He often loses seed to birds and floods, but he doesn't stop planting and watering, because he knows that the harvest will come if he is faithful in doing his part of the work.

We must keep on preaching God's word like that. Psalm 126:5 says, "*Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy.*"

*I cannot hold it in! Why?*

***Because good news is worth sharing!***

In 2 Kings 6 we read of Israel's main city, Samaria, being surrounded by the Syrian army. There was a great famine in the city, and people were so consumed by hunger that two mothers agreed to boil and eat their little sons.

In chapter 7 four lepers debated about going to the city to beg for food or going to the Syrian camp. Since they knew there was no food in Samaria, they decided to surrender to the Syrians and take their chances. When they got to the camp of the army, they were

amazed to find it empty! In the night God had caused the Syrians to hear the noise of an army of horses and chariots so that they had fled in terrible fear, leaving their camp intact.

The lepers, finding the empty camp, began to take away the plunder and hide it. Then one of them said, "*We are not doing what is right. This day is a day of good news, and we remain silent. If we wait until morning light, some punishment will come upon us. Now therefore, let us go and tell the king's household*" (2 Kings 7:3-9).

God's salvation is good news — too good to keep to ourselves, lest some punishment come upon us. Sure — some won't want to listen, but our words will be the literal bread of life to those who know they were starving.

Still, the best way to teach is in personal Bible studies, and the best place is in the home — in yours or in the home of your friend or relative who will allow you to come and share the truths that are precious to you. In Bombay, individual Christians have volunteered to invite their friends to one-night-a-week Bible studies in their homes. Raja Moses set a goal of five visitors for his studies. At first he failed, but he kept inviting and sharing, and now 35 and 40 come each week. **The good news is meant to be shared!** †

**Craig Phillips works with the church in Bombay, India.**

## Quick Commentary On Crucial Verses

### Acts 20:32

Not to some  
creed, philosophy  
or church. Only  
God is able to keep  
that which is  
committed to him  
(See 2 Tim. 1:12)

Grace (Salvation in  
Christ) is only  
available through  
obedience to God's  
word. (See Ac. 11:14;  
Heb. 5:8-9;  
Tit. 2:11-12)

The word is "en-  
grafted" with the  
power to save and  
edify the soul (See  
Rom. 1:16;  
Jms. 1:21)

I commend you to God,  
and to  
the word of his grace,  
which is able to build you up,  
and to give you an inheritance  
among all them  
which are  
sanctified.

One  
becomes an heir in  
God's family by being  
begotten (born again) by  
the Word (See 1 Pet.  
1:23; Jno. 3:3ff; Gal.  
3:26ff)

The "sanctified"  
are Christians  
"set apart" from  
sin by obedience to  
the Word, there-  
fore they are  
called saints (See  
Jno. 17:17-19;  
Eph. 5:23; Heb.  
10:26)

The "faithful seed"  
of Abraham's spiritual  
family. (See Gen  
12:1ff; Mt. 8:11)

That is, only those  
who have obeyed the  
Word will be saved.  
(See Mk. 16:15-16;  
Acts 2:38ff;  
Gal. 3:27ff)

—Foster Northern

# Seek Those Things Which Are Above

**Wayne Barrier**

The Bible provides clear instruction about the priority of things that can demand our energy, attention, and emphasis in life. We sometimes forget this instruction and allow less important things to take control in our lives. We seem to easily drift into very complex, busy,

demanding lifestyles that put Christian service and emphasis at a lower priority than many other dimensions of life.

From Colossians 3:1-4 we read, *"If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory."*

Jesus stated in Matthew 6:33, *"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added to you."* In this verse Jesus is referring to a list of things that man often seeks and emphasizes over the kingdom of God. He further says in Matthew 6:24, *"No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and mammon."*

## DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING

We must learn to place "things above" in first priority. To do so doesn't mean we can put no emphasis on anything else in life. Certainly other things are important, too. We must work to live, giving some emphasis to jobs, careers, finances, and such things. If our first priority is "things above," then our efforts in other areas of life will be influenced by our first priority — Christ. When we successfully "seek first those things above," emphasis on our jobs, careers, finances, etc. will result in greater service to God.

Paul, in Colossians 3:5, mentions some things that must be "put to death" which are earthly. These things are the products of placing emphasis on earthly goals. They include fornication, uncleanness, evil desire, and covetousness which is idolatry.

We are promised eternal life if we can live faithfully to God until death (Revelation 2:10). Most people would pay a great price for something that would lengthen life on earth. Christ makes it possible for every man to have the hope of eternal life (John 3:16). We are asked only to give Him first priority in life. His Word provides the meaning of "first priority." †

Wayne Barrier lives in Florence, Alabama, U.S.A., and works in behalf of World Evangelism.

### Visitation

*Well, I went to visitation  
Against my will, I guess;  
I was hot and tired and  
troubled  
And I wasn't at my best.  
But they told me I was needed  
So I knew I couldn't rest  
With my conscience making  
comments  
That I'm weak and failed the  
test.*

*First I went to see a shut-in  
(She'd been sick for quite a  
while)  
Oh, how she missed the  
Christians,  
And my visit brought a smile!  
Next a brother who'd been  
absent  
Several Sundays in a row;  
He thought nobody missed  
him,  
And he said next time he'd go.*

*Last I called upon a couple  
Who'd just moved into town;  
I invited them to worship  
And they said they'd come  
around.  
Back home again I pondered,  
Why I was feeling fine,  
Visitation's good for others  
But the pleasure was all mine!*

— Author Unknown

“Dost thou love life: Then do not squander time, for that is the stuff that life is made of” (Benjamin Franklin).

Many of us think of time as something which is due us to use as we please, but God does not owe us the dawning of one more new day and not even the conclusion of the present one. Each hour of time is a very special gift from Him. In a sense, at the beginning of each new day He hands this gift to us with the request that we use it wisely.

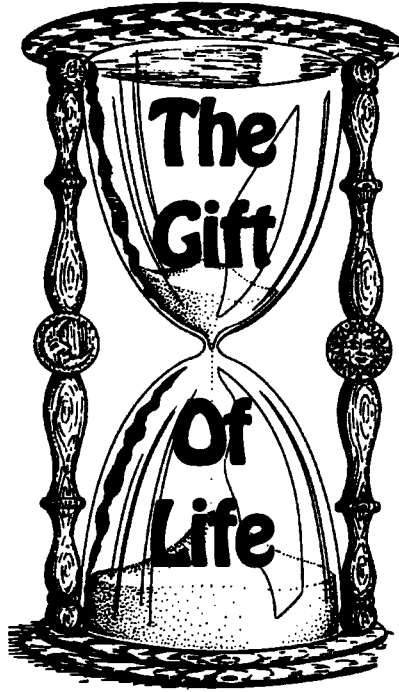
When we hear of a suicide, our usual reaction is the senselessness of throwing away life all at once; but most of us don't mind doing it bit by bit. We fail to realize that to *kill time* is to *murder* it.

Time spent in the “re-creation” of mind and body is not wasted and should be worked into each day's schedule, but so many of our hours

have absolutely nothing to do with recreating of ourselves in relaxation, nor with our duties to God or man. They are simply thrown away.

