

V THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL

Joshua Gootam



Sunny David



Philemon Rajah



P.R. Swamy



Francis David



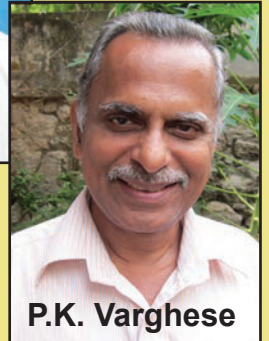
Rajanayagam



Earnest Gill



B. Arjunan



P.K. Varghese

**Long-term workers In
Radio, TV and Literature
among the 1.3 billion
souls of India**

A Set Time

Ann Gilbreth

When
At last
You find me
Sleeping in death,
Do not feel sorrow.
My body is not me!
I will have already gone —
Escorted by angels on High —
To that Paradise of God to wait
For that appearing of Jesus, my Lord,
Who will take His people to glory with Him.

A Glorious Church

Ephesians 5:25-27

Matthew 16:18

JESUS LOVED & GAVE HIMSELF

- HE PROMISED - Matthew 16:18
- HE GAVE HIMSELF - Ephesians 5:25
- HE PURCHASED - Acts 20:28
- HE IS HEAD - Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18
- HE WILL SAVE - Ephesians 5:23



HE SANCTIFIED & CLEANSED IT

- BY WORD - John 17:17; 15:3
- WORD PREACHED - Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:36-41,
- CORINTHIANS - 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Acts 18:8
- WASHED: WATER & BLOOD - Acts 22:16; Rev. 1:5
- REDEEMED - 1 Peter 1:18-19



A GLORIOUS CHURCH

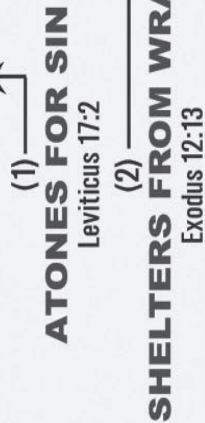
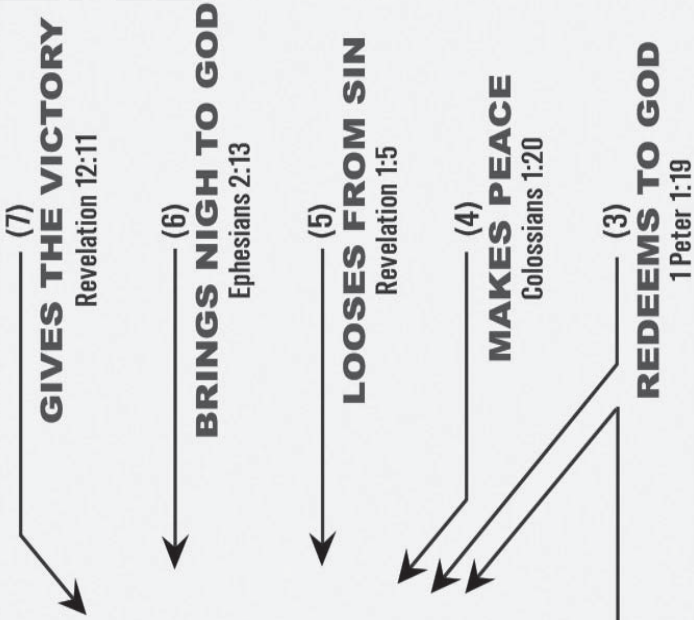
- GLORIOUS - FREE FROM SIN - Galatians 1:3-5
- NOT HAVING SPOT (WITHOUT MORAL BLEMISH) OR WRINKLE (FLAWLESS) - James 1:27; 2 Peter 3:14
- PROVISION TO MAINTAIN - 1 John 1:7
- GLORY TO GOD - Ephesians 3:21



IT SHOULD BE HOLY & WITHOUT BLEMISH

- HOLY (SEPARATE) - Col. 1:21-22; 3:12-13
- WITHOUT FAULT - Philippians 2:14-16
- HE IS OUR EXAMPLE - 1 Peter 1:15-16
- HOLY NATION - 1 Peter 2:8
- TEMPLE IS HOLY - 1 Crinthians 3:16-17

The Blood of Christ



A Great Way to spell **CROSS** **V-I-C-T-O-R-Y**

THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL

STAFF:

Editor: Byron Nichols
Associate Editors: Jerry Bates
Louis Rushmore
Layout Editors: Betty Burton Choate
Bonnie Rushmore
Typesetting: Gay Nichols
Computer Consultant: Bradley S. Choate

Please send articles for publication and changes of address to Byron Nichols in Springfield, with both old and new addresses, so that our records can be corrected.

STAFF WRITERS:

George Akpabli	Gary C. Hampton
Felix O. Aniamalu	Jack Harriman
Rex Banks	Parker Henderson
Wayne Barrier	Gordon Hogan
Paula Bates	Mike Ireland
Roy Beasley	Wayne Jackson
Mike Benson	Ancil Jenkins
Maxie B. Boren	Jeff Jenkins
Ron Bryant	Jimmy Jividen
Charles Burch	John Kachelman, Jr.
Kyle Butt	Dayton Keesee
Ron Carter	Dalton Key
Frank Chesser	Michael L. King
Betty Burton Choate	Mack Lyon
Glenn Colley	Joe Magee
Lance Cordle	J. Randal Matheny
Sunny David	Cecil May, Jr.
Jerry L. Davidson	Colin McKee
Hans Dederscheck	Hollis Miller
David Deffenbaugh	Loy Mitchell
Clarence DeLoach, Jr.	Stan Mitchell
Bill Dillon	Kevin L. Moore
Bobby G. Dockery	Owen D. Olbricht
Hershel Dyer	David Pharr
Earl Edwards	Neal Pollard
Demar Elam	Bonnie Rushmore
Raymond Elliott	Rebecca Rushmore
Reuben Emperado	David A. Sargent
David Everson	David Tarbet
Royce Frederick	J.J. Turner
E. Claude Gardner	Ken Tyler
Alex Gibson	Allen Webster
Joe D. Gray	R.H. Tex Williams

SPANISH EDITION:

Managing Editor: Rafael Barrantes

TELUGU EDITION:

Managing Editor, Translator:

Joshua Gootam

TAMIL EDITION:

Managing Editor, Translators:

Benny Martin, S. Rajanayagam

ENGLISH EDITION IN INDIA AND BRAILLE EDITION:

Managing Editors, Philemon Rajah
and Kingsly Rajah

HINDI EDITION

Managing Editor, Earnest Gill

PAITE EDITION

Managing Editor, Thang Lien

NEPALI EDITION

Cost: \$4.00 for single issues; \$15.00 for four issues; \$25.00 for eight issues. Please make checks payable to World Evangelism, and mail to Byron Nichols, (Editor) P.O. Box 11218, Springfield, MO 65808; Telephone: 417-823-4918; Email: byron.nichols@att.net.

THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL is published by churches of Christ as a non-profit effort. Write to us at World Evangelism, P.O. Box 72, Winona, Mississippi, 38967, USA. Phone: 662-283-1192; Email address: Choate@WorldEvangelism.org.

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



Consider the Goodness and Severity of God

Byron Nichols

In Romans 11 Paul wrote about the rejection of Israel by God, but in telling this, Paul clarified that God's rejection is neither total nor final. He made a way for the disobedient to return and be accepted back.

Paul likened rejected Israel to branches that have been broken from the tree. He then showed that the Gentiles were allowed

to be grafted to God's tree.

With this brief background summary, we come to verse 22 – *“Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God; on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off.”*

The GOODNESS of God

God's *goodness* is just one of His many traits revealed to us in the Bible, but there is much more mention of this attribute than most of the others. His goodness is so abundant that it caused David to ask, *“What is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him?”* (Psalm 8:4). God's goodness is the basis for the multitude of physical blessings that He provides for us every day.

As great as our *physical* or material blessings are, greater still are the *spiritual* blessings which are from God through His Son. *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ”* (Ephesians 1:3).

Obviously, the #1 spiritual blessing that God has provided is what is often referred to as “The Golden Text” of the Bible, John 3:16 – *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”* Without this expression of the goodness of God, our lives would have no significant purpose or hope. Our lives would have no more meaning than that of a wild animal.

There is a very close relationship between God's goodness and His willingness to forgive. It is through His forgiveness that we are able to see and experience His goodness. His goodness demonstrated through His forgiveness is our only means of overcoming our separation from God brought about by our sins.

The SEVERITY of God

We could go on and on considering the *goodness* of God, and that would be the preference of us all, but Paul calls on us to consider also the *severity* of God.

It is somewhat understandable that some folks have trouble seeing how God can be both *good* and *severe*. This seems so contradictory. However, these contrasting attributes of God are somewhat more understandable when we review God's dealings with mankind from the very beginning. Because of His *goodness*, He prepared a perfect place for Adam and Eve, but He made it clear from the start that their blessings were conditioned upon their continuing obedience to His will. They disobeyed, and He drove them out of the Garden. God had made a promise, and He kept it!

God sent His man Noah out with a life-saving message, and He had him continue to spread the word for 120 years. Unfortunately, the people rejected God's message and ridiculed His messenger. God had made a promise, and once again He kept it!

Numerous other similar episodes occurred throughout the rest of the Old Testament, with many disastrous results. God's *goodness* was constant, but so was His *severity* when people ignored and rejected His *goodness*, thus bringing upon themselves His *severity*.

Why the Severity of God?

Although we have already touched on this, I want us to look a little further at the WHY of the severity of God.

Most people understand why an employer refuses to pay a worker who refuses to work. We realize that wages are paid for services rendered. The same principle is in force when God explains ahead of time what the benefits of serving Him faithfully will be, but He also tells clearly that receiving these benefits is dependent on man's faithfulness and obedience to God's commandments. I believe that we can see that these situations are alike. Is it then unjust, unfair or unduly harsh on God's part to hold man responsible for keeping the agreement that was explained ahead of time?

Even when man is disobedient and unfaithful, our loving and good God is ready to forgive us and accept us back if we will but repent and commit ourselves once again to doing His will. We must always remember the goodness of God that is shown in Peter's comforting words in 2 Peter 3:9, "*The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*" Jesus Himself put it this way in Revelation 2:10, "*Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.*" †

ASSOCIATE EDITORIAL



I'm sure that most of us would love to see the church grow. I also feel sure that most of us think that the church is not growing as it should. Let us consider some factors that might aid church growth. The Bible indicates that the first century church grew rapidly; thus if the principles that caused the early church to grow were applied today, surely they would help the modern church.

First, we might consider some things that were **not** factors in the growth of the early church. Many church leaders believe that the key to church growth is spending more money, sometimes large amounts of money. Yet, when one looks at the factors that led to the growth of the

How Can the Church Grow?

Jerry Bates

first century church, money was unquestionably not one of them. In fact, most of the factors that modern church leaders believe are essential to growth was conspicuously absent in the early church. The early church did not have nice buildings; in fact they had no buildings at all. The church met in a variety of locations such as the Temple (Acts 2:46), but it seems that most congregations met in private homes (Acts 5:42; Romans 14:4-5; Philemon 1:2). The early church did not have well educated, prestigious, eloquent men serving as preachers, since located preachers as we think about them were virtually unknown in the first century. Most of the members were poor, and it was the common people who gladly heeded the words of Jesus (Mark 12:37). Thus, the church was not largely composed of civic leaders and respected prominent members of society.

There is no "quick fix" in church growth. Some factors that are absolutely

essential to advancement are all members living a truly Christian lifestyle (Colossians 3:1-10), prayer, and loving, personal relationships among Christians as well as non-Christians. The Christian life is fundamentally a partnership, a partnership with God and other Christians (Colossians 1:7; 4:10,11; Philemon 1:7,16,17). In these passages we find the idea that Christians are fellow laborers in God's kingdom. Paul also used the word "together" several times to highlight a sharing that should exist among Christians. For example, in Colossians 2:11-12 Paul wrote that after being buried with Christ in baptism, we were also raised with Him, and "He has made [us] alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses."

Other New Testament references emphasize the "one another" aspect of Christianity. Paul penned in 1 Corinthians 3:9, "For we are God's fellow workers;



What is the solution to the empty pew? Rather, who is the solution to the empty pew? Each child of God must analyze himself or herself to determine if he or she is part of the solution or instead part of the problem respecting church growth.

you are God's field, you are God's building." This thought is also found in 2 Corinthians 6:1, "We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain." One should be able to see the closeness and togetherness that exists between Christians, as well as recognize that we are coworkers with God. However, we must not compromise purity of doctrine in order

to achieve this togetherness. In fact, one author boldly stated that the weaker the church's position regarding the authority of Scripture, the less likely it will grow (Gary McIntosh, *Biblical Church Growth; How You Can Work with God to Build a Faithful Church*).

Part of the partnering that we have been discussing involves assisting new Christians to mature so that we can partner with them as well. New converts must “*desire the pure milk of the word, that they may grow thereby*” (1 Peter 2:2). They must also “*grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*” (2 Peter 3:18). When new converts fail to grow, they become the weak link in evangelism.

Likely the most important characteristic of growing churches is that the majority of the members are involved in some ministry. Only people reach people, not programs. Gary McIntosh found that generally churches with less than 27% of its members involved in some form of ministry are declining, churches with 28% to 54% involved are on a plateau, and those with more than 55% involved in ministry are growing. Similarly, George Peters wrote, “The expansion of any movement is in direct proportion to its success in mobilizing its total membership in continuous, constant propagation of its beliefs.” In other words, if we want the church to grow, then the majority of the membership must be involved in the work of the church. The church will not grow if evangelism is done by only the preacher, the elders or deacons, or a few of the members. This idea was also present in the early church when we read in Acts 2:42 that the disciples “*continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.*” They also met regularly together, even from house to house (Acts 2:46). We know that many members were also involved in evangelism, even though persecuted, because Acts 8:1 indicates that as the disciples were scattered, they took the Word of God with them. It was the disciples that carried the Gospel throughout the regions, since the apostles stayed in Jerusalem.

The most important factors of church growth are that all members are united in love for God and each other and are involved in some ministry of the church. Basically, if the majority of the members are truly working for the Lord, the church will grow; if they are not, the church will not grow. It is as simple as that! Instead of looking for excuses or shifting blame for lack of growth, let us go back to the basics. Let us simply go to work! †

Resolve today to participate in church growth!

Encourage fellow Christians also to shoulder their responsibilities to help the Lord's church grow. Apply some of the fanaticism typical of sports enthusiasts for the cause of Christ.

Do it religiously!

Salvation Summarized

Louis Rushmore



Essentially, the biblical plan of salvation for today can be summarized, encapsulated, and briefly stated in just nine (9) words – one short sentence. Numerous additional New Testament Scriptures could be marshalled respecting the plan of salvation for non-Christians, but just nine words in one little sentence reveal enough information to identify the point at which one’s sins are removed.

Furthermore, the scope of the authority of the Speaker – Jesus Christ – who made the nine-word statement encompasses heaven and earth (Matthew 28:18 NKJV). Our Lord

and Savior said, and it is recorded, in Mark 16:16 (NKJV), “*He who believes and is baptized will be saved...*” One has to marvel at the simplicity of our Lord’s declaration, which is equivalent in simplicity to $1 + 2 = 3$. ***Belief + baptism = salvation!*** The plan of salvation could not be any simpler than that, and any thinking mind can easily understand it, too. Frankly, someone would have to have the wrong kind of *help* to misunderstand that straightforward statement of Jesus.

Some people mistakenly make an unwarranted distinction between the words of Jesus and the speeches and writings of the apostles of Christ and other writers of the New Testament. Actually, God and the Holy Spirit are behind both the words of our Lord (John 12:49-50) and of the writings in the rest of the New Testament (Matthew 10:19-20; 2 Peter 1:21). Nevertheless, Red Letter Edition Bibles highlight the words of Jesus Christ in red letters, and therefore, Mark 16:16 appears in red letters: “***He who believes and is baptized will be saved...***” By everyone’s estimate, among those who have any regard whatsoever for the Bible, there is no higher authority than the words of Jesus Christ Himself – in red letters or in black and white.

Despite the indisputable fact that Jesus said, “*He who believes and is baptized will be saved...*,” most people today read it differently than what our Lord uttered. They read it as though our Lord said, “He who believes is saved, and if he wants to, he can be baptized.” That **is not** what the Son of God said! Think about that contrast – really *contradiction* – for a moment.

Someday, every soul will appear before the Judgment Seat of Jesus Christ to answer for his or her deeds and hear either a sentence to a devil's hell or an invitation into heaven (2 Corinthians 5:10). Jesus Christ pictured the Judgment scene in Matthew 7:21-23, which reads:

Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew [approved of] you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'

Remarkably and lamentably, some are pictured in that text of trying to negotiate with our Lord, but it did not work. I cannot imagine a sadder passage anyplace in the Bible than that of sincere souls arriving before the Judgment Seat of Jesus, expecting to be ushered into heaven, but instead being consigned to hell. How terribly sad!

Further, I can imagine our religious neighbors finding themselves in that situation respecting their treatment of our Lord's words in Mark 16:16. I can hear friends, neighbors, family members, and coworkers objecting and attempting to negotiate with Jesus at the late date of being before the very Judgment Seat of Christ. "Lord, Lord, You fail to understand! **We voted on that.** It is no longer, *'He who believes and is baptized will be saved...'*, but **now** it is, 'He who believes is saved, and if he wants to, he can be baptized.'" Really, how do you think that is going to work out for them?

Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ said, "*He who believes and is baptized will be saved...*" That message is for non-Christians and how they can become the children of God – how their sins can be removed. However, other passages address how sins that creep into the lives of Christians can be removed. The apostle Peter told a new Christian named Simon who had committed sin, "*Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you*" (Acts 8:22). Likewise, the apostle John also wrote about how sin in the lives of Christians can be removed. "*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*" (1 John 1:9).

There are two (2) laws of pardon in the Christian Age in which we live: one for the non-Christian and one for the Christian. A person cannot effect the removal of sin and becoming a child of God by trying to misapply the second law of pardon to the non-Christian. By the same token, Christians do not need to be baptized – part of the first law of pardon – again to combat sins in their lives. Salvation can be summarized for non-Christians and Christians by correctly applying the appropriate Scriptures to each group. "*Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, **rightly dividing the word of truth***" (2 Timothy 2:15). †

TABLE OF CONTENTS

GOD

The Answer Is Jesus	Wayne Barrier	13
Some Things Which God Does Not Know.....	Kerry Deaton	14
Jesus: Apostle, Prophet, and Teacher.....	Tom Kelton.....	16

EVIDENCES

The Marvelous Human Body	David Everson.....	17
God's Wondrous Creation	Betty Burton Choate	20

THE WORD OF GOD

God's Written Word	Rick Cunningham	24
The Word Is Still Sufficient.....	Dean Fugett	25
Learning Right from Wrong.....	Rod Kyle	26
The Necessity of Having Bible Authority.....	Samuel A. Matthews	27

SALVATION

Hope.....	Bill Dillon	31
I'm Pressing on the Upward Way	Nat Evans.....	32
Grace Includes Faith and Obedience.....	David R. Kenney	34
Getting Serious About Heaven.....	Jimmy Young.....	35

THE CHURCH

God's Preacher for Today	E. Claude Gardner	37
Non-denominational or Pre-denominational.....	Owen D. Olbricht	39
A Word to the Clueless	Bob Plunket.....	41
Ways of Causing the Church NOT to Grow.....	Carroll Sites.....	42

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

"I Am Set for the Defense of the Gospel".....	Ronald D. Bryant	44
Doctrine or Dogma?.....	Mike Hinton	45
Making Baptism Sure	Vance Hutton.....	47
Are Riches Inherently Evil?	Hollis Miller	49
Are There Many Ways to Heaven?.....	J.C. Choate.....	50

CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION

On Fire But Not Burned Out	T. Pierce Brown.....	52
"His Word Was in My Heart..."	Dale Grissom	53
Motivation for Soul Winning.....	Les McGalliard	54

WORSHIP

Does All of Life Constitute Worship?.....	Maxie B. Boren.....	56
God's Plan for Financing His Work.....	Jack Harriman.....	58
Worship the Lord Your God.....	Loy Mitchell.....	59
What Makes Worship Great?	Patrick Morrison	60

PROVERBS 17:22

Humor		62
-------------	--	----

DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING

What is the Role of the Preacher's Wife?.....	Bonnie Rushmore.....	64
Two Dispositions	Charles Cash	68
"Higgy, I'm Dying"	Steve Higginbotham	70
Let Faith in God Guide Your Actions.....	Philip J. Sherwood	71

THE CHRISTIAN HOME

What Our Young People Need	Charles Box.....	73
What Shall I Give the Children?	Richard L. Jones.....	74
Home Is Where Mother Is	Jim Poland	75

TEXTUAL STUDIES

Paul and Philippi.....	Gary C. Hampton	81
A Text That Meets Needs – 2 Peter 2:18-3:13.....	Ardron Hinton.....	84

BIBLE CHARACTERS

John the Baptist	Grady Miller.....	86
Peculiar Pharisees.....	Keith Parker	88
And Matthew (The Tax Collector).....	Neal Pollard.....	89

BIBLE QUESTIONS

What About Evolution?	Mark N. Posey.....	91
Swear Not At All.....	Dennis Gullede	92
What Crucified Jesus?.....	Dwight Fuqua	94
What Is a Miracle?	Travis L. Quertermous.....	95

CHARTS AND OUTLINES

The Mount of Transfiguration.....	Allan E. Flaxman.....	97
The Church Is The Saved.....	Robert H. Martin	99

FROM THE HEART OF...

Evangelism In India		101
---------------------------	--	-----

FEATURES, POEMS AND FILLERS

Consider the Goodness and Severity of God.....	Byron Nichols.....	4
How Can the Church Grow?.....	Jerry Bates	6
Salvation Summarized	Louis Rushmore	9
Verse Search: Romans 16:1-27	Jerry Bates	29
Be Bold To Stand.....	Thomas Baxley	36
Quick Commentary: Jeremiah 29:10-13.....	Betty Burton Chaote.....	43
Measure Up: Jeremiah 9:23-24.....	Betty Burton Choate	55
Poem: Fire	Betty Burton Choate	77
5 Minute Bible Study: Witness	Paula Bates	79
The Rich Fool.....	Randall Evans.....	80
We Are Not Perfect!	Roger Rush.....	85
Bible Find: Thieves.....	Bonnie Rushmore	90
Who Am I in the Life of Ruth?	Rebecca Rushmore	96

The Answer Is Jesus

Wayne Barrier

A friend of mine recently attended a seminar for physicians, government leaders, and social scientists to discuss innovative strategies for resolving several of the nation's growing social problems. These included: (1) violent sex crimes, (2) drug abuse, and (3) AIDS. Many approaches were discussed. Solutions included: (1) sex education, (2) funding of help and assistance-based organizations, (3) stricter



laws, (4) legalization of drugs, (5) more government control of medical services, relief organizations, and education, and a number of other strategies. At one time or another in some place in the world all of these have been tried, and the problems are not resolved. What can be done? My friend was asked his opinion. He was surprised. He was only a simple preacher of the Gospel. He did not hesitate to offer the only answer he believed to be effective.

His answer was just one word, "Jesus." He didn't know how the audience of over 1,500 hundred professionals would react. The result was unexpected. They applauded and stood out of respect for the simple answer of this humble servant of God.

His answer is correct. God's Word clearly supports his answer. The hope of the world is Jesus. My friend's second response was also simple, "Can I tell you about Jesus?" Jesus calls us to Him and offers rest and relief. Jesus in Matthew 11:28-30 states, "*Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.*" The Bible is filled with instructions for following Jesus and receiving the blessings of God. The apostle John states in 1 John 5:4,5 that we can overcome the world with our faith in Jesus.

Our problems can be solved if we will allow Jesus to lead us. Do you know Jesus and follow Him faithfully? The Bible tells us how to do this. †

Wayne Barrier lives in Florence, Alabama, USA, and does mission work in several countries.

GOD

Some Things Which God Does Not Know

Kerry Deaton

Believe it or not, there are some things that God cannot know. I do not want to be irreverent or blasphemous toward God. On the contrary, the things which I am about to present are an answer to some of the blasphemous and irreverent things that have been said about our Heavenly Father and His everlasting Word.

By way of introduction and for example, here is what I mean: All mankind descended from Adam, so God does not know a person who did not descend from Adam (Acts 17:26). There is no such person, contrary to what atheists and evolutionists may think.

God does not know an accountable person who is sinlessly perfect. The Scriptures define sin as “the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4), the law of God. A sin is something committed. Every person who is accountable for his/her own actions has sinned. I have actually heard of individuals who have said that they have never sinned. Well, they just did by making that statement. First John 1:10 says, *“If we say that we have not sinned; we make him [God] a liar, and His word is not in us.”* Notice what this passage says, *“...we make Him [God] a liar...”* Well, we know that this is impossible, for it is impossible for God to lie (Hebrews 6:18), and the truth is not in them.

God does not know of a sinner whom He does not love. Probably one of the verses that everyone could quote is John 3:16, *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”* Another parallel verse is Romans 5:8, *“But God commanded His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”* God loves the whole world, but that does not excuse us from our responsibility to obey His will.

