

VOLUME EIGHTY - SIX

# V THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL



**What Happens When You Die?**

# Each Day is New

**Frances Culp Wolfe**

Each day is new so look ahead,  
The past you can't undo;  
But you can journey with new hope,  
And God will see you through.

Don't fret about lost moments,  
The sun will shine once more.  
Your life can be far richer  
Than it's ever been before.

God's love is free and boundless,  
It can ease the hurt inside;  
Cast out the fear of failure,  
Let Him be your constant guide.

He can steer you to new pathways,  
Give you health and make you strong.  
You can have the Lord's assurance,  
That He forgives mistakes and wrong.

Share the joy you have with others.  
Give as God has given you.  
He has fitted you for service,  
And every day you have is new.



# What Happens At and During Baptism?

Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 1 Peter 3:21;  
Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12-13;  
Galatians 3:27; Acts 22:16

**WHAT?** A burial in water

**MODE?** Immersion in water

**PURPOSE?** Forgiveness of Sins

**WHO?** Penitent person

**IMPORTANCE?** Positions himself for God to act.

Baptism is not Baptism is not our work, but God's work that saves.

**Baptism is God working on us.**

God is the active One ... We are the passive ones. The command to "be baptized" is a passive imperative. An active imperative means that you must do something. **A passive imperative means that you must let someone act upon you.** In baptism God acts on us to do a number of things.

- 1** The ONE DOING THE BAPTIZING in administering the baptism.
- 2** The PENITENT BELIEVER is passive in receiving the baptism being administered.
- 3** GOD is active in administering the baptismal benefits to and on the penitent believer during baptism.



When you exclude baptism from God's saving grace, you are interfering with what God is doing TO us and FOR us!

## HOW GOD ACTS IN WATER BAPTISM

- 1** GOD **FORGIVES** our sins  
■ Ephesians 1:7
- 2** GOD **CAUSES** us to be born again  
■ John 3:3-5
- 3** GOD **ADDS** us to the Church  
■ Acts 2:47
- 4** GOD **WASHES** away our sins  
■ Revelation 1:5
- 5** GOD **PUTS US INTO** the death of Christ.  
■ Galatians 3:27
- 6** GOD **BURIES** us with Christ.  
■ Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12-13
- 7** GOD **RAISES** us up with Christ.  
■ Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12-13
- 8** GOD **APPLIES** Christ's cleansing blood  
■ Revelation 1:5
- 9** GOD **SAVES** us  
■ 1 Peter 3:21



**MATTHEW 16:18**

# Christ and the Church

**MATTHEW 16:18**

**CHRIST — HEAD**

**KINGDOM**  
John 18:37  
Col. 1:13-14

**GOVERNMENT**

**UNITY**

**BODY**  
Col. 1:18  
Eph. 5:23

**CHURCH**

**KINGDOM**

**HOUSEHOLD**

**FAMILY**

**HOUSEHOLD**  
Hebrews 3:6  
Galatians 4:7

**BODY-CHRIST**

**OWNERSHIP**

**CHRIST**  
2 Timothy 2:10



**29 A.D.**  
Matt. 16:18

**27 A.D.**  
Mark 9:1

**580 B.C.**  
Daniel 2:44

**760 B.C.**  
Isa. 2:2-3

**30 A.D.**  
PENTECOST  
ACTS 2:47

**30 A.D.**  
Acts 5:11

**46 A.D.**  
Acts 14:23

**96 A.D.**  
Rev. 1:4

## IMPORTANCE

Matthew 15:15

**BUILDER** . . . . . Matthew 16:18

**BLOOD BOUGHT** . . . . . Act 20:28

**HEAD - CHRIST** . . . . . Colossians 1:18

**FOUNDATION** . . . . . 1 Corinthians 3:11

**SAVIOR** . . . . . Ephesians 5:23

## ONENESS

John 17:20-21 • 1 Corinthians 1:10

**MY CHURCH** . . . . . Matthew 16:18

**THE CHURCH** . . . . . Ephesians 1:22

**ONE BODY** . . . . . Ephesians 4:4

**ONE FOLD** . . . . . John 10:16

**ONE FAMILY** . . . . . 1 Timothy 3:15

## SALVATION

Acts 4:12

**ADDED** . . . . . Acts 2:47

**PURCHASED** . . . . . Acts 20:28

**RECONCILED** . . . . . Ephesians 2:16

**SAVED** . . . . . 2 Timothy 2:10

**REDEEMED** . . . . . Colossians 1:13-14



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



## Abel & the Rest of Us

Byron Nichols

Surely Hebrews 11:4 has to be considered one of the most remarkable and attention-getting verses in all the 31,000+ verses in our Bible. In this great “faith chapter” the inspired writer calls attention to several servants of God in the Old Testament and provides the basis for why they are included in this special discussion. The first one named is Abel, and he is mentioned because of his righteousness. The writer then proceeds to declare that in spite of the fact that Abel is obviously no longer alive, this man of God is still

speaking to mankind today. The verse states, ***“By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks.”*** It is made clear that Abel’s voice can no longer actually be heard, but that his faithfulness has never ceased speaking. His example is so powerful that it has not stopped voicing its message, though many centuries have come and gone.

Abel is the first person to be honored in this way, but he is far from being the only one whose influence and message have continued long after leaving this world. He and the others who are named in this chapter are but a very small sampling of the faithful followers of God during Bible times, including a whole host of others whose names do not appear anywhere in the Scriptures, yet all of these are likewise still speaking today by means of their obedience and faithfulness to the Lord. We are also indebted to those countless believers in the early centuries following the establishment of the church who literally gave their lives as martyrs for Christ rather than to deny Him and give honor to heathen gods and/or men who claimed to be deity. Oh, how thankful we should be today for all of those who are dead,

but who yet are speaking to us by the steadfastness that they exhibited, even in the most difficult and trying circumstances!

This should raise two questions in our own minds: (1) *What am I speaking to others right now as they watch me live what I call the Christian life?* Am I, like Abel, speaking about my commitment and steadfastness to the Lord by my righteousness? Are they able to see Christ living in me? (2) Knowing that, with God's help, I am the master of what my life as a whole will continue to speak after my life here has ended, *what will I be speaking through the years to come?* Just what will be the ongoing influence of my life? Will it be beneficial or detrimental to the cause for which Jesus died?

This brings us now to ***The Voice of Truth International***. It is exciting and gratifying to know that the voice of this special Gospel publication is being heard around the world. Several million copies of the 86 quarterly issues in print continue to speak to the church and to the lost of many nations. These copies are being distributed and used effectively as they speak the message of Christian living and the significance of the church which Jesus built. This voice continues to proclaim the love of God for every soul everywhere and the awesome price that He was willing to pay to make possible the eternal salvation of every individual who will turn to Him in obedience to His will, thus receiving His saving grace.

Every Christian who has any relationship at all with ***The Voice of Truth International***, whether as a subscriber, as a financial supporter, as one who introduces the magazine to others, or as one who encourages those of us who are involved in this endeavor on a daily basis, we ALL are speaking for the Lord. Even if the time should come that the magazine is no longer published, that will not silence its speaking the truth all over the world. Those copies in existence at that time will live on and on, resulting in the continued speaking of God's truth in a clear and concise way, always accompanied by an attitude of love and concern for those who read those messages of truth.

Let me pay special tribute to those who use their ability to speak to others regarding spiritual matters through the avenue of writing the articles that make up each issue of the magazine. What a blessing these servants have been, are now, and will continue to be well into the future. Like Abel, their articles will continue to speak to uncountable numbers of souls for no telling how many years to come. For those who are not writers, these folks deserve your admiration and appreciation for their willingness to bear such a tremendous responsibility. May God help us all to speak on and on for Him. ✚





# Six Miles from Jesus

Jerry Bates

We have all read and thought much about the visit of the wise men to Jesus as recorded in Matthew 2. We do not know very much about these wise men. We do not know who they were, where they came from, how they had received information about the birth of the king, or how they knew the significance of the star. Nevertheless, we do know from Scripture that they came to worship Jesus (Matthew 2:2). They came to Jerusalem inquiring about the King of the Jews. Herod heard about their questioning and was troubled. He was not a godly man and apparently did not know about this prophecy of the birth of a king; however, he knew where to find the information. He consulted the chief priests and scribes regarding the location of the birth of Jesus, and they correctly answered, ***“In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet: ‘But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are not the least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you shall come a Ruler who will shepherd My people Israel’”*** (Matthew 2:6). It is not surprising that upon learning this information, Herod was troubled and wanted to kill Jesus.

What should be surprising to us is the reaction of the chief priests and scribes, or more accurately, the lack of any reaction. They knew a King was to be born; they knew that they were living in the approximate time He was to be born; they knew where He was to be born; yet, upon hearing a rumor that the King of the Jews had been born, they did nothing. Bethlehem was only about 6 miles from Jerusalem, an easy two-to-three hour walk. Bethlehem was a very small town; thus, it would have been easy to determine the truthfulness of the rumor. However, they did nothing. The contrast of the two groups could not be more distinct. The wise men knew

little about the coming King, nevertheless, they sought and worshiped Him as all wise men should. Conversely, the Jewish religious leaders knew a great deal about the coming King, yet they did nothing. No one offered to help guide these foreigners to find the King. They were only six miles from their King, but they did not know it. So close, yet so far! The wise men traveled hundreds of miles to see Jesus, but the Jewish leaders could not travel six miles. So close, yet so far!

We see three reactions to the birth of Jesus. Herod was filled with hatred and hostility. The birth of Jesus was a threat to his position, his power and his influence. Many today seek to destroy Jesus because they do not want Him to interfere with their lives. The reaction of the Jews was complete indifference. They were so absorbed with the details of their religion that any discussion of the birth of the Messiah was irrelevant. Likewise, for many to-



day, Jesus means nothing. They are so engrossed with their lives that Jesus is unimportant to them. On the other hand, the wise men worshipped Jesus and brought expensive gifts to give in honor of the King.

What was the difference in the groups? It was not knowledge because

all had the same basic information. It was not opportunity or ability because all had the same opportunity to worship Jesus. It was a matter of the heart. The heart is always the issue, because ultimately, our heart determines how we respond. It matters not about the obstacles that might be in our way, because if our heart is right, we will respond to Jesus. In John 3, we find that a Pharisee and ruler of the Jews named Nicodemus came to Jesus by night. Likely, he was not completely sure about who Jesus was at this point, but he wanted to know more. He was willing to travel by night to see Jesus, but these scribes could not even walk six miles during the day to investigate whether their King had been born.

The question now comes to each of us, “What will I do?” Many hate Jesus, while countless others ignore Jesus and His teachings, but in the end both groups are in the same place. Both will one day meet God without Jesus and thus be unprepared. However, one cannot ignore Jesus forever. Sooner or later ***“every knee shall bow to Me [Jesus] and every tongue shall confess to God”*** (Romans 14:11). It is also possible to have a great deal of Bible knowledge as well as be very religious and yet still miss the truth. ***“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 you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’”*** (Matthew 7:22-23). We see once again that it is a matter of the heart. These people, while being very religious and doing some marvelous things, supposedly in the name of Jesus, had never made a personal commitment to Jesus from the heart. However, without commitment, we are in the same position as those who completely ignore Jesus.

These scribes we have been discussing were not far from the kingdom of God. Jesus told another scribe in Mark 12:34, ***“You are not far from the kingdom of God.”*** This scribe knew well the Scriptures. He agreed with Jesus as to the two greatest commands in the Bible; however, he lacked a total commitment to Jesus. Whether he ever made the commitment, we do not know. Nevertheless, I submit that there are many today in a similar position. They are not far from kingdom of God, symbolically only six miles away. Yet, regardless of how far we may be, our position is the same. We are lost! Only those who obey from the heart shall enter the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 7:21). **Don’t let six miles prevent you from entering heaven!** †





# The Divine Plan of Redemption

Louis Rushmore

Jesus Christ is the singular key to human redemption, because without Jesus Christ, the Son of God, our Savior and Redeemer, none of us could possibly be saved. Yet, there are a number of aspects relative to the redemption of mankind that work perfectly and intricately together to make possible the salvation of humankind. Furthermore, the redemption of souls involves both deity and humanity, since people **cannot** save themselves apart from God, while at the same time, God **will not** save anyone without his or her obedient participation in the divinely-given plan of redemption.

God's redemptive plan includes roles by God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit and by any man or woman who desires to be saved from sin and entertain a real hope of spending eternity in heaven. Therefore, the roles of each person of the Godhead (Acts 17:29; Romans 1:20; Colossians 2:9) as well as the role of the ones being saved are **essential**. Mankind has a role in his own salvation, without which activity in accordance with the revealed instructions of God in the New Testament, he cannot be saved. The salvation of humans is **conditional** upon their obedience (2 Thessalonians 1:8; 1 Peter 4:17), but no one can be saved or redeemed without the participation of the Godhead.

The Father's part in human redemption involves love (John 3:16), grace (Ephesians 2:8), mercy (Titus 3:5), and the Gospel (Romans 1:16). Christ's part includes the shedding of His innocent blood (Revelation 1:5) and being the Mediator between mortals and the Father (1 Timothy 2:5). The Holy Spirit provided the communication between the mind of God and earthlings through the inspired revelation of the New Testament (2 Peter 1:20,21; 2 Corinthians 3:6; Hebrews 9:15).

Man's part in his own salvation or redemption can be variously described. He must have faith that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (John 8:24). That faith leads to repentance of past sins (Acts 2:38; 17:30). To be saved, a sinner must be willing to acknowledge before others his or her belief that Jesus Christ is Lord (Romans 10:9,10). Baptism or immersion (Colossians 2:12) for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21) results in redemption from past sins (Romans 3:25). Our Lord referred to this as being born again (John 3:3-5).