Think of each day as a large bucket. We may fill it full of baseballs, but it will still hold a box of marbles. At a glance we may say that we have filled all spaces. But wait. The crevices between the balls and the marbles can yet contain a large amount of little shotgun pellets. When we think that **this** has surely completed the task, we are amazed to learn how much sand the bucket can hold. Even when we feel that it cannot possibly hold one more particle of matter, we learn how wrong

we are as we pour into it a gallon of water. In the same sense, we can include so many more worthwhile activities in every busy day by making wise use of spare moments. It has been said that footprints in the



Jane McWhorter



## DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING

sands of time were not made by sitting down.

Just as the workers in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew had to give an account of the wise use of their talents, so must we lay God's gift of each new day back at the Giver's feet that night with a reckoning of the manner in which we have used it. If we are honest, we

are often ashamed of our stewardship of this gift. However, each new day is another opportunity, a fresh chance to try again. Let us not take this priceless gift for granted, because it may never come again. †

**Jane McWhorter is a writer and the wife of a gospel preacher, and they live in Fayette, Alabama, U.S.A.**



### It Only Takes A Minute. . .

- . . . **to stop** and say a few words to the newcomer that you were passing by with a quick "hello".
- . . . **to draw** into a chattering group a person who is obviously feeling like an outsider.
- . . . **to make** the introduction that may not be necessary, but which will demonstrate friendliness.
- . . . **to write** a note to a person who is ill, or who has lost a member of the family.
- . . . **to really listen** to what a child is earnestly trying to tell you.
- . . . **to take** the trouble to pass along the good things you know about others.
- . . . **to build up** a person who is feeling low, or who seems to be worried or discouraged.

— Author Unknown

# Today Will Be Yesterday Tomorrow

Willard Collins

Time is so fleeting that today will be yesterday tomorrow, and this process of change does not take very long. Life is so short.

I recently noticed a large sign in front of a church building which read, "Today Will Be Yesterday Tomorrow." This truth should make each of us determine to live well today. However, some people ruin the present because of worry over what may happen tomorrow.

During World War II

an acquaintance of mine told me that his wife was about to drive him to distraction. The draft was rapidly calling men into the armed forces, and his wife thought he would receive his call any day. Every morning when he left for work she

would cry and say, "I won't get to tell you goodbye many more mornings because you will be gone to the Army." The next morning another day would begin in the same way. When this man had about decided to volunteer for the Army because of this condition at home, the wife realized how miserable she was

making his life. Then she said, "You may be called any day, but until that time comes, I am going to live well each day

so we may enjoy our associations." It so happened that this particular man was never drafted.

Jesus taught His disciples the value of living well one day at a time when He said, "*Take therefore no thought for the morrow; for the*

**"Do today's duty, fight today's temptation; do not weaken or distract yourself by looking forward to things you cannot see."**

**— A.M. Burton**

## DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING

*morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof*" (Matthew 6:34). Paul continued this theme when he taught, "*Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known unto God*" (Philippians 4:6).

Life comes to each individual one day at a time. A. M. Burton, president-emeritus of the Life and Casualty Insurance Company of Nashville, described this plan of God in his book, **The Sunday Visitor**. Burton wrote: "Life does not come to us in lifetimes; it only comes a day at a time. Even tomorrow is never ours until it becomes today. Do today's duty, fight today's temptation; do not weaken or distract yourself by looking forward to things you cannot see."

John Ruskin wrote of filling each day to its brim when he penned, "Let every dawn of morning be to you as the beginning of life and each setting sun be to you as its close."

### A Good Look At Self

Since today will be yesterday tomorrow, each of us needs to take a daily look at self. I once noticed a printed poem hanging on the wall of a home. This poem vividly teaches the need of daily inspection.

"I have to live with myself,  
And so I want to be fit for myself to know.  
I want to be able, as the days go by,  
Always to look myself in the eye.  
I don't want to stand with the setting sun  
And hate myself for the things I have done.  
I can never hide myself from me;  
I see what others may never see;  
I know what others may never know;  
I can't hide myself,  
And so whatever happens,  
I want to be self-respecting and conscience free."

The will of God should be the standard by which we measure ourselves. Christ gave the pattern to His disciples when He said of God's will, "*And he that sent me is with me; the father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him*" (John 8:29). †

**Willard Collins is President-Emeritus of David Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tennessee, U.S.A.**



We must begin learning to distinguish between things trivial, things important, and things all-important. Many of us have become sadly distracted, majoring in minors and minoring in majors.

As one observer has commented, modern man appears to be worshipping his work, working at his play, and playing at his worship.

Take a good, hard look at yourself. Do you allow trivial matters to dominate your life? Are important matters given higher priority than those which are all-important? Are all-important matters relegated to realms of virtual obscurity?

Just what are we talking about? A stain on the tie is trivial; a secure financial future is important; faithfulness to the Lord of life is all-important.

How often is our day made or ruined — determined to be good or

bad — depending upon whether we're having a good hair day, whether or not our favorite shirt is clean, or what the weather is like? How often do we allow a red light or a long line or a critical neighbor to dominate our thinking, our conversation, our very attitude and outlook?

But as grave a problem as this is, there is something more dangerous still. Are we not coming close to exchanging our very souls for the important? When flesh is given prominence over spirit, when living is allowed to supersede eternal life,



Dalton Key

and when time is valued over eternity, we are revealing a disastrous misdirection of focus. There is nothing — **nothing** — more important than faithfulness to God. Jesus expects it; discipleship demands it (Matthew 16:24,25). First century Christians gave their lives in death for it (Revelation 2:10).

Self-preservation is a powerful

## The All- Important



instinct, but it is not the most important thing on earth. We are more than animals, clawing from maddened instinct for survival. We have been blessed with the capacity to look beyond this life, to prioritize matters vying for our attention, and to truly put first things first.

*But will we?*



**Dalton Key is the editor of *Old Paths* and preaches for the North Amarillo Church of Christ in Amarillo, Texas, U.S.A.**

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### If I Had My Child to Raise Over Again

If I had my child to raise over again I'd build self-esteem first and the house later.  
I'd fingerprint more and point the finger less; I'd do less correcting and more connecting.  
I'd take my eyes off my watch and watch with my eyes.  
I would take more hikes and fly more kites; I'd stop playing serious and seriously play.  
I would run through more fields and gaze at more stars; I'd do more hugging and less tugging.  
I'd see the oak tree in the acorn more often; I'd be molded less by the love of power and more by the power of love.

— Diane Loomans from the *Collegeside Family News*



# The High Cost Of Sin

Dayton Keese

The pendulum swing of permissiveness and the attorney's appeal pattern as a way of avoiding justice and punishment have deceived so many hearts that a mass of mankind is fully set on doing evil (see Ecclesiastes 8:11). This article relates to that caliber of creature.

We swim in a sea of uncertainties and unfairness. Every day some soul is gunned down, knocked down, or run around, subtly hooked on the harmful, peer-pressured into

problems, or becomes disturbed in another domestic disaster. Irresponsibility reigns in the work place, where some people keep a better record of "days off" than of duties, want their rights to do wrong, and threaten to sue if anyone dares to question their lazy, loafing, or slovenly style of service (see Colossians 3:22-25).

**Wake up world!** Sin suffers and promiscuity has a price tag! Freeloaders on the road of life end

## DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING

up as captured creatures and hooked humans rather than being fun-filled folks! That assessment rests not on speculation, but on revelation and reality! Listen to the law that will outlast heaven and earth (Matthew 24:35).

***"You have sinned against Jehovah, and be sure your sin will find you out"*** (Numbers 32:23).

*"We commanded you, if any will not work, neither let him eat"* (2 Thessalonians 3:10). *"These also withstand the truth; men corrupted in mind, reprobate concerning the faith. But they shall proceed no further, for their folly shall be evident to all men"* (2 Timothy 3:8,9). *"Be*

*not deceived: God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption . . ."* (Galatians 6:7ff).