God does not know a man under the Gospel Age who will be saved out of Christ and in disobedience to the Gospel. Salvation and all like blessings are “in Christ” (Ephesians 1:3). So the most pertinent question is how do we get “into Christ” to receive these blessings? First, Mark 16:16 says that baptism saves. No matter how many people say that baptism is unnecessary, that does not alter God’s Word. God said it, that settles it, whether one believes it or not. Second, we are baptized “into Christ” (Romans 6:3), thus this is the point in which we “put on Christ” (Galatians 3:27).

God does not know of a person who will be saved without confessing that Jesus is His Son. Matthew 10:32,33 says, *“Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess before My Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven.”* Denying Christ is not just denying that He is God’s Son. Denying Him can also mean that we deny

GOD

His teachings. Many individuals deny Christ by not obeying and abiding in His Word.

God does not know of a faithful Christian who is in rebellion against Him. *“And hereby we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him”* (1 John 2:3,4). The writer of Hebrews has said in chapter 10 verses 26 and 29, *“For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins... Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith He was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?”* The word *“despite”* in this verse actually means *“to insult”*, as translated in the *American Standard, New American Standard, New King James, and New International* versions of the Bible. Christians insult God by sinning willfully! Those individuals are told to repent (Luke 13:3).

God does not know a sinner who was converted and saved after death. After one has died, there is no second chance (Hebrew 9:27). John 8:21 and 24 also say that after death one cannot be saved. The Bible makes it clear that it is imperative that one obey the Gospel before it is too late. Second Corinthians 6:2 says, *“behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation...”* This is not saying that we have eternal salvation in its actuality at that moment. It is stressing the fact that salvation must be attained before it is everlastingly too late.

Finally, God does not know an accountable person who will be saved without faith and without being baptized. In Mark 16:16 we read, *“...he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned.”* Again, there is no person on this earth that can nullify this command by just saying that baptism is unnecessary. As I said earlier, “God said it, that settles it, whether one wants to believe it or not.” Faith is just as essential to salvation as baptism is. God has not promised anyone that He will save them without being baptized. Faith and baptism go hand in hand. One cannot say that they have faith in God’s Word, and not believe that baptism is essential. That is not faith in God’s Word. That is not the faith which God requires. One trying to be saved by faith only is actually trying to be saved by his own works (Titus 3:5), for faith is a work, according to the inspired Word (John 6:29). Paul said it best, concerning those who would try to be saved by their own works of righteousness and disbelieving the true righteousness of God in Romans 3:3,4, *“For what if some did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar...”* God is true, and any man who would dispute His everlasting Word is a liar! God said it, that settles it; may we always look to God’s Word and heed it! ✠

Kerry Deaton is a member of the Liberty Church of Christ in Dennis, Mississippi, USA.

GOD

Jesus: Apostle, Prophet, and Teacher

Tom Kelton

Jesus was *“the apostle and high priest of our confession”* (Hebrews 3:1). God loved the world so much that He sent His Son to save it. As someone has put it, “God only had one Son, and He was a missionary.” In the incarnation the Son of God revealed the ultimate extent of the love of God. No greater love has ever been seen, before or since. *“Though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor; so that by His poverty you might become rich”* (2 Corinthians 8:9). He surrendered His divine prerogatives and left the glory of heaven for miseries of earth.

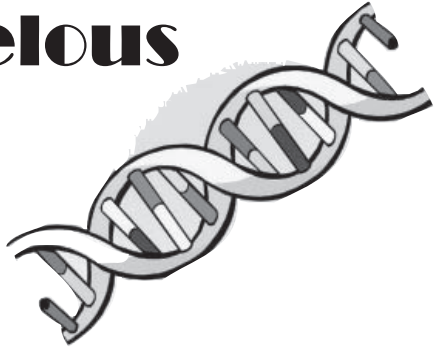
Jesus Christ was a true prophet. He was the Word made flesh (John 1:14). He not only spoke God’s Word, He *was* and *is* God’s Word to the world. No wonder the woman at the well cried out, *“Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet”* (John 4:19). No wonder the disciples on the road to Emmaus called him *“a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people”* (Luke 24:19). Some in the crowd on another occasion said, *“This is really the prophet”* (John 7:40). Jesus also told His disciples how He prophesied. *“I have not spoken on my own authority,”* He said. *“The Father who sent me has Himself given me commandment what to say and what to speak. And I know that the commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has bidden me”* (John 12:49,50). And again He said, *“...the word which you hear is not mine but the Father’s who sent me”* (John 14:24).

Jesus was a great Teacher. Although He had no human qualifications, had secured no degrees, and, as far as we know, only received the most elementary education, He was given the title *“Rabbi”* and told that He was *“a teacher come from God”* by none other than the high-ranking Nicodemus, himself a member of the Sanhedrin (John 3:2). Although on this occasion Jesus made no comment, but took the conversation immediately to Nicodemus, at a much later date, shortly after washing His disciples’ feet, He did accept the title. *“You call me Teacher and Lord,”* He said, *“and you are right, for so I am”* (John 13:13). There is no need to attempt to substantiate this, for the Gospel accounts abound with references both to the actual teaching He gave, and to the reaction that people had to it. *“The crowds,”* we read, *“were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes”* (Matthew 7:29). Out of the Son of God poured forth the most sublime teaching the world has ever known. It drew large crowds of people and has inspired millions ever since. †

Tom Kelton (deceased) was a writer and preacher at Pharr, Texas, USA.

The Marvelous Human Body

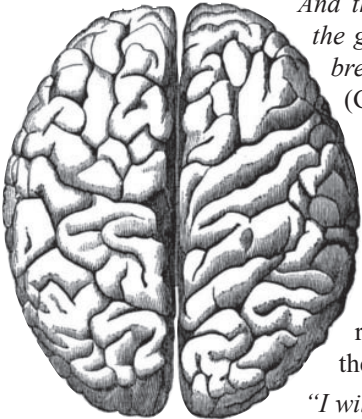
David Everson



Marvelous Are Thy Works

DNA (Deoxyribonucleic Acid), the “stuff of life” as it is sometimes called, is the most powerful information-transmitting method known to man. It carries the blueprint for how each living thing is to be made. This information is carried on structures that we call chromosomes. A typical human chromosome contains about half a billion (5×10^8) units (nucleotides) of DNA. The amount of information one chromosome contains would fill about 2,000 printed books of 1,000 pages each, with each page containing about 500 words. Indeed, marvelous are the works of Him who made us!

The Human Body: An Introduction



“And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul”
(Genesis 2:7).

With these words and actions of God, we see the origin of man. As I look from time to time at the marvelous things that we see in the world around us that God has created, we many times overlook ourselves.

Thousands of years ago before all of the recent medical discoveries, the psalmist penned these words.

“I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when

EVIDENCES

I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth” (Psalm 139:14-15).

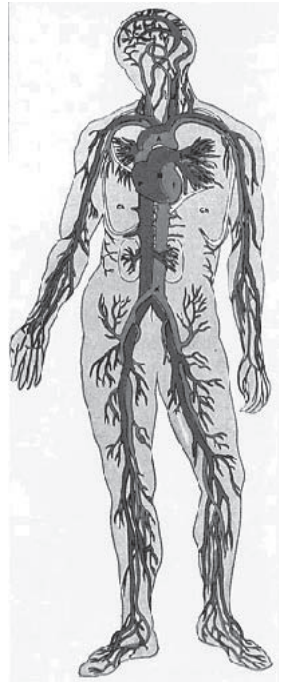
What words would David have used if he was able to know what we know now? Well, I’m not sure that any other words could adequately describe the awe and reverence that we should show for God because of His creating us than “I will praise thee.” For indeed, as we look at the human body in minute details possible today, we can see that we are *“fearfully and wonderfully made.”*

The body does some truly amazing things. Just consider that in an average day your body will:

- exercise 7,000,000 brain cells
- beat your heart 103,689 times
- pump blood 68,000,000 miles
- speak 48,000 words using 72 different muscles for each word
- inhale 438 cubic feet of air
- breathe 23,040 times
- eat 3.25 pounds of food
- drink 2.9 pounds of liquids
- perspire 1.43 pints of water
- produce 100 billion red blood cells
- analyze and process billions of sensory signals
- remove 45 gallons of liquid from the blood
- reabsorb 43.5 gallons of liquid into the blood
- lose 7.8 pounds of waste materials

During your lifetime you will:

- shed and replace 40 pounds of skin
- walk 5 times around the equator of the earth
- produce enough saliva to fill two swimming pools
- blink your eyes 6,205,000 times
- shed over 30 feet of eyelashes

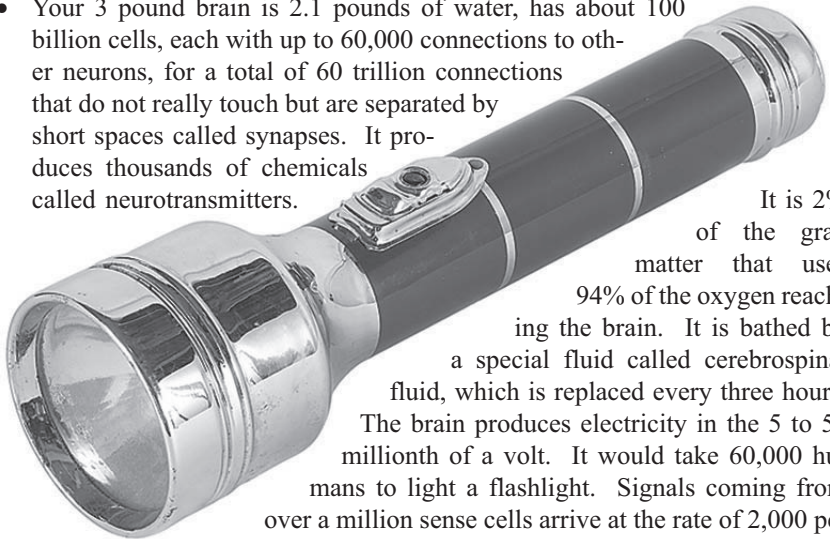


EVIDENCES

- replace every atom making your body once each year you live
- eat 15 tons of food
- drink 12,000 gallons of water
- pump 73 million gallons of blood

Or consider this:

- Your blood travels through 60,000 miles of blood vessels in tubes that allow only one way flow. The blood has seven types of cells that are necessary to keep you alive. *“For the life of the flesh is in the blood”* (Leviticus 17:1).
- Just one square inch on the back of your hand – it will have nine feet of blood vessels, 600 pain sensors, 9,000 nerve endings, 36 heat sensors, 75 pressure sensors, and a total of 72 feet of nerve fibers.
- Your 3 pound brain is 2.1 pounds of water, has about 100 billion cells, each with up to 60,000 connections to other neurons, for a total of 60 trillion connections that do not really touch but are separated by short spaces called synapses. It produces thousands of chemicals called neurotransmitters.



It is 2% of the gray matter that uses 94% of the oxygen reaching the brain. It is bathed by a special fluid called cerebrospinal fluid, which is replaced every three hours. The brain produces electricity in the 5 to 50 millionth of a volt. It would take 60,000 humans to light a flashlight. Signals coming from over a million sense cells arrive at the rate of 2,000 per second.

Indeed, we are *“fearfully and wonderfully made!”* Let us truly *“praise God”* because of what He did when He created our bodies. †

David Everson is an elder in the church of Christ in Belington, West Virginia, USA, and has many years of education in biology.

EVIDENCES

God's Wondrous Creation

Betty Burton Choate

Of course, evolutionists tell us that we have evolved from nothing, from remnants of the “big bang”, from warm primordial soup that spawned the first spark of life — actually a single-celled amoeba that somehow divided and multiplied and changed to finally become every life form that exists today. Trying to make the fairy tale more believable, they insert billions of years, and all sorts of possibilities, probabilities, and must-have-happened.

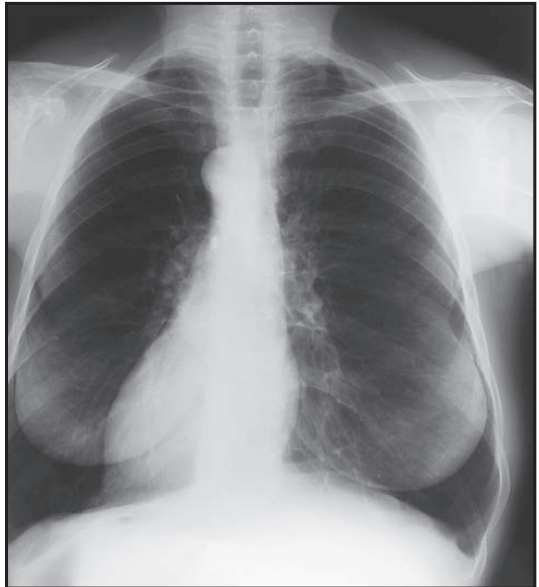
True science has established laws, which nothing that has been observed has ever contradicted:

- ◆ “Nothing” cannot become “something”.
- ◆ Non-life cannot produce life.
- ◆ No “kind” can breed with an entirely different “kind” (baramin).
- ◆ Information cannot generate itself; information is the result of creative intelligence.

The human body, growing from the union of the male sperm and the female egg, is the unending revelation of the genius of God. It consists of:

◆ **The nervous system**, including the brain, the spinal cord, and the nerves running throughout the body. This system collects, analyzes, processes, and transfers information from the organs of the body to the brain and back to the organs of the body.

◆ **The circulatory system**, including the heart, blood vessels, and blood. Through



EVIDENCES

60,000 miles of arteries, veins, and capillaries, this system provides oxygen and food to every cell of the body, as well as defending the cells from harmful intruders, and removing waste from the cells.

◆ **The respiratory system**, including the nasal passages, pharynx, larynx, trachea, bronchi, diaphragm, and lungs. This system brings oxygen into the lungs that is then taken by the blood to every cell of the body. Without oxygen to the brain, the cells begin to die within four minutes, with permanent brain damage being done even if the person survives the crisis.

◆ **The skeletal system**, including bones, cartilage, ligaments, tendons, and operable joint structures. This system provides structural support for the body and the joints that allow movement. Not only are bones lightweight, they are able to withstand pressure, and even to repair themselves when there is a fracture or a break.

◆ **The muscular system**, including all the various types of muscles that coordinate to move any part of the body, the eyes, and the involuntary organs that keep the body functioning. The heart, itself, is a muscle of extraordinary strength and endurance, beating an average of 2.5 billion times during the average life.

◆ **The digestive system**, including the mouth (teeth and salivary glands), esophagus, stomach, liver, gallbladder, pancreas, intestines, rectum, and anus. Through this system, water and food are taken into the body and processed. Whatever is useful is digested, goes into the blood stream and is then dispersed throughout the body. Unusable substances are disposed as waste.

◆ **The urinary system**, including the kidneys, ureters, bladder, and urethra. This system maintains electrolyte and fluid balance, and secretes excess fluids through urination.

◆ **The integumentary (skin) system**, including the skin and growths of the skin: hair and nails. This system gives shape and appearance to the body. Skin not only shields the body from invaders but it controls the amount of fluid leaving the body.

◆ **The lymphatic system**, including tonsils, adenoids, thymus, spleen, the lymph nodes, and vessels transferring lymph between tissues and the blood stream. This is the immune system that helps to defend the body from disease.

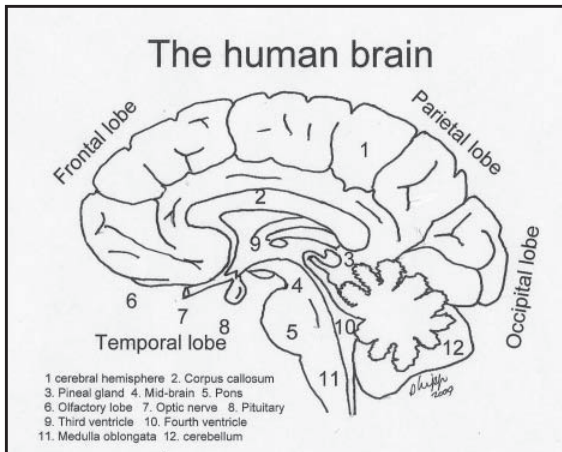
◆ **The endocrine system**, including the hypothalamus, pituitary gland, pineal gland, thyroid, parathyroids, and adrenal glands. This system provides the means of communication, within the body, by the use of hormones.

◆ **The male and female reproductive systems**, two entirely different systems, both of which are necessary for reproduction.

EVIDENCES

The Human Brain

As scientists study the systems of the body, it becomes evident that the brain itself is in control of everything. About the size of a fist, weighing three pounds, protected by its bony covering, the brain is the body's central operational system. And just how does it manage such complexity? **Through the working of its own complexity!**



The brain, too, is made up of numerous parts, as is shown in the graphic above. Eighty-five percent of its weight is in the **cerebrum**, which is divided into two hemispheres, each further divided into four lobes. The left hemisphere is the logical, reasoning side and also directs the right side of the body. The right hemisphere deals more with the visual aspects, and controls the left side of the body.

The **thalamus** and **hypothalamus** are in the area called the **diencephalon**. The thalamus receives messages, analyzes them, and directs them to the appropriate area of the brain. The hypothalamus controls the involuntary workings of the organs.

The **cerebellum** is the second largest part of the brain. It controls balance and muscle movement.

The **pons** receives millions of messages, second by second, and decides what is worthy of sending forward to the appropriate part of the brain and what should be ignored.

The **brain stem** connects the brain to the rest of the body, sending and receiving messages from all parts of the body and to all parts of the body.

Conclusion

Question: Do the eyes really “see”? Do the taste buds really “taste”? Do the fingers really “feel”?

Second Question: Does the brain really “see”? Does the brain really “taste”? Does the brain really “feel”?

EVIDENCES

No, and No, and No! It is only as the eyes send messages to the brain, and the brain sorts those messages, relays them to its appropriate section, and then interprets the messages that we have the sensation of seeing, tasting, feeling, etc.

What may seem in this article to be too detailed a listing of the body's systems and the brain's parts is actually barely touching the surface of the intricacies of this marvelous creation which houses the soul! No matter how deeply scientists delve into the mysteries of the human body, there are depths yet to be learned. As David declared in Psalm 139:13-16: *"For You formed my inward parts; You covered [wove, the meaning in Hebrew] me in my mother's womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well. My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed, and in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them."*

Each of us lives in one of the greatest "wonders of the world". We should value the treasure God has committed to our care, and we should have even greater concern for the welfare of the immortal gift He has shared with us and placed within these bodies — our souls, the *real* self. The life we live and the choices we make will determine where we exist eternally. We must never forget that reality. †

Betty Burton Choate is the widow of J.C. Choate, living in Winona, MS, USA.

The soul lives eternally: *"Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, And the spirit will return to God who gave it" (Ecclesiastes 12:7). "But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life" (Romans 6:22).*

What happens to our bodies? *"Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed — in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality" (1 Corinthians 15:51-53).*

God's Written Word

Rick Cunningham

There is no legitimate excuse for not knowing God's directions. Since the very beginning, God has revealed His will to mankind. Through prophecies and revelations, God has made His wisdom available to all who seek it. The written Word details it.

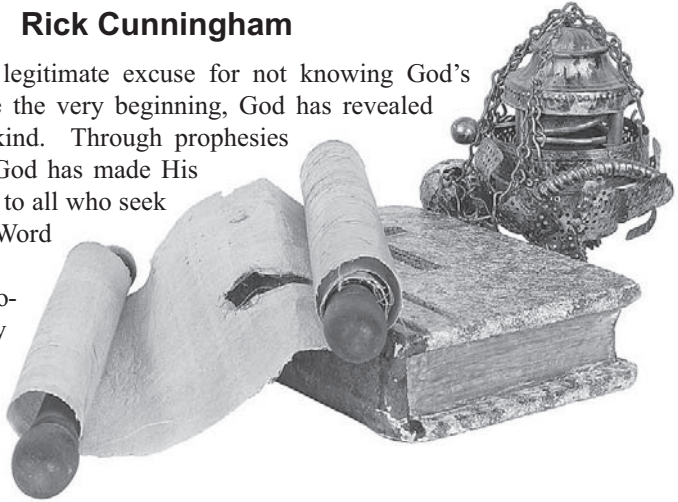
Still, some people act as if they are waiting for a personal revelation from God. They question the usefulness of

the Bible because it seems to them to be archaic. Its directions and warnings go unheeded. They ignore the lessons given to past generations, laid out in the Bible.

This is not a new phenomenon. Jeremiah prophesied some 2,600 years ago. Even in his day there were modernists who ignored previous revelations. Jeremiah wrote, *"This is what the Lord says: 'Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls.' But you said, 'We will not walk in it!' I appointed watchmen over you and said, 'Listen to the sound of the trumpet!' But you said, 'We will not listen!'"* (Jeremiah 6:16,17). God did not bless that generation. Instead, those people were conquered by the Babylonians and carried into exile. They were defeated because they ignored God's Word.

Today, we need to ask for the ancient paths, not the modern ways. We need to hear God's written Word, not trust in faddish religion. We need to conform to God's will, not let popular culture define our beliefs. God has revealed Himself, His Son, and His entire plan for mankind in the Bible. God shows us which way to go at every crossroad we come to. The outcome of our lives depends on whether or not we follow God's directions in the written Word. †

Rick Cunningham is the preacher for the Main Street congregation in Big Spring, Texas, USA.



THE WORD OF GOD

The Word Is Still Sufficient

Dean Fugett

When Paul left Timothy in Ephesus, he left him with a charge and a challenge. When he wrote to Timothy, he reminded him of that charge and gave him a foundation of authority. *“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work”* (2 Timothy 3:16,17). The Word of God was sufficient for Timothy. The Word of God is sufficient for us as it is today.

But, have you noticed how many people, religious and otherwise, leaders and members alike, are turning to other sources for solutions to their problems and answers to their questions? The wisdom of the Eternal God is supplanted and replaced by psychology. Recreational programs are substituted for the power of God’s Word. Self-help books abound. Quick fixes are the craze of the day. It isn’t enough to teach and expect obedience. The individual accepts no responsibility. Failure is all the fault of the seed and the sower if it doesn’t accomplish what some seem to think it ought to do. They have forgotten, or are willfully ignorant, of the fact that the Word is sufficient to the purpose for which God ordained it. If the Word doesn’t do what man thinks it ought to do, it isn’t God’s fault. The fault lies with man.

What do we want the Word to do? What do we expect it to accomplish? Shall we turn to the Word of God and let it tell us just what God intended? Or, shall we continue to pass our judgment on the Word from the vantage point of man’s wisdom? Remember, *“For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe”* (1 Corinthians 1:21). God intends for the Word to be used for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness. He doesn’t expect those corrupted by lust and evil lives to appreciate its power unless the soil is the good soil (Luke 8). Too many are working too hard to make the Word of God acceptable to the carnal mind, rather than making the mind and the life to conform to the Word. The Word is sufficient as it is for man as he is. The Word is perfect; man is lacking. †

Dean Fugett is a preacher and elder with the church of Christ in Cave City, Arkansas, USA.

THE WORD OF GOD

LEARNING RIGHT FROM WRONG

Rod Kyle

Are you living life by the very best moral code? Does there appear to be mass, ethical confusion in the lives of millions of people throughout the world? How can we know what is right or wrong in every life situation?

It is a God-sized problem, and it is self-evident that only a moral code revealed by the Creator will do!

This is exactly what the Bible says. Hebrews 1:1,2 teaches (1) that God has spoken; (2) that His written moral code began in the Old Testament and is now completed in the New. In fact, in the New Testament Jesus teaches that His Words will be the final and absolute moral code for all time (John 12:48; Matthew 24:35).

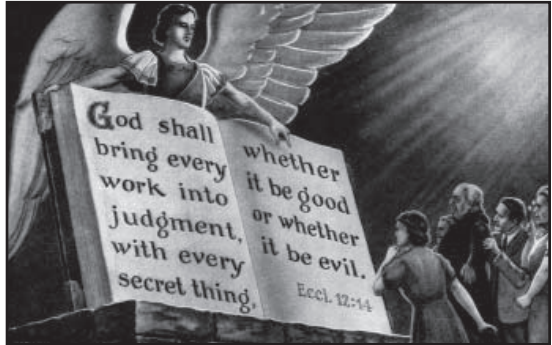
When reading the New Testament, however, one quickly learns that it is not a code book regulating conduct with specific do's and don'ts. Instead, it deals with motives, uses principles, occasionally specifies a particular action, and often demonstrates all three.

For example:

1. A **specific** action is prescribed in Colossians 3:9. We are told not to lie.
2. A **principle** is identified in Colossians 3:23. We are told to work hard in every situation.
3. An **example**, demonstrating the biblical ethic of capital punishment, is given in Acts 25:11. This is a true example because the one making the declaration was inspired by God.

The clear teaching of the revealed and confirmed Word of God is this: all of life is a moral test, and the time when your Report Card will be read is on the Day of Judgment (2 Corinthians 5:10). The amazing thing about that day is that no one will pass on self-merit (Romans 3:12,23). †

Rod Kyle preaches the Gospel in New Zealand.