Generally, one must be obedient to the Gospel of Christ to be saved (Hebrews 5:8,9). This will include purity of life and mind (Revelation 22:14), which involves laying aside evil (James 1:21). Faithfulness must characterize the child of God, even if he or she would have to forfeit his or her life for that faith (Revelation 2:10); Christians must endure (Matthew 10:22). The faithful Christian must demonstrate his or her faith by works of obedience (James 2:24). This is how a person calls on the name of the Lord to be saved (Romans 10:14).

Man's role in his own redemption is only possible after he has gained knowledge from the Scriptures (2 Timothy 3:15). Christians, then, can pass along that saving knowledge – the Gospel of Christ – to other humans so that they can have access to redemption, too (1 Corinthians 1:18,21).

## Defining Redemption

Two families of words with similar definitions translate in the New Testament to “redeem” and “redemption”. They have similar meanings with different emphases. The Greek verb “exagorazo” means to buy out, such as to buy a slave out of slavery to grant him or her freedom. The verb “agorazo” appears in Revelation 5:9 regarding human salvation, which reads, ***“And they sang a new song, saying: ‘You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation’”*** (NKJV).

The Greek verb “lutroo” means “to release on receipt of ransom (akin to “lutron,” ‘a ransom’)... signifying to release by paying a ransom price, to redeem” (Vine’s). It appears in Titus 2:14, which reads, ***“who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.”*** The word “lutroo” appears in 1 Peter 1:18 as well. ***“Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers.”*** “While both [exagorazo] and [lutroo] are translated ‘to redeem,’ “exagorazo” does

not signify the actual ‘redemption’, but the price paid with a view to it, “lutroo” signifies the actual ‘deliverance,’ the setting at liberty” (Vine’s).

Nouns “lutrosis” and “apolutrosis,” “a strengthened form” (Vine’s) of “lutrosis,” appear in the New Testament and relate to human redemption in several familiar passages. ***“Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption [lutrosis]”*** (Hebrews 9:12). ***“Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption [apolutrosis] that is in Christ Jesus”*** (Romans 3:24). ***“In Him we have redemption [apolutrosis] through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace”*** (Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14). ***“And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption [apolutrosis] of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance”*** (Hebrews 9:15). The concept of redemption (lutrosis) is of “redemption from the penalty of sin” (Thayer’s).

## Overview of Redemption

By divine redemption, we mean the redemptive plan that is divine in origin. In other words, “How did God in the New Testament state that He is willing to save people from their sins?” It is unreasonable to believe that God will accept one or more manmade redemptive plans instead of His plan for the salvation of lost souls.

God the Father through His mercy (Titus 3:5) and grace (Ephesians 2:8) designed a redemptive plan. Essentially, by God’s mercy He withholds punishment from us that we deserve. By God’s grace, we receive good things from Him that we do not deserve.


Through mercy and grace, God sent Jesus Christ to be our Savior (John 3:16). Jesus brought the divine redemptive plan with Him (John 1:17). Jesus Christ died on the cross for our salvation (Hebrews 9:28). Through mercy and grace, God caused the Holy Spirit to reveal the redemptive plan through the New Testament (2 Peter 1:20,21). The Holy Spirit, along with the Father and the Son, participates in the redemption of souls: ***“For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit”*** (1 Corinthians 12:13).

In addition, God’s redemptive plan requires the participation by those who would be saved. Jesus is said to be the Author of salvation to them who ***“obey Him”*** (Hebrews 5:8,9). ***“Though He was a Son, yet He learned***



*obedience by the things which He suffered. And being been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him.”* This obedience includes hearing the Word of God only (Romans 10:17); *“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”* The Word of God leads to Bible faith (John 8:24); *“Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.”* Faith leads to repentance (Luke 13:5); *“I tell you, no; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.”* Repentance is followed by professing Christ (Romans 10:9,10); *“That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”*

Then comes immersion (Romans 6:3-5); *“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore, we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection”* (KJV). From then onward, Christians must practice faithfulness (Revelation 2:10); *“Fear none of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give thee the crown of life.”*

The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have done their parts for the redemption of lost souls. Have you, dear Friend, participated in your own redemption according to God’s redemptive plan, or have you subscribed to a mere manmade redemptive plan, which is unable to save your soul? Eternity is too long and souls are too precious to accept a counterfeit plan of salvation. **Divine redemption is within reach of every soul and is all that will matter in judgment.** 

### Works Cited

*Thayer’s Greek Lexicon.* CD-ROM. Seattle: BibleSoft, 2006.  
*Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words.* CD-ROM. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1985.



# 5-MINUTE BIBLE STUDY

Paula Bates

## *TRUTH or CONSEQUENCES*

1. O Lord, are not Your eyes on the \_\_\_\_\_? You have stricken them, but they have not grieved; You have consumed them, but they have refused to receive \_\_\_\_\_. They have made their faces harder than \_\_\_\_\_: they have refused to return. Jeremiah 5:3
2. Thus says the Lord: I will return to \_\_\_\_\_, and dwell in the midst of \_\_\_\_\_. Jerusalem shall be called the City of \_\_\_\_\_, the mountain of the Lord of hosts, the Holy Mountain. Zechariah 8:3
3. For which I was appointed a preacher and an \_\_\_\_\_ – I am speaking the \_\_\_\_\_ in Christ and not lying – a teacher of the \_\_\_\_\_ in faith and truth. 1 Timothy 2:7
4. This is he who come by water and \_\_\_\_\_ – Jesus Christ; not only by water, but by water and blood. And it is the \_\_\_\_\_ who bears witness, because the Spirit is \_\_\_\_\_. 1 John 5:6
5. But if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct \_\_\_\_\_ in the house of God, which is the \_\_\_\_\_ of the living God, the pillar and ground of the \_\_\_\_\_. 1 Timothy 3:15
6. Who will render to each one according to his \_\_\_\_\_: eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and \_\_\_\_\_; but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the \_\_\_\_\_, but obey unrighteousness – indignation and wrath. Romans 2:6-8



### Answers:

1. Truth, correction, rock
2. Zion, Jerusalem, truth
3. Apostle, truth, Gentiles
4. Blood, spirit, truth
5. Yourself, church, truth
6. Deeds, immortality, truth

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# The *Real* Sacrifice

Ralph Hunter



In 1964 a young preacher lad sat in an early morning class in Central Christian College (now known as Oklahoma Christian University), studying “Harmony of the Gospels”.

The teacher, a well-known and well-versed Gospel preacher, brought to the attention of the students Matthew 27:46, “*And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?’ that is, ‘My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?’*”

The young preacher asked the teacher, “Why did Jesus ask His Father that?” The teacher answered in his gentle, kind, and loving, but knowledgeable way, “Because He did!”

You might wonder how would I know these things that transpired over 50 years ago. I was the one who asked Hugo McCord why Jesus would speak to the Father in such a way. Let me share with you the answer that I presented that morning.

Though Christ never sinned, He was made to be sin by the Father, that man might be reconciled to Himself: “*Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: ‘We implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God.’ For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him*” (2 Corinthians 5:18-21).

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Isaiah 53:6 says, *“All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”* First Peter 2:24 further describes what was done: *“...who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness — by whose stripes you were healed.”*

We understand, even as the children of Israel were told in Isaiah 59:2, *“...your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear.”* Was the Son (Christ) separated from the Father? The answer comes from the words of the Son as He prayed to the Father, *“These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come, glorify thy Son. That thy Son may also glorify thee”* (John 17:1). Then in verse 5 of the same chapter, *“And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.”*

Why was the Son separated from the Father? Again we can know the answer to that question as we look to Habakkuk 1:13; *“Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity.”*

As mankind is dead in sin, that is, separated from the Divine, so the sacrifice of Christ was a separation from the Father. That is, He was dead (separated) from the Father. Without doubt the physical crucifixion was an agonizing and brutal type of death, but the *real* sacrifice was being separated from the Divine Being with Whom Christ [the Word] had existed from eternity. Even with Christ dwelling among man as flesh (John 1:14), He still communed with the Father, but at His death on the cross He was accursed: *“Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree’)”* (Galatians 3:13), thus fulfilling Deuteronomy 21:23.

Would it be any wonder then that the Savior’s prayer would be, *“O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt”* (Matthew 26:39b), seeing that He would be separated from the Father for the first time ever? Was there physical pain and agony? Without doubt! We as mortal beings can relate to such circumstances, but the *real* sacrifice at the cross was the separation of the Son from the Father. ✝

Ralph Hunter works in jail/prison ministry with the Lord’s church in Owasso, Oklahoma, USA.

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# Classic Brain-Teaser...

Austin Johnson


“If God can do anything, can He create a rock so large and heavy that He cannot pick it up?” Do not think about it too long because your brain will hurt. Also, it is a ridiculous question that means nothing. Can God do anything? That’s a loaded question — but yes. Can God accomplish anything that He desires to accomplish? Once again, this question is loaded — but yes. So think about this with me: Why is He so interested in us? If God has all the ability He needs to do anything and to accomplish anything He desires, then why does He need us? Well, in my opinion, God does not need us. Instead, God chose us! Listen to the words of Peter:

***“Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:4,5).***

***“But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9).***

How incredible are these verses! A God who can do and accomplish anything that He desires chose us as His possession, as His children! This message should excite us to no end, and yet it should also have another effect on us:

***“Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you” (1 Peter 5:6,7).***

We ought to continually humble ourselves to His will and change our lives, whether we like it or not because, at the proper time He will exalt us and bring us to heaven, which we are guaranteed to love! So instead of thinking of silly brain-teasing questions, focus on God’s choosing of you for Himself! 

Austin Johnson is the Associate minister of the Calvert City Church of Christ in Calvert City, Kentucky, USA.

# The Names of Jesus

Glenn Colley

How many names or descriptions can correctly be used for you? Come up with several? An interesting Bible study is the search for all the designations for Jesus. In Revelation 19 alone there are at least four. Enjoy them with me:

**“He...was called Faithful and True...”**

Found in verse 11, this name underscores the fact that we can respect and trust everything Jesus has said. He is never inconsistent or deceitful. Hebrews 13:8 says of Him, *“Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever.”* This concrete trustworthiness is of huge importance when we think of His unchanging attitude toward what is (or isn’t) sin. No matter how the society about us changes in what it considers to be wrong, Jesus keeps on being faithful and true. He doesn’t change in His attitude toward false religions and their doctrines (Matthew 7:21; Ephesians 5:26,27). He doesn’t change in what He has said people must do to be saved (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:16). He doesn’t change how much He loves you.

**“He had a name written, that no man knew, but He Himself” (v. 12).**

This is the unknown name. Even this reminds us that He has all power over heaven and earth. You see, He has a name above every name (Philippians 2:9). There are things about Christ we cannot know because He is so much higher than we are, and that fact demands our attitudes of humility and awe toward Him.

**“...and His name is called The Word of God.”**

This one is in verse 13, and it reminds us of John 1:14, *“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”* Get the



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meaning: A word is the vehicle by which we convey thought. Jesus so completely communicated the will of God in His actions, teaching, will, and thought that He accurately wore the name “Word”. He was the human expression of God’s Word!

**“And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh  
a name written,  
KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS” (v. 16).**

Consider that this is the highest title ever given. If you took all the kings who ever lived and put them in one grand arena, Jesus would be King above them. If you put all those who had ever been called ‘Lord’ in one place, Jesus would stand head and shoulders above them and be Lord of all. Revelation 11:15 says He will reign forever and ever. Colossians 1:17 says, *“He is the head of the body, the church; that in all things He might have preeminence.”*

Our favorite name for Jesus of course is easy to identify. We love best to call Him **“Savior”**. 

Glenn Colley preaches for the West Huntsville church in Huntsville, Alabama, USA.



# **"Scientists Don't Have a Clue How Life Began"**

**Kyle Butt**


Twenty years ago, John Horgan, staff writer for *Scientific American*, wanted to write an article titled, **"Pssst! Don't Tell the Creationists, but Scientists Don't Have a Clue How Life Began."** His editor at the time did not like the title and changed it. Horgan has waited 20 years, however, and the original editor who did not like his title is gone, so he simply re-used it for an article he wrote in February of 2011, two decades later (Horgan, 2011). *The fact that Horgan could accurately say that the scientific community did not have a clue 20 years ago about the origin of life, and the situation has not changed in two decades of intense research, speaks volumes about the false theory of evolution and its explanation of the origin of life.*

The reason that "scientists don't have a clue how life began" is because those whom Horgan is labeling as "scientists" have prejudicially eliminated the only viable option for the origin of life. What Horgan means is that scientists who believe in evolution cannot give any plausible, naturalistic scenario that would make life possible. Horgan mistakenly equates "scientists" with "evolutionary scientists". The fact of the matter is, thousands of scientists across the country know exactly how life began — God created life during the six-day creation week. In fact, we at Apologetics Press have several highly qualified staff and auxiliary scientists who have studied the evidence and know how life began.

The quandary that Horgan and evolutionary scientists are in arises from the fact that, according to evolution, life had to spontaneously generate from non-living chemicals — and there is no plausible naturalistic accounting for this. To defend his position that "scientists" do not have a clue, Horgan explained that the idea of DNA molecules forming spontaneously has major problems: "DNA can make neither proteins nor copies of itself without the help of catalytic proteins called enzymes. This fact turned

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the origin of life into a classic chicken-or-egg puzzle: Which came first, proteins or DNA?” (2011). Horgan then noted that origin-of-life scientists have postulated that RNA might be the answer to the beginning of life. But he concluded: “The RNA world is so dissatisfying that some frustrated scientists are resorting to much more far out — literally — speculation” (2011). The far out ideas to which Horgan eluded are notions that life was dropped off by aliens, or that microbes from outer space “seeded” our planet. Horgan correctly observed that such outlandish suggestions only “push the problem of life’s origin into outer space. If life didn’t begin here, how did it begin out there?”