May we be sobered by the sentence Scripture imposes on sin and sinners, selecting rather the grace and goodness of God that saves souls through His Son (read carefully 1 John 4:14; Hebrews 5:8ff; Mark 16:15ff; John 14:15; Matthew 28:18-20). †

**Dayton Keesee is the preacher for the Eastside congregation in Midwest City, Oklahoma, U.S.A.**

### Removing God

In June of 1962, the United States Supreme Court heard the case of *Engel Vs. Vitale*. Though many are unfamiliar with this case, they are familiar with its outcome. The result of this case was to remove prayer in public schools. Since 1962, we have seen schools throughout the country forbid even the mention of God's name or His word. They have even removed the Bible from library shelves.

Abraham Lincoln wrote, "The philosophy of the school room in one generation will be the philosophy of the government in the next." Though the government may remove any mention of God in public schools, only you can remove Him from your heart (Psalm 40:8; Isaiah 40:8).

—Rick Eichelberger

\*Note: Suicide among teenagers has tripled during this time; in the last ten years alone, violent crime has increased by more than 40%; people ages 18-25 are the biggest users of illegal drugs.

# ... And If He Repent...

**Tim Nichols**

As a sinful and undeserving man stands before the God of heaven and earth and solicits forgiveness for his sins, he must do so with a perfect willingness to forgive his fellowman of all trespasses of which he will repent (Matthew 11:25). If the offending brother has created great distress; if he has been negligent to repent after repeated warnings; even if he has been properly disfellowshipped by the Lord's people for his offense — he is to be forgiven when he tells us that he has repented.

*“Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him (Luke 17:3,4).*

After seven offenses in one day, one might come to suspect that the repeated expressions of repentance are not genuine. We might be tempted to assume, and to act upon the assumption, that the repetition of offenses implies a lack of intention to cease them. But, in keeping with the consistent Biblical principle that it is our duty to judge *observable actions* rather than *hearts*, it is our duty and need to forgive. God alone knows the hearts of men, and He will bar the gates of heaven against those whose declarations of repentance are hypocritical. Our obligation is to forgive. Notice that our Lord instructs us, under such circumstances, to take heed to ourselves. There is need for the one who has been wronged to be careful that he does not become the one *doing* wrong by failing to receive the one who has confessed his sin and repented.

Who can say what positive and good effect our forgiveness might have upon those who have obtained it through deceit when they see that the children of God are serious about living according to His ways? Since it is true that the goodness of God leads men to repent (Romans 2:4), it follows that the goodness of His people, which is but one expression of the goodness of God, would potentially have the same effect upon those whose hard hearts can be softened by kindness. It may be that forgiveness could have the



## DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING

effect of drawing forth true repentance where none had been. We are, therefore, both obedient to our Lord and potentially helpful to one lost in sin when we refrain from judging the  *motive*  of one who tells us that he has repented. *“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you”* (Ephesians 4:32).

The apostolic penman who rebuked the Corinthian brethren for their failure to withdraw from the openly sinful brother among them, and that guided them to jointly *“deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus”* (1 Corinthians 5:4,5), is the same inspired penman who later — after the brother had repented — admonished them to forgive him, to comfort him, and to confirm their love toward him. The goal was redemption, not vengeance.

*“Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him. For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things. To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ; Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices”* (2 Corinthians 2:6-11).

Notice once again that the instructions given to the Corinthians to withdraw from the sinning brother and *then to forgive* him upon his repentance were given, not only for the benefit of the erring brother (who needed to repent in order to go to heaven), but also in order to test the willingness of the  *Corinthian saints*  to obey God in all things. They would have disobeyed God if they had failed to discipline the brother, and they would have also disobeyed if they had failed to forgive him upon learning of his repentance. Satan has divisive “devices” that he is prepared to use at such a time (anger, malice, etc.), and we can only avoid being subject to them if we know of them and avoid them. The Corinthians apparently passed both tests and demonstrated that truth and love must always be joined together.

In our vigilant stand for the truth may we never forget that the truth directs us to love one another and to forgive. *“Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye”* (Colossians 3:13). †

**Tim Nichols preaches for the church in Keyser, West Virginia, U.S.A.**

# Where's Mother?

Hugo McCord



Our little one lay mid snow white  
sheets  
And smiled in peaceful  
slumber sweet,  
Soon he opened his blue  
eyes wide,  
And saw me standing by his  
side.

His baby lips quivered, loud he cried,  
"Where's Murver?"

Small Anne was playing in the yard.  
She ran too fast and fell so hard.  
Up the steps she ran past me  
With bleeding hands and aching knee.  
Tears in her eyes, she could not see;  
She cried, "Where's Mother?"

When Jack comes in each day from school  
Throws his coat and cap upon a stool,  
Into the kitchen he quickly flies,  
Thinking of cookies and apple pies.  
If she's not there, he always cries,  
"Where's Mother?"

I was their Dad and could not see  
Why they asked for Mother instead of me  
But the next day when I came from town,  
Before I laid my burden down,  
I asked the children standing round,  
"Where's Mother?"

Sometimes one immortal line makes a poem immortal. In Robert Frost's "The Death of a Hired Man," Silas, a former employee, returns to a farm where he had once worked. He was financially broke and physically worn out with

"... nothing to look backward to with pride, and nothing to look forward to with hope..."

His former employer was cool to him. Silas had left him suddenly during the haying season over a quarrel about a raise. Now, in his last desperate hours, he returned here rather than going to a rich brother's house thirteen miles down the road. Then Frost gives the hauntingly powerful line, "Home is the place where when you have to go there, they have to take you in."

The Prodigal Son had one more chance. He had run out of options. In desperation, he turned homeward. What if he had had no home? What if there had been no father to greet him and take him in?

How many people are there in the world that have no haven to go



# Home

Owen Cosgrove



to, no place to lay their head, no place to call home? Several years ago I was occasionally called upon by funeral directors to conduct paupers' funerals in the town where I lived. The indigents were buried in their own section of the cemetery in the cheapest caskets the county could buy. There were no family plots in that part of the burial grounds — only single graves.

I have conducted graveside services where not one survivor known

## THE CHRISTIAN HOME

to the person was present. The grave diggers, the funeral home people, and I carried the casket from the hearse to the grave. The death certificate read: PERMANENT ADDRESS — UNKNOWN.

Thank God for our homes, our memories, our roots, our parents, our brothers and sisters, both in the flesh and in Christ, our schools and public institutions, our communities and friends, our families, our neighbors, our culture, and our foundations of life. Thank God that we can look backward with some satisfaction and forward with hope. Thank God for fathers and mothers who love their children and who work hard to provide for them. Thank God for HOME, home in this life and home in the life to come. And thank Him for the BOOK that tells us how to make our homes what they ought to be.

Frost says that home is something that somehow you do not have to deserve. Maybe so. I appreciate so very much the home my parents provided for me. I hope that the Lord is pleased with the home I have provided for my children. Home is where the heart is. Home is where our hope is. There is no place like home. †

Owen Cosgrove is the preacher for the Northside Church of Christ in Waxahachie, Texas, U.S.A.

### What Matters

My mother says she does  
not care  
About the color of my hair,  
Nor if my eyes be blue or  
brown  
Nor if my nose turns up or  
down,  
It really does not matter.