THE WORD OF GOD

THE NECESSITY OF HAVING BIBLE AUTHORITY

Samuel A. Matthews

The New Testament is God's FINAL authority. All men living today are under (amenable to) the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15,16; Luke 24:45-49). Whatever the law of Christ says, it says to those who are under that law. This principle is plainly set forth in Romans 3:19 and 4:15.

Thus, in order to be pleasing to God, every man living today must have New Testament authority for the Plan of Salvation which he obeys. This cannot involve, for example, instruction to be baptized because one has already been saved. That is one of the devil's greatest false teachings today.

The New Testament authorizes only the penitent believer, who is still a lost man, to be baptized in order to be saved (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38) — that is, to become a saved person, a child of God (Acts 22:16; Romans 6:3-5; Galatians 3:26,27; 2 Timothy 2:10, 1 Peter 3:20,21; etc.). Every person who seeks to be saved by the blood of Christ by obeying a humanly-invented plan of salvation is doomed to fail in attaining that salvation. He must repent of his denominational error and obey that plan of salvation which is authorized in the New Testament.

Jesus Himself made clear that many people who think they are saved are horribly mistaken. Why? Because they have obeyed mere human plans of salvation rather than the one divine plan of salvation (read Matthew 7:13,14, 21-23). Being a sincere, conscientious religious man will not save without obeying the Gospel of Christ in being baptized (see the account of Saul of Tarsus in Acts 9:22,26).

Some men have invented the false doctrine that lost men are saved the very moment they believe on Jesus Christ as the Son of God. At the point of belief, they say, Christ is accepted into the heart. Many say that one is saved "by faith-plus nothing, minus nothing." But the Bible teaches that faith without works (acts of obedience to Christ) is dead (and compares it to the body without the spirit (James 2:24,26). Even the devils believe (James 2:19), yet they are not saved, because they do not obey. Men must be honest (Luke 8:15). Men must learn God's will and do only what the Bible authorizes. No one can be saved by faith "before and without any further act(s) of obedience;" such is dead faith (James 2:17).

To be saved, a penitent person who believes that Jesus is the Christ, the Son

THE WORD OF GOD

of God (Luke 13:3; John 8:24), must be baptized into Christ (Romans 6:3-5; Galatians 3:26,27) to be saved by the death (blood) and resurrection of Christ (1 Peter 3:20,21; Revelation 1:5). He must then live faithfully before God even unto death (Revelation 2:10).

Jesus said, “*All authority (power) has been given to me in heaven and in earth*” (Matthew 28:18). When it comes to matters pertaining to the soul, Jesus is the only authority. As our High Priest, He is the only one who can regulate our moral and spiritual affairs. We will face Him as our judge in the last day (John 5:22).

The authority of Jesus is universal in scope (in heaven and in earth). No angel, priest, pope, or preacher has power like this. Jesus is supreme in authority. The claim of Jesus is an exalted one; all legislative, judicial, and executive authority is given unto Him in heaven and on earth. No one in human flesh had ever claimed so much. He was clothed with authority after God “*...raised him from the dead, and made him to sit at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come*” (Ephesians 1:20,21).

Jesus Himself made clear that many people who think they are saved are horribly mistaken.

Jesus is the “*King of kings, and Lord of lords*” (1 Timothy 6:15) and the ruler of the kings of the earth. He will exercise this authority as King of His kingdom until the last foe is conquered, and then He will deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father (1 Corinthians 15:24). The Word of Christ is the only authoritative voice in the church. There is no legislative authority in the church today. We execute and obey His laws, but we cannot make laws for the church. Since Christ has “all authority,” there is no place in the church for man’s programs.

The Scriptures reveal that God’s Word is everlasting (1 Peter 1:25). Jesus says, “*Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away*” (Matthew 24:35). A truth that must never be forgotten in respecting the authority of God’s Word is this: “*For ever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven*” (Psalm 119:89).

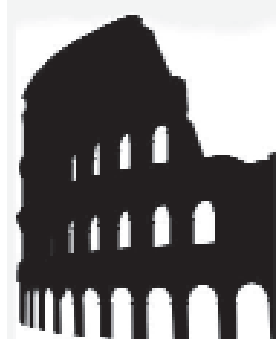
Please search the above Scriptures and see whether these things are so (Acts 17:11). The churches of Christ are neither Catholic, Protestant, nor Jew. We are CHRISTIANS (1 Peter 4:16)! †

Samuel A. Matthews works with the church in St. Thomas, Virgin Islands.



Romans 16:1-27

Jerry Bates



1. What is Phoebe called? (v. 1)
2. What was Paul's request of the Roman Christians regarding Phoebe? (v. 2)
3. What had Phoebe done that, according to Paul, deemed her worthy of assistance? (v. 2)
4. Who are called Paul's fellow workers? (v. 3)
5. What service had they rendered to Paul? (v. 4)
6. Who was the firstfruits of Achaia? (v. 5)
7. To whom did Paul send greetings who had been Christians even longer than he? (v. 7)
8. How were Christians told to greet one another? (v. 16)
9. What are we told to do to those who cause divisions in the church? (v. 17)
10. Who or what are those divisive people really serving? (v. 18)
11. I want you to be _____ in what is good, and _____ concerning evil? (v. 19)
12. Who sent greetings along with Paul? (vs. 21-23)
13. Paul said the Gospel was a _____ kept _____ since the world the began, but has now been made _____. (v. 26)

(see the back cover for answer)

1 I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea, 2 that you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you; for indeed she has been a helper of many and of myself also. 3 Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, 4 who risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. 5 Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Greet my beloved Epaphroditus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia, to Christ. 6 Greet Mary, who labored much for us. 7 Greet Andronicus and Junia, my countrymen and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.

8 Greet Amplias, my beloved in the Lord. 9 Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and Stachys, my beloved. 10 Greet Apelles, approved in Christ. Greet those who are of the household of Aristobulus. 11 Greet Herodion, my countryman. Greet those who are of the household of Narcissus who are in the Lord. 12 Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa, who have labored in the Lord. Greet the beloved Persis, who labored much in the Lord. 13 Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine. 14 Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren who are with them. Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them.

16 Greet one another with a holy kiss. The churches of Christ greet you.

17 Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. 18 For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple. 19 For your obedience has become known to all. Therefore I am glad on your behalf; but I want you to be wise in what is good, and simple concerning evil. 20 And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

21 Timothy, my fellow worker, and Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater, my countrymen, greet you. 22 I, Tertius, who wrote this epistle, greet you in the Lord.

23 Gaius, my host and the host of the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the treasurer of the city, greets you, and Quartus, a brother. 24 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

25 Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began 26 but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith 27 to God, alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen.

Hope

Bill Dillon

Christ is not a hope, or some hope, but the hope.

*“Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Savior; and Lord Jesus Christ, **which is our hope**” (1 Timothy 1:1).*

Christ is the only hope! Hope is wanting something good and hav-

ing reason to expect it. Solomon said, *“The righteous hath hope in his death”* (Proverbs 14:32). In other words, the righteous person wants something good in death and has reason to expect it. What possible good could come at death? Only one thing, and that is Christ. Philippians 1:21,23 says: *“For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain... For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better.”*

But, there are numerous false hopes. Job 31:24 speaks of those who made gold their hope and confidence. How sad when hope is in gold and not God!

Multitudes will stand in darkness on the last day because wealth has been their hope, or health has been their hope, or religious traditions have been their hope, or some “pastor” or “reverend” or other religious personality has been their hope, or self has been their hope. People who have built upon these hopes will someday lament: *“I am gone; and mine hope hath he removed like a tree”* (Job 19:10).

Is there a wail more mournful than the cry of lost hope?

What is your hope? If Christ is not in your life, then hope is not in your death (Mark 16:16). †



Bill Dillon preaches for the Lord’s church in Cotter, Arkansas, USA.

SALVATION

I'm Pressing on the Upward Way

Nat Evans

Charles H. Gabriel wrote:

I'm pressing on the upward way, new heights I'm gaining every day;
Still praying as I onward bound, Lord plant my feet on higher ground.
My heart has no desire to stay where doubts arise and fears dismay;
Tho' some may dwell where these abound, my prayer, my aim is higher ground.
I want to scale the utmost heights, and catch a gleam of glory bright;
But still I'll pray till heaven I've found, Lord, lead me on to higher ground.

The chorus says:

Lord lift me up and let me stand, by faith, on heaven's table-land;
A higher plane than I have found, Lord plant my feet on higher ground.

We are to indeed examine ourselves day by day to see whether or not we are what we ought to be as children of God.

When we turn to Philippians 3:13-21, we see that Paul says, "*Brethren, I count not myself yet to have laid hold...*" No matter what others might think, say, or do, Paul is saying he had not as yet arrived. There was within him that determination to continue to grow spiritually. He desired to grow and to be more like Christ day by day.

Do you remember the song from years ago that echoed the sentiment that God made the world and all things therein in six days, but the song continued to say, "But He is still working on me"?

The biggest room in my house of life is the room for self-improvement. Peter wrote in 2 Peter 3:18, "*But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*" The force of the Greek verb is, you keep on growing. We are to indeed examine ourselves day by day to see whether or not we are what we ought to be as children of God (2 Corinthians 13:5; 2 Peter 1:5-11). We need to recognize the danger involved if a person feels that he/she has made it. Paul warned against the danger of being overconfident. "*Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall*" (1 Corinthians 10:12). One never becomes so strong as a child of God that he can lay aside all caution, and thus

SALVATION

no longer be concerned about the fiery darts of Satan (Ephesians 6:16). We must be determined to put on the whole armor of God so we can be victorious over sin and Satan (Ephesians 6:10-17). Indeed, we must always be watchful (Matthew 25:1-13). We must seek to grow spiritually (Hebrews 5:12-14). Paul warns in Galatians 5:4 of the danger that anyone is in who thinks that there is never any danger of falling. Yes, a child of God can fall (Galatians 5:4).

We need to make sure in life that we have the proper goal and are striving earnestly for it. We need to have a strong sense of purpose that will challenge us to keep on growing, to press onward to higher ground. Are you and I stronger spiritually than we were a year ago, or six months ago? Are we reading our Bibles? Are

we praying without ceasing (2 Timothy 2:15; 1 Thessalonians 5:17)? If we ever reach the point as children of God that we are no longer concerned about the danger of sin in our own lives, then we are in serious trouble (1 John 1:8, 10).

These verses remind us that at times we all fall short. Going back to Philip-pians 3:13, Paul says, *“but one thing I do...”* One translation says, *“but this one thing I do.”* Notice Paul didn’t say, “This one thing I dabble at.” By “dabble” I mean, to do something superficially, not seriously. Paul had that one supreme goal or purpose in mind, and that was to go to heaven, to please God. And so, with that same goal in our minds, we ought to be moved to say, “I’m pressing on the upward way. I want to be more like Christ, to follow Him as a pattern or as an example” (1 Peter 2:21). “Lord, plant my feet on higher ground.” †



Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil... having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God (Ephesians 6:10-17).

SALVATION

Grace Includes Faith and Obedience

David R. Kenney

Utilizing cross-references in Bible study can help avoid misapplication. For example, perhaps you have heard stated that we are saved by grace, but not by the Gospel. We are saved by grace — *“even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)”* (Ephesians 2:5 NKJV). But also notice we are saved by the Gospel — *“Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you — unless you believed in vain”* (1 Corinthians 15:1,2). Contradiction? Only if you hold the mistaken view that we are saved by grace *independent* of the Gospel. The contradiction, however, would be with one’s interpretation, not the Scriptures.

The same is true with grace, faith, and obedience. People have been erroneously taught that there is nothing one can do for salvation. For example, Ben Bogard, who was debating N.B. Hardeman, President of Freed-Hardeman College, made a statement some would agree with: “I am going to maintain that there is **no act at all** that any man in the Old Testament time or the New ever had to perform in order to be saved” (*Hardeman-Bogard Debate* 93). Consider that for a moment — **“no act at all”**. How does this compare with the audience that was so pierced with sorrow for crucifying their Messiah? Please notice their interruption of Peter’s sermon — *“Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Men and brethren, what shall we do?’”* (Acts 2:37). Did Peter tell the people there was nothing to do, **“no act at all”**? He did not. Notice what Peter told them to do: *“Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit’”* (Acts 2:37,38). Peter listed, not one, but two, acts that they had to complete — repentance and immersion for the forgiveness of their sins. Is faith important? Absolutely; however, we must possess more than faith. James wrote, *“You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only”* (James 2:24).

By examining these and other texts, we can see that more is involved in man’s salvation than some are teaching. **God** did His part in developing the plan for man’s salvation. Jesus did His part by executing that plan, and the **Holy Spirit** did His part by revealing this plan to man through the Bible. Now, **we** must do our part by following that plan which includes obedient works — *“And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him”* (Hebrews 5:9).

Why not accept God’s grace through faith by obeying the Gospel? †

David Kenney preaches for the church of Christ in Wadsworth, Ohio, USA.

SALVATION

Getting Serious About Heaven

Jimmy Young

As you read this article I hope to influence you to serve God and have the hope of eternal life. I wish to begin by asking if you agree with these facts:

1. Do you agree that life on earth is brief – like a vapor (James 4:13-15)?
2. Do you agree that life on earth is uncertain (James 4:13-16)?
3. Do you agree that life on earth will end either in death or the Second Coming of Christ (Hebrews 9:27,28)?

If you agree with the above three facts, do you also believe the Bible teaching concerning life after death (2 Corinthians 5:1)? These are the reasons why this subject is of the utmost importance. I truly hope and pray that each one of us will be serious about heaven. What is meant by “getting serious about heaven?” I believe the following explanation will help. Would you study these three points?

First, Paul speaks of a **condition**: “*If*” (Colossians 3:1). Note what he said, “*If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.*” If we are to be serious about heaven, we must establish the right relationship with Jesus the Christ. Paul speaks of being risen with Christ. One cannot be risen with Christ unless he/she has first been “*buried*” with Christ (Colossians 2:12; Romans 6:3,4). Baptism is God’s appointed way of getting into His Son. Once one gets into Christ he/she must maintain the right relationship with Him (John 15:4-10). You will note that Jesus used the word “*abide*” eight times to show or prove just how conditional it is. To *abide* means to *remain* or *dwel*.

Secondly, there is a **challenge** to “*seek*” (Colossians 3:1,2). All of us are seekers. Some seek material wealth (Matthew 6:32). Some seek after the wisdom of the world (1 Corinthians 1:22). In Paul’s epistle we find the reason for seeking things above: “*you died*” – you were separated from the old sinful life (Colossians 3:5-11). One’s “*life*”, his/her very existence or being is “*hid with Christ in God.*” Christians are new people — heavenly-minded, goal-oriented people.

Thirdly, we are to maintain **confidence**. Paul said, “*When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory*” (Colossians 3:4). Christ shall be manifest, or appear, as one of every twenty-five verses in the New Testament declares! We shall also appear with Him (Colossians 3:4). The dead shall be raised (1 Thessalonians 4:13-27). We shall be given a glorious body

SALVATION

(Philippians 3:20,21). We shall be with God in glory forever (Romans 11:36), and God shall be with us in His glory forever (Revelation 21:1-4). These Scriptures give us the needed confidence to help us in getting serious about heaven.

Friends, let us set our minds on going to heaven. It has been said, “Those going to heaven must send their hearts on ahead.” That is a good statement for those serious about heaven. Jesus tells us, “*For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also*” (Matthew 6:21). How serious are you about going to heaven? Have you met the conditions, accepted the challenge, and do you stand with confidence? If you are serious about heaven you can and will say, “Yes!” †

Jimmy Young works with the Nettleton Church of Christ in Jonesboro, Arkansas, USA.

BE BOLD TO STAND

Thomas Baxley

Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, king of the world, built a great statue of gold. On the day the statue was dedicated, the king gave an order for everyone to fall down and worship the idol when the music played. This event was so momentous that the king gathered all the governors of his empire to come pay homage to himself and his new statue. Among the witnesses of the event were three Jews by the name of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. They were given the same order as everyone else — at the sound of the music, fall down and worship the idol. The penalty for anyone’s disobedience (i.e., not worshipping the idol) was to be cast immediately into the fiery furnace (Daniel 3:1-18).

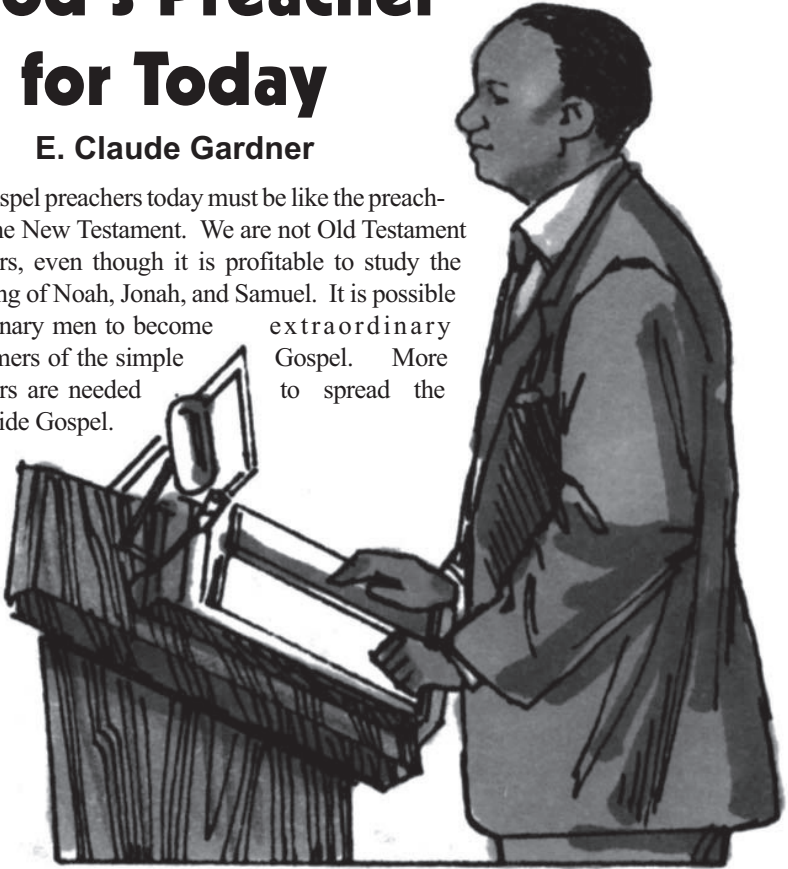
There was a dilemma here similar to one found in Daniel 6 — honor God or honor the king. Believers are to be subject to governments since they are instituted by God (Romans 13:1f), but what about when they give orders contrary to the law of God? In those cases, we must obey God rather than men (Acts 5:29). Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego stood boldly before the king and said, “No!” Though knowing the command of the king and the punishment to follow for breaking the command, they were believers and would not violate the law of God. **We, also, must boldly stand against the king and his fiery furnace when he commands us to violate the law of God.** †

Thomas Baxley preaches for the Highway 9 church of Christ in Piedmont, Alabama, USA.

God's Preacher for Today

E. Claude Gardner

Gospel preachers today must be like the preachers of the New Testament. We are not Old Testament preachers, even though it is profitable to study the preaching of Noah, Jonah, and Samuel. It is possible for ordinary men to become extraordinary preachers of the simple Gospel. More preachers are needed to spread the worldwide Gospel.



We should encourage young men to begin preaching. Parents should teach their sons that they could become preachers. Rather than parents pointing them to glamorous and lucrative professions, they should evaluate their sons to see their potential in communicating and in development of mental talents. Not all boys can and should plan to preach, but many young men do have the ability and zeal to serve as God's preachers and should be encouraged to do so.

To consider being God's preacher, there are three key principles: **Content**, **Conduct**, and **Consequences**. These truths will encourage and not deter men

THE CHURCH

from being preachers.

Here are commands from God to preachers — **Why, When, Where, How, What.** (All Scripture references are taken from the New King James Version unless otherwise noted.)

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19).

“For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!” (1 Corinthians 9:16).

“...and the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also” (2 Timothy 2:2).

“Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching” (2 Timothy 4:2).

“As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison” (Acts 8:3).

“So then faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. But I say, have they not heard? Yes indeed: Their sound has gone out to all the earth. And their words to the ends of the world” (Romans 10:17,18).

“For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect. For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God...but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness” (1 Corinthians 1:17,18,23).

“He will be great and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David” (Luke 1:32).

“For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe” (1 Corinthians 1:21). †

E. Claude Gardner is President-Emeritus of Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson, Tennessee, USA.

“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? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!’” (Romans 10:14,15 NKJV)

THE CHURCH

Non-denominational or Pre-denominational

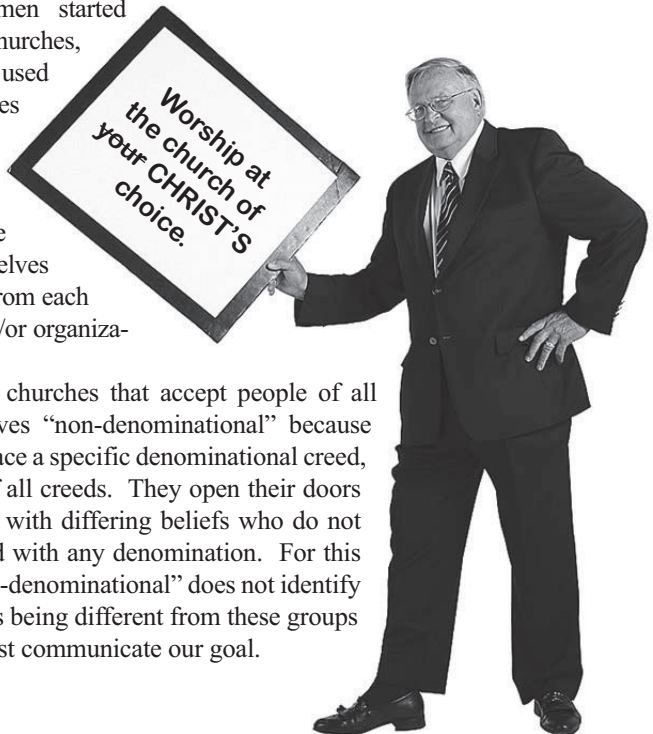
Owen D. Olbricht

The sign in front of the meeting place of the church of Christ in Mount Holly Springs, Pennsylvania that was placed there by Charles Yana II, the local minister, reads:

**CHURCH OF CHRIST
Pre-denominational**

This sign expresses the truth that the church Jesus established (Matthew 16:18) was built before men started denominational churches, churches that have used denominational names in order to set them apart from other churches. By doing this, they have denominated themselves because they differ from each other in doctrine and/or organization and practice.

In recent years churches that accept people of all creeds call themselves “non-denominational” because they no longer embrace a specific denominational creed, but accept people of all creeds. They open their doors to almost all people with differing beliefs who do not want to be identified with any denomination. For this reason the term “non-denominational” does not identify churches of Christ as being different from these groups and thus does not best communicate our goal.



THE CHURCH

Development of Denominations

Denominational practices began when churches started to be led away from Christ by men, even as Paul warned the Ephesus elders that such would happen (Acts 20:28-31). One bishop began to take control of one congregation, then a number of congregations, and finally all congregations fell under the umbrella of one leading bishop, known as the father bishop, the pope.

The lack of biblical authority for this arrangement and for many other practices was opposed by Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Wesley, John Smith, and many others. These men began what is known as the “reformation movement”, which was built on some biblical principles, but which also fathered contradictory doctrinal teaching. From these men and those of like nature have come the many denominations we have today.

Modern churches that have wanted to avoid identifying with those denominations began congregations that would accept people from all denominations. In order to attract followers, they invited people to join them, regardless of their religious viewpoint, and to become a part of a conglomerate of beliefs under a non-denominational umbrella. Their purpose in most cases was not to go back to the teaching that preceded the development of denominations, but was to include teaching and practices of all denominations, and thus to be known as “non-denominational”. “Inter-denominational” would be the more accurate term.

The Goal

The goal of the churches of Christ is to follow Jesus’ teaching, which preceded the creation of doctrines that have resulted in the many denominations of today. In order to do this, we accept only the inspired record in the New Testament. We should express our uniqueness by letting the world know that we are not simply “non-denominational”, but **pre-denominational**. Since “non-denominational” has come to mean an amalgamation of doctrinal beliefs, the term “pre-denominational” might better communicate our plea to return to the simple New Testament message of Jesus.

A good sign in front of our buildings could read as the one in front of the Mount Holly Springs, Pennsylvania, meeting place: †

CHURCH OF CHRIST
Pre-denominational

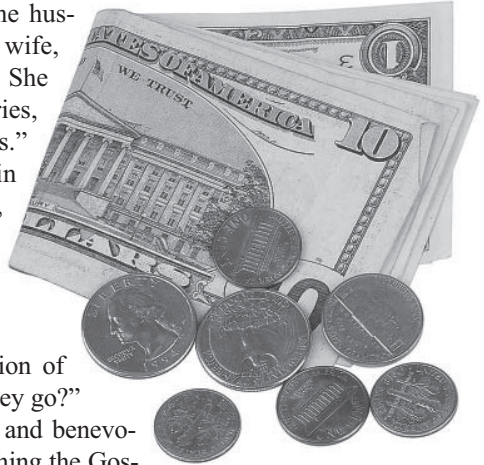
Owen D. Olbricht is a preacher and writer living in Sherwood, Arkansas, USA.