In his concluding paragraph, Horgan wrote: “Creationists are no doubt thrilled that origin-of-life research has reached such an impasse...but they shouldn’t be. Their explanations suffer from the same flaw: What created the divine Creator? And at least scientists are making an honest effort to solve life’s mystery instead of blaming it all on God” (2011). Horgan is exactly right when he says that scientists (read that “evolutionary scientists”) do not have a clue how life began. He is wrong, however, to insist that the evolutionary scenario of life’s origin rests on the same footing as the concept of creation. The origin-of-life research has not shown that a naturalistic origin for life is merely improbable; instead, it has shown that it is *impossible* — life does not and cannot spontaneously generate from non-living chemicals. That being the case, the only truly “scientific” idea left would be to follow the evidence where it leads — to an intelligent, supernatural Creator. Antony Flew, at one time the world’s foremost atheistic philosopher, came to just such a conclusion when he wrote: “The only satisfactory explanation for the origin of such ‘end-directed, self-replicating’ life as we see on earth is an infinitely intelligent Mind” (2007, p. 132). 

**Kyle Butt is a speaker and writer for Apologetics Press, located in Montgomery, Alabama, USA.**

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## Evidences

# HOW CAN WE KNOW THERE IS A GOD?

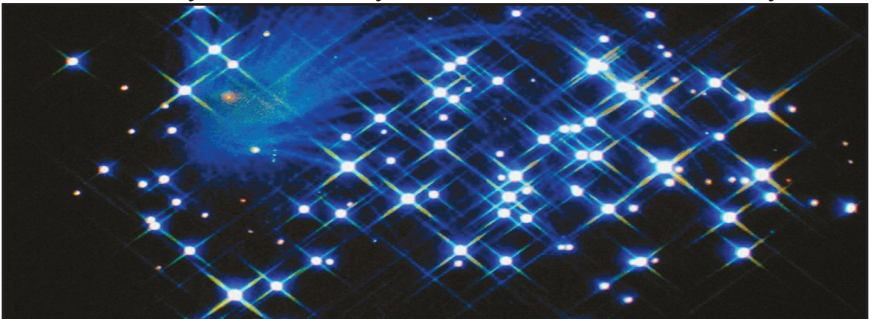
Betty Burton Choate

There are many in the world today who would scoff at the idea that an invisible God actually exists. Their logic is, “Unless I can see it, I won’t believe it.” We can’t *see* magnetism; we can’t *see* gravity; and there are many, many other things that are simply too small for our eyes to see — yet we don’t deny their existence. Why? Because we can see their *effects*.

Romans 1:20-25 makes a powerful statement: *“For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.*

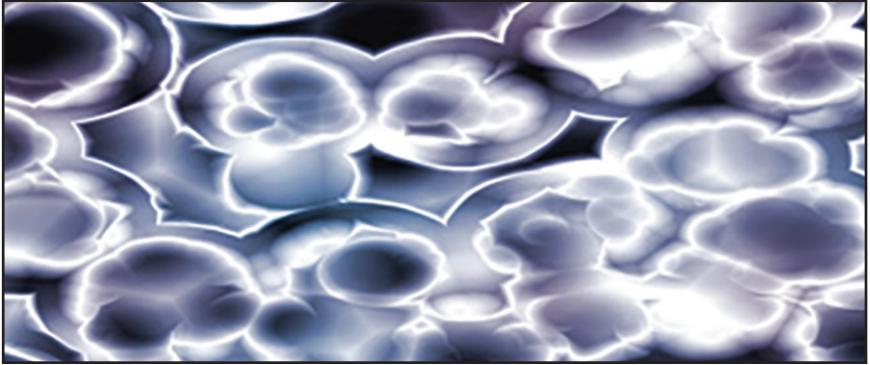
*Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.”*

How exactly these words describe our current world! Unless people have deliberately blinded their eyes to what is all around them, they cannot



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help but see the intricacy of even the smallest thing that exists — and even science, itself, states the law that every “effect” had a “cause”; in other words, everything that is made had to have a maker. Of course that law is discarded if it results in the conclusion that God is the maker and the cause! How inconsistent and unscientific!



From the immeasurable expanse of star-filled space down to the microscopic cells that make up every living thing, we can see the intelligence and wonder of God’s creation, if we open our eyes and look.

Not only do we see God in the physical things He has made, but we see Him in ourselves, if we look with honesty.

Genesis 1:26 reveals: ***“Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’”***

What does it mean that humans are “made in God’s image”? Since we are not invisible, we know that this refers to something other than the physical body. What are other ways that humans are unique, different from any other living thing?

- ✿ Have you ever seen an animal pray?
- ✿ Do animals bury their dead, along with “useful” things, evidencing expectation of a bodily resurrection?
- ✿ Do animals verbalize, with the ability to learn and speak each other’s languages?




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- ✿ Do animals feel the emotions of love, hatred, anger, laughter, tears, grief, shame, pride, peace, anticipation, trust, disappointment, discouragement, defeat, empathy, and other emotions humans experience? (Yes, a dear pet can sense grief or other intense emotions in its owner, and may show empathy through whining or snuggling close, but what we see in an animal is miniscule compared to the range and intensity of emotions common to humanity.)

The first and strongest need for humans is to love and to be loved. Without this bond with other humans, life is not complete and is usually filled with grave psychological problems. First John 4:7,8 explains this basic human need: ***“Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.”***

Every emotion felt in the human heart is a miniature of what God feels. Love, in order to be fulfilled, must have a recipient and a return of the love. Humans were given that capacity, so that we can know God’s love and so we can return love to Him. We are also blessed with the capacity to feel anger, grief, happiness, contentment, and the full range of emotions attributed to God. In this way, we are made in His image.

We are also made in His image spiritually. God is an eternal being; He had no beginning, and He will have no end. Humans are comprised of a physical body and an immortal soul. At the time of conception, a new soul came into existence, made in the image of God in the sense that it will never die.

The amazing thing about the soul is that it creates a spiritual vacuum in the human entity — a vacuum that can be filled only by the presence of God. The history of the human race shows that all peoples have felt the compulsion to worship; all buried their dead with the expectation of a resurrection and a future life; all have a definite sense of moral “right” and “wrong”. All of these things have no explanation if there is no God and if there is no embedding of His nature in humanity. We are surrounded by witnesses to His existence and power, if we will only be honest enough to admit it. 

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

# *The Word of God*

Charles Box

**Hebrews 4:12** shows the power of the Word of God by naming five qualities or attributes of that Word. The Word of God is the source of our faith, and it also stirs our devotion to God. God's Word, Scripture, is *"... living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart"* (Hebrews 4:12).

**The Word of God is living.** This Word is very much alive as it cuts the hearts of sinners and comforts the souls of saints. Both saints and sinners die, but God's Word lives on. *"All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, and its flower falls away, but the word of the Lord endures forever"* (1 Peter 1:24,25).

**The Word of God is powerful.** The Word of God is powerful enough to convert the soul. *"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple"* (Psalm 19:7). The Word of God pulls down the devil's strongholds. *"For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds"* (2 Corinthians 10:4). It is our powerful weapon to use in our fight against Satan.


**The Word of God is sharp, "sharper than any two-edged sword".** The Word of God is *"the sword of the Spirit"* (Ephesians 6:17). It cuts where no physical sword can. God's Word cuts the *"heart"*. A physical sword can cut a person's physical heart, but it cannot touch the *"heart"* of the person. God's sharp sword cuts the spiritual heart (Acts 2:37).

**The Word of God divides soul and spirit, and joints and marrow.** The Word of God cuts those sinful things away from the heart which by so long being practiced have become the nature of the person. This Word even cuts away the most difficult of sin problems — lust of the flesh and lust of the mind. It is this cutting which makes men willing to give up sin.

**The Word of God discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart**

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(Hebrews 4:12). The Word of God cuts away at even the most secret of sins, those in our mind. Sinful actions proceed from sinful thoughts. ***“For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. These are the things which defile a man, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man”*** (Matthew 15:19,20). The Word of God is capable of getting the person right on the inside. What power!

The Word of God can change your life and then, through you, change many others. Are you willing to trust and obey God’s Word? 

Charles Box preaches for the Walnut Street church in Greenville, Alabama, USA.

### **“Study to show thyself approved to God...”**

Every Christian wants to be approved of God, or by God. We want Him to accept us — accept our prayers, our worship, and our obedience unto salvation. ***“As His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue”*** (2 Peter 1:3). His Word contains all the instructions we will ever need in order to live and to be saved. This passage shows me that I can be “approved”, or shown to be a diligent servant by studying God’s Word and learning His will.

I believe the Bible teaches that any and everyone who sincerely wants to understand the truth can do just that. Jesus said, ***“You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free”*** (John 8:32). However, the Bible also teaches that not everyone who opens the book will believe it. Some will even think they’ve obeyed when, in reality, they will be eternally lost: ***“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 you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’”*** (Matthew 7:21-23) Through the correct handling of the Word, any individual can learn God’s will for his or her life. Let the Word, and it alone, guide your life. — Darrell Powell

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# Who Has the Right *to Change the Message?*

Ronald D. Bryant

*The Christian faith is not a do-it-yourself project.* One does not figure out or amend the particulars as he goes along. The Scriptures are not an amendable agenda.

The Scriptures, inspired of God, “*completely furnish*” us unto every good work (2 Timothy 3:17). They contain “*all that pertains to life and godliness*” (2 Peter 1:3). They serve to bring us to God and to a right relationship with God (Romans 1:16,17). The warnings against “*going beyond what is written,*” against, “*going beyond the doctrine of Christ,*” against “*adding to*” or “*taking away from*” the Word of God are many and pointed. The admonition to “*preach the word*” is pointedly given, yet it is no more pointed than the warning not to “*preach another gospel*” (2 Timothy 4:2; Galatians 1:6-9).

*The Christian faith rests upon the inspired Word of God.* The Gospel of Christ is the message that calls us to life in Christ. The terms of salvation are set forth in that message. The saved are constituted the people of God, the “*called out body of believers*” in that Word. The worship and the work of God’s people, as well as the moral and spiritual conduct that honors God, can be learned only in that sacred volume. The Christian life is produced and is maintained only in the acceptance of the will of God in Christ, the will of God expressed in the Gospel. Mere lip service to that message will not suffice. An amended Gospel or a partial Gospel is no Gospel at all (Galatians 1:6f).

And yet, there are folks who say with all candor that they do not see anything wrong with changing the message, with changing the Word of God. They say they are interested in the future of the church, and from their point of view the message can be changed, the purpose of God can be set

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aside, and the nature of the church rearranged. New terminology, different requirements, new officers, new freedoms are presented as acceptable, even desirable. The program offered will allow each one personal choices in matters of faith and practice. Different plans of salvation are argued as viable. The worship of your choice, the church of your choice, and even the Jesus of your choice are part of this agenda. After all, what could be wrong with setting aside the biblical, the God-authored agenda?

**ANSWER: There is plenty wrong with setting aside, or perverting the will of God! Everything is wrong with that agenda!**

Who can set aside what God has authored and still be loyal to Him? Who can reject, or set aside, or ignore what God requires and still be loyal to Him? Is there a greater or more urgent matter than the matter of loyalty to Him? The Christian faith involves each one of us in being loyal to God, because God alone is the eternal, omniscient, omnipotent Creator, and we humans — though the crown of His creation — are dust, elevated by His graciousness.

**The patriarch Job said this of God:**

*“Dominion and fear belong to Him;  
He makes peace in His high places.  
Is there any number to His armies?  
Upon whom does His light not rise?”*

**And Job raised this question concerning man:**

*“How then can man be righteous before God?  
Or how can he be pure who is born of a woman?  
If even the moon does not shine,  
And the stars are not pure in His sight,  
How much less man, who is **a maggot**,  
And a son of man, who is **a worm**?”* (Job 25:1-6)



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



# **THE WORD OF GOD**

## **In Bible Study**

**John Thiesen**

The attitudes we have towards the Bible will affect greatly what we get out of our study of the Book. Many say that no two people can derive the same thing out of the study of God's Word. This is a wrong attitude which from the outset will drastically affect our study.

The right attitude is that God wants all to get the same message from His Word. If we go to the Bible doubting that we shall come up with the truth, the pages of God's Book will seem to us to bear some secret, mysterious meaning between the lines. As a result, we will be searching for hidden meanings rather than plain truth. This is an attitude of mistrust, thinking that God is trying to trick us with His words, and it will only result in our becoming confused.

### ***God Wants Us to Understand the Bible Alike***

God wants us to know the truth, believe, and obey it. He wants us to enjoy the grand knowledge about Himself and His Son, and for us to have all the blessings of forgiveness of sins and eternal life which He freely offers to us. He is not a God who throws stumbling blocks in our way and hides the truth from our eyes. He is not playing games with us to see how many He can fool or surprise. How the devil must laugh every time he can persuade someone to believe that the Bible is an unfathomable mystery which no one can understand with any certainty.

### ***Faith That God Is Speaking to Us Through His Word***

We should go to the Bible with the attitude that God is speaking to us through it. The words contained there are not the product of human learning or the thoughts of great men. They are not the work of great dramatists, artists, politicians, or poets. Most of the writers were simple people of ordinary, everyday occupations, but they all had the same thing in common: **God miraculously placed the words in their minds which He wanted them to use to convey His thoughts.** *“Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost”* (2 Peter 1:21). If we have this attitude, then we

## THE WORD OF GOD

will listen with deep respect to God speaking through these prophets.