And Mother says she does  
not care  
If I am dark or if I'm fair,  
Or if I'm thin, or if I'm fat;  
She does not fret o'er  
things like that;  
It really doesn't matter.

But if I cheat or tell a lie  
Or say mean things to make  
folks cry,  
Or if I'm rude or impolite  
And do not try to do the  
right,  
Then that does really  
matter.

It isn't looks that makes one  
great  
But character that seals  
your fate;  
It's what's within your heart,  
you see,  
That makes or mars your  
destiny,  
And that does really  
matter!

— Author Unknown

# The Home

Jack W. Carter

A lot of people are talking about the importance of the home these days. Many of these were doing everything they could to undermine the home not too long ago. I think that the change has come about *as the result of the results*. When the homes of a nation go wrong, the well-being of a nation goes wrong, and there is a lot to fear. Frankly, *people today are scared*. Now, a frantic effort to restore the sanctity of the home is growing daily.

But sadly, not enough are concerned and the concerned are not concerned nearly enough. If we are going to get things back on track, we need to make some drastic changes in our attitudes toward the home.

Consider a glimpse from the past.

"In love of home, the love of a country has its rise."

*Charles Dickens*

"The family is the test of freedom; because the family is the only thing that the free man makes for himself and by himself." *G. K. Chesterton*

"Strength of character may be acquired at work, but the beauty of character is learned at home. There the affections are trained. There the gentle life reaches us, the true heavenly life. In one word, the family circle is the supreme conductor of Christianity." *Henry Drummond*

"Domestic happiness, thou only bliss of Paradise that hast survived the fall." *William Cowper*

*"Through wisdom is an house builded; and by understanding is it established; And by knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all precious and pleasant riches"*  
(Proverbs 24:3,4).

The home must be a high priority item for Christian families. Our world is in trouble today because too many carelessly constructed Christian homes are in trouble. †

Jack W. Carter is the preacher for the church in Castle Rock, Colorado, U.S.A.

# Husbands and Wives

Clarence DeLoach, Jr.

*"... as heirs together of the grace of life" (1 Peter 3:7).*

One of the greatest paragraphs in the New Testament on the husband-wife relationship is found in 1 Peter 3:1-7. Peter focuses upon three essential ingredients of marital bliss:

- Submission
- Consideration
- Cooperation

Husbands are reminded of four areas of responsibility:

1. Physical sharing: *"dwell with them"*
2. Intellectual sharing: *"according to knowledge"*
3. Emotional sharing: *"giving honor unto the wife"*
4. Spiritual sharing: *"that your prayers be not hindered"*

The key to a successful and fulfilling marriage is the commitment of two people — minds, hearts, bodies, and lives to each other.

In the Christian family, husbands and wives are *"heirs together of the grace of life."* When both submit to Christ and to each other, marriage becomes an enriching experience.

In view of what Peter said, take inventory of your marriage by answering these questions:

1. Am I helping or harming my spouse's efforts to reach heaven?
2. Am I contributing to a healthy atmosphere for spiritual growth in my mate?
3. Are we growing in understanding of each other's personalities, moods, etc.?
4. Am I learning to be more sensitive to my partner's feelings and emotions, or do I take him/her for granted?
5. Is this marriage enriching or ensnaring — and am I causing either?

*How is your marriage faring in the light of this check list?*



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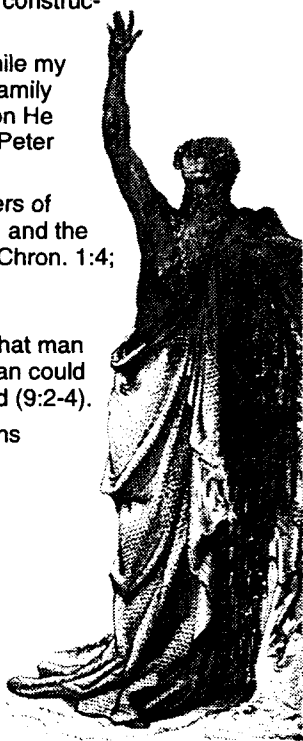
# Who Am I?

*Can you identify me? Read each clue and think carefully. If you guess my name after the first clue, give yourself a score of 100 points. If you know who I am only after the fifth clue, your score is 60, etc. When you are sure of my identity, look up the passages of scripture following each clue to verify the facts from God's word. I am a good example of faithfulness during very bad times.*

1. **100** When I was born my father predicted that I would be a comfort to my family (? 5:29).
2. **90** Three sons were born to me (5:32).
3. **80** By inspiration I was called "perfect in my generations", and it was said that I "walked with God" (6:9).
4. **70** There was such evil on the earth during my time that God was grieved at His heart that He had made man (6:6,7).
5. **60** I did "according to all that God commanded" me to do (6:22).
6. **50** I undertook and completed a tremendous construction project, by faith (6:14-22).
7. **40** God waited, with great longsuffering, while my work was being completed, so that my family and I could be saved from the destruction He had promised to bring on the wicked (1 Peter 3:20).
8. **30** I was mentioned by name by these writers of Scripture: Moses, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Peter, and the writers of Hebrews and 1 Chronicles (1 Chron. 1:4; isa. 54:9; Eze. 14:14; Hebrews 11:7; 1 Peter 3:20).
9. **20** God made a covenant with me, saying that man would be feared by animals, and that man could eat the flesh of animals but not the blood (9:2-4).
10. **10** My family and I saw a sign in the heavens which was the seal of God's covenant (Genesis 9:12,13).

**My Score** \_\_\_\_\_

*See answer on inside back cover.*



# Jumping Jehoshaphat

Jack Harriman

King Jehoshaphat made a social visit to King Ahab (2 Chronicles 18). This seems out of place since Jehoshaphat was a very good man, while Ahab was totally corrupt.

While there, Ahab asked Jehoshaphat to help him liberate Ramoth Gilead — a northern city in Israel which had been captured by the Syrians. Ahab knew the value of getting close to someone who is close to God. Surprisingly, Jehoshaphat agreed. But his conscience did not totally agree, so he requested confirmation from God.

Four hundred prophets of Baal said, *“Go up, for God will deliver it into the king’s hand.”* But Jehoshaphat still could not get the consent of his conscience and he asked for a prophet of the Lord. Micaiah was brought from prison and asked to advise. *“No, don’t go. Your armies will be defeated and Ahab will be killed.”*

But they went! As a precaution, Ahab disguised himself as an ordinary soldier. But a Syrian sol-

dier shot an arrow at random, and it struck Ahab between the joints of his armor, and he died — proving again that one cannot hide from God. That which seems altogether casual is done by the determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God.

Jehoshaphat went home must the wiser. The prophet Jehu met him with this rhetorical question, *“Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the Lord?”* (2 Chronicles 19:2). This is the sort of thing that the writer of Second Corinthians had in mind when he said, *“Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers”* (2 Corinthians 6:14)

One prophet of the Lord was worth more than 400 prophets of Baal — illustrating again the value of those who preach the **truth, all the truth, and nothing but the truth.** †

**Jack Harriman is a gospel preacher working with the Center Street Church of Christ in Fayetteville, Arkansas, U.S.A.**



# Paul's Last Days

Harvey Porter

Paul is the best-known person in the New Testament, besides our Lord Jesus Christ. He occupies the most prominent place in the Acts of the Apostles, the history book of the New Testament. He wrote more letters to the churches than any other writer. He is a favorite with all of us as students of the Bible. He was so very Christ-like in his living and in what he wrote by inspiration.