THE CHURCH

A Word to the Clueless

Bob Plunket

I love the commercial where the husband comes home and asks the wife, “Where did all the money go?” She says, “Oh, I threw it away on groceries, utilities, clothes, insurance, and taxes.” She turns and looks at the camera in frustration and disgust and says, “He’s clueless.” In other words, he does not know what it takes to live. He thinks you can still buy a week’s groceries for \$10.00.



I feel like many ask this question of the church. “Where does all the money go?” “Oh, we throw it away on missions and benevolence and building upkeep and preaching the Gospel. I think an elder might look at the camera and say, “They are clueless”, meaning that they don’t know what it takes to make ends meet.

But worse than this, I am afraid the church is becoming clueless about what the Bible teaches. **Some cannot tell one who is lost what to do to be saved and give Scripture for it. Some think the church is a denomination and do not understand the church as the body of Christ. Some do not have a clue as to what the Bible teaches about marriage and divorce. Some do not know why we sing without instruments of music, why we eat the Lord’s Supper on the first day of each week, why the church is autonomous, has elders as pastors, has preachers as evangelists, and has deacons serving tables. Others are clueless as to why women do not preach publicly and serve as elders. Jesus said, “Ye do err not knowing the scripture...”**

We need to be informed. The husband who thinks the wife is wasting the money needs to pay the bills one month. The member who wonders where the money goes needs to go to the business meeting and see. Those who do not know why the church does what it does need to read the Bible. **We must not be clueless.** †

Bob Plunket preaches for the Colbert Heights congregation in Tuscombua, Alabama, USA.

THE CHURCH

Ways of Causing the Church NOT to Grow

Carroll Sites

Do you want to see the church grow? Do you want to see the local congregation where you worship grow? There are many things which actually PREVENT growth in the local congregation, such as:

1. Very simply, but highly important, **don't invite people to Bible study or worship services** — IF you don't want the church to grow.
2. **Don't keep preachers around very long.** The most productive years of a minister's work starts AFTER the fourth or fifth year. IF you are not interested in the church growing, insist on a change of preachers about every two or three years.
3. **Don't be enthusiastic about the local congregation's work** — IF you don't want the church to grow. Passive churches rarely attract new members.
4. **Always depend upon someone else in the congregation to give** — IF you don't want the church to grow. God expects everyone else in the church to give — BUT ME. Don't give, and the church will remain about the same as it is — or go down.
5. **Never plan for growth.** Only plan for the present number of church members and the current program — IF you don't want the church to grow.
6. **Suffer from the "cutback" syndrome** — IF you don't want the church to grow. Since we have experienced inflationary times we must "cutback". Don't challenge the brethren to accept difficulties and to sacrifice — IF you don't want the church to grow.

You see, all one has to do to insure a LACK of church growth is to NOT DO ANYTHING. Without doubt, that will be a successful method to kill the growth of the local church.

Are YOU interested in seeing your congregation grow? I am just optimistic enough to believe that YOU ARE! Will YOU become involved - and will YOU sacrifice, if necessary, to see that your congregation will continue in both spiritual and numerical growth? DO YOU WANT THE CHURCH TO GROW??? HOW BADLY??!!



Carroll Sites is an elder and the preacher for the Lord's church in Higden, Arkansas, USA.

Quick Commentary on Crucial Verses Jeremiah 29:10-13

For thus says the Lord: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place.

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.

As a nation, America has fallen from the lofty biblical ideals of her founding fathers. Could Israel's warning also be ours? Could this promise also be ours, if we turn and seek God with all our hearts? Does He have thoughts of peace toward us and not of evil, of a future and a hope?

Judah had followed Israel's transgression in the worship of idols and unfaithfulness to God. He had warned through the prophets that there would be punishment — in this case, to correct and not to destroy.

Jeremiah was given words of warning and of consolation. There would be seventy years of correction in Babylon. The end result was that, evidently for the first time, Judah completely put away idolatry.

God's promise in response was that when Judah sought Him with all her heart, God would listen to her penitence and would return her to her land. The reason? **"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope."**

“I Am Set for the Defense of the Gospel”

Ronald D. Bryant

Paul pointedly directed Timothy, “*Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus*” (2 Timothy 1:13). The point of Paul’s directive is that God has given through Christ a “pattern”, a “pattern of sound words”. The New Testament is that pattern. It is the standard for conversion, commitment, worship, church organization, and teaching. It furnishes the pattern for the new life in Christ. If it is not the pattern, no one could know what was right or wrong, acceptable or unacceptable, holy or profane. If it is not the pattern, one could not say that truth was delivered by Jesus (John 6:63ff; 8:31f); nor could one say that the Holy Spirit guided the apostles into “all truth” (John 16:13; 1 Corinthians 1:10ff; Ephesians 4:1-6); nor could one say that the Word in which men should be sanctified will be the one by which all shall be judged (John 12:48-52; 17:8,17,18,20,21). Additionally, if the New Testament is not the pattern, then there is no way to identify the people of God, there is no basis for fellowship, nor limit; there is no way to identify the faithful, nor to identify the apostate, if the New Testament is not the pattern (1 Timothy 1:3-11; Titus 1:9-13; 2:11-14; 3:8). There is no way to determine what worship is, nor is there any pattern to establish worship in “spirit and truth” if the New Testament is not the pattern for the Christian age (Matthew 15:8,9; John 4:23,24; Acts 2:42).

The life in Christ that God desires for all to come and possess is made known through the Gospel. The Gospel of Christ reveals the way of salvation, the nature of the Christian life, the fellowship of the people of God, the church and its organization, the nature and elements of Christian worship. It answers all of the questions pertaining to “life and godliness” and enables us to become “partakers of the divine nature.” All of this is through the “knowledge” of Christ (2 Peter 1:3,4).✠

Ronald D. Bryant preaches for the Central Church of Christ in Gadsden, Alabama, USA.

...till we all come to the unity of the faith
and of the knowledge of the Son of God,
to a perfect man,
to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ
(Ephesians 4:13).

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

Doctrine or Dogma?

Mike Hinton

Paul once wrote to a young evangelist and encouraged him to demonstrate a pattern of good works in his life (Titus 2:7,8). His instruction included the admonition to handle doctrine with integrity, reverence, and incorruptibility. The surpassing importance of following those instructions is revealed in 2 John 9. John plainly states that those who do not abide in the doctrine of Christ are estranged from God. Such a dire consequence renders it impossible to undervalue the importance of holding fast to sound doctrine.

However, it is quite common for men to greatly overstate the value of dogma, often declaring it to be the equal of doctrine. Perhaps I should pause to define terms, since “dogma” may not be familiar to all except as the root to the word “dogmatic.” Dogma, according to *Encarta Reference Library*, is “...an authoritative and precisely formulated statement of a religious doctrine that is advanced, not for discussion, but for belief.” In short, we might say that doctrine is what the Scriptures actually teach. Dogma is the human interpretation and application of doctrine. Doctrine is inspired of God and is therefore without error. Dogma is derived from doctrine, but it

relies in part on human wisdom, and is therefore very subject to error. Let me draw an illustration from the Bible.

The Law of Moses codified a doctrine concerning the Sabbath Day (Exodus 20:8-11). God decreed that six days of work was enough for any week. By the time of Christ, man’s attempts to interpret and apply that law had led to the creation of a foolish and complicated dogma that forbade the plucking of grain to satisfy hunger, or even healing the sick on the Sabbath (see Mark 2:23-3:6). In this hostile exchange with the Pharisees, Jesus pointed out a critical error in their thinking when He intoned, “*The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.*” The dogmatic traditions derived from the fourth commandment were obviously at great odds with the doctrinal intent of God (see also Mark 7:9-13).

Now, please understand that dogma is not of necessity opposed to doctrine. In Acts 15, early church leaders agreed upon dogma meant to counter a weakness in the faith of Gentile converts. The council commanded them to abstain from eating foods that had been sacrificed to idols. It is clear from Paul’s teaching on the matter in 1 Corinthians 8:1-13 that God did not

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

regard meat waved before an idol as any more polluted than meat waved before a fence post. (See also Isaiah 44:9-20.) An idol is nothing but wood, stone, or

were just the first of many dogmatists intent on hijacking the church to benefit their personal agendas. Since that time, an unbroken litany of division



Food offered to an idol in Asia.

metal! The culture of the day and the idolatrous background of many new Christians made the council's decree prudent. But, they had no authority to permanently alter doctrine to deal with this or any other matter.

Subsequent generations of church leaders have not always understood or accepted the limitations of dogma. The Pharisaic Christians who attempted to use the Jerusalem council to force circumcision and the Law of Moses on the Gentiles were not unique. They

and apostasy has resulted from the mistreatment of doctrine.

We would do well to recall the manner in which our Lord chastised those of His day who offered vain worship, "...*Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men*" (Matthew 15:9). How fearful it would be on Judgment Day to stand before God rightly accused of respecting dogma and rejecting doctrine. †

Mike Hinton is a worker for the Lord in Blanchard, Oklahoma, USA.

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

Making Baptism Sure

Vance Hutton



There is one baptism commanded of all accountable people (Ephesians 4:5). That is the correct, true baptism of the New Testament to last until the end of time (Matthew 28:18-20). Peter wrote of making one's calling and election sure, and we certainly want to make baptism sure. The matter is too important to be otherwise. One cannot afford to be wrong about it. This baptism puts one into Christ (Galatians 3:27), puts one in contact with the blood of Christ (Romans 6:3), washes away sins (Acts 22:16), and renders one faithful to the Lord (Acts 16:15).

Baptism is a part of obedient faith. The jailor had done this by saying he "*believed*" in God (Acts 16:32-34). In Acts 19:2,3, Paul in conversation with twelve disciples, would use the word "*believe*" to sum up what they had done, including baptism. Every example of conversion in Acts is consummated with baptism. Not one example can be shown in New Testament conversions apart from baptism.

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

Bible baptism is immersion in water (Romans 6:3,4; Colossians 2:12; Acts 8:35-39). It is preceded by hearing (Acts 18:8), believing (Acts 8:37; Mark 16:16), repenting (Acts 2:38), and confessing our faith in Christ (Acts 8:37). It must be followed by faithfulness until or unto death (Acts 2:42; Revelation 2:10). Bible baptism is for or *unto* the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21). It is in the name of, or under the authority of, the Lord (Acts 2:38; Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 19:4,5).

An example of twelve disciples is given in Acts 19:1-7, who had not made their baptism sure. They had been baptized unto John's baptism after it was obsolete or had been rendered invalid. This baptism was immersion in water, preceded by faith and repentance, and for remission of sins. But, faith in relation to this baptism was in the Lord that should come (Acts 19:4). At the time of their baptism, Christ had come, had died, had been buried, and had arisen the third day. Paul immediately knew that something was not right in their conversion. They had been baptized with a baptism that then offered no promises. Having heard this (Acts 19:5), they made their baptism sure. They did it correctly. They had partially obeyed, but such was not good enough. These twelve saw the difference and readily obeyed.

Many today in denominational churches have been sprinkled for baptism. Some were baptized as infants. Some have not made the confession of the Bible. Almost all have not been baptized for the remission of sins. They have confessed that God for Christ's sake had already pardoned their sins. Many have waited a week or two or a month or two before baptism. That clearly reveals that their baptism was not unto remission of sins. It only takes a **little** to make baptism **unsure**. Many were baptized to please some other person. Some have been baptized because someone else was. One says he or she did it to obey God. So did these twelve. We must believe the right things and understand that baptism is done to obtain remission of sins and to place one into the precious kingdom (church) of our Lord.

These twelve in Acts 19 did what all should do who have questions about their baptism. Do you need to do it correctly? Some refuse because it would make them appear to have been wrong in the past or because it would make others appear to have been or be wrong. Friend, you cannot afford to be wrong in this, and there is no excuse when one learns better. These twelve were willing to make it as sure as they could. Will you? Is there doubt concerning your baptism? DO IT RIGHT. †

Vance Hutton is the preacher for the church of Christ in Double Springs, Alabama, USA.

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

ARE RICHES INHERENTLY EVIL?

Hollis Miller

A bottle of intoxicating beverage left unopened on a shelf will not make anyone drunk. It is when the bottle is opened and its contents consumed that drunkenness begins. Likewise, it is not money itself, but the use one makes of it that can result in evil. Material wealth can do many good things. With it churches can be established, educational institutions dedicated to Christian ideals can be built and maintained, orphanages can be perpetuated, the hungry can be fed, and families can provide themselves with life's necessities. Nowhere in the Bible is the mere possession of material wealth condemned as an evil.

But the Bible does sound warnings against God's people holding money in too high esteem. When the ruler inquired of Christ concerning what he needed to do, he was told to sell his possessions and distribute the money among the poor (Luke 18:18ff). Upon hearing the Lord's words, the ruler turned and walked away because he had great possessions. Can there be any doubt that in the ruler's case Jesus knew his attitude toward his wealth? Paul instructed Timothy to warn the rich not to trust in their uncertain riches (1 Timothy 6:17). A few sentences earlier the apostle had stated that the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and that in their greediness for riches some had been led astray from the faith, piercing themselves through with many sorrows.

In His warning against treasuring up treasures on earth Jesus said, "*For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also*" (Matthew 6:19ff). He further taught that one cannot serve both God and money. The word "serve" suggests slavery. One need not, however, be a slave of money merely because he may possess it. Nevertheless, it behooves such a one to be on guard against permitting material wealth to assume too prominent a role. Money is a tool in the hands of all Christians, whether rich or poor. When properly used, it can be a great blessing. But when coveted and hoarded for its own sake, it can be a curse. †



Hollis Miller is an evangelist living in Murray, Kentucky, USA.

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

Are There Many Ways to Heaven?

J.C. Choate

In the religious world, including both those who believe in Christ and those of other religions, most think that there are many ways to heaven. They explain that even though different roads may be taken, all are headed for the same destination. That sounds good, but that is not what the Bible teaches. Jesus said, *“I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me”* (John 14:6). Here Jesus is saying that there is but one way to heaven, and that He is that way.

Who said that there are many ways to heaven? Jesus did not say that, and neither did those who know what the Bible teaches on this subject. Those who say that there are many ways to heaven are those who believe all kinds of unscriptural things concerning heaven and how to get there.

On another occasion Jesus said, *“Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber”* (John 10:1). Now I didn’t say that, but Christ Himself said it. **He** is the way to heaven, and therefore, Christ says that when one tries to go another way, he is a thief and a robber because the way he travels has not been authorized.

It is true that in this world there may be many roads to travel to a particular destination, and most people apply that same idea to spiritual matters. They picture all the different religions ultimately leading to heaven, but again, Jesus declared that He is the one and only way to that eternal home.

This world has become very “pluralistic”, which means that any “god”, any religion, is counted as acceptable. The reasoning is that as long as people are “good” and are trying to follow their “god” and their religion to the best of their knowledge and ability, God will accept them. Shiva and Vishnu of Hinduism are alright. Islam with Mohammed as its prophet is another way. Buddhism with its pillars of “goodness” is followed by many. The Pope is thought by adherents to be God’s “vicar” on earth. Preachers in “community” churches and denominations preach a feel-good doctrine that assures listeners that everyone will be saved by God’s unending grace.

The problem with all of these ways and promises is that you cannot read any of this in God’s Word! These were lies created by Satan to deceive the world!

But thinking about the many roads that lead to a particular city, suppose you are officially authorized to take only one of these routes. In that case, you would have

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

to follow the rules if your boss was to be pleased with you. If you took another way, not only would you be going against the wishes of your boss, but you would also lose your reward at the end of the way. So it is with the spiritual road. Christ has authorized only one way. He Himself is that way because He came into this world to live among men and to die on the cross, to be buried, and then to be resurrected, to assure man of salvation. If He paid that kind of price, He has every right to make it clear what He expects of us if He is going to save us and take us to heaven.

In the case of our spiritual life, there is no other road. Jesus Christ is the only Savior, He began only one church to which He adds all of the obedient, and He authorizes the wearing of only His name. Ephesians 4:4-6 teaches that there is **one** God, **one** Lord, **one** Spirit, **one** faith, **one** baptism, **one** body or church, and **one** hope. There is also **one** way to worship — in spirit and according to Truth (John 4:24), and **one** way to live faithfully unto death (Revelation 2:10). There will also be **one** judgment, when each soul will give account of all that was done in this life (Hebrews 9:27). Following the judgment, there is **one** heaven and **one** hell for all eternity (Matthew 25:46).

If this is the designated way for the saving of *one* soul, it is also sufficient for the saving of *all* souls — all, that is, who will submit to the Lord and follow His directions in all things.

With the foregoing being true, why would anyone dare to teach that there is more than one way to heaven? What would be the reason for it? Surely the Lord knows what is best for man, and He has prepared a way — **ONE WAY** — for us to be saved, one way to heaven. Christ warned that the majority will be on the broad way that leads to destruction, but only a few will be on the narrow way that leads to life (Matthew 7:13,14).

Which way are you going? We urge you to let Christ be your way, the only way that leads from this sin-cursed world to a home in heaven with God forevermore. †



J.C. Choate [deceased] preached the Gospel for more than fifty years.

ON FIRE BUT NOT BURNED OUT

T. Pierce Brown

For over 60 years I have been reading the story of Moses and the burning bush, as recorded in Exodus 3, but when I read it a few moments ago I got a lesson from it that had never occurred to me before. Of course, this is the way God's Word is. We could read it daily for a hundred years, and though we might assume that we have exhausted its meaning, it is ever fresh and



new. We have seen preachers or others who seemed to be “on fire for the Lord” at some time in their lives, but after a while they seemed to burn out. We may remember Jeremiah who said, *“And if I say, I will not make mention of him, not speak any more in his name, then there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with forbearing, and I cannot contain”* (Jeremiah 20:9). What was once a burning fire in some preachers has become little more than warm ashes now. We hear frequently in many areas of life talk of “burnout”, but it is especially troublesome to hear of preachers who get “burned up” at something and quit preaching the Gospel.

What was it that made the bush not burn up or burn out? It was no doubt a miracle, but it was nevertheless the power of God. It was the miraculous power of God that was behind the first preaching of the Gospel when cloven tongues like fire came and sat upon the apostles, and they began to speak with other tongues as the Holy Spirit gave them utterance (Acts 2). Without such a miracle, it is still true that the Gospel is the power of God to save, and if one gets his power and utterance from the Holy Spirit, and is strengthened by the Spirit in the inner man (Ephesians 3:16), the chances of his burning out would be almost non-existent.

However, if his power comes from a consciousness of his own great wisdom, insight, oratorical ability, or other such factors, it may well be that he will burn out as a Gospel preacher, and possibly even burn up eventually. When the weak and limited man comes to the strong and limitless God, he can be on fire and still not be consumed. †

T. Pierce Brown (1923-2008) lived and preached in Cookeville, Tennessee, USA.

CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION

“His Word Was in My Heart...”

Dale Grissom

If we really expect to win the lost to Christ, we will strive to be like Him by adding the fruit of the Spirit to our lives: *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law”* (Galatians 5:22,23). Then we must mature as Christians and be like the prophet Jeremiah who said, *“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.”*

Personal evangelism is really about obeying the commandments of the Lord: *“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world”* (Matthew 28:19,20).

If we will empty ourselves of all selfishness, false pride, and rebellion, really strive to put God first in our lives, and develop a love for all souls, we can do much for the Lord through personal evangelism. We must look for opportunities to teach others the Gospel of Christ. *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek”* (Romans 1:16).

We will set goals for ourselves if we expect to be successful in evangelizing. We must first determine to win lost souls, then work diligently to make it happen. We start by winning one soul to Christ, and then another and another. We must not be overcome with fear, but work hard to accomplish our goals, using the early Christians as our example: *“As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and dragging off men and women, committed them to prison. Therefore, they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word”* (Acts 8:3,4). Just think what could be accomplished for the Lord if every Christian were to take advantage of every opportunity to teach! †

Dale Grissom (1927-2014) was dedicated to personal evangelism and worked with the church of Christ in Dexter, Missouri, USA.

We must first determine to win lost souls, then work diligently to make it happen. We start by winning one soul to Christ, and then another and another. Just think what could be accomplished for the Lord if every Christian were to take advantage of every opportunity to teach!

CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION

Motivation for Soul Winning

Les McGalliard

I've been thinking about motivation for evangelism. What thoughts should fill our minds as we contemplate the condition of souls that have never obeyed the Gospel of Christ? Let's meditate on the following:

Every accountable human being on the face of the earth is lost outside of Jesus. Paul says that there is no condemnation to those who are "*in Christ*" (Romans 8:1). In other words, those who are not in Christ *are* condemned. They are condemned by the sin in their lives. No man, or woman, is immune — all are sinners (Romans 3:23). The only way we can get into Jesus is by being baptized into Him (Galatians 3:26,27; Romans 6:3,4).

When we understand and are convinced that the truth and the truth alone will make men free, we will be compelled to share it!

The Gospel is the power that God has to save. Paul said he wasn't ashamed of it and that he was eager to preach it (Romans 1:15-17). He said that we stand in it and are saved by it (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). The preaching and teaching of the Gospel is the means that God has ordained for the transmission of it to the world. Only by sharing the Gospel will men and women be saved. God does not miraculously plant the knowledge of the Gospel in the hearts of lost people (Mark 16:15,16; 1 Corinthians 1:21).

Jesus is the only Savior. Salvation is not found in New Age religion, Mohammed, Confucius, Buddha, or in Judaism. It is found in Jesus Christ alone. Peter clearly stated the matter when he declared: "*There is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name [authority] under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved*" (Acts 4:12).

Jesus is only going to save His church. Paul said that Jesus is the "*head of the church, His body, of which He is the Savior*" (Ephesians 5:23). If He is going to save His body and His body is the church, then people must be part of His body to be saved. The church does not save, but is composed of the saved.

If we really believe that these things are true, really believe them, what motivation will that provide to reach lost souls? When we understand and are convinced that the truth and the truth alone will make men free, we will be compelled to share it! †

Les McGalliard has preached the Gospel for many years, primarily in Texas and Oklahoma in the USA.



How Do You Measure Up?

“Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom,
Let not the mighty man glory in his might,
Nor let the rich man glory in his riches;
But let him who glories glory in this,
That he understands and knows Me,
That I am the Lord,
exercising lovingkindness,
judgment,
and righteousness
in the earth.
For in these I delight,”
says the Lord.

Jeremiah 9:23,24

Does All of Life Constitute Worship?

Maxie B. Boren

For quite some time now brethren have been discussing the question, “Is the entirety of a Christian’s life worship to God?” Some in the brotherhood have taken the position that it is. A few have gone so far as to make outrageous assertions to “drive home the point” of what they consider the all-encompassing nature of worship. For example, a statement from a writer appeared in print in which he said: “All of life is worship to God...even changing diapers”. Such an affirmation is void of truth and is nothing less than absurd. It borders on sacrilege if, in fact, it is not.

To say that “changing diapers” is worship to God reflects a gross misunderstanding of what worship is all about. According to the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Vol. 5, page 3110, worship is defined as, “Honor, reverence, homage, in thought, feeling, or act, [whether] paid to men, angels, spiritual beings, or to Deity.” (Obviously, a person could be deceived into worshipping some inanimate object, or some other human being, but for this article, we are using the word worship as a conscious homage, reverence, and praise offered to the true and living God.)

In the Old Testament the principal Hebrew word used for worship, “shahah”, carries the connotation of “bowing down to”. According to the *ISBE* article, from a composite of all Old Testament teaching on the subject, the idea for worship is “the reverential attitude of mind and body, combined with the...notions of religious adoration, obedience, and service.”

In the New Testament, the primary Greek word used is “proskeneo,” meaning “make obeisance to, do reverence toward, to kiss toward” (*W.E. Vine’s Expository Dictionary of N.T. Words*, page 234). “The N.T. idea of worship is a combination of the reverential attitude of mind and body, the general ceremonial and religious service to God, the feeling of awe, veneration, adoration...” (*ISBE*). From reading the *ISBE* article on worship, as well as gleanings from countless other sources, and especially from plain biblical teaching, one gains the clear understanding that worship to God is the purposed and conscious offering of praise, adoration, and homage to the One deserving of such, in keeping with the guidelines given by Him. Worship is something that a person purposes to do, and does from his heart, in acts prescribed by God.