### ***We Must Believe the Bible Is Authoritative***

Another attitude toward the Bible that we should have is that it is authoritative. That is, we must believe that it communicates the only religion that will carry us to Heaven. No other idea about God, no other way to immortality, no other means of reaching God has been given by the Lord but that way revealed in the pages of the Holy Bible. If we do not possess this attitude, then we will be fair game for false teachers, easily persuaded to stray into paths leading in the wrong direction and away from God. ✝

John Thiesen (1934-2006) was involved with the Spanish translation of *The Voice of Truth International* and had served as a missionary for many years in Malawi, Central Africa.



This painting depicts the action and attitude that resulted in the flourishing of the Restoration Movement in Europe and America during the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries: Family study of God's Word, and the desire to follow it alone.

# Verse Search



1. How did Paul feel like he had to speak to the Corinthians? (v. 1)
2. I fed you with \_\_\_\_\_ and not with \_\_\_\_\_ food. (v. 2)
3. What are the characteristics of carnal men? (v. 3)
4. Using himself and Apollos as examples, he said all men are simply \_\_\_\_\_ of God. (v. 5)
5. I \_\_\_\_\_, Apollos \_\_\_\_\_, but God gave the \_\_\_\_\_. (v. 6)
6. Who are the most important ministers in the kingdom of God, those who plant or those who water? (v. 7)
7. We are God's \_\_\_\_\_. (v. 9)
8. If Paul laid the foundation, what are others doing to the foundation? (v. 11)
9. What is the foundation that Paul said he laid? (v. 11)
10. What are some of the materials with which man might build on that foundation? (v. 12)
11. What day will reveal the materials with which we built? (v. 13)
12. To what are Christians compared? (v. 16)
13. Who dwells in us as Christians? (v. 16)
14. What will God do to those who defile His temple? (v. 17)
15. To God, what is the wisdom of this world? (v. 19)  
(see the back cover for answers)

## VERSE SEARCH

1 And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. 2 I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; 3 for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men? 4 For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not carnal?

5 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? 6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. 7 So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase. 8 Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor.

9 For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building. 10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. 11 For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. 14 If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss, but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

16 Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? 17 If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.

18 Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. 19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, "He catches the wise in their own craftiness;" 20 and again, "The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile." 21 Therefore let no one boast in men. For all things are yours: 22 whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world or life or death, or things present or things to come--all are yours. 23 and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's.

**NOTE:** This section of Scripture deals with a most important subject, division in the Lord's church. All of us are simply servants of God. Each one has different functions and different abilities, but no one is more important than the other. Ultimately, it is God who gives the increase; thus, no one should become puffed up or boastful of how many people he has converted. We are all God's fellow-workers; in other words, we are on the same team. Each Christian is simply an instrument that God uses to accomplish His purposes. Thus, it is only God who should receive honor or glory.

# Why Are You Waiting?

### Dalton Key

Though the subject of baptism is treated frequently within the New Testament and always with candor and clarity, strange ideas — baptismal myths — continue to be advanced by many souls attempting to justify their aversion to the baptism of New Testament Scripture.


#### Consider the following examples:

“You were baptized in your way; I was baptized in my way. What difference does it make? After all, one baptism is just as good as another.” Those re-baptized in Acts 19:1-5 would disagree, as would the inspired Paul, who pointedly wrote, “***There is one baptism***” (Ephesians 4:5).

“Baptism is a symbolic act, merely confirming the fact that I have already been saved by faith alone.” The Bible teaches something vastly different. After speaking of the salvation of Noah and his family from the flood of that day, Peter continues, “***The like figure whereunto even baptism does now save us***” (1 Peter 3:21).

“I don’t understand how water can wash anyone’s sins away.” Indeed, water — any water, even the water of baptism — has no intrinsic power to save. Only the blood of Jesus Christ has this power (Revelation 1:5). Yet, we come into contact with this sin-cleansing blood in the obedience of baptism. At the time of his conversion, Paul (who at this time was known as Saul) was commanded to “***be baptized and wash away your sins***” (Acts 22:16).

“Baptism may be necessary, and I’ll probably be baptized someday, but there’s no need to do anything right now.” “***Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation***” (2 Corinthians 6:2). With salvation from sin hanging in the balance, with everything to gain and nothing to lose, with heaven calling and friends praying, why wait?

Or again, as Paul was encouraged with respect to his need for baptism, “***And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord***” (Acts 22:16). 

Dalton Key is the Editor of *Old Paths* and preaches for the 10th and Rockford congregation in Tulsa, Oklahoma, USA.



## SALVATION

# One Is Baptized into Christ to Become a Christian

Sunny David

Recently, I bought a little book, entitled *Believe and Be Baptized*. In it, the author vainly tried to show his readers that baptism follows conversion and that baptism is just an outward sign of an inward salvation. In one place, explaining Acts 2:38, he says, “They must REPENT in order to be forgiven and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” How brazen one could get to prove an error! Is this what Acts 2:38 in your Bible reads? The Bible clearly states: *“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.’”* The Bible teaches that one must both repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of sins — not just repent. Yet, in another place in his book he writes, “A person is not baptized to *make* him a Christian, but rather to *show* he is a Christian.” The Bible in Galatians 3:27 says, *“For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”* Can one be a Christian without getting into Christ or without putting on Christ? How does one put on Christ? The Bible teaches, through baptism into Christ in whom we have redemption through His blood, one receives the forgiveness of sins (Colossians 1:14).

The apostle Peter, in his first epistle, linked baptism with salvation and used Noah’s ark and the flood as an illustration. He stated in 1 Peter 3:20,21, *“Who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. There is also an antitype which now saves us — baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”*

The clear inference is that it was the water of the flood that separated Noah from the disobedient generation that perished, and it is the water of baptism that separates between the saved of today and the disobedient who will perish. Before one is baptized, he is *outside of Christ*; after

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he is baptized, he is *in Christ*. So the apostle Paul said to the Romans, *“Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in the newness of life”* (Romans 6:3,4). The newness of life or the new life in Christ begins after and not before baptism. Before one is baptized, he has the guilt of sin upon him; when he is baptized, his sins are washed away (Acts 22:16). Obedience is his appeal to God, and in the act of baptism, he calls upon the name of the Lord. One submits to baptism to obtain forgiveness and to have a clear conscience.

Let us now study two cases of conversion to Christ from the eighth chapter of the Book of Acts. When Philip the evangelist had gone into the city of Samaria, he preached there *“the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ.”* The next line reads that *“both men and women were baptized”* (Acts 8:12). If proclaiming things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ did not include baptism, the Samaritans would not have known to be baptized. Preaching Christ and baptism cannot be separated.

In the same chapter, we read the story of the eunuch to whom Philip had *“preached Jesus”* as they were traveling in the eunuch’s chariot. The record says, *“Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, ‘See here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?’ Then Philip said, ‘If you believe with all your heart, you may.’ And he answered and said, ‘I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.’ So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him”* (Acts 8:36-38). Philip had preached Jesus to eunuch, and the eunuch wanted to be baptized right then and there. What does this show? It shows very clearly that one cannot preach Christ genuinely and candidly without preaching about baptism. If I am preaching Christ, I must preach baptism. Preaching baptism is preaching the Gospel of Christ (Mark 16:15,16) ✝

**Sunny David is a preacher of the Gospel and elder in the church in New Delhi, India.**

## SALVATION

# I Never Knew You

Wayne Barrier



Almost everyone has faced a situation in everyday life when success depends on whether someone we know provides a good report on one's character and background. We list references on applications for jobs, loans, membership in organizations, passports, etc. We would be greatly disappointed if our person of reference provided a negative report or even reported that they did not know us.

Jesus describes the situation in Judgment where He would declare

to some that He never knew them, yet they claim to be His followers. Consider Matthew 7:21-23, ***“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will***

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*of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”*

Jesus is providing us with the conditions for His acceptance and for admission into His kingdom. We are not given the opportunity to argue or negotiate terms for His acceptance of us. Many people will be surprised to be rejected by Jesus, even though they claimed to be ministering, servicing and living for Him. Why? They did not do the will of God, the Father in heaven.

Does God want us to teach, worship, reject evil, and do good deeds in His name? Yes, He does, but we can do these things and still be unacceptable. We must learn from the Word of God the ***“will of God”***. His will defines acceptable teaching, worship, manner of life, etc. We must search all the Scriptures to know His will. We cannot selectively choose certain Scriptures and ignore others in establishing doctrine for following Jesus. Paul instructs Timothy regarding the Scripture in 2 Timothy 3:14-17 and says, ***“But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”***

We can be confident of our salvation and relationship with Christ if we base our lives on His Word. The Bible clearly reveals His will. We live in times when we want quick answers to questions, quick results, and personal freedom to behave as we desire, all the while rejecting absolute rule and authority. If we want to be in heaven for eternity, we must do ***God’s will***. Do you know His will? †

Wayne Barrier has worked for decades in foreign evangelism throughout various countries, and he resides in Florence, Alabama, USA.

## SALVATION

# O GLORIOUS VICTORY

Charles R. Rose

It would be futile to argue that faith is not essential to one's salvation. In fact, ***“without faith it is impossible to please God...”*** (Hebrews 11:6). Paul could face death knowing full well that he had fought the good fight of faith to the end (2 Timothy 4:7,8). He had no fear of death because in his faith in Jesus Christ was the assurance of eternal life with the redeemed of all the ages.

Once Paul wrote, ***“For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain”*** (Philippians 1:21). He went on to say he was hard-



pressed between these two ideas of living and dying. ***“Having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better”*** (Philippians 1:23), he knew the promised inheritance was beyond anything one could acquire in this life; still, there was the thought of being needed by so many this side of the grave (Philippians 1:24).

Like Paul, as children of God, we should not fear death. Our faith in the resurrected Christ should cause us to realize that ***“if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still alive in your sins”*** (1 Corinthians 15:16,17). How hopelessly futile it is for those who do not have faith in the resurrected Christ! But we are assured that ***“now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep”*** (1 Corinthians 15:20). A vibrant, living faith in the heart of a child of God is priceless, as priceless as the sacrifice of

## **SALVATION**

Christ, for the two are combined to bring about God's saving grace, ***“for by grace you have been saved through faith...”*** (Ephesians 2:8a). Thus faith becomes the catalyst that moves one to repent (Acts 2:38). Too, faith keeps one ***“faithful until death”*** (Revelation 2:10). And, ***“Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints”*** (Psalm 116:15). Just as we desire to be with our Lord eternally, He too, has that strong desire to be with us eternally.

***So live that when the summons comes...***

***Thou go not like the quarry-slave at night, scourged to his dungeon,  
But sustained and soothed by an unfaltering trust,  
Approach thy grave like one  
Who wraps the drapery of his couch about him,  
And lies down to pleasant dreams.***

(from *Thanatopsis* by William Cullen Bryant)

With such a priceless faith one can face the end of this life ***“ready to be offered...[having] fought the good fight [and] kept the faith”***; one can fully expect the Lord, the righteous Judge, to give him the glorious crown at His appearing (2 Timothy 4:6-8).

***“So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through the Lord Jesus Christ”*** (1 Corinthians 15:54-57).

Has your victory been secured?



Charles R. Rose is the preacher for the Lord's church in Lincoln, Missouri, USA.

***And the Spirit and the bride say, “Come!”  
And let him who hears say, “Come!”  
He who testifies to these things says,  
“Surely I am coming quickly.”  
Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!***





# Bible Find

Louis Rushmore

## NAMES OF CHRIST WORD SEARCH

Christ the Lord	Bridegroom	Chief Shepherd
Jesus of Nazareth	Lamb of God	Stone of Stumbling
Son of the Highest	Light of the World	Rock of Offense
Son of the Living God	Son of God	Chief Cornerstone
Holy One of God	Only Begotten	Lord of Lords
Bread of Life	Alpha and Omega	Second Man
Rabbi	Prince of Life	Lord of the Sabaoth

Holy One  
Just One  
Immanuel  
Messiah  
Son of God  
High Priest  
Savior  
Lawgiver

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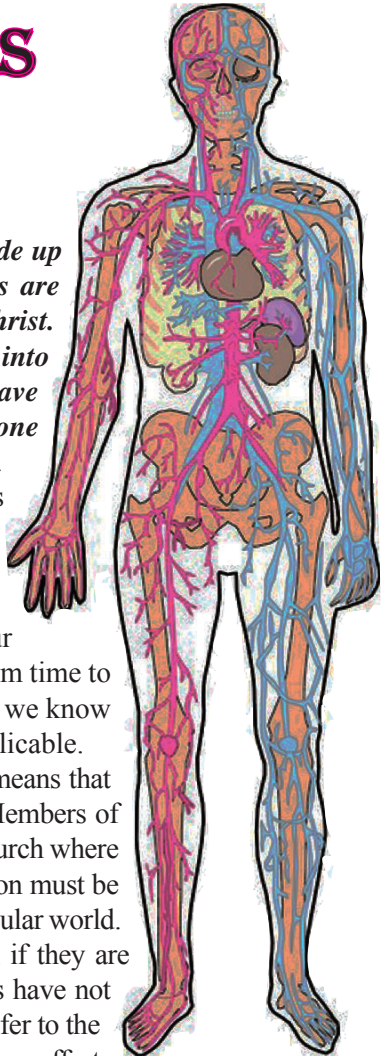
# THE BODY IS A UNIT

Harvey Porter

*“The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body — whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free — and we were all given the one Spirit to drink” (1 Corinthians 12:12,13).*

This is one of the great metaphors of the whole Bible. While this letter was addressed to the troubled church at Corinth, we recognize that the teaching applies to the church in any age. Our problems may put on different clothes from time to time, but they are all still the same. And, we know that Paul’s inspired solutions are still applicable.