Dr. Luke was a traveling companion with him on his second and third missionary journeys. In the last letter Paul wrote, 2 Timothy, he stated, *"only Luke is with me."* That means that Luke was with him while he was in prison in Rome for the last years of his life.

History seems to indicate that both Peter and Paul were put to death by the wicked emperor, Nero, in Rome. Many Bible students have wondered why Luke did not record the circumstances of Paul's death. Instead of telling of the death of Paul, Luke ends Acts on a joyful note. He wrote, *"For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. Boldly and without hindrance he preached the king-*



## BIBLE CHARACTERS

*dom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ*" (Acts 28:30,31).

The Roman government allowed Paul to stay in "*his own rented house.*" The Romans no doubt knew that he was a political prisoner because of the unfounded charges the Jews had made against him. Christianity was no threat to the Roman empire, just as it is no threat to any government today. Luke leads us to believe that many Christians whom Paul had taught visited him while he was in prison. Paul was much loved, even though some in the church were against him.

Luke said that he preached the kingdom of God boldly and without hindrance. This was characteristic of his whole life. Wherever he was, he preached. Preaching was his life, his dedication, his compulsion. He wrote, "*Woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel*" (1 Corinthians 9:16). Faithful gospel preachers love to preach. Faithful Christians love to hear preaching. Jesus loved preaching. Paul said, "*I shunned not to declare unto you the whole counsel of God*" (Acts 20:27), and "*I kept back nothing that was profitable to you*" (Acts 20:20). When he wrote to the Roman Christians, he said, "*I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are in Rome also*" (Romans 1:15). Paul loved preaching and showing the

unsearchable riches of Christ. Only the worldly make fun of preaching and look down on it.

Luke's last words of the great book of Acts were "*and (Paul) taught about the Lord Jesus Christ.*" All of our preaching and teaching should center on our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul said, "*... Christ in you the hope of glory*" (Colossians 1:27). He further wrote to the Colossian Christians, "*so then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught . . .*" (Colossians 2:6,7). He also said, "*For me to live is Christ . . .*" (Philippians 1:21). He could have said, "For me to preach and teach is Christ."

I think Luke wanted to conclude his history of the early church and Paul on a very encouraging note. Paul ended his life doing what he loved best — preaching and teaching the Lord Jesus Christ.

*"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day..."* (2 Timothy 4:7,8). †

**Harvey Porter is a long-time preacher for the Montgomery Boulevard congregation in Albuquerque, New Mexico, U.S.A.**

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## PROVERBS 17:22

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One preacher gave this explanation as to why he was so long-winded. He said, "My mother had a long delivery when I was born, and it has affected me ever since."

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It is said that one out of four people is mentally imbalanced. Think of your three closest friends. If they seem okay, then you're the one.

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An elder confronted one of the deacons and said, "I hear you went to the ballgame instead of to church this morning." The deacon indignantly replied, "Well, that's not so! And I have the fish to prove it!"

*Used car salesman to customer:*  
"Not only does this car have low mileage, but most of that was while it was being towed." —Bob Thaves

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Wise old uncle Virgil says that some folks are a lot like a loaf of French bread — they have an awful lot of crust.

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A foolish husband remarked to his wife, "Honey, you just stick to the washing, ironing, cooking, and scrubbing. No wife of mine is going to work!"

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It was probably the same husband who said, "I have a cold or something in my head."

His wife answered, "I bet it's a cold."

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A preacher was fired recently. He went to dinner with one of the members. When he was asked if he would like some more corn, he passed his glass.

## PROVERBS 17:22

Supposedly God and Adam were talking in the Garden. Adam asked God about Eve:

*Adam:* "God, why did You make Eve so **beautiful**?"

*God:* "For you to love, Adam."

*Adam:* "Well, God, why did you make Eve so **soft**?"

*God:* "For you to love her, Adam."

*Adam:* "Well, God, why did you make Eve so **dumb**?"

*God:* "So she could love **you**, Adam."



Young Billy says that his mother's age is her own business, but that she's been in business a l-o-o-o-ng time."



R. M. Cornelius has identified the "Seven Ages of Man"—

- 6 weeks — all systems go
- 6 years — all systems "No!"
- 16 years — all systems know
- 26 years — all systems glow
- 36 years — all systems owe
- 56 years — all systems status quo
- 76 years — all systems slow



Despite inflation, a penny for some

people's thoughts is still a fair price.



Overheard from a child: "It's hard to hear in our church building. Daddy said it's because the agnostics are so terrible."



The older generation thought nothing of getting up at 6:00 o'clock in the morning — and the younger generation doesn't think much of it either.



A woman was bitten by a dog suspected of having rabies. After the seriousness of this was explained to her, she began to write in a notebook. The young doctor asked if she was making out her will. "Oh, no!" she said. "just in case I've been infected, I'm making out a list of the people I want to bite before I die."



A preacher resigned, saying that Jesus had called him to another church. The congregation stood up and sang, "What a Friend We Have in Jesus."

# A Way That Is Right And Cannot Be Wrong

Frequently heard quotes      If others are right, is the church of Christ safe?      If the church of Christ is right, are others safe?      The Bible is right - Note what it says on the subject

One church is as good as another	Yes	No	Matt. 16:18 Eph. 4:4-5; Acts 2:47; I Cor. 1:10;
Can be saved inside/outside of church	Yes	No	Acts 2:47; Acts 20:28; Eph. 2:16; 1:22
Just live a good life	Yes	No	Acts 10:2 cp. 11:14; Mk. 16:15-16;
One is saved by faith <i>only</i>	Yes	No	Jms. 2:14-26; Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:37-38
There is nothing in a name	Yes	No	Acts 4:12; Exo. 20:7; Acts 11:26
Instrumental music in worship is optional	Yes	No	Eph. 5:19-20; Col. 3:16; Gal. 1:8-9; Rev. 22:18
One can be sprinkled or immersed	Yes	No	Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:12; Eph. 4:5; Acts 8:38-39
One can be saved without being baptized	Yes	No	Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38; I Pet. 3:21; Gal. 3:27
Once one is saved, he is always saved	Yes	No	I Cor. 9:27; Gal. 5:4; I Cor. 10:12; Heb. 10:26ff
Salvation is predestined	Yes	No	Matt. 7:21; Jno. 3:16; Lk. 13:3
Weekly communion optional	Yes	No	Acts 20:7; Rom. 10:17; Heb. 8:5



# Don't Limit Yourself To Your Business

Earl D. Edwards

## Introduction:

1. Philippians 2:1-4.
2. The Bible tells us to "*attend to your own business*" (1 Thessalonians 4:11). Also 2 Thessalonians 3:11; 1 Timothy 5:13; 1 Peter 4:15.
3. But we frequently distort this Biblical teaching —
  - A. To the point of allowing a neighbor to be beaten or raped without helping.
    1. Example: A lady was raped and killed in the late 1960's in New York City, and a journalist found 36 witnesses who did nothing to help her!
  - B. To the point of allowing a brother to sin so as to condemn his soul without intervening (because "It's none of my business").
4. In this passage Paul says the real Christian will not limit himself to just his business. He/We won't do so because —
  - I. We have been so greatly blessed "*in Christ*" — verse 1.
    - A. We have been blessed by Him who cared for our business when we couldn't. These blessings include:
      1. Encouragement — "*in Christ*" — see Romans 6:3,4 and 1 Peter 1:5, "*shielded by God's power.*"