Let’s note just a few biblical examples that clearly show worship to be an act one purposes to engage in, and does: **(1)** Abraham gave instruction to the two young men who accompanied Isaac and him to Moriah, to attend to the animal while “*I and the lad will go yonder and worship...*” How could he “go and worship” if all

WORSHIP

of life is worship? Read Genesis 22:1-5. (2) When Moses and Aaron informed the elders of Israel of God's intention of delivering them from Egyptian bondage, the record says "*they bowed their heads and worshiped*" (Exodus 4:31). What were they doing before that? — listening to what Moses and Aaron had to say, and upon learning of deliverance, they obviously wanted to praise and thank God by worshiping Him, and did so. (3) According to 1 Samuel, chapter one, Elkanah "*went up...to worship...in Shiloh*" (verse 3). He and his wife, Hannah "*rose up in the morning early, and worshiped before the Lord...*" (verse 19). Worship is something they went to do, and did; worship did not encompass the totality of their lives. (4) Read Psalm 95, especially verse 6: "*O come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our maker.*" Worship is a specific thing a person does. No human being does this continually, 24 hours of every day. (5) Read the context of John 4:19-24. What impressions do you gain? (6) The Ethiopian eunuch had "*come to Jerusalem to worship*" and then returned. Read Acts 8:27,28. (7) Note that Paul "*went up to worship at Jerusalem*" in Acts 24:11.

Much of the argumentation on the matter revolves around the translation of Romans 12:1. In the KJV, ASV, NKJV, and Campbell's *The Living Oracles*, Paul's exhortation to the saints in Rome is that they give themselves as living sacrifices to God, which is translated as their "reasonable service." In the RSV, NASV, and NIV it is rendered "spiritual worship" or "service of worship". But in spite of the disputed wording in this text, when "the whole of God's Word" is considered, the following is reasonable and scriptural to conclude: All worship offered to God can be thought of as service rendered to God, but not all service rendered to God is necessarily worship of God. As a good parent, a Christian is serving God by tending to the bodily needs of an infant, but it is ridiculous to say in so doing the parent is worshiping God. At that moment, the worship of God is not in the mind of the parent. Worship of God involves intent and purpose of heart, a conscious disposition of mind to express praise and adoration. Think about it. †

Maxie B. Boren is a Gospel preacher and an elder in the Brown Trail congregation in Bedford, Texas, USA.

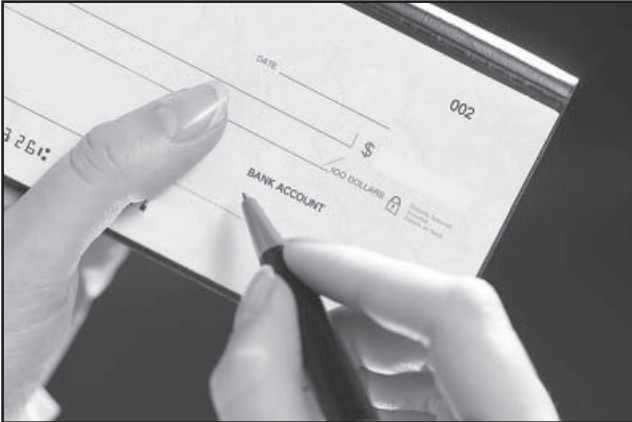
Worship to God is the purposed and conscious offering of praise, adoration, and homage to the One deserving of such, in keeping with the guidelines given by Him. Worship is something that a person purposes to do, and does from his heart, in acts prescribed by God.

WORSHIP

God's Plan for Financing His Work

Jack Harriman

God has a plan for financing His work. He has involved His people in carrying out that plan, and they are greatly blessed as a result of their participation in it. That plan involves six things.



✧ **First**, the collection of the funds is to be taken on the first day of the week when the church is assembled (1 Corinthians 16:1,2). Obviously there is no moral principle behind the day of the collection, but rather a convenient opportunity.

✧ **Second**, each Christian is to participate in the plan (1 Corinthians 16:2). The young and old, the poor and rich, all are to participate in the Lord's plan.

✧ **Third**, the amount of that contribution is to be according to one's prosperity (1 Corinthians 16:2). If the Lord had named some definite amount or some definite percentage, then that could be too hard for some and too easy for others. The giver must decide how much, and that decision is a positive exercise.

✧ **Fourth**, each Christian's contribution is to reflect a generous heart (2 Corinthians 9:6). Generosity is giving more than one legally or morally must. It is going the extra mile. That is the only kind of giving that actually benefits the giver.

✧ **Fifth**, each Christian is to give willingly and cheerfully (2 Corinthians 9:6). I do not want any gifts that are not freely given. Do you? Neither does the Lord. Gifts that are not freely given do not benefit the giver.

✧ **Sixth**, each Christian is to give with premeditation and prayer (2 Corinthians 9:7) which are good for the giver. †

Jack Harriman is a Gospel preacher living in Fayetteville, Arkansas, USA.

WORSHIP

Worship the Lord Your God

Loy Mitchell

Then Jesus said to him, “*You shall worship the Lord your God and Him only shall you serve*” (Matthew 4:10).

Satan was busy trying to get Jesus to sin. The devil had taken Jesus up to an exceedingly high mountain. He showed Him all the kingdoms of the world. The devil said, “*All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me*” (Matthew 4:9).

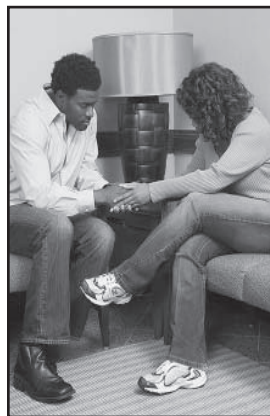
Jesus did not give in. He rejected this temptation and refused Satan by quoting from Deuteronomy 6:13. God is the ONLY BEING to be worshipped. To God and God alone are we to offer reverence. He must be the recipient of all homage. God forbids the worship of angels and men. What about Satan?

Jesus was offered all the kingdoms of the world. “No cross! No shame! No death! You can be a great earthly king, Jesus. You can have it right now. No pain and all gain”, was the message of the devil. Jesus refused this temptation, for He knew the cross was the only way for Him to become our spiritual king.

Today we know this to be true, but how we struggle to put it into practice! Satan still comes with his temptations. “Worship me! Serve me! Look at what I can give you, and you can have it right now. No pain! Live it up! You worked hard all week. Give yourself a break. Worship God on Sunday? No, that is a day of rest. Wednesday night? Not a chance. You are tired and need to relax.” No, you are too busy giving the “finer things of life” to your family so you don’t have time to worship God daily in your own home and to study His word. Your children need time for homework and sports.

I plead with you. Don’t buy into the propaganda of the DECEIVER. He is a liar. Protect yourself and your family by worshipping and serving God daily. You will be blessed beyond your fondest dreams. You will have the peace that passes understanding. You will be ready to meet your Creator with confidence and anticipation on the judgment day. You must make the choice. **WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD AND HIM ONLY SHALL YOU SERVE.** †

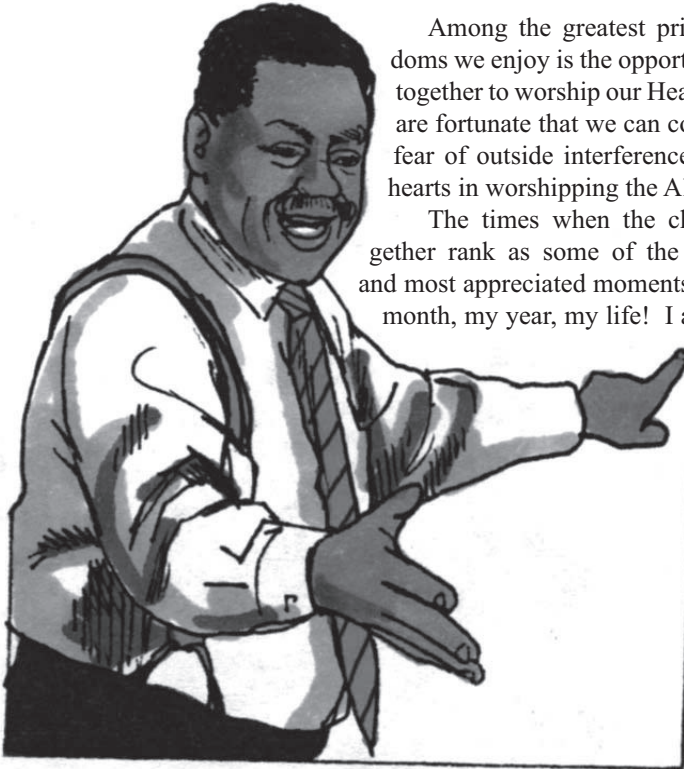
Loy Mitchell is an evangelist working with the Lord’s church in Knott, Texas, USA.



WORSHIP

What Makes Worship Great?

Patrick Morrison



Among the greatest privileges and freedoms we enjoy is the opportunity to assemble together to worship our Heavenly Father. We are fortunate that we can congregate without fear of outside interference as we unite our hearts in worshipping the Almighty.

The times when the church gathers together rank as some of the most anticipated and most appreciated moments of my week, my month, my year, my life! I am so grateful for

opportunities to worship. I leave refreshed, edified, encouraged, uplifted, challenged, and strengthened.

Certainly there have been times when Christians have expressed far different senti-

ments regarding the worship than those I have enumerated. I have heard people say, "I didn't get anything out of worship today." Why does worship affect some in a positive way, while others are seemingly unaffected or negatively affected by the same worship? What is it that distinguishes one worship service from another? How is it that we can leave the assembly one week thinking that the worship was great while leaving another service at some other time thinking that the experience was subpar and ineffective? What makes worship great?

WORSHIP

Let me begin by stressing what does not make worship great. The man in the pulpit cannot and does not make for a great worship. It matters not how dynamic his presentation, how bold his proclamation, or how verbose his oration. It doesn't matter if he can hold your attention for hours at a time. It doesn't matter that he can speak Greek and Hebrew or that he has a mastery of the English language. It doesn't matter that he can quote hundreds of Scriptures in every sermon.

The song leader cannot and does not make for great worship. It matters not if every song he leads is upbeat and engages the entire congregation. It matters not if he has perfect pitch. It doesn't matter if every selection is always appropriate for the occasion.

Those who lead us in prayer cannot and do not make for great worship. It matters little that their prayers seem as though they take us into the very presence of God. It doesn't matter that they can remember the names of everyone on the sick list as they appeal to God for healing. None of these make for great worship.

What, then, does make worship great? Worship is great when **we** realize how great God is! *"May all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you! May those who love your salvation say evermore, 'God is great!'"* (Psalm 70:4). *"For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods"* (Psalm 95:3). Corporate assemblies are a time for us to come together with hearts that are bursting with gratitude, praise, adoration, and reverence because of how awesome our God is! Worship provides us a time to pour out the great swelling of thanksgiving and amazement that builds in our hearts as we constantly reflect on our great God. Because my God is so great, I can overlook the preacher's accent, his mispronounced words, his grammatical shortcomings, and his less than stellar delivery, and I can fully appreciate that he is giving his best effort to point me to, and remind me of, the greatness of Jehovah!

Because my God is so great I won't sit idly by as we praise and extol Him in song, even if the song leader doesn't choose my favorites, or if he pitches the song too high/low, or if he doesn't keep the tempo just right throughout.

Because my God is so great, I look forward to coming before the throne of His grace in prayer as my brothers lead us, even if the prayer seems longer than usual or if the one leading us nervously, or as a force of habit, repeats himself.

Because my God is so great, I am not concerned with what time we get out of services. I am just grateful that the great God of heaven gives an unworthy sinner like me the opportunity to worship Him! That's what makes worship great! ✠

Patrick Morrison preaches for the Sixth Avenue Church of Christ in Jasper, Alabama, USA.

PROVERBS 17:22



A married woman was asking for information regarding an insurance policy.

She asked the agent, “Suppose that I take the life insurance on my husband today for a million dollars, and tomorrow he dies: What will I get?”

The agent looked at her suspiciously and replied, “Probably a life sentence.”



Larry had been extremely nervous while his wife was giving birth to their first child. When the nurse came to the waiting room, Larry was really excited and said, “Quick, tell me! Am I a mother or a father?!”



A preacher preached every Sunday for two different congregations located about 10 miles apart. The worship time was 9:30 at one and 11:00 at the other.

He would often find the parking lot of the second church full, and he would be forced to park down the road and race to the church building on foot in order to not be late.

The problem was finally solved when he selected a parking spot near the side door of the building and posted a sign that read, “You Park – You Preach.”



Two children ordered their mother to stay in bed one Mother’s Day morning. As she lay there looking forward to breakfast in bed, the smell of bacon floated up from the kitchen.

After a long wait, she finally went downstairs to investigate. She found them both sitting at the table eating bacon and eggs.

“It’s a surprise for Mother’s Day,” one explained. “We decided to cook our own breakfast.”



Fred had this problem of getting up late in the morning and then was always late for work. After a few weeks of this, his boss was mad and threatened to fire him if he didn’t do something about it.

Fred went to his doctor, who prescribed a pill and told him to take it before he went to bed.

He got a great night’s sleep and actually beat the alarm in the morning.

PROVERBS 17:22

After a leisurely breakfast, Fred cheerfully drove to work. “Boss,” he said, “the pill actually worked!”

“That’s all fine,” said the boss, “but where were you yesterday?”



“Bob, why don’t you play golf with John anymore?” asked a friend.

“Would you play golf with a guy who moved the ball with his foot when you weren’t watching?” Bob asked.

“Well, no,” admitted the friend.

“Neither will John,” replied Bob.



A teenager was always asking his father if he could borrow the family car. Pushed to the limit, the father asked his son why he thought God had given him two feet.

Without hesitation, the son replied, “That’s easy, one for the brake and one for the accelerator.”



You may not have known that the fellow who invented the door-knocker got a No-bell prize.



The math teacher saw that Jimmy wasn’t paying attention in class, so she

called on him and said, “Jimmy! What are 2 and 4 and 28 and 44?” He quickly replied,

“NBC, FOX, ESPN, and the Cartoon Network!”



Some Signs Found in Kitchens:

A Balanced Diet Is a Cookie in Each Hand.

A Husband Is Someone Who Takes Out the Trash and Gives the Impression He Just Cleaned the Whole House.

A Messy Kitchen Is a Happy Kitchen... and This Kitchen Is Delirious.

Countless Numbers of People Have Eaten in This Kitchen and Gone on to Lead Normal Lives.



Computer jokes: A complex system that doesn’t work is invariably found to have evolved from a simpler system that worked just fine.

The number one cause of computer problems is computer solutions.



I’ve given it a whole lot of thought, and I’ve decided that if I ever need a heart transplant, I want one from a used car salesman. That way I’ll get one that’s never been used.

I am sure asking various members of the Lord's church, one would hear a variety of answers to the question, "What is the role of the preacher's wife?" Yes, the leaders of a con-

You cannot serve God and mammon." The word "hate" in these two verses means to love less. As faithful followers of Jesus, we must love our family members less than we love Christ. The

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE PREACHER'S WIFE?

Bonnie Rushmore

gregation and the preacher that serve that congregation need to consider the opinions of the individuals who make up the congregation on any subject that affects the church, including the "role of the preacher's wife". However, the only viewpoint that matters is what God's Word says on the subject under consideration!

Biblically speaking, the primary role of the preacher's wife is to be a faithful Christian, putting God first in her life. Jesus said in Luke 14:26, *"If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple."* Also, consider our Lord's words in Luke 16:13. *"No servant 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.*

latter verse further explains that our hearts will be loyal to only one master – to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, or to Satan – we cannot divide our loyalties between the two. The preacher's wife, as well as all Christians, must demonstrate that God ranks first in her life.

The next most important role of the preacher's wife is that she is a proper wife to her husband and that she fulfills her God-given responsibilities in that realm. Titus 2:4-5 clearly outlines the role of a wife: *"that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed."* In this chapter, Paul outlined the responsibilities of the members of a congregation. In verses four and five, the young women were told how to be good wives.

DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING

If God has blessed the preacher and his wife with children, the wife's duties have increased. The above verse speaks of women loving their children. This includes caring for their physical and spiritual needs. While it is the primary responsibility of the father to train and to admonish the children in the ways of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4), the mother needs to assist in this area. She is the one who spends the most time with the children. Mothers need to put into practice Deuteronomy 6:6,7 and 11:18,19 by using every waking moment to instill in their children the Word of God. Mothers should teach their children to respect older individuals and their peers. Children should be taught to be responsible for their actions and possessions. The preacher's wife and all married women have a huge obligation to fill that will take much time and energy to fully comply with God's commands in the role of wife and mother.

Some members of the Lord's church expect the preacher's wife to be extremely hospitable. They believe it is her duty to invite the visitors into her home for a meal. It is her responsibility to take food to the sick. Clearly the Bible teaches that Christians are to show hospitality, and it is one of the qualifications of an elder, and subsequently of elders' wives (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8). First Peter 4:8,9 reads, *"And above all things have fervent love*

for one another, for 'love will cover a multitude of sins.' Be hospitable to one another without grumbling." In these verses Peter instructed all Christians to show hospitality because of a love of the brethren. God commands Christians to be hospitable, not because we have to but because we want to.

Some believe that the preacher's wife should be teaching the children's Bible classes, and if not already on the schedule to teach, she is the one to call upon at a moment's notice to fill in for a missing teacher. Others expect the preacher's wife to participate in every activity sponsored by the local congregation. Some even think the preacher's wife should be the one to take care of seeing that those activities are scheduled, planned, promoted, and function properly.

When I think of these attitudes I am reminded of Jesus' Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-29). In this parable Jesus showed that each Christian has various abilities, and each child of God must use those God-given abilities for the Lord. Remember, the parable praised the five- and three-talent individuals because they used what they had. The one-talent individual was condemned, not because he had only one talent but because he failed to use the one talent. This parable clearly teaches that **God expects, even demands, that each Christian work for the Lord, but no Christian is ex-**

DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING

pected to do everything. The preacher's wife, along with every Christian in the congregation, must evaluate his or her individual talents and opportunities and serve the Lord accordingly.

It would be almost impossible for a preacher's wife with young children to take charge of every activity of the Lord's church and still be the wife and mother God commands her to be. Perhaps the discipline problems we see in preachers' children is a result of preachers' wives trying to do everything within the body of the local congregation, and their children are neglected or the wife is simply too tired from all the extra activities to focus on their own children.

Unfortunately, some leaders within a congregation think that when they hired the preacher that they were the successful bidders in a **two-for-one sale**. They feel that when they hired the preacher that they also hired his wife for secretarial duties, teaching, visiting, etc. They believe that she should be available at any time to counsel, encourage, and comfort others in the congregation. This attitude places an unjust requirement upon the preacher's wife, and it often encourages her to neglect her God-given role as wife and mother.

The Bible does not outline specific roles for the preacher's wife. The duties and responsibilities of the preacher's wife are no different than that of

any Christian woman within the local congregation. However, because her husband is in a leadership role, she should be mature enough to accept that some hold her to a higher standard than others within the Lord's church.

Within any congregation of the church there are members who are babes in Christ and others who are mature, with some falling somewhere in between. Elders, deacons, and their wives must meet certain qualifications to serve the Lord in those leadership roles. Each of the qualifications deals with a level of maturity on the part of the elders, deacons, elders' wives and deacons' wives. Preachers and their wives must also demonstrate a level of maturity in order to appropriately serve the congregation.

Here are some suggestions that will help the preacher's wife be all that she can be for God and the local congregation that her husband and she serve. Of course, all Christians are supposed to serve according to their abilities within the scope of biblical roles.

◆ Dress appropriately for worship, for activities hosted by the congregation, and when outside the home (1 Timothy 2:9-10). What is proper attire for a picnic in the woods may not be acceptable clothing for worshipping our God. The key is modesty in dress and behavior.

◆ Show hospitality to all the members of the congregation and visitors.

DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING

We do not truly get to know our brothers and sisters in Christ when we only see them at the church building. Invite people into your home. You do not have to serve a full meal – snacks and tea or water will suffice. The purpose of the visit is not to show off your culinary skills (or lack thereof), but to get to know the individuals.

◆ Be compassionate to those around you. Let others see that you care about them as persons and that you love them and their souls.

◆ Have a listening ear. As much as possible, be a person that others can turn to during difficult times. Listen with compassion and understanding, and give appropriate advice when needed. Sometimes others know what they need to do, but they just need someone with whom to talk as they sort out the difficulties life throws their way.

◆ Learn to keep quiet. When someone tells something in confidence, keep it to yourself. If this confidence is something you feel you cannot personally handle, ask permission to talk to the elders or to your husband about the matter. Also, because of the position your husband has, you may become aware of circumstances that are not common knowledge within the congregation. You must keep this information to yourself. Much harm has come to Christians and to the church because a preacher's wife talked to others about things that should never have been voiced.

◆ Learn to say “No” in a loving, kind way. Know your limitations. Make sure that your family is your first priority. If taking on another class or project will mentally and physically drain you and keep you from properly caring for your family and home, say, “No I cannot do that at this time.” We must maintain the proper balance of serving God and others outside the realm of our home and maintaining our homes.

◆ What is the role of a preacher's wife? It is to be a faithful Christian, serving God to the best of her ability, to assume the attitude and behavior of a godly wife as outlined in Scripture and to encourage her husband in his work with the church. The role of the preacher's wife is no different than the role of any Christian woman. What we sometimes fail to realize is that our families come first in our service to God. As our children grow, we can reach out with greater emphasis to the world around us. It will be a sad day in eternity if we saved multitudes of lost souls but failed to ingrain the Word of God on our children's hearts, and they are lost. †

Bonnie Rushmore is a staff writer for the *The Voice of Truth International* as well as the layout person. She and her husband live in Winona, Mississippi, USA where they and others cooperate to help perpetuate the long-standing missionary work of the late J.C. Choate.

DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING

TWO DISPOSITIONS

Charles Cash

Jesus told this parable: *“Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood up and prayed about (with) himself; ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men — robbers, evildoers, adulterers — or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’ But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God have mercy on me, a sinner’”* (Luke 18:10-13).

In this parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector, or publican, Jesus graphically presents two attitudes, or dispositions, which are poles apart — self-righteousness and true humility. What a contrast!

The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself, or with himself, *“God, I thank you that I am not like other men.”* What an ego! What a self-righteous snob! *“God, just look at me, what a wonderful person I am.”* He was inviting God to join his fan club. Do you suppose his prayer ever reached beyond the roof of the Temple?



The Pharisees weren't always that way, that bad. The Pharisees originated during the inter-testament period and were men of strong religious character who took a leading role in resisting the Hellenization movement which was leading some Jews to adopt Greek customs in religion. Thus, they helped greatly in retaining and preserving the Jewish religion in this very difficult time.

Unfortunately, by the time of Christ, they had become, for the most part, a group of hypocritical, self-righteous men who, with their purely legalistic interpretation of the law and the countless traditions they had added to it, looked down their noses at everyone else. “Separatists,” they were called. In Matthew

DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING

23, we find Jesus pronouncing strong and stern woes upon the Pharisees. These were the most scathing rebukes Jesus ever leveled against anyone.

The Pharisee's prayer was a prayer of pride. There are different forms of pride. There is pride of race, pride of place, pride of face, and pride of grace. Pride of grace is self-righteousness, perhaps the worst form of pride. Augustine once made a prayer that has become well-known. He prayed, "Lord, save me from the good man — myself." The Pharisee needed to be saved from himself. We need to be saved from the good man. When we feel ourselves to be so "good" there is the subtle danger of complacency and self-satisfaction, not to mention the danger of becoming self-righteous.

How different the prayer of the tax collector! He, standing at a distance, would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, "*God, have mercy on me, a sinner.*" This is truly the "sinner's prayer". The demeanor of the tax collector teaches us the great lesson of the parable: humility. Lowliness is the beginning of holiness. Humility leads us to God. The apostle Peter promises us that "*God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand*" (1 Peter 5:5,6). Humility causes a sense of inadequacy. Humility causes an acute awareness of our sins. David, with a humble and contrite heart, said, "*My sin is ever before me.*" To admit to God and to ourselves that we are sinful and unworthy is the first step toward God and deliverance from our evil selves. The tax collector in Jesus' story told it just like it was!

In His conclusion Jesus said, "*I tell you that this man (tax collector), rather than the other (Pharisee), went home justified before God.*" The tax collector went home with a spring in his step after having a burden, the burden of sin, lifted. The Pharisee went home just as he came, or even worse. One man came to the Temple out of meaningless habit, no doubt. The other came out of the deepest need. The tax collector had prayed the simple prayer that all of us need to pray: "*God have mercy on me, a sinner.*"

“Two men went to pray, or rather say,
One went to brag, the other to pray.
One stands up close, and treads on high.
Where th’ other dare not send his eye.
One nearer to the altar trod,
The other to the altar’s God.”



Charles Cash works with the Bella Vista Church of Christ in Bella Vista, Arkansas, USA.

DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING

“Higgy, I’m Dying”

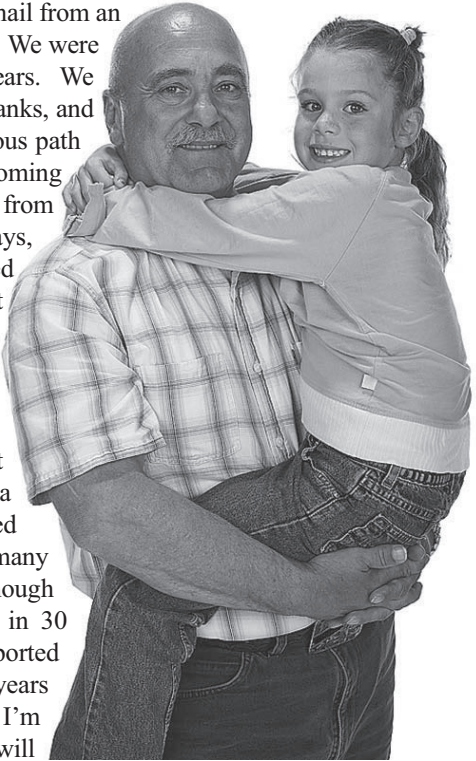
Steve Higginbotham

Earlier this week I received an email from an old high school classmate and friend. We were very close during our high school years. We had a lot of laughs, played a lot of pranks, and helped each other navigate that perilous path that leads on from boyhood to becoming a young adult. But after graduation from high school, we went our separate ways, and our paths have only briefly crossed once in the past 30 years, until last week. Out of the blue, I received a message from my old friend and it said, “Higgy, I’m dying from cancer. Please pray for my family.”

That was it. Nothing more. Short and to the point. What took only a few seconds to write has consumed my thoughts this past week. So many memories have flooded my mind. Though I haven’t seen this friend but once in 30 years, I feel as though I’ve been transported back through time, and the past 30 years haven’t happened. But they have, and I’m heartbroken for my old friend and will certainly honor his request.

But let this be a reminder to all of us. We’re all dying. Whether we are cognizant of it or not, each day we are a day closer to death. Therefore, say what you need to say to your friends and family while you have time. Don’t allow loving words to go unspoken, and then later to haunt you with regret. Not tomorrow, but today, tell someone you love how you feel. Remember, you and your loved one are dying. ☩

Steve Higginbotham preaches for the Karns Church of Christ in Knoxville, Tennessee, USA.



Let Faith in God Guide Your Actions

Philip J. Sherwood



“But you, be strong and do not let your hands be weak, for your work shall be rewarded!” (2 Chronicles 15:7). *“The Lord is with you while you are with Him. If you seek Him, He will be found by you, but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you”* (2 Chronicles 15:2).

These words are just as relevant today as they were in Asa’s time. We need to put behind us all the worldly pastimes and everything that keeps us separated from God. As the last days are with us and we do not know the hour when Jesus will return, we need to be ready and going about the Lord’s business. Too often we put our work, family, friends, and our leisure time before God. There is nothing wrong

DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING

in working, for God commanded us to work. Even Adam had to tend the Garden of Eden, and when he was cast out he had to *"toil by the sweat of his brow,"* and this has continued until this day. Paul wrote in 2 Thessalonians 3:10, *"For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat."* Sadly, many are breaking this law of God every day.

Family, friends, and our leisure time are important too. We show our love for God in our homes, or we should, to our family and neighbors. Hospitality is important, and inviting the lost should be our priority. Satan is working hard, as he knows the time is short. He even deceives God's children where he can (Matthew 24:24).

Keep close to God, in study, worship, meditation, prayer, and fellowship. This is how we stay strong in faith. If we leave out even one of these we soon forget the urgency for our faith and God's work. We need to be *"about the Lord's business"* as Jesus is (Luke 2:49).

Always remember what Jesus has done for us, that He died for our sins. Continue growing in faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love, for without these we are short-sighted even to blindness (2 Peter 1:5-10). It is a lifetime's work; we cannot afford to give up at any time, for if

we forsake God, He will forsake us. The consequences are too terrible to contemplate.

The deeper our love for God, the more willing we are to work for Him, not to gain a place in heaven by working, but to show the depth of our love for being made right with God. The deeper our love, the more we want to share with the lost. God saved us to reach out to others as others have reached out to us to show us the way to salvation.

We will be rewarded by seeing others saved and growing in faith. Then God's final reward is the commendation of *"...Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord"* (Matthew 25:21). We must use our talents and gifts for the furtherance of God's kingdom, not just to make our private lives more comfortable.

"Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather healed. Pursue peace with all men, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:12-14). †

Philip J. Sherwood works with the North Shores Church of Christ in Auckland, New Zealand.

What Our Young People Need

Charles Box

We have many wonderful young people. These children need good examples from parents and older Christians. Paul wrote, *“None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself”* (Romans 14:7). What we do has an effect on others. The actions of parents have a tremendous consequence on children. Parents are very poor examples when they smoke, drink, curse, lie, dress immodestly, and such like in front of their children. One sure way to avoid doing wrong before them is to do right wherever you may be, whether in the presence of your children or not.

Parents may think their actions have no effect upon their children, but they could not be more wrong. Parents are to train their children in the *“nurture and admonition of the Lord”* (Ephesians 6:4). A large part of that training is setting the proper example before your children.

“I saw tomorrow look at me
From little children’s eyes,
And thought how carefully we would teach
If we were really wise.”

Abraham and Joshua are good examples of the kind of fathers we need (Genesis 18:19; Joshua 24:15). Both of these good men led their families in serving God. Mothers like Hannah are also needed. She said to the Lord concerning her son, *“I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life”* (1 Samuel 1:11). When we have mothers like Hannah we will have sons like Samuel. Fathers like Abraham will produce sons like Isaac.

Children learn early to love the things mom and dad love, and to hate the things mom and dad hate. Thus, when Christian parents show that their first love is God and His Word, likely the children will learn to love spiritual things, too. But if we show we are more interested in the world and earthly things than in the Lord’s cause, we shouldn’t be surprised if the children grow up the same way. What do our children see in us? *“Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it”* (Proverbs 22:6).

The hope for our world is found in Christian families. When the Word of God is followed, society will be made better by strong families. Our young people are our most vital resource. May God give us the wisdom to teach them what they need to learn. *“Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb is a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one’s youth”* (Psalm 127:3,4). ✠
Charles Box preaches for the Walnut St. Church of Christ in Greenville, Alabama, USA.

THE CHRISTIAN HOME

What shall I give the children?

Richard L. Jones



Give them the gift of time. Most of us are aware of how quickly time speeds away. Don't be selfish with your time, especially with your children. Take time to play with them. Take time to pray with them. Take time to tell them the great stories of the Bible. Take time to enjoy your precious children.

Give them the gift of amazement. In a world of chicanery and cynicism, it is some-

times more difficult to think of the wonderful marvels of God. Don't get lost in the mechanics of analysis. Help children take the sweeping view of the great and majestic things God has created.

Give them the gift of security. Children want to be hugged, kissed, and held. They want to feel the love that strong arms encircling them can give. Show them that you trust in the living God.

Give them the gift of self-esteem. Tell them they are made in God's image, that God is the one responsible for making life possible. Commend every positive aspect of their lives. Turn the negatives into opportunities for encouragement. Let them be your helper in the kitchen, around the house and yard. Work together.

Children give us many gifts in exchange. They give us happiness through their smiles and affection. They give us hope through the twinkle in their eyes. They give us meaning and purpose when they grasp our hands and hold on tightly.

What a great God we serve who has given the world the magic of children! ✠

Richard L. Jones preached for many years in the state of Oklahoma, USA.

Children want to be hugged, kissed, and held. They want to feel that love which strong arms encircling them can give. Show them that you trust in the living God.

THE CHRISTIAN HOME

HOME IS WHERE MOTHER IS

Jim Poland

A child was asked, “Where is your home?” The little fellow replied, “Where mother is.”

“But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine: that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things... that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed” (Titus 2:1-5).

Mother has been given those special feminine and winning traits which nobly qualify her for the strenuous and honorable task of being a homemaker.



Be mindful of: All the nights of watching! All the self-denial! All the tears! All the concern! All the joy! All the helpfulness! All of these and more are seen in the home which mother makes!

She molds ties of undying love and binds the bonds of a family trust and makes them aware of their worth in her sight and God's.

This is home. And this is as near paradise as this world has to offer. I don't know who wrote the following:

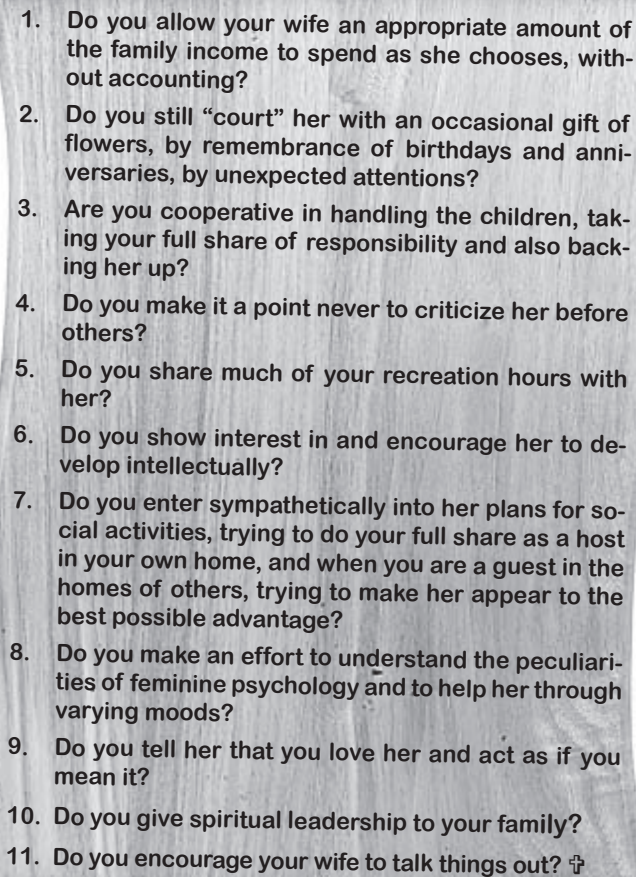
“There are three words that sweetly blend,
And on the heart are graven.
A precious, soothing balm they lend,
They're 'Mother,' 'Home,' and 'Heaven.'”

Home? What is it? As a word, it should bring fond memories to one's heart. It is something we associate with mother. It is the place of rest to which the care-worn soul turns tired steps from the toils and struggles of life. It is the family fortress that shuts out the world. It is where the weak and weary spirit finds strength and support. It is the one place in this wide world where hearts are sure of each other. It is the only place where the commoner can be a king, or a queen, or a prince, or a princess (Proverbs 31:24-28). †

Jim Poland preaches for the church of Christ in Carthage, Missouri, USA

THE CHRISTIAN HOME

Test for Husbands

- 
1. Do you allow your wife an appropriate amount of the family income to spend as she chooses, without accounting?
 2. Do you still “court” her with an occasional gift of flowers, by remembrance of birthdays and anniversaries, by unexpected attentions?
 3. Are you cooperative in handling the children, taking your full share of responsibility and also backing her up?
 4. Do you make it a point never to criticize her before others?
 5. Do you share much of your recreation hours with her?
 6. Do you show interest in and encourage her to develop intellectually?
 7. Do you enter sympathetically into her plans for social activities, trying to do your full share as a host in your own home, and when you are a guest in the homes of others, trying to make her appear to the best possible advantage?
 8. Do you make an effort to understand the peculiarities of feminine psychology and to help her through varying moods?
 9. Do you tell her that you love her and act as if you mean it?
 10. Do you give spiritual leadership to your family?
 11. Do you encourage your wife to talk things out? †



Perspective

Twenty years ago we dreamed a house.

Years of talking,

Planning,

Months of sweat and toil

Transformed the dream

To full reality

With walls and windows, floors and doors.

OUR house...

But we freely loaned our house to God.

For all those years, the joy of ownership was sweet.

Then the horror:

Fire! Fire!

Flames, leaping, licking, crackling

Engulfed our house

Our things,
Our lives —

A monster of a size no one could stop:

All — all we'd loved of things, all we'd known and owned —

Were OURS no more;

Stark fear and panic filled my heart

And then, at last, acceptance:

The raging fire had burned my world away

And in that awful hour of severance and defeat

I let it go.

Now, how strange the feeling in my heart

As I paint and varnish,

Make decisions, measure cuts

And work,

Raising up replacement walls on the funeral pyre

Of the house that once was OURS,

I am thinking always

That this tool is being readied

As equipment in God's hands;

THESE walls — THIS lamp — THESE chairs

Are HIS;

But, for some little frame of time

He's lending them to us

As stewards,

To tend and use for Him.

I own nothing any more

And not a thing owns me....

— Betty Burton Choate



5-MINUTE BIBLE STUDY WITNESSES

Paula Bates

1. A _____ witness does not lie, but a _____ witness will utter lies. Proverbs 14:5
2. This man came for a _____, to bear witness of the _____ that all through him might believe. John 1:7
3. Nevertheless he did not leave Himself without witness, in that he did good, gave us _____ from heaven and fruitful _____, filling our _____ with food and gladness. Acts 14:17
4. And there are _____ that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water and blood; and these three agree as one. If we receive the _____ of men, the witness of _____ is greater; for this is the witness of God which He has _____ of his Son. 1 John 5:8,9
5. But he who endures to the end shall be saved. And this Gospel of the kingdom will be _____ in all the world for a witness to all the _____, and then the end will come. Matthew 24:13,14
6. They also set up false witnesses who said, "This man does not cease to _____ blasphemous words against this _____ place and the law; for we have heard him say that this _____ _____ will destroy this place and change the customs which Moses delivered to us." Acts 6:13,14

~~© 2008~~

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Faithful, false | 4. Three, witness, God, testified |
| 2. Witness, Light | 5. Preached, nations |
| 3. Rain, seasons, hearts | 6. Speak, holy, Jesus of Nazareth |

TEXTUAL STUDIES

In Luke 12:13-21, we find the parable of the rich fool. We often notice that this man was called a fool, but seldom do we ask why. Following are some reasons Jesus called this man a fool.

He thought about the gifts, but not about the Giver. God is the giver of every blessing (James 1:17). Yet, this man gave credit to himself and not God. The man had an I “I” will do this, and was focused on his the exclusion of the Today, we are rich must never forget that the blessings we have are from God. Whatever talents we have to earn money are given from God as well. Without Him we would be nothing.



The Rich Fool

Randall Evans

problem. He said, “I” will do that. He material wealth, to Giver of those gifts. in this nation. We

He thought about himself and forgot about his neighbor. The rich fool was making plans for all his wealth. He was going to tear down his barns and build greater ones. He was storing up money all for himself. There is no mention of his planning to help anyone else. Today, we must be willing to share our wealth to help others. First John 3:17 says, *“But whoso hath this world’s goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?”* Let us remember the Words of Jesus: *“It is more blessed to give than to receive.”* Look for someone in need, and help him or her, sharing the blessings God has given you.

He thought about his body and forgot about his soul. The rich fool had great plans to nourish himself physically. He was going to eat, drink, and be merry, but what about his spiritual condition? It seems he had no concern for things spiritual. Let us realize that our physical bodies will decay and wax old while our souls are eternal. As Christians, we should give spiritual things priority over those things physical.

He thought about life and forgot about death. The rich fool was not concerned about death at all. How could he have been? He was too busy making plans for all he was going to do with his money. It seems that he thought he was going to live forever. However, the sobering words of God rang in this man’s ears when He said, *“Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?”*

What is the lesson for us? Our lives are short at best (James 4:14), and death is certain (Hebrews 9:27). With this in view, we should lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven instead of treasures on earth (Matthew 6:19-21). †

TEXTUAL STUDIES

Paul and Philippi

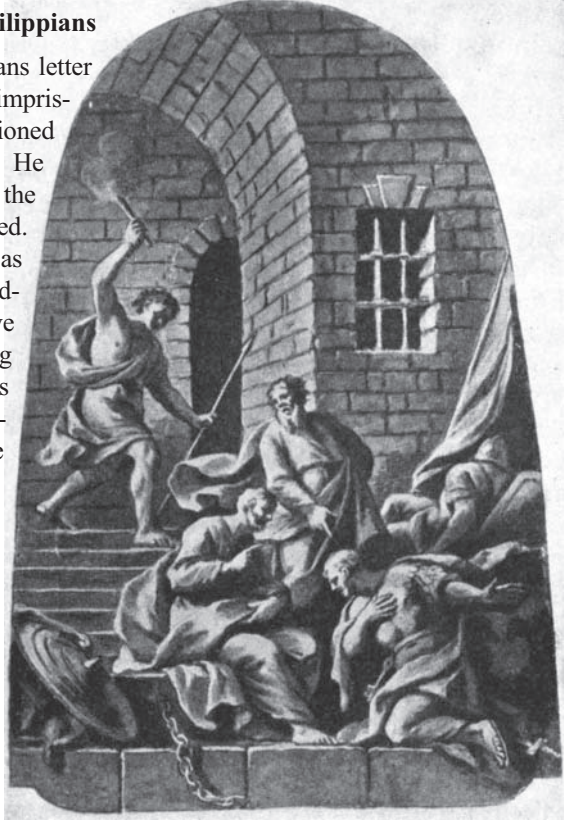
Gary C. Hampton

Paul, the Author of Philippians

Paul wrote the Philippians letter from Rome during his first imprisonment. Timothy is mentioned because he was with him. He was also with him when the church at Philippi was started. Paul described both of them as servants of Christ, or in bondage to Christ. All who have reached an age of knowing right from wrong are slaves (Romans 6:16-18). All Christians are like slaves who have been purchased by the Lord, our Master (1 Corinthians 6:19,20). Concerning the writing, Lipscomb says:

This epistle was written by Paul while in "bonds" in the Praetorium (1:7-13). He sends greetings from Caesar's household (4:21); he expresses expecta-

tion of some crises in his imprisonment (1:20-26); and confident hope of visiting Philippi (1:26; 2:24). All those indications place it in the first imprisonment of Paul in Rome which we know to have lasted "two whole years" (Acts 28:30), which certainly began in the year A.D. 61. Therefore, its date must be somewhere towards the end of the imprisonment, in the year of A.D. 63.



TEXTUAL STUDIES

To the Saints in Philippi

Paul wrote to the saints, including all who were separated from sin and dedicated to God's service (1 Corinthians 6:9-11). This is a fitting description of every Christian (2 Thessalonians 1:10). He also addressed the bishops and deacons. It was Paul's practice to ordain elders in every church (Acts 14:23). These men were the overseers, or bishops, of the church and were to watch for the safety of the members' souls (Acts 20:17, 28-32; Titus 1:5-14; Hebrews 13:4, 17; 1 Peter 5:14).

All Christians are deacons, or servants, but here the word is used for the *office* of deacon (1 Timothy 3:8-13). Their job appears to have been to attend to physical needs of the brethren and routine requirements. In doing this, they freed the elders for the more important tasks of prayer and study, allowing them to keep themselves and the flock safe (compare Acts 6:17).

The City of Philippi

D. Edmond Heibert, in his book, *An Introduction to the Pauline Epistles*, gives us a little insight into the nature of the city of Philippi. "It was an inland town and was situated about eleven miles north of the seaport of Neapolis." It was strategically important because it stood at the place where a mountain pass ran through the Balkans. The ancient name of the town was Crenides, which means, "The Little Fountains". This likely came from the number of springs in the area. Philippi II of Macedonia saw the importance of its location and took it over to protect Macedonia from the Thracians. In 356 B.C., he had it enlarged, fortified, and renamed Philippi.

The Romans built the Via Egratia, a highway, through the pass, and therefore through Philippi. In 42 B.C., the Roman Republican armies, led by Brutus and Cassius, were defeated by the armies of Mark Anthony and Octavian, who was later called Augustus. The pride brought on by the victory led Octavian to elevate the city to colony status. Its citizens were Roman citizens, and their names were enrolled in Rome's annals. They did not have to pay poll and property tax. They were not ruled by a provincial governor, and they had the right to own land. Heibert says the population of the city included the Roman colonists, Macedonians, and Orientals. Few Jews settled there because it was an agricultural and military city.

Paul and Philippi

Paul first visited Philippi on his second missionary journey (Acts 16). Timothy had joined Paul for the first time at Lystra. The Holy Spirit would not allow them to go to Asia or Bithynia. Paul had a vision at Troas of a Macedonian man calling for them to come over and help them. Luke's account as they set sail changes from a

TEXTUAL STUDIES

discussion of what Paul or “he” did to what “we” did. We conclude, then, that Luke joined Paul and Timothy at Troas (Acts 16:10). Immediately after receiving the Macedonian call, they sailed to Neapolis and journeyed on to Philippi, which Luke called the chief city. We do not really know what made him say it was the chief city.

The few Jews who lived there did not have a synagogue, but they did have a place outside of the city for prayer. On the Sabbath, Paul went to that place and spoke to the women assembled there. Lydia and her household were baptized. Paul healed a damsel possessed with a spirit. He and Silas were caught, dragged to the marketplace, and beaten for it. It was in prison that they met, taught, and baptized the Philippian jailer and his household.

The apostle would not be released privately the next day by the magistrates. He, a Roman citizen, had been beaten without being charged. The magistrates had to go in person and ask Paul and Silas to leave. Heibert thinks Paul’s insistence upon his rights as a Roman citizen was very important. He says the magistrates needed to realize that this was not some insignificant revolutionary movement, as had been charged, but was being preached by a Roman citizen. He thinks this may have saved the young church some later problems. Paul and his company departed after they met with and comforted the brethren at Lydia’s house.

The Christians at Philippi would have been included in those Macedonia Christians Paul commended for their liberality (2 Corinthians 8:1-15). They had a close working relationship with Paul, having supported him on more than one occasion (Philippians 4:15,16; Acts 18:5; 2 Corinthians 11:7-10, especially 9). Paul may have visited them when Corinth was having its problems (2 Corinthians 2:12,13; 7:5,6). He did keep the Passover with them in Acts 20:6, so, it comes as no surprise that he would want them to have God’s grace and peace. Grace is kindly acts freely given. Peace is an internal calm. †

Gary C. Hampton preaches for the Siwell Road congregation in Jackson, Mississippi, USA.

Providential opportunities, such as Paul and Silas experienced in the Philippian jail, doubtlessly worked out for the good (Romans 8:28), despite the personal pain (Acts 16:22,23) and humiliation that they endured (1 Peter 4:12-16). The new congregation was encouraged and validated, and the jailer and his family were converted, too. Always and everywhere, **think opportunity!** Furthermore, be careful not to dismiss the providence of God.

TEXTUAL STUDIES

A Text That Meets Needs - 2 Peter 2:18-3:13

Ardron Hinton

Christians Need To Be Reminded:

“Beloved, I now write to...stir up your pure minds by way of reminder” (3:1).

1. Reminded of the message of the apostles and of the Israelite prophets before them who predicted the facts of their message (3:2).
2. Reminded of the promised return of Christ and the certainty of it (3:4,10).
3. Reminded of the fact that God means what He says (3:3,5).
4. Reminded of the prospect of a far better world (3:13).

Christians Need To Be Warned:

“I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears” (Acts 20:31).

1. Warned that the world promises a “freedom” it does not even have (3:19).
2. Warned that the “washed” can become unclean again (2:20).
3. Warned that backsliding makes you worse than the unconverted (2:21,22).
4. Warned that there will be scoffers to face and to resist (3:3).
5. Warned that sameness in human affairs will be used to mislead (3:4).
6. Warned that the present world is already destined for demolition (3:5-7).
7. Warned that Christ’s return will be unexpected and sudden (3:10).
8. Warned that judgment is certain and its standards settled (3:7,11).
9. Warned that physical things are not eternal, not to be trusted (3:11,12).

Christians Need To Be Informed:

“Are you not therefore mistaken, because you do not know the Scriptures nor the power of God?” (Mark 12:24).

1. Informed concerning the pattern and tactics of error (2:18,19; 3:3,4).
2. Informed concerning the Lord’s view of time (3:8).
3. Informed concerning the reason for delaying His return (3:9).
4. Informed concerning the nature of the end time (3:5,6,10).
5. Informed concerning the proper reaction to these facts (3:9,11,12).

TEXTUAL STUDIES

“...that all should come to repentance.” “...what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness.” “...looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God...”

How firmly rooted in our minds are these facts? How carefully heeded are the warnings? How thoroughly understood are the instructions for living? †

Ardron Hinton is a preacher of the Gospel and lives in Blair, Oklahoma, USA.

We Are Not Perfect!

Roger Rush

Some think that being a Christian means that one never sins. Nothing could be further from the truth. We have a Savior who withstood every temptation and overcame every obstacle to live a sinless life (Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 2:22). We are called to follow his example, but it is a mistake to think that we must live a perfect life to do that. In essence, Jesus sets the standard for which we strive, but never quite achieve.

John warned that those who say they have no sin are self-deceived and devoid of truth (1 John 1:8-10). The Bible tells us that we all sin and come short of God’s glory (Romans 3:23). Except for our Lord, there is no man who does good in life and never sins (Ecclesiastes 7:20). What, then, is the difference between Christians and non-Christians if all are sinners?

✘ **First**, Christians are saved sinners. Having been obedient to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, a Christian’s sins are washed away by the blood of Jesus (Ephesians 1:7). Further, as long as we “*walk in the light*” or live as a child of God ought to live, Jesus’ blood continues to cleanse us of all sin (1 John 1:7). Through Him, we are justified, sanctified, forgiven, redeemed, and saved.

✘ **Second**, Christians are not controlled by sin. Sin does not have dominion over God’s people (Romans 6:14). That means that Christians are motivated by a desire to do what is right and to reject what is wrong. It means that we are committed to embracing good and shunning evil. It means that we are determined to follow God’s standard and not our own. It means that we are resolved to withstand temptation, not to surrender to it!