**“The body [church] is a unit.”** That means that it is united; it is one functioning entity. Members of every congregation ought to think of the church where we worship as “a body”. Every organization must be united in order to last. This is true in the secular world. Businesses, countries, and families all fail if they are not united in the basic things. Many of us have not given attention to this teaching. We may refer to the church as “they,” not “we.” We may make no effort to be involved in the various works of the church. We may not attend worship very much, or support the church by our financial means. If very many feel and act this way, the congregation will soon fail and cease to exist.




## THE CHURCH

Paul continued by saying, ***“The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts”*** (verse 14). He described these parts by saying that they were different in looks, size, and function. He cautioned that though the functions were different and some seemed more important than others, each member of the body was important. In fact, he stated that all were necessary. The foot is not as beautiful as the eye, and the foot’s function does not seem as important to us as the function of the eye, but who among us wants to lose either one? We need both; the body depends upon both parts to do what they were designed by God to do.

That brings us to another eternal principle, and that is that God did not give us all the same talents and abilities. Paul wrote, ***“But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as He wanted them to be”*** (verse 18). God is pleased when each of the body parts (members of the church) use to the fullest their God-given talents. We must not say that God has not given us *any* talent, that we cannot do *anything*. That is never true. Everyone can do *something* in the work of the church.

Paul concluded with this very important teaching when he wrote, ***“But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other”*** (verses 24,25). This is one of the great needs of the church today, to have ***“concern for each other”***. In both large and small congregations, getting acquainted with each other is difficult. No matter how difficult it is to get to know one another in this fast, modern age, we must make an effort. We can get to know those in the area where we sit each Sunday, and after making friends in that area, we could move to another and then to another. We can note the names of those who lead in public worship and meet them and their families. Attending a Bible class is one of the best ways, as well as attending all of the get-togethers of the church.

Remember, Paul said that the body is a unit (exists as one), and the unit or body is made up of many parts, which are all important. God gave talents to each of these parts so they can function and show concern for each other. We all are a part of this body. 

Harvey Porter (1929-1998) preached in Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA.

## THE CHURCH

# What Is in an Elder's Toolbox?

Neil Richey

Elders carry an invisible toolbox. Inside that toolbox are numerous items that help to make elders successful in their work as shepherds of the souls of the church. The following are some things that you will find in an elder's toolbox.

In every elder's toolbox there should be a **pillow**. I don't know how you could be an elder in the Lord's church if you are not intimately involved with God. Intimacy with God cannot be had separate from a devoted prayer life. Elders need to spend time on their knees in prayer — thus the need for a pillow!

Wendell Winkler told the story about serving under an elder who literally had a prayer room built away from the house in his yard. He would actually retire there every morning and pray. On one occasion, this godly man was asked to lead a prayer during a Gospel meeting. When he was finished, the preacher leaned over to brother Winkler and said, "I would have traveled all this distance just to be a part of that prayer."

I wonder how many elders, preachers, and Christians in general have "prayer closets"? Jesus said, *"But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret..."* (Matthew 6:6). We need shepherds who know how to pray.

In every elder's toolbox there should be a **phone**. By definition, a shepherd is one who looks after the flock. With the hustle and bustle that exists among the members of the local church, it can be a real challenge to drop in for a visit. But, there are very few folks who cannot be reached by a simple phone call. Add to that, virtually everybody has voice mail. A quick call from an elder with "how are you," "missed you Wednesday," or "let's get together for lunch or a cup of coffee and talk" will go a long way to show the congregation that the elders who labor among us care for our souls.

## THE CHURCH


In every elder's toolbox there should be **a pair of steel-toed shoes**. Though the work of an elder can be a wonderful experience, it can also be a discouraging one. To borrow a statement from Franklin Camp, "No men on earth have a graver responsibility than elders." With that responsibility comes a certain amount of criticism.

It never ceases to amaze me how some members of a local congregation will constantly criticize the eldership. If the elders try to move in a direction to facilitate spiritual and numeric growth [maintaining soundness, of course], there is always someone who works as a detractor. That same person will complain to the elders and, more often than not, to anyone in the church who will listen, until one of two things happens — the elders give in and give up, or the disgruntled member leaves and starts attending another congregation.

We need leaders in the church today who have strong backbones and refuse to give in to the minority. Yes, elders need to wear steel-toed shoes.

In every elder's toolbox there should be some **tissues**. A man can never serve successfully as an elder without compassion. We live in an age where people are hurting. Elders must learn to get down where people are and to weep with those that weep (Romans 12:15).

Approximately every twenty-seven minutes a husband and wife call it quits — get divorced. Have you ever seen a wife leave a husband and take the kids, and he, through no fault of his own, is forced to bear the financial burden so that a deadbeat wife can live it up with another man? How do you deal with that? With compassion.

Are you aware of any homes where the wife is giving due diligence to be the Christian that she ought, but the husband sees no use for the Lord, and in turn makes every day a challenge for his wife to maintain her faithfulness? How do you help that wife to hang in there? With compassion. When death makes its cold harsh blow on the life of a man, and his spouse is left behind to mourn for a man she wanted to be married to for fifty more years, who should be at her side? The preacher? Sure! But the tender touch she needs to feel is that of a shepherd caring for his flock. 

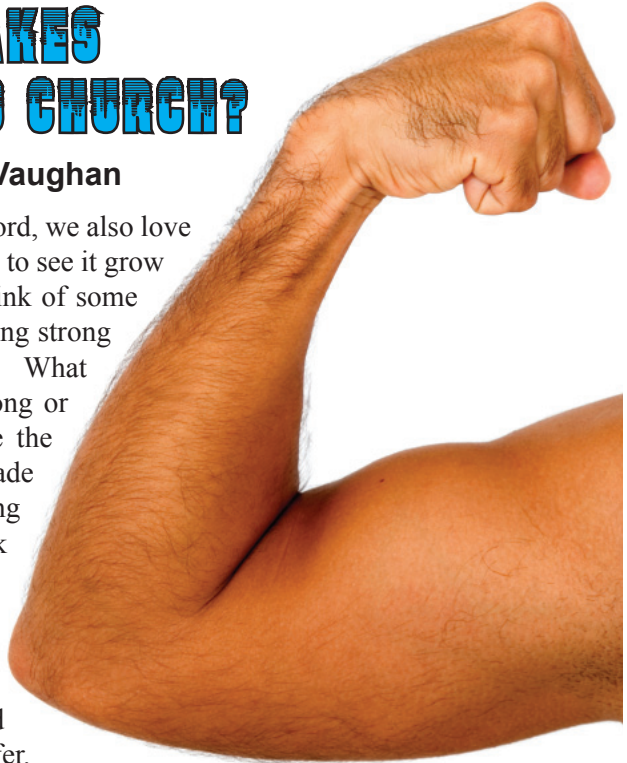
**Neil Richey preaches for the Piedmont Road congregation in Marietta, Georgia, USA.**

## THE CHURCH

# WHAT MAKES A STRONG CHURCH?

John R. Vaughan

If we love the Lord, we also love His church and want to see it grow and prosper. We think of some congregations as being strong and others as weak. What makes a church strong or weak? Some make the mistake Samuel made when selecting a king for Israel. Some look only on the outward appearance (1 Samuel 16:6,7). God's measurement of a strong church and man's idea often differ.



### MAN'S STANDARD

- A church rich in worldly wealth is a great church
- A church with a beautiful, expensive meetinghouse
- A church with a large membership
- A church whose members move and live in “so-called” high society

### THE LORD'S STANDARD

**A church that is rich in good works** (1 Thessalonians 1:7,8) The church in Thessalonica was not known for its fine church building or scholarly and popular preacher. It was not known for its large membership or the wealth it controlled, but by its good works — it was rich in good works.



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**A taught membership** (Matthew 24:11; 1 Peter 2:2; 2 Timothy 2:15; John 6:44,45; 1 Peter 3:15) Ignorance of God's Word has long been a hindrance to the church. Most of the troubles in the church have as their source a lack of Bible knowledge.

**A faithful membership** (Matthew 24:11; Revelation 2:10; James 1:27) A church that will condone sinful living is not a strong church in God's sight. Regardless of the size of the membership or the wealth of the members, the church that does not hate sin and love truth and righteousness is weak before God.

**A united church** (Psalm 133:1; Matthew 12:25; 1 Corinthians 1:10) No church can be a strong church so long as it suffers division.

A strong church is one that is rich in good works, strong in faith, has a taught membership, enjoys unity, and whose members are faithful to the Lord. It should be remembered that **a church cannot be stronger than its individual members**. Therefore, every member should strive to be strong in faith, rich in good works, well-taught in God's Word, faithful to the Master, and striving to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. It is a glorious privilege to be a Christian, a member of the body of Christ, the church. ✝

John R. Vaughan has preached for many years, particularly for the Graymere congregation in Columbia, Tennessee, USA.

### A Strong Church

Allen Webster

Will our congregation have an empty seat, two less busy hands, two fewer listening ears, a silenced tongue and two fewer bowed knees when we are gone? Will they be able to say "He really built up this church" or "She is irreplaceable because of her tireless work"? Think what must have been said at Peter's funeral, when he laid down his battle-scarred armor, after service as an apostle and elder (Matthew 10:2; 1 Peter 5:1). What of Aquila and Priscilla, who were always assets to the church (Acts 18:26)? Did the Colossian church miss Philemon, Apphia, and Archiphus (Philemon 2; Colossians 4:17)? Some of God's greatest New Testament servants were "just church members" who lived faithfully till death (Revelation 2:10). May they be able to say that at our funerals. ✝

# Glory

**Andy Miller**

Romans — what a powerful book! In the first eight chapters alone we get a complete view of our need, Christ's response, the Holy Spirit's influence, and God's promise. We have gone from being children of wrath to being children of royalty. We've been, along with all creation, crippled by the fall, marred by sin, yet, invited before the Master. Our places are set. Our chairs have been pulled out. We take our seats. Our adoption is realized. Along with the other sinners-made-saints, we share in God's glory. How is this possible? Kind of hard to comprehend what God has done for us, yet Scripture speaks strongly to what God has accomplished through His Son and in the strength of His Spirit for every Christian.

- We've moved beyond condemnation (Romans 8:1).
- We are delivered from the law (Romans 7:6).
- We are delivered from the power of evil (Colossians 1:13).
- We are members of His kingdom (Colossians 1:13).

- We are justified (Romans 5:1).
- We are perfect (Hebrews 10:14).
- We have been adopted (Romans 8:15).
- We have access to God at any moment (Ephesians 2:18).
- We are a part of His priesthood (1 Peter 2:5).
- We will not be abandoned (Hebrews 13:5).
- We have an imperishable inheritance (1 Peter 1:4).
- We are partners with Christ in life (Colossians 3:4), in His sufferings (2 Timothy 2:12), in His fellowship (1 Corinthians 1:9), and in His privileges (Ephesians 2:6).

**Glorious?**

**Yes, Sir!**

**As children  
of God we are...**

- members of His body (1 Corinthians 12:13),
- branches of the vine (John 15:5),
- stones in the building (Ephesians 2:19-22),
- a bride for the groom (Ephesians 5:25-27),
- priests in the new generation (1

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Peter 2:9), and

- a dwelling place of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19)

We possess — get this — every spiritual blessing possible. ***“In Christ, God has given us every***

***spiritual blessing in the heavenly realm”*** (Ephesians 1:3). This is the gift offered to the lowliest sinner on earth. Who could make such an offer, but God? Who else, but God could present to us such glories! ✚

## Glory of This Latter House

Mark McWhorter

The prophet Haggai encouraged the Israelites to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem. The people who came back from captivity had begun to build but then stopped. It had been several years since they had worked on the Temple.

Haggai also gave prophecies of the church. In 2:9 we read, ***“The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts.”***

Most commentators agree that this verse has reference to the church. However, what is sad is that many religious people today believe that the church is not the promised kingdom.

God established the Temple. He blessed those who built the Temple. Solomon’s Temple was considered one of the most magnificent buildings in existence before it was destroyed.

If the church has more glory than Solomon’s Temple, it cannot be because Christ *failed to establish the kingdom* and, instead, gave us *the church*. That would make the church a secondary institution that began from failure rather than from glory. The church is a glorious body. It has more glory than the Temple could ever have. The church is the kingdom (Colossians 1:13; 1 Thessalonians 1:12). It is the heavenly Jerusalem (Hebrews 12:22).

Study your Bible. Learn all you can from it. Obey the commands in it and be a member of the Lord’s church. ✚

## DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

# *Disagree or Hate?*

**Robert Ball**

The culture in which we live has many diverse people who believe many diverse things. Some people see nothing at all wrong with an individual choosing to participate in homosexual activity. These people believe it is a choice to be made by the individual and that everyone else should respect that individual's choice. Those who make the choice to participate in homosexual activity are sometimes treated cruelly and even beaten and battered by other individuals. This violence evidently is perpetrated by individuals who disagree with the sexual conduct in which their victims have chosen to participate. Sometimes this type of violence is referred to as a hate-crime.




It is against the law to inflict violence such as beating and battering on another individual. It is right and good, and most of us are happy such laws are in place to protect the citizens of our communities. These laws should protect individuals who have chosen to participate in homosexual

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activity in the same way they protect other citizens. However, there seems to be another issue developing in our culture.

There seems to be those in our culture who think that speaking out against, admonishing against, and disagreeing with participation in homosexual activity should be labeled a hate-crime. I disagree with homosexual activity and admonish people against doing it, but I do so because of **what the Bible teaches**, not because of my personal feelings on the matter. There are those who say we should be tolerant and accept persons who openly participate in homosexual activity into our Christian fellowship. **I disagree on the basis of what the Bible teaches** (1 Corinthians 6:9-11). This does not mean that I hate people who participate in homosexual activity; I simply disagree with their lifestyle on the basis of Scripture. For someone to suggest that my speaking out against the homosexual lifestyle by disagreeing with it is a hate-crime is hateful to me.