## CHARTS AND OUTLINES

2. Consolation of love — even in moments of crisis we receive comfort *“in all our troubles,”* (2 Corinthians 1:3ff).
  3. Fellowship of the Spirit — see Acts 5:32 and Romans 8:26, where we find *“the Spirit intercedes for us with groans.”*
- II. Since we have been so greatly blessed, we should be characterized by *“the same love”* (verse 2), thus making Paul’s joy complete, see 1:4.
- A. Negatively, that means removing: *“selfishness or empty conceit,”* verse 3. See also Romans 11:20.
  - B. Positively, that means: *“to act with humility of mind.”* See also Matthew 11:28ff.
    1. Considering others as *“more important than myself,”* verse 3.
    2. Looking out *“also for the interests of others,”* verse 4.
      - a. Do look out for “ours,” yes.
      - b. But also others’ interests must be in my mind.
        1. That involves recognizing his validity before God.
        2. That involves greeting him, learning about him.
      - c. Christianity is a religion of putting others’ interest before self.
        1. Christ did, 2:5-11.
        2. Elders must, Acts 20:28; Hebrews 13:17.
        3. Preachers must, 2 Timothy 4:1,2 and 1 Timothy 5:20.
        4. All Christians must, Philippians 2:4. See also 1 John 3:17; Galatians 6:10; Genesis 4:9 (brother’s keeper).

### Conclusion:

1. It is true that I must avoid the extreme of being “nosey.”
2. But when I enter into a spiritual family with others, in a sense I become my “brother’s keeper.”
3. Example: When a man and woman get married, each one’s business becomes the other’s. Just so, bound together in God’s kingdom, my brother’s business becomes, to some degree, my business.



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# Seven Things The Lord Hates

J. C. Choate

## Introduction:

1. Did you know that God can hate? He has the capacity to hate as well as to love.
2. The word hate here means to detest, to abhor, and that which is abominable.
3. The next word that is used in this text is the word abominable, which also carries with it the idea to loathe, detest, to abhor, to despise.
4. Surely there must be more than seven things that the Lord hates, but the word seven is often used to mean that which is full and complete.
5. Certainly the seven things mentioned here would be some of the baser things that the Lord hates.
6. If God hates these, what should our attitude be toward them?

## Discussion:

### I. A Proud Look.

1. This means to show oneself above others, to want to be preeminent, to be arrogant, haughty.
2. It is always used in the Scriptures in a bad sense (2 Timothy 3:2; James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5).
3. To the contrary, the Bible teaches that we should be humble (Matthew 5:5).

### II. A Lying Tongue.

1. The telling of an untrue statement with the intent to deceive, a falsehood.
2. With some people in some parts of the world, lying has become an accepted thing.
3. The Bible says that liars shall be cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 21:8).
4. Harsh judgment is pronounced on liars, because when trust is destroyed, there is no foundation on which to build a relationship.



## CHARTS AND OUTLINES

5. The opposite of a lie is truth, honesty, and integrity in all that we speak.
6. The Lord's Word is truth (John 17:17); the truth is that which saves us eternally (John 8:32).

### **III. Hands That Shed Innocent Blood.**

1. This is murder through an act of hatred, revenge, cruelty, or war.
2. A work of the flesh (Galatians 5:21).
3. Murderers will be cast into hell (Revelation 21:8).

### **IV. A Heart That Deviseth Wicked Imaginations.**

1. This is a wicked heart, one that is ever thinking, planning, scheming, and developing something evil (Matthew 15:19,20).
2. The Lord requires us to have pure hearts (Matthew 5:8).

### **V. Feet That Are Swift In Running To Mischief.**

1. This has reference to a person who is running about causing trouble, stirring up division and hatred.
2. This may be done through gossip, meddling in the other fellow's business, etc. (Acts 13:10).
3. God wants us to be peacemakers (Matthew 5:9).

### **VI. A False Witness That Speaketh Lies.**

1. One who in an official capacity as a witness bears a false report.
2. The violation of one of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:10).
3. Christ said that this sin proceeds out of the heart (Matthew 15:19,20).
4. To be people of God, we must keep our word (Matthew 5:37).

### **VII. He That Soweth Discord Among Brethren.**

1. This is one who causes division, conflict, problems.
2. Christ prayed that we might all be one (John 17:20,21).
3. Paul said that there should be no division among us (1 Corinthians 1:10).
4. Paul also said that we should mark those who cause division (Romans 16:17,18).

### **Conclusion:**

1. If God hates these things, to engage in such practices is to be opposed to God.
2. All such people will be lost, if they do not repent.
3. We should remain free of these evils and hate them even as God does. †

**J. C. Choate is editor-in-chief of *The Voice of Truth International*.**

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FROM THE HEART OF . . .

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*A street scene in London, England. The ancient streets and buildings in London have been preserved so that many streets look exactly as they did two or three hundred years ago.*

# **United Kingdom**

## **of Great Britain and Northern Ireland**

**Keith Sisman**

(Some of this information is controversial, but I believe it is probably correct. I will happily send a bibliography should you require this. KS)

### **Ancient History**

The Greeks under Brutus (Brytys in Welsh) in approximately 1,200 BC landed in Britain (named after Brutus). These early settlers (who seemed to be monotheistic and believers in the resurrection, and

## FROM THE HEART OF...

would later start the Druid religion) were able to proceed north after the receding Ice Age (caused by the Flood). Brutus was able to trace his ancestors back to Adam via Japheth. Brutus built a city called New Troy on the northern banks of the Thames, renamed Kaerlud (meaning "city of Lud") in approximately 70 BC. Again renamed by the Romans as Londinium and hence London. The early pre-Roman British were not crude pagans as recorded by most historians but were, as can be expected from their Greek background, quite advanced. They were literate, able to build roads, and had communications and trade with Europe. These early Celtic British sacked Rome in 390 BC.

Christianity arrived in approximately AD 37, and at least one British monarch had been baptized by AD 58.

The early Celtic church was very evangelistic, making contact with most of Europe and into Italy. The Bible they used was the Old Latin Version (pre-Jerome), and it is

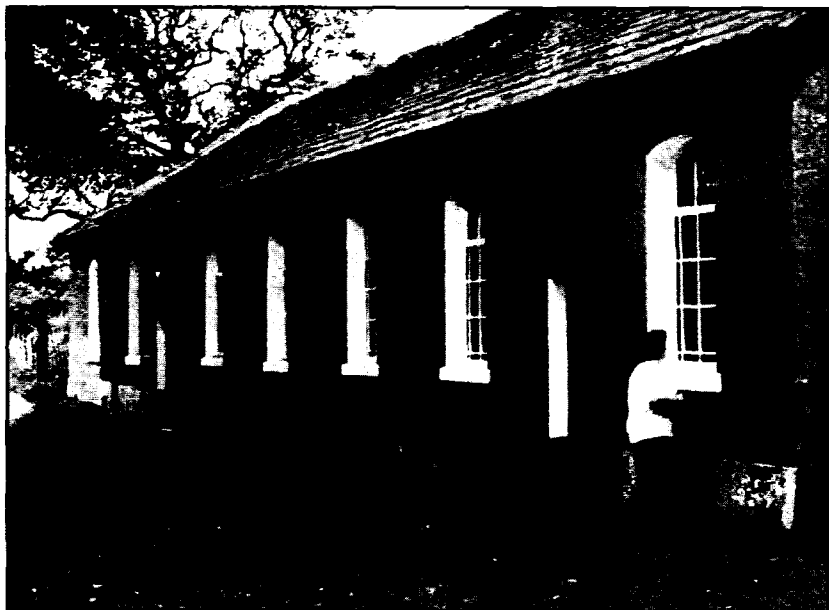


***Westminster Abbey, the most famous church building in Great Britain, has been the coronation site and burial place for many of her monarchs.***

through this version that Acts 8:37 and 1 John 5:7 have come down to us. Eventually, by the ninth century, the Vulgate of Jerome became the English Bible.