✘ **Third**, we are not sinless, but we do *sin less*. Our goal is to conform to the example of our Savior. Like the apostle Paul, we want to be able to say, “*Christ lives in me*” (Galatians 2:20). As we move toward maturity in Christ, sin has less of a place in our lives, and God’s Word has more control.

Our eternal well-being does not hinge on our being “perfect” or “sinless.” Our salvation is made possible because our Savior was sinless. We lay no claim to living perfect lives, but we do try everyday to live as close to Jesus as we can. We will never regret doing that, but we will regret forever our failure to try! †

John the Baptist

Grady Miller



Jesus praised His cousin, saying, *“Truly I tell you, among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist”* (Matthew 11:11). The mere mention of John’s name reminds us of uncompromising courage and steadfast devotion.

Emerson once wrote, *“To be great is to be misunderstood.”* Sadly, there are many today who fail to understand the calling of John and the nature of his work. Consider for a moment these few observations concerning John the Baptist.

John the Baptist did not establish a church. The New Testament documents one church (Ephesians 4:4), and that church was built by Jesus Christ (Matthew 16:18). Jesus alone is her Foundation (1 Corinthians 3:11) and Head (Colossians 1:18); Jesus alone purchased the church with His own precious blood (Acts 20:28). Just as Peter or Paul did not establish a church of their own, neither did John the Baptist. The New Testament knew of no church built by John, governed by John, or named after John.

John was not even a member of the Lord’s church. In fact, John was dead and buried before the church was even established! Notice the chronology or the timetable of the Scriptures:

BIBLE CHARACTERS

1. John preached that *“the kingdom of heaven is at hand”* (Matthew 3:1-2). The kingdom was near, or would be begun soon, but as yet it did not exist.
2. In Matthew 6:10 Jesus taught His disciples to pray, *“Thy kingdom come,”* for it was still future.
3. In Matthew 11 John is in prison, his public ministry now finished.
4. In Matthew 14 John was beheaded and buried by his followers.
5. Later, in Matthew 16, Jesus promised, *“I will build my church”* (verse 18). *“I will build”* — first person singular future indicative active. John was dead and in his grave when Jesus promised to build His church.

The only possible conclusion is that John was not part of the Lord’s church, having died before it was established. This rings true with our Savior’s words in Matthew 11:11, *“He that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than [John].”* Today, we have the privilege to be a part of Christ’s church, an honor that John was denied because, like Noah, Abraham, Moses, and others, he lived and died before the church was established.

John never intended to receive the honor that rightfully belongs to Jesus. He said, *“I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him...He must increase, but I must decrease”* (John 3:28, 30). *“He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear”* (Matthew 3:11). It is misguided ignorance for one to call himself after John the Baptist or to name a church after him. Why pay homage to the servant instead of the Master? Why exalt the slave above the Savior? Such is not in accordance with the will of the Father, or of the Son, or for that matter, of John the Baptist. †

Grady Miller preaches for the Lord's church in Colorado Springs, Colorado, USA.

It is misguided ignorance for one to call himself after John the Baptist or to name a church after him. Why pay homage to the servant instead of the Master?

BIBLE CHARACTERS

Peculiar Pharisees

Keith Parker

The Pharisees were a peculiar bunch. Religious, not righteous. Traditional, not truthful. Proud, not penitent.

Read Matthew 23. Jesus gives us a glimpse into their religion.

First, they failed to practice what they preached. *“So you must obey them and do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach”* (23:3). They were preaching one thing and practicing another. Their talk was not in harmony with their walk. Peculiar Pharisees.

Second, they had a show-n-tell religion. *“Everything they do is done for men to see”* (23:5). They wanted some pats on the backs, “that-a-boys”, and “way-to-goes”. They did what they did for show. Peculiar Pharisees.

Third, they majored in minors and minored in majors. *“You give a tenth of your spices, but you have neglected the more important matters of the law”* (23:23). They made mountains out of mole hills and mole hills out of mountains. Small was big and big was small. Peculiar Pharisees.

Fourth, they were beautiful on the outside, but ugly on the inside. *“On the outside you appear to people as righteous, but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness”* (23:28). Their hands were clean, but not their hearts. They needed a heart-transplant. Peculiar Pharisees.

Fifth, they were heavy on tradition, but light on truth. *“You nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition”* (Matthew 15:6). They placed tradition on the same level as truth. Truth and tradition walked hand-in-hand. Peculiar Pharisees.

A few questions: (1) Do you practice what you preach? Do you talk the walk and walk the talk? (2) Do you have a show-n-tell religion? Do you want people to know what you do for God? (3) Do you major in minors and minor in majors? Do you make the big stuff little and the little stuff big? (4) Are you beautiful outwardly, but ugly inwardly? Is your heart as pure as your hands? (5) Do you seek tradition above truth? Are you a truth-seeker, or a tradition-seeker?

Peculiar Pharisees? Peculiar Christians!



Keith Parker works with the Lord's church in Hendersonville, Tennessee, USA.

BIBLE CHARACTERS

And Matthew (The Tax Collector)

Neal Pollard

It is interesting to me that Matthew, who lists himself eighth among the twelve apostles, adds a qualifier to his name different from any notation he makes about the others (10:1-4). He identifies one as a traitor, gives an ethnic detail about another, tells us that there are two pairs of brothers chosen by our Lord, gives surnames, nicknames, and tells us James is the son of Alphaeus. Yet, only after his own name does he specify occupation. We know there are fishermen in the group. At least one professional nationalist stood among the chosen. Perhaps one was in the finance business. Strangely, however, he mentions only his trade.

By Matthew's own account, tax collectors had no qualms hanging out with sinners (9:10,11). Luke records at least one known for unscrupulous, unethical behavior in that occupation (19:1ff; cf. 3:13). In fact, Matthew repeatedly lumps together tax collectors, prostitutes, and pagans (11:19; 18:17; etc.). That is apparently how they were seen, especially by the scribes and Pharisees. Yet, Matthew does not hide the kind of work he did before Jesus called him. He openly lists it as the thing that distinguished him.

Did he do this to give hope to people who wrestled with the guilt of their own sins, who would know what he overcame to follow Jesus and see him as an example of Jesus' power? Did he do this to show that even he, who was picked to be an apostle and to write one of the four sacred records of Jesus' life, had a sinful past (cf. Romans 3:23)? Did he do this to show the unity possible in Christ? How much interaction did he and Simon the zealot have in fulfilling Jesus' ministry? Did they ever "door knock" together? How far apart were they when reclining to eat together? A Jewish nationalist would not have had deep, inherent appreciation for a guy collecting taxes to enrich the Roman coffers.

What is clear is that Matthew tells everyone what he did and who he was. Yet, what he became through Christ is what is most important. He is still faithfully serving after Christ's resurrection and ascension (Acts 1:13). He had a role in doing the initial preaching of the Gospel of Christ (Acts 2:14).

What about Joe the alcoholic? Or Ted the foul-mouthed? Or Susie the liar? If they repent and obey Jesus, can they find a useful place in the kingdom, too? We already know the answer. The Lord wants us to believe it! †

Neal Pollard is the preacher for the Bear Valley church in Denver, Colorado, USA.



Thieves

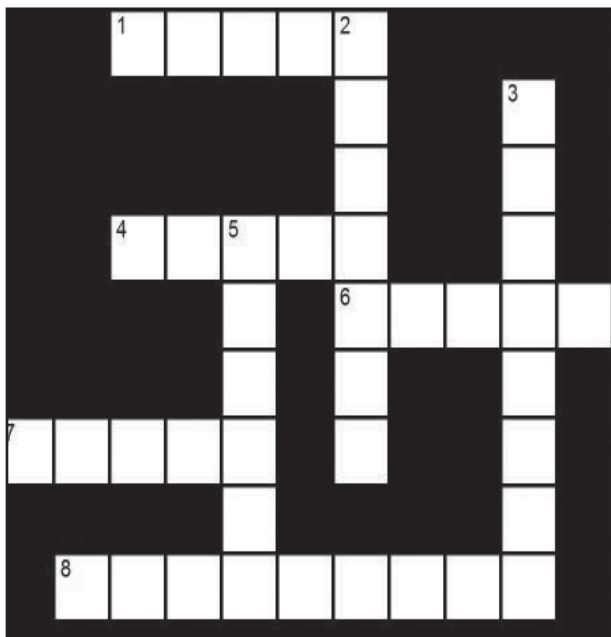
Bonnie Rushmore

Across

- 1 Who stole from the disciples' treasury? (John 12:4-6)
- 4 Since Jesus was crucified with thieves, how many crosses were on Calvary's hill? (Matthew 27:38)
- 6 Who took a Babylonian garment, silver and gold during the battle at Ai? (Joshua 7:11-21)
- 7 Who stole 1,100 shekels of silver from his mother? (Judges 17:2)
- 8 Who stole Job's camels and killed the servants watching over them? (Job 1:17)

Down

- 2 Who stole Job's oxen and donkeys and killed the servants watching over them? (Job 1:13)
- 3 Who was called a robber in John 18:40?
- 5 Who stole the household idols that belonged to her father? (Genesis 31:19)



WHAT ABOUT EVOLUTION?

Mark N. Posey

Question: Doesn't the Bible allow for the theory of evolution? Can't a Christian believe in evolution and creation and still be alright?

Answer: This is a frequently-asked question, and it comes in various forms, such as, "Can a person be a Christian and believe in evolution?" or, "Hasn't science proven the theory of evolution, thus contradicting the Genesis account of creation?" To answer this, we must first understand what we mean by the term "evolution". If it were defined simply "change" — as the development of an infant to an adult or a change within a kind, such as a dog or cat — then this would pose no problem. This evolution, or developmental change within certain kinds, is completely consistent with Holy Scripture. The problem is that the prevailing theory of evolution goes far beyond this. The theory states basically that complex elements have developed from simpler elements, and living organisms have sprung from non-living chemicals, by a chance association.

The theory of evolution is less of a scientific theory and more of a philosophy about the origin of life and the meaning of man. The theory of evolution is contradictory to the biblical account of creation. The Genesis account records 10 different times how God created plants and animals after their kind, with no crossing of the kinds. Man was fully man at his creation, as was woman, with no long gradual period of development.

The idea of natural selection, or survival of the fittest, is at odds with the biblical teaching that all things were created good (Genesis 1:31). The Scriptures teach that everything was originally created perfect, and death and decay occurred only after sin entered into the universe. This is opposed to the evolutionary concept of everything getting better. The Christian should not be embarrassed for believing the Genesis account of creation, since it not only fits observable facts, but also was the view of Jesus Christ (John 1:1-5; Colossians 1:15-18; Matthew 19:1-6). †

Mark N. Posey preaches for the Austinville Church of Christ in Decatur, Alabama, USA.

The Christian should not be embarrassed for believing the Genesis account of creation, since it not only fits observable facts, but also was the view of Jesus Christ.

BIBLE QUESTIONS

Swear Not At All

Dennis Gullede

What did Jesus mean when He said, “Do not swear at all” (Matthew 5:34)? One possible explanation of this passage is that Jesus forbids all oaths — even those required for testimony in a courtroom situation. David Lipscomb believed that it applied in this setting (*Questions Answered*, pp 668-670); however, both Jesus and James dealt with **abuses practiced by the Jews**, not judicial oaths. This verse is sometimes used to condemn cursing and profanity. Profane speech should be condemned, but this passage does not do it. The verse, understood in its context, has an altogether different significance.

There are various contemporary uses of the word “swear” that make it difficult for us to understand what Jesus actually taught. For example, “swear” might refer to an oath taken on the witness stand. Some prefer to say “I affirm” rather than “I swear”. This is actually a distinction without a difference. Another common use of the word “swear” is to make it refer to profanity or cursing, that is, to use profanely insolent language. We typically use the word “curse” to mean the same thing. Peter “*cursed and swore*” (Mark 14:71). Did the apostle fly into a cursing rage? No. Peter may actually have said something like, “May the Lord strike me dead if I know him, I swear I don’t know him.” Acts 23:12, 21 is a good commentary on the meaning of the words “curse,” or “oath.”

To “swear” is to invoke the name of God, sacred persons, or sacred things in confirmation of something said or done. It is usually followed by the preposition



**To “swear” is to invoke the name of God,
sacred persons, or sacred things
in confirmation of something said or done.**

BIBLE QUESTIONS

“by,” that is “to swear by”. Abimelech had Abraham swear by God (Genesis 21:23). Moses swore by heaven and earth (Deuteronomy 4:26). Another word meaning the same thing is “adjure” (Matthew 26:63; Acts 19:13). James used

**One does not need an oath to tell the truth.
Making one’s word his bond is never out of fashion.
Christians must be truthful in all things. Mean what
you say and say what you mean. It’s just that simple.**

the word “oath” in the same prohibition of swearing. He wrote, *“But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation”* (James 5:12). An “oath” is an appeal to God or sacred things, by way of attesting the truth of one’s word. It is evidently not a blanket condemnation since Jesus answered an oath (Matthew 26:63,64), and Paul used oaths (2 Corinthians 1:23; Romans 1:9; Galatians 1:20).

The intended meaning of the word “swear” in Jesus’ statement is evident from its context. The Jews swore by different things (Matthew 5:34,36; 23:16-22). They excused dishonesty in keeping vows or promises, on the basis that they did not invoke God’s name, thus profaning deity. Lying had become so common that an oath was required when one gave his word. Even then one would find a loophole allowing him to renege if he so desired. One does not need an oath to tell the truth. Making one’s word his bond is never out of fashion. Christians must be truthful in all things. Mean what you say and say what you mean. It’s just that simple. We should not have to call upon the name of God, or anything else, to attest the truthfulness of our words. †

Dennis Gullede preaches for the church of Christ in Mabelvale, Arkansas, USA.

“But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation” (James 5:12).

BIBLE QUESTIONS

What Crucified Jesus?

Dwight Fuqua

Who crucified Jesus? This question is academic because those who crucified Him are dead. *What* crucified Jesus? This question is relevant because the motives (sins) that crucified our Lord are very much alive today. By these very sins it is possible for us to crucify the Son of God again (Hebrews 6:6).

Envy crucified Jesus! Pilate *“knew that they had handed Him over because of envy”* (Matthew 27:18). Envy (phthonos) is “the feeling of displeasure produced by witnessing or hearing of the advantage or prosperity of others” (Vine). Envy is a work of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21). *“Love does not envy”* (1 Corinthians 13:4). There is no sin an envious person will not commit. This is illustrated by Joseph’s brothers (Genesis 37), King Saul (1 Samuel 16ff), the elder brother (Luke 15), and many others.

Greed crucified Jesus! Judas conspired with the Jewish leaders to sell out the Lord for *“thirty pieces of silver”* (Matthew 26:14-16). What people will do for money never ceases to amaze! They will sell liquor, dope, pornography, and even their bodies. Many lie, steal, and cheat for the “almighty dollar.” Greed (pleonexia) is “covetousness, a desire to have more” (Vine). Paul wrote, *“For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows”* (1 Timothy 6:10).

Ignorance crucified Jesus! It was to the very people who crucified Jesus that Peter said, *“Yet now, brethren, I know that you did it in ignorance as did also your rulers”* (Acts 3:17). Paul added, *“Which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known they would not have crucified the Lord of glory”* (1 Corinthians 2:8). Ignorance (agnoia), “want of knowledge or perception” (Vine), is a principle cause of sin. Yet, ignorance does not excuse. God *“commands all men everywhere to repent”* (Acts 17:30).

Cowardice crucified Jesus! The disciples fled at the scene of the Lord’s betrayal (Matthew 26:56). Peter followed at a distance (Matthew 26:58). Pilate, afraid of losing favor with the people, delivered Jesus to be crucified (Matthew 27:15-26). The rulers of the synagogue believed in Him, but would not confess Him (John 12:42,43). Cowardice, the lack of courage and resolution, crucified the Lord.

We must identify and purge these very sins from our lives. Is your heart free from envy, greed, ignorance, and cowardice? I know that you do not want to crucify the Son of God again! †

Dwight Fuqua preaches for the Findlay congregation in Sparta, Tennessee, USA.

What Is a Miracle?

Travis L. Quertermous

On August 28, 2007, just before 11:00 a.m., surfer Todd Endris's worst nightmare came true — he was attacked by a great white shark, not once, but three times! Just as all hope seemed lost, Endris was saved by a pod of bottle nose dolphins that formed a protective ring around the surfer, kept the shark at bay, and allowed him to reach shore. There a friend applied emergency first aid and saved his life. "Truly a miracle," Endris later told a reporter.

The word miracle is one of the most loosely used words in the Bible. Anything that is unusual, wonderful, or mysterious is labeled a miracle, but the biblical definition is more precise than that.

But was it a miracle? The word miracle is one of the most loosely used words in the Bible. Anything that is unusual, wonderful, or mysterious is labeled a miracle, but the biblical definition is more precise than that. In Scripture, a miracle is a supernatural act of God done when He suspended natural law. Examples include the ten plagues on Egypt, parting the Red Sea, calling down fire from heaven, the virgin birth of Christ, raising the dead, walking on water, or giving sight to one born blind.

As wonderful as Endris's rescue was, dolphins saving swimmers from sharks are a natural occurrence, not a supernatural one, and history provides many examples of such. Thus, it was not a miracle. The Bible teaches in 1 Corinthians 13:8-13 that miracles were a temporary part of God's plan and that He is not performing miracles in the world today. Let us be sure we use Bible words in Bible ways. †

Travis L. Quertermous is a Gospel preacher working with the church of Christ in Dexter, Missouri, USA.

The Bible teaches in 1 Corinthians 13:8-13 that miracles were a temporary part of God's plan and that He is not performing miracles in the world today. Let us be sure we use Bible words in Bible ways.

Who Am I in the Life of Ruth?

Rebecca Rushmore

Can you identify me? Read each clue and think carefully. When you are sure of my identity, look up the passages of Scripture following each clue to verify the facts from God's Word. Give yourself 10 points for each one you identified correctly.

1. I am the father-in-law of Ruth (Ruth 1:1-4).
2. I am the mother-in-law of Ruth (1:1-4).
3. I am the brother-in-law of Ruth (1:1-4; 4:10).
4. I am the first husband of Ruth (1:1-4; 4:10).
5. I am the sister-in-law of Ruth (1:1-4).
6. I owned the field where Ruth gleaned and I married her as the kinsman redeemer (2:3; 4:1-13).
7. We witnessed the redemption of Ruth at the gate (4:1-11).
8. I am the son of Ruth (4:13-21).
9. I am the grandson of Ruth (4:22).
10. I am the great grandson of Ruth (4:22).



See answer on inside back cover

My Score: _____

The Mount of Transfiguration

Allan E. Flaxman

Introduction:

- A. By old tradition this was Mount Tabor. However, it now seems this was unlikely as Mount Tabor was inhabited.
- B. Today's scholars seem to favor Mount Hermon as being the Mount of Transfiguration, but the Bible does not actually tell us, so we cannot be at all certain.
- C. Wherever it was, the event left a lasting impression, and we find Peter some thirty years later referring to it as an important event in the undergirding of his faith (2 Peter 1:16-18).

Body:

I. First let's notice the startling transfiguration. The event was truly amazing.

- A. The face of Jesus **“shone like the sun”** (Matthew 17:2). Brilliant, yet hard for us to truly imagine.
- B. His clothes were bright as light (shining from His body?).
- C. Paul, many years later, tells us that Christ veiled Himself in flesh, though those are not the actual words he used (Philippians 2:7). During the transfiguration, was that veil briefly lifted, thus giving His apostles just a glimpse of His glory?
 1. It causes us to ask what amazing things await us when we reach that heavenly glory (as the humble caterpillar that becomes the beautiful butterfly).
- D. The great truth is that God is light (1 John 1:5).
 1. Jesus is truly called the Light (John 1:6-9). He thus takes the darkness of sin away from me.
 2. The Christian experience is that the more we allow Jesus to penetrate our lives, the more the darkness of sin and ignorance is rolled back.

II. Now let's hear the Emphatic Proclamation.

- A. Let's now view this spectacular scene and hear the voice from the cloud. (Read Matthew 17:3-7.)
- B. Yes indeed, **“The Word became flesh”** (John 1:14), and what an amazing thing this was. (Read Philippians 2:5-11.)

CHARTS AND OUTLINES

1. God, the Word, clothed himself in human flesh and,
 - a. Became the Captain of our salvation, leading His followers on to victory over the forces of evil (Hebrews 2:10).
 - b. Piloting men through treacherous reefs during life's journey.
 - c. Issuing commands that are sure and steadfast.
 - d. Setting aside fallible human reasoning on matters eternal, once and for all (Romans 1:18-32).
- C. Could they come to believe all of this? Yes! Because it was underlined and emphasized by witnessing this amazing event and hearing the voice from the cloud.

III. Then finally we are exposed to the Enlightening Revelation.

- A. Look at verse 8. *"...they saw no man, save Jesus only"*.
 1. Their minds are now crowded with the events they had both seen and heard.
 - a. They were now certain of Jesus' real identity.
 - b. But did authority for men still come from Moses and the prophets?
 2. Truly, these men did lack higher schooling, but they were by no means fools. (Peter showed years later he could take a hint from God (Acts 10:11-20, 34,35).
 3. And here on the mount, God gave them the hint of all time. *"No man, save Jesus only."*
 - a. Moses and Elijah had vanished without even one word from them. Jesus stood alone in all His Majesty.
 - b. Their minds were now prepared to accept Christ's final and vitally important message to them, *"All authority has been given unto me, in Heaven and in earth"* (Matthew 28:18-20).
- B. Today we see Jesus Christ reigns supreme.

Conclusion:

- A. The startling transfiguration – His humanity briefly drawn aside.
- B. The emphatic proclamation – *"This is my beloved son...."*
- C. The enlightening revelation – *"They saw no man, save Jesus only."*
- D. For a victorious life, leading to eternal mansions, men must acknowledge daily the supremacy of Christ, and daily obey Him. †

Allan E. Flaxman (1916-2008) was a Gospel preacher in New South Wales, Australia.

CHARTS AND OUTLINES

Introduction: Ephesians 5:23.

- A. Paul clearly states:
 1. The husband is the head of his wife.
 2. Christ is the Head of the church.
 3. Christ is the Saviour.
 4. He is the Saviour of the body.

The Church Is The Saved

Robert H. Martin

I. CHRIST IS THE SAVIOUR.

- A. Matthew 1:21 – Jesus – He will save His people from their sins.
- B. John 4:42 – Christ, the Saviour of the world.
- C. Luke 19:10 – the Son of man came to seek and save the lost.

II. SALVATION IS IN CHRIST.

- A. The Bible plainly teaches that salvation is found “in Christ”.
- B. Those “in Christ” have:
 1. Salvation (2 Timothy 2:10).
 2. Redemption (Ephesians 1:7).
 3. Forgiveness (Ephesians 1:7).
 4. Eternal Life (1 John 5:11).
- C. Those in Christ are the saved.
- D. The saved are those in Christ.

III. THE SAVED ARE IN THE BODY.

- A. As we have already pointed out, the body is the church and the church is the body (Ephesians 1:22,23; Colossians 1:18).
- B. If salvation is in Christ (2 Timothy 2:10), and one is baptized into Christ (Galatians 3:27), and baptism puts one into the body (1 Corinthians 12:13), then one must be in the one body to be saved.
- C. To be in Christ is to be in His body.

IV. THE SAVED ARE IN THE CHURCH.

- A. As we’ve already pointed out, to be in the body is to be in the church. That’s where all believers are.
- B. Acts 2:41,47 – Those who accepted his message were baptized, and they are added to them; they were added to the church.
- C. Acts 5:14 – The believers were added to the Lord, or to the church.
- D. Acts 11:24 – Much people were added unto the Lord, or to the church. †

Robert H. Martin is a long-time missionary in the Pacific Islands.

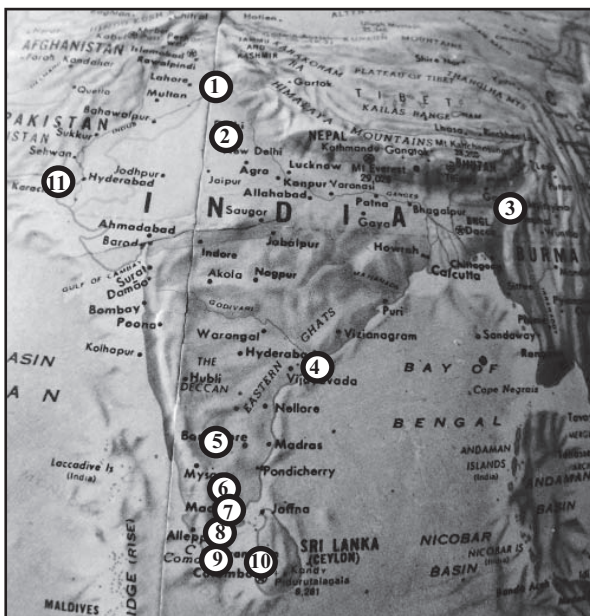
Evangelism in India

Since the early 60s India has been the target of evangelism by Canadian and American Christians. J.C. Bailey, Jim and Carl Johnson, and David Hallett — Canadians who were not required to have visas — were among the first to go. The J.C. Choates, Craig Phillips, and other Americans followed, along with countless

men who made short-term evangelistic trips. Many of the churches established in those early years have remained faithful and have become mature, some now having elders and deacons, and supporting their own preachers.