The apostle Paul and Barnabas worked together on the first missionary journey. They labored together and established many congregations in this effort. Nevertheless, when it came time to begin the second missionary journey, Paul and Barnabas had a disagreement, and the Bible says, ***“The disagreement became so sharp they parted company”*** (Acts 15:39). They did not work together on the second missionary journey; Paul took Silas, and Barnabas took John called Mark, and they worked separately. I believe it would be a tremendous leap toward a wrong conclusion, however, to say that Paul and Barnabas hated one another. They simply disagreed sharply on whether to take Mark to work on the journey.

Homosexual activity is a sin, just like fornication is a sin (Hebrews 13:4). I do not hate individuals who choose to engage in illicit heterosexual activity. I do, however, disagree with their decision to participate in such activity because of **what the Bible teaches**. I do not hate people who choose to participate in homosexual activity, but I do sharply disagree with their decision to do so because of **what the Bible teaches**. Furthermore, I encourage them to repent of this activity, and I warn them of the eternal consequences of not doing so. 

**Robert Ball is the preacher for the Hialeah church of Christ in Hialeah, Florida, USA.**

# DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

# Reactions to the Resurrection

Bobby Dockery

The story of the resurrection has always been central to the preaching of the Gospel (1 Corinthians 15). When the apostle Paul came to Athens about 52 A.D., he sought to justify Christianity to Greek philosophers on the basis of its risen Lord. Standing in the midst of a hostile audience with the evidences of Greek superstition all around him, Paul proclaimed that God *“has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all men by raising him from the dead”* (Acts 17:31). That day in Athens, three different attitudes toward the resurrection were exhibited. People generally react in these same three ways today whenever the resurrection is discussed.



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**1. SOME WERE HOSTILE.** The Bible says plainly: *“Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some began to sneer...”* (Acts 17:32). Some have always responded to the “Good News” with mockery. When faced with the doctrine of the resurrection they retreat in ridicule. When Paul preached the resurrection before the Roman Governor Festus, he cried out in derision: *“Paul, you are insane”* (Acts 26: 24 LB). Jewish scholar Hugh Schonfield, in his book, *The Passover Plot*, dismisses faith in the resurrection as “fairy dust”, and suggests that the resurrection was an elaborately orchestrated fraud! But how are we to explain away the




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eyewitness testimony of more than 514 separate individuals who saw the risen Lord (1 Corinthians 15:4-8)? Famed scholar B.F. Westcott wrote, “There is no single historical event better or more variously supported than the resurrection of Christ.”

**2. SOME WERE INDIFFERENT.** Though some mocked, others said, “*We shall hear you again concerning this*” (Acts 17: 32). They were polite, but they were no more interested than the scoffers. Their attitude was, “So what?” In substance they said, “We’re pretty busy right now. Maybe some other time.” Indifference is far more common than mockery. It is not so much that the world is hostile to Christianity as it is just that the world doesn’t care. To the average person, whether or not Christ was raised from the dead is not nearly as important as living in a nice house, having a good job, and getting the kids through college. Even many “Christians” live as though Jesus were still dead. The resurrection of Christ makes no real difference in their day-to-day living. If we really take the resurrection seriously, it will mean some drastic changes in our comfortable complacency. So, it is generally easier just to ignore the whole thing. The resurrection of Christ does not really have the impact on our lives that it ought to have.

**3. SOME WERE RECEPTIVE.** The Bible notes, “*But some men joined Him and believed...*” (Acts 17:34). Thanks be to God that there are always a few who will objectively consider the evidence and accept the reality of the resurrection! How do we participate in the resurrection of Jesus Christ? In the New Testament, the believer signified his desire to become involved in Christ’s death and resurrection by reenacting it in the act of baptism. Paul wrote, “*Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?*” (Romans 6:3). Baptism is faith’s response to the resurrection. It recreates in the life of the believer the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (Romans 6:4,5; Colossians 2:12)!

There are three possible reactions to the resurrection of Christ. Some laugh it away; some shrug it off; and some take it in. Which reaction is yours? 

**Bobby Dockery is a writer and preacher in Fayetteville, Arkansas, USA, and he has been heavily involved in mission work for many years.**

## Quick Commentary on Crucial Verses

### Hosea 11:1-4; 8,9

1 "When Israel was a child, I loved him, And out of Egypt I called My son.

2 As they called them, So they went from them; They sacrificed to the Baals, and burned incense to carved images.

3 "I taught Ephraim to walk, taking them by their arms; but they did not know that I healed them.

4 I drew them with gentle cords, with bands of love, and I was to them as those who take the yoke from their neck. I stooped and fed them.....

8 "How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel? How can I make you like Admah? How can I set you like Zeboiim? **My heart churns within Me;** My sympathy is stirred.

9 I will not execute the fierceness of My anger; I will not again destroy Ephraim. For I am God, and not man, The Holy One in your midst; And I will not come with terror.

These verses given through the prophet Hosea allow us very poignant insight into the nature of God. He describes Israel [Ephraim] as His son, whom He loved. In the language of a parent, He tells how He helped them through the childhood years, taking them by the arms and helping them to walk, stooping to feed them when they could not take care of themselves.

Why was God so grieved that He described His pain as His heart **churning** within Him? Because, in spite of all that He had done for His people, they continued to sacrifice to the Baals and to burn incense to idols. Perhaps because they accepted God's help and yet worshipped the pagan gods at the same time, they were seemingly unable to decide Who was the real God — Who was blessing them and who was the cause of their troubles.

In spite of the justness of God's anger, and the fact that the Israelites deserved to be annihilated, God had mercy and only punished their idolatry. He allowed them to continue as a people until the Saviour could be born in that nation to bless the entire world with the message of salvation.

# *The Hidden Harvest*

Randall Caselman

When a farmer was asked what time he gets up to go to work, he replied, “I wake up in the middle of it.” There may be a lot of things an honest farmer may not understand about planting and reaping, but one thing that he does understand is that God gives the increase. Indeed a farmer wakes up in the middle of his work.

There are a lot of things we may not understand about sowing the seed of the kingdom and reaping a soul harvest, but Scripture tells us that it is God who gives the increase. ***“I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God gave the increase”*** (1 Corinthians 3:6).

God’s harvest can be found in the most unexpected places, places we never imagined and could not have anticipated. This New Testament principle is repeated many times in Scripture:

**Traveling from Judea to Samaria, Jesus stopped at Jacob’s well for a drink of water. There He encountered the Samaritan woman and sowed the kingdom seed, resulting in the conversion of an entire village.**

Following the Jerusalem council, Paul passed through the lower regions of Asia Minor delivering the Word of grace. Churches were established in the faith and increased in number daily.

While praying, Ananias received directions leading to the conversion of a Christian apologist and missionary; ***“Arise, go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul”*** (Acts 9:11).

Philip the evangelist was told, ***“Go south to the road that goes from Jerusalem to Gaza”*** (Acts 8:26). His sowing resulted in the conversion of an Ethiopian governmental official.

Peter found an unexpected open door to the Gentiles when he responded to a vision in his sleep (Acts 10).

The providence of God drew Paul and Silas to a riverside in

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Philippi where a group of women had gathered for prayer. The Lord opened Lydia's heart with marvelous results (Acts 16).

**What are some things we can learn from these narratives?**

◆ Those who plant must never be afraid to go where others have never gone before. Jesus, Philip, Peter, and Paul were planting on virgin ground. Farmers know that virgin soil is the most productive.


◆ We must be ready to go, regardless of what we are doing. Philip was involved in a great work in Samaria, yet he left it in favor of teaching one man on a lonely dusty road.

◆ Never fear, God is with us. Ananias was paralyzed when asked to go seek out Saul of Tarsus. He knew who Saul was, yet God said, ***“Go, this man is mine”*** (Acts 9:15). We never know what God has planned for those we may touch with the message.

◆ We must not allow prejudice to stop us. Jesus was not concerned with the color of the woman's skin or her religious preconceptions (John 4). Peter was told, ***“Don't call unclean that which God has made clean”*** (Acts 10:15).

◆ Understand that the providence of God is always at work. Jesus, Paul, and Silas were in the right place at the right time. God knows when the soil is right and when the grain is ripe for harvesting. Ours is to understand that He needs us to plant and water.

◆ Evangelism can take place any time, any place, not just in our church buildings. We plant and water at the grocery store, in the bank, on the golf course, at work, and around our neighborhoods. It's called “market-place evangelism”. That is where Jesus died, and that is what He is about, and that is where Christ's church ought to be and what the church of Christ ought to be about.

◆ Some may sow and reap by the hundreds or thousands. Others, like Ruth of old, may glean only by the handfuls, but every soul is precious in His eyes. Know that God has placed each of us at a strategic place in His field to plant and water. 

**Randall Caselman preaches for the Bella Vista Church of Christ in Bella Vista, Arkansas, USA.**

## CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION

# ***"Except Ye Become as Little Children"***

Patrick Morrison

In Matthew 18:1-6, Jesus gives some very important qualifications for those who would enter the kingdom of heaven. He would say, ***"Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."*** Notice that this is something all who wish to enter that heavenly abode must do. But what did Jesus mean when He said that all who would enter heaven must become as little children? Surely He did not mean that those converted to Him must be childish and immature in their behavior. Rather, He meant that those who are converted to Him must be *childlike*. There is a vast difference in being childish and being childlike.




Perhaps one of the most outstanding qualities of a young child is his humble spirit. Young children have not yet learned what pride is. Those who wish to live for eternity in the presence of Almighty God must employ this same attitude of humility. As adults, we often trust in our own abilities

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all too much, refusing (because of stubborn pride) the help of those who truly can help us. This is often the case when it comes to salvation. We must turn to the One and *only* One, who *can* save us — God. We must obey what He has set out for us to do. We must never think that we are “above” that which God would have us do. Without humility, we will never access the grace of the Almighty (James 4:10; 1 Peter 5:6). Is your pride more important than your soul (Proverbs 16:18; Matthew 16:26)?

A young child trusts with all his heart that his parents will be there for him in his time of need. A child trusts that his father will be there for him when he takes those first steps, or takes his first ride on his new bike. A child trusts that his mother will be there for him when he scrapes his knee, or when the other kids are picking on him. Those who would enter into heaven must, too, manifest a simple, loving trust in the One who loves us and gave Himself for us (Jeremiah 17:7). When God makes a promise, we should trust Him to see it through. When I do what He has told me through His Word, I can rest assured and trust with all my heart that He will uphold what He has promised. I can also rest assured that He will be there for me in times of need, in times of rejoicing, in times of despair. God is faithful and will not forsake His children (Hebrews 13:5). Do you trust in God?

Have you ever seen two children engaged in a tussle, shouting to each other that they hate one another, only to see them five minutes later playing together as best friends, as if nothing ever happened? Children are so quick to forgive one another and to forget in the same manner. Those who desire to live with God for eternity must manifest a similar attitude of forgiveness. The child of God must be willing to forgive those who repent of their wrongdoing if they wish to be forgiven of their sins by the Father (Matthew 18:21,22; Ephesians 4:32). Do you manifest the same forgiving attitude toward others that God manifests toward you?

True conversion requires that we become childlike. Without such an attitude of heart and a disposition of mind, we have no hope of entering into eternity in heaven. Won't you become as a little child? 

**Patrick Morrison preaches for the Sixth Avenue congregation in Jasper, Alabama, USA.**



# How Do You Measure Up?

"Behold, I send My messenger,  
And he will prepare the way before Me.  
And the Lord, whom you seek,  
Will suddenly come to His temple,  
Even the Messenger of the covenant,  
In whom you delight.  
Behold, He is coming,"  
Says the Lord of hosts.

"Return to Me, and I will return to  
you,"

Says the Lord of hosts.

"But you said,

'In what way shall we return?'

"Will a man rob God?

Yet you have robbed Me!

But you say,

'In what way have we robbed  
You?'

In tithes and offerings.

You are cursed with a curse,

For you have robbed Me,

Even this whole nation.

Bring all the tithes into the  
storehouse,

That there may be food in My  
house,

And try Me now in this,"

Says the Lord of hosts,

"If I will not open for you  
the windows of heaven

And pour out for you such  
blessing That there will

not be room enough to  
receive it."

Malachi 3:1,8-10



# Is the Use of Instrumental Music in Worship to God *a Salvation Issue?*

Owen B. Moseley

Is the use of instrumental music in worship to God a “salvation” issue? Yes. Why do I say, “Yes”? Because the Bible teaches that anything that is sinful is a salvation issue. It further teaches that anything that we do that is not of faith is sin. Paul stated in Romans 14:23: ***“But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because he does not eat from faith; for whatever is not from faith is sin.”***

Paul says in Romans 10:17: ***“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”*** Where in the Word of God can anyone find that the use of instrumental music in worship to God is either authorized, approved, or mentioned?

Some present a form of the following argument: Even though the Bible does not say that you **can** use the instrument in worship in the New Testament, the instrument was not only used in worship to God in the Old Testament, it was *commanded*. So the use of the instrument in worship to God is mentioned in the Word of God, they maintain, and they rest their case.

We need to be very careful when we use teachings and examples in the Old Testament to justify something we want to do. There are many teachings and principles in the Old Testament that apply to us today. There are some that do not. It is important that we be very careful to make proper judgments as to which teachings and principles apply.