The Roman Catholics 'evangelized' England under 'Saint' Augustine during the early seventh century. The Celtic Christians did not take kindly to Augustine, and somewhere in the region of 1200

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***This old meeting house at Tottlebank, Cumbria, England was used by the church until 1669 when the congregation went into apostasy. This pre-dates the restoration movement in the Americas by one hundred and fifty years.***

Celt Christians died under the instructions of Augustine.

Possibly the first British Bible translation appeared around 992 under Abbot AElfric, but it might not have been the complete Bible. The British have never taken kindly to the Pope and Latin Bibles, and it was around 1380 that the Wycliffe Bible (both Old and New Testaments) was translated into English from the Vulgate, to the dismay of Rome. This was the start of the English Reformation.

Tyndale's New Testament first appeared during 1525 and this was the first translation from the Greek into English. This English version did much damage to the cause of Rome and set the path for the 'King James' Bible which first appeared in 1611. It is still the only popular Bible in print (apart from the New King James Version) which uses both the Greek Received Text with Western Latin Readings (of the Received Text Type).

The church gained new ground

## FROM THE HEART OF . . .

after 1640 and many congregations were formed after this date. England, during this post civil war period, was puritan. One of Oliver Cromwell's officers, a Henry Dene, started many congregations, including those at Warboys, Fenstanton, Peterborough. This was a good two hundred years before Alexander Campbell proved to be so influential in the Restoration Movement in America!

By 1860 there were more than 100 congregations of the church in England alone. Growing through dissention and division which resulted in the beginning of the Christian Church and the Disciples of Christ, the church numbered more than 16,000 members by 1930. The years of World War II proved to be devastating, and at the close of the war the church was at its weakest point, numerically and financially.

### More Recent Church History

In the decade following, American missionaries began to come to Great Britain. Many of the present churches are of American origin and most, if not all, of our evangelists are supported from the States.

Though 67 congregations meet in England and Scotland, with 4 in

Ireland, the total membership numbers less than 2000. Many congregations are little more than two or three families meeting together, often in the homes of members.

### London

There are five congregations in London. **Kentish Town** has been going for many years. They built and paid for their building, which is 125 years old. It is located at Hope Chapel, Prince of Wales Road, Kentish Town, London.

**Lewisham** meets at 98 Slaithwait Road, Lewisham, London. Christopher Sealey and Malcom Armstrong are the evangelists.

Pete Hodge is the evangelist for **Newcross**, a typical inner city congregation. Pete helps to organize the Dawlish Fellowship each year. Dawlish is a small English seaside resort on the south coast. About 100 people are expected in 1997 (the first week of April). This is great for meeting other Christians, for fellowship and lectures.

**Wembley**, meeting at 92 Barnhill Road, Wembley, London, with 102 members, is one of our largest congregations. John Griffiths and Marc Veary are the Evangelists.

**Wimbledon** meets at The Chapel, Wimbledon YMCA, 200 The Broadway, Wimbledon,

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London. Alasdair MacKay and Andrew Kalista are the evangelists.

There are other congregations at **Dawlish, Peterborough, Skelmersdale, Tunbridge Wells, etc.**

In Glasgow, Scotland (Pop. 1.9

million in the area) there were two congregations in the south, before the Northside church was started in 1988. John Galloway and Alastair Ferrie shifted their evangelistic efforts from the south in order to



***These are students at the British Bible School, Corby, England: Dondon Buo, Philippines; Leopold Gordon, Canada; Inainara Murmane, Latvia; Linda Wigington, Florida; Liga Lochmele, Latvia; Roy Wigington, Florida; Ilona Shakinko, Belarus; Mitchell Saxton, Michigan; Daniel Ogubic, Nigeria.***

***Evangelists from the Corby area serve as volunteer teachers in the school, with occasional courses taught by men from abroad. Graduates from this 2-year school preach the Word in more than 20 countries.***

***In addition to the intensive study of the Bible, students participate in three campaigns each year and make annual visits to the British Museum in London.***

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follow up on canvassing of Bible course leaflets that had been distributed as ground-work. There have been 30 baptisms, and the church continues to grow.

Because of the small state of our congregations, most men preach and evangelise. The only part in worship I do not do is song leading, and that because I can't sing!

The congregation which my family and I attend is located in Eye, a suburb of Petersborough, 80 miles north of London in one of Britain's fastest growing cities. Patrick Boynes is the evangelist. Christians have been meeting here for seven years, and the number has doubled from 10 members to 20 since 1992.

Each Wednesday we conduct a Children's Bible Club at the local Community Centre and have over 20 children who come on a regular basis. Most of these are from families who are not yet associated with the congregation. Every few months we have Parents' Evenings to which we have invited the mums and dads to see what the children have been doing and to hear a message from the word of God. Involvement with the local community is seen as being a vital part of reaching out among them.

A guest speaker for a well-advertised gospel meeting in Britain may be just an ordinary member of

another congregation. Some of our evangelists/ministers support themselves through secular employment, both full and part time.

In England we have only two congregations with elders, and only one of those with deacons. So the role of the man in a British congregation can be quite a busy one.

We have a free video tape lending library, run by Sarah and myself, using video tapes provided by the World Video Bible School, Buda, Texas. The tapes are available to congregations or individual Christians. This is an excellent work, getting good quality teaching into both churches and homes, ideal for small congregations where there is no full time or experienced teacher and also for combating some of the liberal teaching that is around.

One thing we lack over here is good quality books. Many of the books that are in circulation originate from liberal sources. Some brethren, myself included, import books direct from the USA, but this is the exception. This is something which I plan to put some time into over the next few years, in making good materials accessible over here so that individual Christians can develop their own reference libraries. †

**Keith Sisman is a Christian businessman living in Huntingdon, Cambs. England.**



There are basically three general views to consider concerning the question of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, all of which have slight variations, but we should be most concerned with what the Bible says.

**First View:** the Spirit Himself indwells and can do anything He wants with a Christian, despite what the Bible teaches.

**Second View:** the Spirit only indwells representatively by the Scriptures you believe and not actually a measure of the Holy Spirit Himself.

**Third View:** the Spirit Himself indwells the Christian but is faithful to do only what the Word says He can do with you.

The Bible will support only one view, because each view is opposed to the other. The third one is certain.

Five New Testament letters affirm that the Holy Spirit does dwell in us and there are many other Scriptures which allude to the fact:

Romans 8:9

1 Corinthians 6:19

1 Thessalonians 4:8

2 Timothy 1:6,14

1 John 3:24; 4:4,13

This spiritual concept is not very obvious to us who are so physical because of our lack of awareness to our spiritual well-being and needs. However, this should not surprise us because even atheists



## FROM THE HEART OF . . .

affirm that we are both physical and spiritual beings when they refer to the human spirit, but atheists are most confusing when giving opinions on spiritual needs and health. However, the Bible is certain about our spirituality, as well as our spiritual health and needs. So just because we don't *see* the Holy Spirit or *feel Him physically*, doesn't mean He isn't there indwelling us, the Christian. The Bible claims He does. History shows that people of all ages have exhibited the need to pray and worship, therefore confirming the existence of a *human spirit*. Why, then, should we doubt the Bible's claim of the Holy Spirit's desire and ability to dwell within us, especially since the Bible also points to the following reasons for His indwelling:

**First**, to assure us and give us a guarantee for our salvation by trusting obedience to the Word of God (Acts 2:38,39; 2 Corinthians 1:22).