India's current population is 1.25 billion, second to China. She is projected to reach 1.45 billion by 2028, surpassing China. To better understand these figures, in a country about **1/3 the land size of the United States** the number of souls is **equal to the total population of 14 major European countries, plus North America and South America!** There is work to do yet!

1. **Chandigarh**, Hindi Voice of Truth magazine and Bible course, Hindi Bible training school.
2. **New Delhi**, capitol of India, Hindi/English radio/TV/literature/monthly magazines, seminars
3. **Manipur**, Paite Voice of Truth magazine, literature, TV, seminars
4. **Kakinada**, Telugu radio/TV/Telugu Voice of Truth magazine/Bible courses, monthly magazine, books; Oriya literature, seminars
5. **Bangalore**, Tamil radio/literature, seminars
6. **Kangayam**, Tamil TV, Tamil Voice of Truth, monthly magazine, books
7. **Batalagundu**, Tamil radio/TV/literature/monthly magazine, Bible training school, seminars
8. **Madurai**, Tamil TV/English Voice of Truth, J.C. School of Evangelism
9. **Trivandrum**, Malayalam TV, monthly magazine, seminars
10. **Colombo, Sri Lanka**, origin of radio transmissions for India; for Sri Lanka
11. **Pakistan**, work in Karachi, Lahore [the Hogans], and now in Toba Tek Singh.



FROM THE HEART OF... “AS THE WATERS COVER THE SEA”

Joshua Gootam

The Lord foretold through the prophet Habakkuk that, “*As the waters cover the sea, the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord*” (Habakkuk 2:14). Jesus instructed His disciples to go into the entire world and preach the Gospel to every creature. They were to go among all the nations or ethnic groups with the message of the salvation that is in Jesus Christ. The disciples took their job seriously. They were accused of turning the world upside down with their new teaching (Acts 17:6). They were so efficient that they covered the world with the good news of salvation in the name of Jesus Christ within their life time (Colossians 1:23).



But what about us in the 21st Century? Surely the world has expanded beyond imagination in the last 20 centuries. Population and problems have multiplied tremendously. Sin has grown manifold in the world. The need to cover the earth with the message of salvation is even greater now than ever before.

The Lord has raised men like brother J.C. Choate who had a vision to reach the modern world through radio and literature. He chose the most populous subcontinent — India — as his work place. Broadcasting the Good News on Radio Sri Lanka and using the talents of Indian preachers who were faithful to the Word, brother Choate, through the support of American Christians and churches, enabled millions of people to hear the Gospel in their own mother tongue, in Hindi, Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam, and English. These languages literally cover the whole Indian subcontinent. Then, in order to reinforce the verbal lessons, literature in the form of Bible courses, transcripts of the radio sermons, and other study materials were printed and supplied freely to those who were interested in acquiring more knowledge. This was reassuring to people. They could verify in print, black and white, what they had just heard on the radio and keep it for future reference.

The TELUGU radio program was known as SATYA VANI which means the “Voice of Truth”. We began broadcasting in 1975 on the Sri Lanka short wave radio twice a week. The response was so great it soon became a daily program. As there was no TV in India in the early 70’s, 80’s and 90’s we had a massive radio audience.

FROM THE HEART OF...

Most of the contacts were enrolled in the free correspondence course. They were asked to study the Bible in the quiet of their homes to come to the knowledge of the truth. Soon 100's and 1000's began to obey the Gospel throughout the Telugu speaking world, which resulted in 100s of congregations that later multiplied into 1000s. As the waters filled the sea, this state of Andhra Pradesh was filled with the glory of the knowledge of God's word. We now have over 4 million enrolled in Bible Correspondence Courses. Each one that completes the course either in Telugu or Oriya gets a copy of the Holy Bible for free. Each person is encouraged to study and get the knowledge of the glory of the God.

With the onset of TV in the Indian home in a big way, radio audiences began to be on the wane. Brother Choate realized this and encouraged Indian preachers to take advantage of this audio visual medium. We now telecast God's Good News four times a week on satellite channels which reach all over the world. Our TV programs are simultaneously put online on the website **www.satyavanicoc.com** and **www.youtube.com** so everyone interested can hear God's word with the click on the mouse anywhere in the world. Besides the four satellite channels, we are also using several local cable TV stations to telecast our messages.

We receive an average of 200 letters per day asking for Bible correspondence courses. Our phone at the office is constantly ringing with calls from our contacts. We run the world's biggest Bible correspondence program in a regional language. We translate, write, and print books in Telugu and Oriya languages for the benefit of the church in India, providing literature both for Christians and non-Christians in a systematic way. Our aim is to make people literate with the knowledge of God's word. Our Telugu monthly magazine SATYA WAKKU, which means the "Word of Truth", goes to 11,000 homes while the Oriya magazine goes to 3000 homes. We also print tri-fold multicolored tracts in thousands and make them available to preachers so they can distribute them. Tracts are in great demand in this country. Preachers use them as tools to gain access to different homes. Needless to say, each tract carries an ad about our TV programs and free Bible Correspondence course.

We are also in great demand to preach in large Gospel meetings throughout this state. I, for one, try to take three such meetings per month. My son, Ricky, is in big demand to hold meetings for the youth. My second son, Ronnie, is taking great interest in teaching God's word and is now doing several lessons for TV. My wife, Kabita, is on the job 24/7 to carry the WORD into Orissa. Since Oriya is her mother tongue she is more or less in charge of that aspect of the work through the printed page, correspondence courses, books, and magazines.

Joshua Gootam [jgootam@yahoo.com.] has preached the Gospel in India for decades.

FROM THE HEART OF...

The Effect of Literature/Radio/TV in the Development of the Lord's work in India

Sunny David

In early 1960s when Christians from Canada and America began to enter India with the true message of the Gospel of Christ, there existed all kinds of denominational churches since the colonial days throughout the country. Hardly any people, at that point of time, had heard about the true church — the church one can read about in the Bible.

Today, after almost fifty-five years of the preaching of the true Gospel, surely most people in India have heard what the church of Christ is and what it stands for. Innumerable congregations have been established throughout the land. People everywhere have been leaving their denominational beliefs after learning and obeying the truth of the Gospel.

The role of literature and radio and TV has been a great catalyst for the growth of the Lord's work during these years. The man behind these efforts was J.C. Choate, who from late 60s began to envision the future of the work in India. First he began printing a monthly magazine, *The Bible Teacher*, from Delhi — now in its 45th year of printing — and then tracts, books, and Bible correspondence courses. To reach more people with literature in their own languages, J.C. began contacting and encouraging sound Gospel preachers in different parts of India to translate and produce more printed materials. All of this was very successful work. New contacts were made, people began to learn the truth of God's word in different places, more congregations of the one true church began to come up in various places. But then in mid 70s, when J.C., to his excitement, learned that the Gospel could also be preached in India via Radio Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), he immediately contacted the station through Reggie Gnanasundaram, a brother he had converted during the months spent in that country. The result was that contracts were signed for the preaching of the Gospel in different languages, using faithful local Indian men to serve as speakers. Now, with the combined power of radio and literature, the Gospel began to reach into peoples' homes in their own



FROM THE HEART OF...

languages. Radio Sri Lanka had wide coverage, enabling millions to hear truths they had never known before. Many obeyed the Gospel, and as a result more and more congregations of the church were established.

But J.C. was yearning for something more to happen, for another tool, for another avenue of reaching more people. Those prayers were answered when he learned a few years later that it was now possible to use television in India to broadcast religious programs! He immediately began to work for it, visiting American churches to raise the necessary funds and again encouraging Indian preachers who spoke the different languages to get ready to preach the Good News through TV.

The message is now being carried to the homes of people every day through literature, radio, and TV. Souls are being taught the truth of God's word and they are calling, and writing, asking questions, requesting for more literature and Bible correspondence courses. Upon being taught, many are obeying God, being made free from the ignorance and falsehood that had enchained them for years. Thank God for making all such work tools available to us to reach people everywhere with His soul saving message, and thank God for men like brother Choate who relentlessly worked to obey His great command to preach the Gospel to all nations.

Sunny David (sunny_davidin@yahoo.co.in) works among Hindi-speaking people.

Harvest through Medias in Tamil Nadu B. Arjunan

We know that though Bethlehem was small, one who would be ruler over Israel came out of her. In India, part of God's ministry was started also in a small place, Batlagundu in Tamilnadu State near Kodaikanal, Western Gatz, and is being continued successfully for the glory of our Almighty God.

I and my wife Glory were longing to have a monthly magazine in the Tamil language. In 1992 we started printing the magazine, known as *'The Word of Christ'*. At the beginning we could print only 4 pages as a booklet but now we rejoice to say that 4000 copies are being printed with 24 pages every month! How is it possible? Almighty God gave us an opportunity to meet our brother J.C. Choate who was interested in literature ministry. We met brother J.C. and sister Betty in Bangalore



FROM THE HEART OF...

and talked about the need for the magazine. They came forward to help with this work and so the literature ministry has been continuing for the past 22 years! Many people eagerly receive our magazine and learn how to be saved. Once it met a young girl who had decided to commit suicide but she got our magazine through someone, she started to read it, and she changed her mind. She told us about all of this through the mail.

Broadcasting the Gospel in Sri Lanka Radio is another good medium for reaching millions of people in their own languages. Our Tamil radio program, known as 'The Word of Christ', is being broadcast every Saturday from 5:30 p.m. to 5:45 p.m.

We loved to preach the Word of Christ on Sri Lanka Radio, but we received a double blessing when brother Choate asked me to preach and glorify God on television too. Thousands view our TV Tamil Program known as 'The Word of Christ'. This medium meets the people face to face and helps them to know the New Testament doctrine. Even three months back 43 persons who heard the word were baptized. Last week also 5 persons were baptized because of receiving spiritual knowledge through the medias of TV and Radio.

This growth has opened the way to start 'World Evangelism Bible School' in Tamilnadu. Through this school the Lord's word is being taught in class-form in various places in the state. The Jerry Bates help with teaching the students twice in a year. Every month the local preachers take classes for their students and I go to their places once in three months. The purpose of World Evangelism Bible School is to train the students to share the Gospel in their own areas for local church growth.

Every year we conduct retreats too, known as 'World Evangelism Retreat'. So far we have conducted four retreats. Three of them were at Kumuly in Kerala State and one was in Kodaikanal Hills in Tamilnadu. The Bates participated in three. All of these ministries are bringing a good harvest in the state.

B. Arjunan, preacher of the Gospel, lives in Batlagundu, Tamilnadu, South India.

Work Report of J.C. School of Evangelism

Philemon Rajah

"Each one Catch one" is the new agenda of the Roman Catholic Chief priest in our state (Tamilnadu), as he is motivating all the Catholic people here to go out and restore the fallen members to the old flock. When these denominational

FROM THE HEART OF...



leaders and people are coming up with new motivational slogans and plans like this to grow the false doctrines and groups, how can we who are blessed by the truth be silent? So please pray for us to be zealous in reaching the unreached by motivating all the churches and individual Christians to do the work of evangelism.

The recent batch (5th Batch) of church members who were trained and equipped for evangelizing through our **J.C. School of Evangelism** are from a hill station named COONOOR in Nilgris district of Tamilnadu (South India). Twenty-nine students from three different congregations have undergone

eighteen months of classroom training and field training, graduating on 31st of August 2014. Initially, 35 people joined the program and at the last 29 graduated.

The graduation program was witnessed and honored by the motivators cum teachers of this school of evangelism — that is, brother Jerry Bates and sister Paula Bates. Our sincere appreciation for this dedicated couple who are consistent in their efforts to tirelessly teach the interested Christians in our schools. The lessons by our academic president, Jerry Bates, and ladies class teacher, Paula Bates, and our director, Philemon Rajah, are all exceptionally in-depth to make normal Christians of the churches to be 100% evangelists.

Below is the Work report given by the 29 graduated students of the J.C. School of Evangelism in COONOOR:

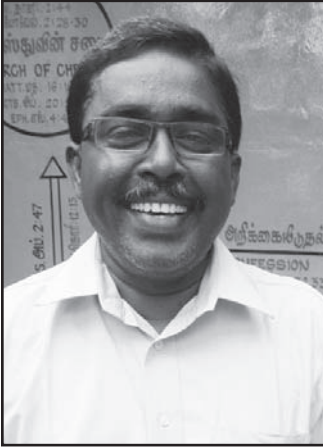
- ◆ Baptisms – 19
(Among these, 7 people were baptized by the students on the graduation day)
- ◆ Tracts distributed – 7226
- ◆ New House Visits (door Knocking) – 753
- ◆ New House Bible Studies – 127
- ◆ Tamil *Voice of Truth* magazine distributed - 312
- ◆ *Voice of Truth* in English distributed – 70
- ◆ Tamil Monthly magazine (*Gracious Word*) distributed – 334
- ◆ Bible correspondence course in Tamil – 235
- ◆ Special Books in Tamil – 147

Philemon Rajah does special training for personal evangelism through his schools.

FROM THE HEART OF...

Obedience and Growth in Kangayam

S. Rajanayagam



This is from the desk of S. Rajanayagam, a Gospel preacher for about 30 years and one of the partners of World Evangelism, which was envisioned by our late brother J.C. Choate to take the Gospel across the globe, about our Annual Bible Camp. The site where we have been conducting our annual camp is about 300 km from Kangayam, where the church meets. We preferred this place as it is ideal for all the participants that come from different parts of

Tamil Nadu and neighbouring states, with access to trains and buses around the clock, enabling the ones who are interested to come without much challenge.

We usually have in excess of 400 Christians and non-Christians from almost all the districts of Tamil Nadu and from nearby states, representing about 50 churches from 35 different cities and towns.

Recently, as a result of our TV and literature work, we had a meeting in Mayiladuthurai, a congregation of about 35 Christians which is 350 km away from Kangayam. This work was started two years back by the effort and support of Kangayam church. We had a group meeting and ladies meeting on Saturday afternoon and 4 obeyed the Gospel. It was drizzling at the time of baptism and we had to go to a nearby field to find enough water for immersion, and also it was getting dark but everyone cooperated well for this spiritual event. Please pray for the young Christians to grow strong in Him.

We had two baptisms at Salem and the meeting was attended by about 70. It was arranged on the flat roof of the preacher's house. A Hindu temple was adjacent to his house. There only we had two baptisms, a man whose wife is already a Christian, and a young girl whose parents are Christians. Please remember them in your prayers as well.

We had a lectureship meeting at Tirupattuer with four speakers, including myself. It was well arranged and was attended by about 120. The preacher expects to have some conversions from it in the near future.

S. Rajanayagam organizes a Bible camp and a lectureship each year.

FROM THE HEART OF...



Kerala State Hears the Gospel

P.K. Varghese

“This day is the day of good news!” (2 Kings 7:9). Even lepers in the Old Testament time did not keep silent. They found the need and did what they could. From the first century to this century God has kept his promises in the New Testament. People have faced all kinds of challenges. Christians in the first century kept a sincere pattern and efforts to work for His cause. The population has greatly increased and so have tools that can be used in evangelism. Still Christianity is in the minority, and true Christians are even less so the need to spread the Gospel is even greater than before.

Brother J.C. Choate and family traveled and lived in several countries to evangelize people through available medias. They moved to India in 1968. Their work from the mid-70s with radio and literature helped in many places for the truth to be spread. Especially Malayalam-speaking people are scattered in different countries for their daily bread, so hundreds and thousands of people were able to listen to the truth of the Gospel through the programs broadcast on Radio Sri Lanka. When TV came in, J.C encouraged me to make use of that medium, and a number of our Radio listeners also made that request. Many thousands of people are watching to our “Voice of Truth” TV programs and read our magazine, *“Bible Truth”* in their own homes. Our TV programs can be seen in the United States also, enabling us to establish congregations where there were none. In this month we had three baptisms here in Trivandrum. The Jerry Bates have encouraged us in many ways. We are grateful to all those who do their best to promote the works in Kerala.

We are able to distribute more than two hundred Bibles to different homes every year, besides tracts and books which we print and send to thousands regularly. We are in need of more workers to do the follow-up teaching so that unknowing people may not join false religions. Let us all work together for the one cause set before us as the time runs fast. We never know when our Lord returns. Kindly pray for more workers. We give all glory and honor to Him! ✠

P.K. Varghese works with churches in Kerala state, at the southern tip of India.

THERE IS NO TIME FOR APATHY IN THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST!

We encourage you to consider these good works: to subscribe, support, publicize, benefit from, and take advantage of what our brethren are doing to spread the message of Christ.

WORLD EVANGELISM PUBLISHING & GOSPEL GAZETTE

ONLINE BOOK STORE Hundreds of religious publications (books, pamphlets & tracts) and *The Voice of Truth International* magazine, written by faithful members of the churches of Christ, are available online at *Gospel Gazette Online* (www.GospelGazette.com) or *World Evangelism* (www.WorldEvangelism.org) by selecting “store”. Call (662) 283-1192 or email bookstore@gospelgazette.com for a free printed catalog.

GOSPEL BROADCASTING NETWORK

Printed & online Bible correspondence courses, DVD's and television programming. Visit the GBN webpage at: <http://gbntv.org/>. Located at 8900 Germantown Road, Olive Branch, MS 38654. Phone: (662) 874-5508



For pennies per household you can spread the Gospel in your community through this

doctrinally-sound bimonthly paper. It will even be personalized with the local church's address and news. Phone: (877) 338-3397; email: info@jvillecoc.org; Website: www.HousetoHouse.com



Are you looking for an opportunity to be a branch, bearing fruit to God? **World Bible School teachers** have that opportunity. Check out worldbibleschool.org for full information. Make your time count for souls!

Search TV programs with Phil Sanders are on 76 broadcast TV stations, 41 broadcast radio stations, 192 cable systems, and 5 satellite systems (Dish, GBN, American Life, DirecTV, and INSP). Benefit from the lessons, support the preaching of the Gospel. Phone: (800) 321-8633; email: search@searchtv.org; website: www.searchtv.org.



IN
SEARCH
OF THE LORD'S WAY[®]

TELEVISION MINISTRY OF THE EDMOND CHURCH OF CHRIST
P.O. BOX 371, EDMOND, OK 73083-0371



World Video Bible School has been privileged to serve the church for more than 25 years by making teaching and evangelism materials for the church's use all over the world. Over 1,800,000 tapes/DVDs and over 100,000 "Searching for Truth" books have been sent throughout the world. World Video Bible School, 25 Lantana Lane, Maxwell, TX 78656-4231; phone: (512) 398-5211; toll free (US only): (877) 398-5211; Fax: 512-398-9493

Gospel Gazette Online

Serving an international readership with the old Jerusalem Gospel via the Internet

Gospel Gazette Online is a monthly Gospel magazine on the Internet, begun by Louis and Bonnie Rushmore in 1999. Thousands of articles, written by faithful Christians, are archived and selectable through the on-site search engine. *GGO* is free to users throughout the world, and it is visited regularly even in parts of the world that remain virtually inaccessible to missionaries. (www.gospelgazette.com)



Apologetics Press has been speaking clearly, loudly, and biblically for years on subjects pertaining to **Creation/Evolution, the Godhead, the inspiration of the Scriptures, and many other vital questions of faith.** Dave Miller has produced excellent DVDs on **The Silencing of God in America** and **The Quran.** phone: (800) 234-8558; website: www.ApologeticsPress.org.

What Can You Do to Help Spread the Word?

- * For just a moment, put yourself in a village in Africa, or even in a large city in India, or in the jungles of South America. You are an immortal soul, living in a perishing body. How will you knowledgeably prepare for the judgment and eternity that awaits us all?
- * Does the church of Christ exist in your community, so that you can hear the Gospel preached? For most people in the world, the answer is “No”.
- * Is there a source for buying Bibles in your community? Though the Bible has been translated into most languages, villages seldom have bookstores. For most people in the world, the answer is “No”.
- * If you have found the Truth and are a Christian, is there a bookstore from which you can order additional study materials? For most people in the world, the answer is “No”.

So you are born into an unbelieving home, you live according to the religion of your parents, you grow old, and you die, thrust into eternity to meet the God you never knew. What unspeakable tragedy! This scenario is LIFE for the majority of the people of the world.

Through mass media — radio programs, TV, and literature — we are doing all we can to bring God’s Word to people who have so little hope. Half of each issue of *The Voice of Truth International* is sent free of charge to churches and individuals who have few or no other study materials, to aid in their spiritual growth. We ask brethren to help us with \$40 a month, to cover the \$10,000 postage bill incurred with every issue. Will you please have mercy on these souls and help us share the saving Gospel with them?

To help with this particular need, please send your checks to:

THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL

Box 72, Winona, MS 38967

To speed up your announcement that you want to help,
call us at 662-283-1192 or send your email to

Choate@WorldEvangelism.org

Website: WorldEvangelism.org

Dear Brethren:

- I want to subscribe to the quarterly magazine, *The Voice of Truth International*. Enclosed is my check for \$15.00 for four issues, or \$25.00 for eight issues. My address is given below.
- I want to order the complete set of the volumes that are still in print (78 issues) for the reduced price of \$2.00 per copy. My address is given below.
- Please send special prices for WBS teachers and their students.
- I want to MAKE A GIFT subscription of *The Voice of Truth International*. Enclosed is my check for \$15.00 for four issues, or \$25.00 for eight issues. The address is given below.
- I want to send \$30.00 per month (or a multiple), for a box of 35 copies (or multiples) of each issue of the magazine as they are printed (quarterly). Churches are also urged to use boxes in this way. Or you may send one payment of \$350.00 per year for four issues. This will help us to send more copies to the mission fields.
- We want to give \$_____ each month to help send this magazine to mission fields of the world, including the USA.
- As a congregation we want to help print and circulate copies of each issue of this magazine by making a special contribution to this effort. We can specify where the copies we pay for will be used, whether in our personal work, in jail ministry, overseas, or...

(Return this form stating your wishes in an envelope, along with your check, to the following address.)

Attn: Byron Nichols
THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL
Box 11218
Springfield, MO 65808

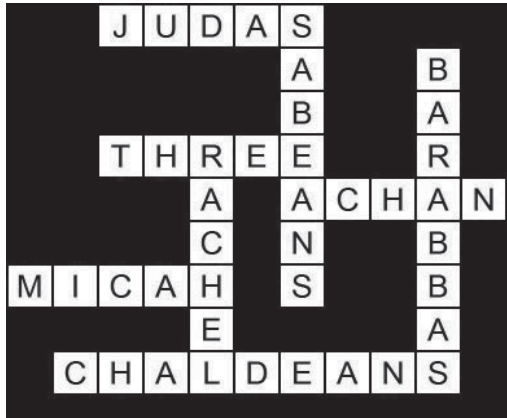
NAME _____
STREET _____
CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____
PHONE _____ EMAIL _____

ANSWERS TO PUZZLES

Verse Search (page 29)

1. Servant of the church
2. Assist her in whatever needs she had
3. She had helped many herself.
4. Priscilla and Aquila
5. They had risked their lives for Paul.
6. Epaenetus
7. Andronicus and Junia
8. Holy kiss
9. Note or mark them and avoid them
10. Their own bellies
11. Wise, simple
12. Timothy, Lucius, Jason, Sospater, Tertius, Gaius, Erastus and Quartus
13. Mystery, secret, manifest

Bible Find (page 90)



Who Am I? (page 96)

1. Elimelech, 2. Naomi, 3. Chilion, 4. Mahlon, 5. Orpah, 6. Boaz, 7. ten men of the elders of the city
8. Obed, 9. Jesse, 10. David

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

As a team of co-workers we call ourselves “World Evangelism”....

In Volume 81 of *The Voice of Truth International*, we featured pictures of American partners of “World Evangelism”, doing some of the physical work in the production and distribution of literature. We realize that we would be very limited in what we could do if we did not have co-workers overseas who are “boots on the ground” to do the preaching [radio, TV, and congregational], writing [The Voice of Truth International in local languages, monthly magazines, tracts, Bible courses, and study books], and follow-up work [home studies, Gospel



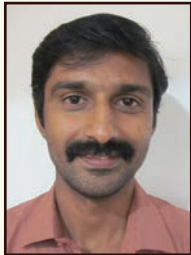
Thang Lien



Vernon Douglas



Bennie Martin



Kingsly Rajah

meetings, and lectureships] to bring new souls into the Kingdom, and to continually strengthen the church as a whole. This issue is a partial coverage, particularly of our brethren in India with whom we have worked for decades. The front cover pictures the original generation with whom we have worked, in some cases, since 1968. The back cover shows the younger generation that is now shouldering some of these responsibilities.

Of course, through literature and other mass media tools, we also work with brethren in the Philippines, Viet Nam, China, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Pakistan, Ghana, Nigeria, Tanzania, Guyana, and many other countries.



Ricky Gootam



Vinay David



John Dean