There is a teaching and principle contained in the Old Testament that I believe relates to the question of instrumental music in worship to God. I believe this teaching and principle is very compelling. When the Israelites set out on their journey from Egypt to the promised land, they often allowed their physical desires to affect their judgment. (Many of us today, often behave in the same manner.) God had abundantly blessed them. Their reaction: murmuring and complaining all along the journey.

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There are two events having to do with God commanding Moses to draw water from a rock that I want us to examine.

The first event is recorded in Exodus 17:1-6. (Please read.) The second event is recorded in Numbers 20:2-13. (Please read.) There are some key points in these two accounts that I want us to consider.

The first time that Moses drew water from the rock, God told Moses to take his rod, go to the rock in Horeb, *strike the rock*, and water would come forth. Moses heard; Moses believed; Moses obeyed; and the water came as God had promised.

The second recorded time that Moses drew water from the rock was nearly forty years later (Numbers 20:1). The majority of the Israelites from the first episode had perished because of their lack of faith in God's promise (Numbers 14:1ff). Apparently the new generation was similar to the previous one. The parents did have an influence — however, not for good.

God told Moses to take his rod, assemble the congregation, and *speak*



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## WORSHIP

*to the rock* (Numbers 20:8). Moses took the rod, gathered the people, approached the rock, and yet, rather than speaking to the rock, he struck it with his rod twice (Numbers 20:9-11).

Moses heard; Moses did not believe; Moses did not obey. He did not do as the Lord had commanded him. Even though the water came forth, the Lord did not overlook his sin. Moses was not permitted to lead the Israelites into the promised land because of his transgression. Moses died in the land of Moab (Deuteronomy 32:48-52; 34:1ff.).

### HOW DO THESE TWO EVENTS RELATE TO THE QUESTION OF THE USE OF INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN WORSHIP TO GOD?

The two events with the rocks and bringing forth water illustrate an extremely valuable lesson for us today: We must follow the will of God *as* He has authorized it and *when* He has authorized it. Even a casual reading of the Bible clearly shows that God sometimes does change what He requires. This is abundantly clear in the example regarding the rocks and the drawing of the water.

Notice that God changed the instructions at the second rock from the time that Moses brought water from the first rock. God did not overlook Moses' disregard for His latest instructions. Moses was punished for his lack of faith and his disobedience. He missed the promised land of Canaan because he did not follow the new instructions that God had given him.

What does this suggest about those who practice the philosophy that says "instrumental music may not be authorized in worship to God in the New Testament but it is in the Old Testament. Therefore, we can use it"?

Each time, God gave specific instructions to Moses that He expected to be followed. God held Moses accountable for failing to follow His new instructions. Why can't people today see that we need to apply the teachings given to us in the New Testament regarding worship? We must not look back for regulations in the Old Testament that don't apply to us, even though they may tend to please some of us.

Moses sinned at the second rock because God's instructions had changed and Moses failed to obey the new instructions. When we fail to obey the instructions that apply to us, we sin.

## WORSHIP

Moses sinned at the second rock when he struck the rock because his action was not an act of faith (Numbers 20:12). When our worship is not an act of faith, we sin.

Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. The Word of God did not say for Moses to strike the rock. Moses did what God had *not commanded* and failed to do what He *did command*. Therefore, Moses sinned. A combination of his lack of faith, his failure to act as God instructed, and his unauthorized and inappropriate actions resulted in his failing to glorify God.

The Word of God that applies to us today, regarding worship to God, does not say to use instruments of music in worship to Him; therefore, we sin when and if we add them to our worship. **Sin, no matter what its form, is always a salvation issue.** ✝



**“I will declare Your name to My brethren;  
In the midst of the assembly I will  
sing praise to You” (Hebrews 2:12).**



## WORSHIP

# ***Mechanical Instruments of Music in Worship***

Ruben Hall

In the discussion of any Bible topic, it is extremely important to keep emotions out of the way and under control. Phrases such as “I feel” and “I think” should never be the basis of an argument. The Bible should and must be the only basis. Why? *“All scripture is given by the inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works”* (1 Timothy 3:16,17). Since the Bible perfectly and thoroughly furnishes unto all good works, why is there a need for anything else? Feelings and opinions lead only to “heated” arguments in which the truth is never revealed.

*“God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth”* (John 4:24). In order to worship God in “truth”, we must worship Him by His Word. *“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth”* (John 17:17).

So, what do the Scriptures reveal concerning singing and/or playing musical instruments?

◆ Matthew 26:30: *“And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.”*

◆ Acts 16:25: *“But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.”*

◆ Romans 15:9: *“For this reason I will confess to You among the Gentiles, and sing to Your name.”*

◆ 1 Corinthians 14:15: *“What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.”*

◆ Ephesians 5:19: *“Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.”*

◆ Colossians 3:16: *“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”*



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◆ Hebrews 2:12: *“I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You.”*

◆ Hebrews 13:15: *“Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.”*


◆ James 5:13: *“Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms.”*

These nine verses teach that singing is an acceptable and required act of worship unto God, but what about playing musical instruments? Nowhere in the New Testament is there any mention of playing mechanical instruments as being an acceptable form of worship. So, where is the authorization to use them in worship found? To find this authority one must resort to the creeds and opinions of man. *“But in vain they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men”* (Matthew 15:9).

Under the Old Testament worshipping God with mechanical instruments of music was permitted (Psalm 33:2). However, it must be understood that the Old Law is no longer binding or in effect today, but it is rather *“for our learning”* (Romans 15:4).

◆ Colossians 2:14: *“Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross.”*

◆ Galatians 3:24,25: *“Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.”*

God has revealed His perfect will in the Bible, and it is up to man to follow it. *“O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps”* (Jeremiah 10:23). It is when man becomes “bored” with God’s will and changes it to fit his own will that one perverts the Gospel. *“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from Him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed”* (Galatians 6:6-9). 

## WORSHIP

# *Instrumental Music in Worship*

**Glover Shipp**

I have been in churches of Christ for all of my 80 years, and have served as a preacher, missionary, deacon, and then as an elder of the Edmond, Oklahoma Church of Christ. I have taught world religions, the history of Christianity, and our own history. I have studied at length the matter of instrumental music. I have visited instrumental churches. Here are my conclusions:

Mark Henderson is right in saying that the New Testament is silent on instruments in worship. The instruction on music in worship is found primarily in three passages:

Ephesians 5:19, which says to speak to one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs; to sing and make music in your heart to the Lord.

Colossians 3:16, which tells us to sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in our hearts to God.

Hebrews 13:15, which says that we are to offer the fruit of our lips as a sacrifice of praise.

One argument Henderson did not mention is historical. Here is what the Catholic Encyclopedia says in this matter:

**“The first Christians were of too spiritual a fibre to substitute lifeless instruments for or use them to accompany the human voice. Clement of Alexandria severely condemns the use of instruments even at Christian banquets . . .” (X, 651). “For almost a thousand years, Gregorian chant without any instrumental or harmonic addition, was the only music used in connection with the liturgy” (X, 657).**

And yet another of many historical witnesses:




## WORSHIP

*Voices and Instruments in Christian Worship*, published by The Liturgical Press: **“From the standpoint of ritual action, liturgical music can only be monodic and vocal. Throughout nearly ten centuries of its history, Christian worship was in principle, and nearly always in fact, celebrated una voce [“one voice”- unanimously] and a cappella [without instrumental accompaniment, lit. “as the chapel”]... The abundance and clearness of the texts in which the Fathers of the Church have discussed the questions can leave us in no doubt about the content and firmness of their teaching: musical instruments are to be excluded from the worship of the New Alliance” (142, 150).**

Because of this historical position, the Eastern Church continued without instruments, even after the split with the Roman Church. The result is that all of the Orthodox churches, to my knowledge, continue their tradition of a cappella music. This is a major segment of “Christendom”. Other churches, also, deny their use, and so churches of Christ are not unique in their position.

My observation in visiting contemporary instrumental services is that they look and sound exactly like any rock band — loud, and with a heavy percussion beat. Guitars predominate, but with other instruments also used. The instrumentalists generally are not singing. Among those attending, many are not singing at all, but just listening to the music up on the stage. Finally, most have lost all ability to sing parts or even a cappella. The words of the songs are projected, but not the music. If a visitor doesn’t know a song, he or she cannot enter into the singing.

Visit the Edmond Church of Christ and hear a cappella music generally at its best. The congregation of about 1,200 members sings very well without ever turning to instruments to aid it!

We are certainly not against instruments in the secular world. I played a violin for many years. Others are professional-level musicians. We choose to sing unaccompanied in worship to God because of New Testament teaching on the matter, the example of the early church, and its subsequent history for its first millennium. 

**Glover Shipp, preacher and missionary, currently lives in Austin, Texas, USA.**

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## PROVERBS 17:22

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While visiting a modern art museum, a lady turned to an attendant standing nearby and said, “This, I suppose, is one of those hideous representations you call modern art?”

“No, madam,” replied the attendant. “That one’s called a mirror.”



A young man hired by a supermarket reported for his first work day. The manager greeted him with a warm handshake and a smile, gave him a broom, and said, “Your first job will be to sweep out the store.”

“But I’m a college graduate,” the young man replied indignantly.

“Oh, I’m sorry. I didn’t know that,” said the manager. “Here, give me the broom – I’ll show you how.”



A farm boy accidentally overturned his wagonload of corn. The farmer who lived nearby heard the

noise and rushed right over.

“Hey, Albert!” the farmer yelled. “Forget it for now. It’s dinnertime. Come eat with us, and then we’ll come back and I’ll help you turn the wagon back up.”

“That’s mighty nice of you,” Albert said, “but I don’t think Pa would like me to.”

“Aw, come on,” the farmer insisted. “You have to eat! We’ll get back to the wagon soon.”

“Well, okay,” said the boy, and then added, “But Pa won’t like it.”

After a hearty dinner, Albert thanked his host and said, “I feel a lot better now, but I know Pa is going to be real upset.”

“Aw, don’t be foolish,” the neighbor said. “By the way, where is your Pa?”

“Under the wagon.”



A man walked into a fish and chip shop with a fish under his arm. He asked, “Do you have any fishcakes?”

“Yes, of course,” said the fish shop owner.

“Great,” replied the man. Nodding at the fish under his arm, he said, “It’s his birthday.”

## PROVERBS 17:22

**Teacher:** “Billy, give me a sentence starting with “I”.

**Billy:** “I is...”

**Teacher** (interrupting): “No, Billy. Always say, “I am.”

**Billy:** “Alright...I am the ninth letter of the alphabet.”



**Johnny:** “Do you think people can predict the future with cards?”

**Jimmy:** “My mother sure can. She takes one look at my report card and tells me exactly what will happen when Dad gets home.”



The Sunday morning service had ended, and the preacher was greeting the people as they were leaving. Everyone was friendly as they greeted him, but no one said anything about the sermon.

He was getting a little concerned about that until someone said, “Oh, preacher, your sermon reminded me of **the peace and love of God.**”

The preacher was a little puzzled by this and asked him to explain what he meant.

The person explained, “Well, preacher, that sermon reminded me of the peace of God because it

**passed all understanding**, and it reminded me of the love of God because **it endured forever.**”



A pompous new colonel had just moved into his new office and was sitting at his desk when an airman knocked on the door.

Wanting to appear very important, the colonel quickly picked up the phone, told the airman to enter, and then said into the phone, “Yes, General, I’ll be seeing him this afternoon and I’ll pass along your message. In the meantime, thank you for your good wishes, sir.”

Confident that he had greatly impressed the young enlisted man, he asked, “What do you want?”

“Oh, it’s nothing too important, sir. I was just sent here to hook up your telephone.”

### Some Points to Ponder

- **It is better to be alone than in the wrong company.**
- **“Faith is not destroyed all at once, but by one compromise at a time.”**
- **Someone wisely advised, “Don’t grumble because you don’t have what you want; be thankful you don’t get what you deserve.”**

# REFINED IN FIRE

Author unknown

The following story is a great example of how the Lord teaches and molds us through life's trials.

There was a group of women in a Bible study on the book of Malachi. As they were studying chapter three, they came across verse three which says, ***“He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver”*** (Malachi 3:3). This verse puzzled the women, and they wondered what this statement meant about the character and nature of God.

One of the women offered to find out about the process of refining silver and get back to the group at their next Bible study. That week this woman called up a silversmith and made an appointment to watch him at work. She didn't mention anything about the reason for her interest in silver beyond her curiosity about the process of refining silver. As she watched the silversmith, he held a piece of silver over the fire and let it heat up. He explained that in refining silver, one needed to hold the silver in the middle of the fire where the flames were hottest as to burn away all the impurities. The woman thought about God holding us in such a hot spot — then she thought again about the verse, that he sits as a refiner and purifier of silver.

She asked the silversmith if it was true that he had to sit there in front of the fire the whole time the silver was being refined. The man answered that yes, he not only had to sit there holding the silver, but he had to keep his eyes on the silver the entire time it was in the fire. If the silver was left even a moment too long in the flames, it would be destroyed. The woman was silent for a moment. Then she asked the silversmith, “How do you know when the silver is fully refined?”

He smiled at her and answered, “Oh, that's easy — when I see my image in it.”

If today you are feeling the heat of the fire, remember that God has His eye on you.





## DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING



I realize the subject of fasting is not a popular thing to talk about, but that is exactly why we need to discuss it. Few biblical practices are neglected in the church today like fasting. Here are three reasons why we all need to be fasting.

### 3 Reasons Why Christians Need to be Fasting

Wes McAdams

**1. We need to fast because we need to be devoted to prayer.** Fasting is simple. For a relatively short period of time, we devote ourselves so thoroughly to prayer that we even neglect the most basic act of eating. This isn't because we believe God will hear our prayers better when we fast, but because we are making it clear to our own mind and heart that prayer is far more important than eating.