**Second**, to comfort or strengthen us (John 14:16).

**Third**, to write upon our heart the law of God (Jeremiah 31:31-33; John 15:26).

**Fourth**, to offer and dispense loving control over us as an adopted child-servant (Romans 8:9-17; 1 Corinthians 14:32). That is, He leads us with the Word as He wants, in cooperation with our spirit (Romans 8:14; 1 Corinthians

12:11).

**Fifth**, to teach us with His "anointing" (John 2:20-27).

**Sixth**, to fill us with righteousness, joy and peace, feeding and watering us, spiritually (1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 5:8).

**Seventh**, to intercede in our prayers when we are unsure about how to pray (Romans 8:26-28).

With so many reasons to indwell us as a Christian, it is easy to see that there might be confusion about how He fulfills the reasons for indwelling us. Each of these seven reasons needs study in order to be understood clearly, and we can spend hours on each one of them. But this does not mean that the reasons are false or unimportant. On the contrary, each reason for the Spirit's indwelling is essential for our growth in the knowledge and graciousness of Jesus (2 Peter 3:18).

How, in the first place, does He indwell us? How does this essential and almost mysterious inner relationship begin? Acts 5:32 teaches that upon our faithful obedience to the initial commands of the Gospel, the Word of God, He is given to us. It is the wording of the Bible which He uses to tell us of His presence, and to convince us of His work; it is the Holy Scriptures which describe His fruit, for which we eagerly look.

In Galatians 5:16-26 we learn that the Holy Spirit is to be *walked*

## FROM THE HEART OF . . .

*with and lived in.* The Word shows us *where* we are to be walking, that is, *how we are to be living and fashioning our lifestyle.* So it is an obvious link to see that the Spirit works and indwells in us by using the Word, and by our trusting cooperation with the Bible, the Holy Spirit abides in us.

The new Testament itself shows a big change in how the Spirit *worked* through the early history of Christianity, but not in *how* he indwells. **The way in which he worked and the fact of His indwelling are two different subjects.** The Christians in the first century did not have the written Word, so they needed confirmation of what was spoken, in order to prove that it was true. This confirmation by miracles was the miraculous way the Spirit worked (Mark 16:20), but after the spoken Word became written, there was no need for further confirmation of the Word; it had been proved true beyond a shadow of doubt. So the *miraculous way* in which the Spirit worked was gradually changed; however, the *indwelling* of the Spirit is still very real, for the reasons numbered above. See also Acts 8:14-21; 1 Corinthians 13:8-12; and James 1:25 for a clear view on the cessation of the miraculous way God's Spirit worked.

The Spirit's early work for

Christians *without* the New Testament was miraculous, but the Spirit's latter work for Christians *with* the New Testament was as natural as the fruit that grows on a tree. That is why God told us about the Spirit's character growing in us, as if it were like fruit (Galatians 5:22,23).

Please remember, just because God changes the picture frame, doesn't mean He wants to change the picture! May we prayerfully let the Spirit indwell and involve us in His work of changing our character. Meditate and live the command, "*with all prayer and supplication praying at all seasons in the Spirit, and watching thereunto in all perseverance and supplication for all the saints*" (Ephesians 6:18). Because "*the supplications of a righteous man availeth much in its working*" (James 5:16).

New Testament teaching on the work of God's Spirit in the Christian emphasizes *the development of Christ's character*, not the development of *supernatural power*. After all, *the power to change a sinner into a saint is far more astounding and beneficial than the power to change a lame man into a walking one* (Matthew 9:1-8). †

**Jeff Wealand is an evangelist for the church in Skelmersdale, England.**

## ANSWERS TO PUZZLES

### *Verse Search* — 13 (from page 49)

1. That His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father.
2. The Feast of the Passover, the supper which was eaten before Jesus' betrayal.
3. The devil.
4. The Father had given all things; He; God; was going; God.
5. He began to wash the disciples' feet.
6. Peter.
7. He knew who would betray Him.
8. To give them an example of attitude of service toward each other. No. No.
9. So that when it happened they would believe that He was the Messiah.
10. Yes.
11. "Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in Him."
12. To love one another.
13. That we are His disciples.
14. "As I have loved you."
15. "Lord, where are You going?"
16. "Where I am going; but you shall follow Me afterward."
17. Lay down his life for.
18. "Most assuredly, I say to you, the rooster shall not crow till you have denied Me three times.

**Who  
Am  
I?**

(from  
page  
93)



Noah

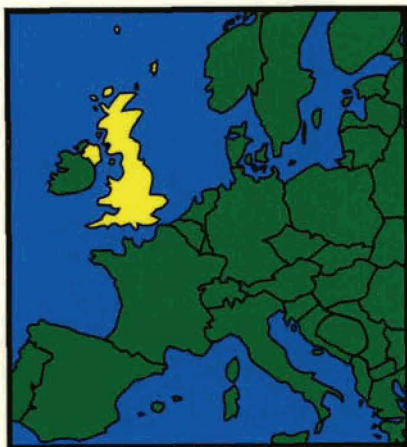
### **The Book of 1 Thessalonians**

May the Lord make you increase  
and abound in love to one another.

(page 24)

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:**

## United Kingdom



**Government:** Constitutional Monarchy

**Queen:** Queen Elizabeth II

**Prime Minister:** John Major

### Secular Facts:

**Location:** Off the northwest coast of Europe, across the English Channel.

**Land Mass:** 93,602 Sq. Mi.

**Population:** 58,000,000.

**Major Cities:** London, Birmingham, Manchester, Cambridge and Oxford. Edinburgh (Scotland), Cardiff (Wales), Belfast (Northern Ireland), and Dublin (Southern Ireland).

**Weather:** Because of the Gulf Stream, pleasantly warm in summer, cold in winter; much cloudiness and rain.

**Language:** English.

**Literacy:** 97%.

**Religion:** 47% Anglican, but the majority do not participate actively. 9% are Roman Catholic; 3% are Muslim and this is the fastest growing religion.

**Economy:** Industries: steel, metals, vehicles, textiles, electronics, shipbuilding and aircraft. Crops are grains, sugar beets, fruits and vegetables; cattle, pigs and sheep are the primary livestock. Britain is involved in World Money Markets and International Banking.

**Monetary Unit:** Pound.

### The Church:

**Congregations:** England and Scotland, 67 churches with a membership of 1,835. Northern and Southern Ireland, 4 congregations, 120 members. The largest group numbers about 100. There are approximately 15 full-time evangelists.

**History:** Restoration preaching in Great Britain preceded the work of Alexander Campbell and his contemporaries in the United States. England alone claimed more than 100 congregations by the mid 1800's and the number peaked in 1930 with more than 16,000 members. However, World War II left the church at its weakest point numerically and financially. The continued growth of humanistic teachings and emphasis in life have further robbed the British people of interest in religion.

**Modern History:** In the early 1950's a number of American missionaries settled in Great Britain. Among these were men who helped to lead the churches away from restrictions of "one cup", circuit preachers, etc. Today, most preachers are part-time, self-supported local brethren.

British Bible School in Corby, England is instrumental in training preachers.