When a major decision has to be made, when calamity strikes, or even as a regular discipline, fasting and prayer go hand-in-hand. For instance, when Nehemiah heard about the deplorable condition of Jerusalem, he *“sat down and wept and mourned for days, and continued fasting and praying before the God of heaven”* (Nehemiah 1:4). I think about things that are happening in our world today and wonder, “Why are we not encouraging Christians to pray and fast about these things?”

**The rioting in Baltimore should cause Christians to fast and pray.**  
**The earthquake in Nepal should cause Christians to fast and pray.**  
**The spiritual condition of our culture – and the church – should cause Christians to fast and pray.**

## DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING

And the list could go on and on.

Picture a 9-year-old boy coming up to his father to ask a question, but without even looking up from a handheld video game on which he is playing. The father is likely to ask, “Is this not important enough that you would stop playing your game for a few minutes while you talk to me?” Or even, “Am I not important enough for you to stop playing while you talk to me?”

Are not these issues – and God Himself – important enough that we stop eating for a little while in order to fully devote ourselves to talking with our Father?

**2. We need to fast because we need to consider what we are truly hungry for.** This is one of the most important questions we can ask ourselves. Fasting helps us examine ourselves and ask ourselves questions like these:

Am I more hungry for the things of this world than I am for righteousness?

Do I worship God because I long for the things He gives me or because I long for God Himself?

If I had to choose between God and food, which would I choose?

Fasting is a wonderful way to root out the “idols” in our lives. We must ask ourselves if we are truly pursuing the Lord or pursuing earthly things. Fasting helps us say with our whole hearts, ***“The Lord is my portion, says my soul, therefore I will hope in him”*** (Lamentations 3:24).

**3. We need to fast because we believe in restoring New Testament Christianity.** One of my biggest frustrations is inconsistency. If we are going to say we want to be the church of the New Testament, then fasting is a practice we must restore.

- ◆ Jesus fasted (Matthew 4:2).
- ◆ Jesus said His disciples would fast after He returned to heaven (Matthew 9:15).
- ◆ Jesus gave instructions for fasting (Matthew 6:16-18).
- ◆ The church fasted and prayed before sending missionaries out to preach the Good News (Acts 13:3).
- ◆ The church fasted and prayed when appointing elders (Acts 14:23).

## DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING

- ◆ If we are truly going to be the church of the New Testament, we must not only pray, we must fast as well.

I realize some people have medical conditions that make fasting impossible. And remember that you don't have to fast for days or even 24 hours; you could simply skip a meal and spend that time devoted to prayer. And if you medically can't fast from food at all, perhaps you could find other things from which to fast.

*“But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you”* (Matthew 6:17,18). ✝

Wes McAdams is pulpit minister for Baker Heights Church of Christ in Abilene, Texas, USA and has the website, “Radically Christian”, from which this article was taken with his permission.

### Communion

Oh, Lord,

For these few minutes let me stop my work and sit here in this quiet place, alone with myself, alone with You.

Let me feel my thoughts and look within to see the self I sometimes do not know.

Let me stop in utter stillness to feel Your presence permeate this quiet room.

Let me be filled for this short span of time with heaven's peace, with sweet contentment in my soul, with all the fullness of eternity.

And, Lord, when reluctantly I leave this room to cope again with life's distractions and preoccupations, keep vivid in my mind this place of peace, and bring me here again.

— BBC

# Another Reason for Faith in God

Charles Pugh III

An article in *Reader's Digest* considered the question: "What are the keys to good health?" The article stated, "Good genes and avoiding risk factors such as smoking, drinking, and high cholesterol foods are important. But they don't tell the whole story." Listed among the additional "things you can do for your body that will help you stay healthy" was the following:

"CONSIDER YOUR SOUL. Growing evidence links belief in God to better physical health."

Jeffrey S. Levin at Eastern Virginia Medical School in Norfolk, Virginia, states, "The evidence strongly suggests faith in God truly is linked to a long, healthy life."

Of course, faith in God is no guarantee that one will never

get sick. Many great women and men of faith, about whom we read in the Bible, often experienced physical problems (cf. 2 Corinthians 11:24-27; Philippians 2:25-27; 1 Timothy 5:23, etc.). One entire book in the Bible (the Book of Job) deals with the physical suffering which came even to the man of faith. And it is still appointed for men to die (Hebrews 9:27).

However, is it not significant that the research of medical science has to admit that there is some correlation between a life of faith in God and good health? While it may surprise many, it should come as no surprise to those who believe the Bible. For centuries the Book, published long before *Reader's Digest*, has affirmed, "**Trust in the Lord... In all your ways acknowledge Him... Fear the Lord and depart from evil. 'IT WILL BE HEALTH TO YOUR FLESH AND STRENGTH TO YOUR BONES'**" (Proverbs 3:5-8).✚

Charles Pugh III has a writing ministry and resides in Vienna, West Virginia, USA.





# Shared Grief

**Betty Burton Choate**

You smile  
and talk  
And go about your day  
in seeming normalness.  
I might not know your hurt inside  
— I might not guess —  
Except that I was there that day  
And saw your haunted eyes  
And heard your pain  
And felt the panic  
trembling in your body  
As I held you close

and closer still,  
Longing to infuse in you  
some strength and hope  
From my own depleted store.  
But underneath  
I see the shadow  
And the pain behind your eyes;  
I see the molding of the hurt,  
and sometimes  
I feel the waves of panic  
Cresting to the edge of uncontrol  
When hurt and fear  
Sweep through your heart anew  
And would engulf your soul...


I pray for time to pass,  
for the calmness of God's love  
to lift His hand  
against the panic's crest  
and say,  
"Thus far you come, and then no more;  
Here,  
your proud waves stop!"

I pray for growth in faith,  
For healing to begin.

Oh, my love,  
Find rest tonight in  
God's strong arms,  
and empathy in mine.



# Test for Wives

- ☐ Do you try to make the home interesting, attractive, cheerful, a place of rest and relaxation — devoting as much thought and study as you would to a job “downtown”?
- ☐ Do you encourage your husband to spend some time with his men friends?
- ☐ Do you serve meals that are enticing in variety and attractiveness?
- ☐ Do you handle household finances in a business-like way?
- ☐ Do you keep yourself attractive in appearance, in order that your husband may be proud to have everyone know you are his wife?
- ☐ Are you a good sport: cheerful and uncomplaining, punctual, not nagging, not insisting on having your own way or the last word, not making a fuss over trifles or requiring your husband to solve minor problems that you should handle alone?
- ☐ Do you bolster your husband's ego, not comparing him unfavorably with more successful men, but making him know that you respect him?
- ☐ Do you prevent your mother and other relatives from intruding unduly, and show courtesy and consideration to his relatives?
- ☐ Do you take a sympathetic and intelligent interest in his business?
- ☐ Do you cultivate an interest in his friends and recreations, so you can make a satisfactory partner of his leisure hours?
- ☐ Do you encourage him to talk things through?
- ☐ Do you encourage your husband and your children in the things of the Lord? 

**Question: How did you score on the test? What do you need to work on?**

**(Maybe next, “A Test for Husbands”)**

## THE CHRISTIAN HOME

# The Family Needs Grandma!

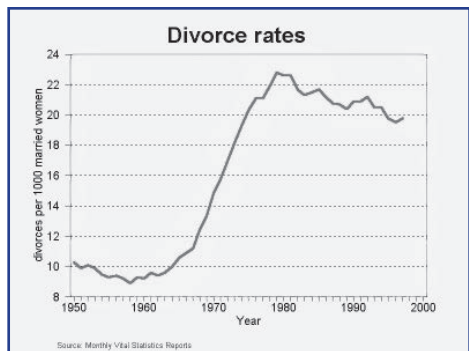
Jerry Blount

*“The aged women likewise, that they be in behavior as becometh holiness, not false accusers: not given to much wine, teachers of good things: That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed” (Titus 2:3-5).*

In this passage, Paul identified the role of Grandma as a key stabilizing factor for a successful home. This is the last line of defense as mapped out by Paul — Grandma! Today this is compounded by the fact that now, in many cases, Grandma hasn’t known marital success or a “settled life” either. I was born in 1955 and graduated in 1973. I was the product of a happy home, as were both of my parents. ***“The hoary head [gray head] is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness”*** (Proverbs 16:31).

Previous to my generation, divorce was unheard of. When I married, my Grandma started in lecturing me, “In our family, we marry for life!” She was right. She died with the man she had loved all her life. My mother — her daughter — died with the man (my father) whom she had loved all her life. My father loved my mother till the day she died. With my generation, that presumption has collapsed. There are fewer and fewer of us left. This situation of crumbling marriages and fragmented families has been in a state of decline though out my lifetime.

Most within this generation have not seen a Bible example of how they are supposed to live. For example, most young men coming of age today literally have not been raised by their fathers! They have been raised by someone



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else. How can a young man learn how to be a father when he has not seen one, or at least not a genuine one?

The chart shows the rise in the rate of divorce over the last 50 years or so, an increase that has taken place along with several key Supreme Court cases that have undermined respect for God and the Bible. Notice that as respect for Scripture from every level of society has declined, one result has been that success in marriage has all but collapsed.

The rise in the divorce rate, aka “rate of failure” in marriage steadily rose along with **the rise in the teaching of evolution**. In 1925 the teaching of evolution vs. creation hit the courts and became a key part of required teaching. A child no longer was the offspring of God, but became recognized as an animal. School discipline began to disintegrate. The “animals” acted as such, slowly at first. Loyalty, fidelity, etc. — “human” traits slowly began receding.

**School prayer was outlawed**, so young “animals” were no longer allowed to address their Creator. Next, it became legal to **destroy children** [abortion] in the name of civil rights. If our children are but “evolved cattle” then, it logically follows that parents should have the right to choose death for their children, the same as they can choose death for their cattle or their pets. We put animals to sleep when it is “kinder” than letting them live. Said children were declared to legally be “non-persons” in much the same fashion as slaves had once been. Note the visible, measurable effect these decisions have had on the viability of marriage and the stability of the home!

That which makes us human (different) has bit by bit been undermined and then repudiated. For this article, **we could track the decline of marriage, the rise of violence, the collapsing economy, the rise of welfare** and find

### **Supreme Court Case notes:**

- Scopes replaced “Creation” with “evolution” as the public explanation of our existence...  
Redefining who we are.
- Engel is the first of two cases that year. One outlawed school prayer, the other Bible readings.
- Roe v Wade redefined “when” we are human, teaching us to ignore the plight of the helpless.
- Bowers upheld a Georgia law criminalizing sodomy.
- Lawrence reversed Bowers, decriminalizing sodomy

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that each of these things is interrelated. It is a package deal. Respect for God, respect for our country, respect for ourselves are tied together.

Civilization has slowly begun to unravel. Why? These events did not occur in a vacuum ***“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction”*** (Proverbs 1:7).

My generation began experimenting with the fundamental foundations of society itself. This experiment has failed!

I joined the rank of “Grandparent” some 10 years ago. I grew up through the rebellion of the sixties. I have watched the explosion of drugs, divorce, and finally of violence. My own sister was murdered over a divorce. During my lifetime, as a nation, we have ***“sown the wind, and have reaped the whirlwind!”*** (Hosea 8:7).

My point is this: My grandparents are all gone. I am now old enough that my friends are beginning to gradually die off. The newest ranks of grandparents are no longer the last bastion of stability and happiness! In earlier years, when a marriage fell apart, Grandma was there. But today, too often Grandma is divorced, single, and struggling as well. Today, most (yes, most) grandmas have very little to offer. They have lost the moral high ground to give the lecture that my grandma gave to me.

Soon, no one alive will remember what once “was”, as no one now alive remembers a time when families were an unshakable bedrock of our society — a bedrock that was so stable that only *one* ended in divorce for every *thirty-four* marriages. It was **shameful** to fail at marriage. It was shameful for a man to walk out on his family, or for a woman to throw out her husband and expect the government to “raise” her kids. What is “normal” now? Chaos has taken the place of stability, and soon living memory will fade. We will not remember what “could be” if we were to choose God’s way.

***“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap”*** (Galatians 6:7). How long has it been since we kicked God out of school, then from public discourse? A local newspaper article appeared a few years ago that said our area (Wichita, KS) has one of the highest divorce rates in the nation, 7 divorces for 10 marriages. I guess that is accurate; we are also a national center for late term abortions. We

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have gone from 1 divorce in 34 marriages to a point where basically half of all marriages fail everywhere. But in our area it is nearing 3 out of 4!


One modern definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over while expecting a different result. God through Hosea had warned us of exactly this situation. *“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children”* (Hosea 4:6).

Time is running out for us as a people! Never in recent memory has the frailty of human reasoning been more obvious. Never has the need for Jesus Christ (and His leadership!) been more clearly demonstrated. *“I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly”* (John 10:10, Jesus, 2000 years ago).

My grandmas have both been dead for many years. If our society is to survive, the older women of this day must gather their grandchildren and demand that they undo what our generation has done! Our young people must know that there is



something better! We must once again fearlessly declare that the ways of God are better than the ways of man. We must once again admit that we are not smarter than God and must rely on God's wisdom.

It is enjoyable to brag about our successes, but now we must admit our failures. We are about to hand off a world that is not as good as the one our parents and grandparents handed off to us. For the sake of our children and grandchildren, we must tell them why so they will know to “want” what they do not see! 

**Jerry Blount, The Pillar church of Christ; 316-320-4321; [www.JerrysChristianjottings.com](http://www.JerrysChristianjottings.com)**

# THE CHRISTIAN HOME

## WHY “SAME-SEX MARRIAGE” CANNOT BE MARRIAGE

Dr. Glover Shipp

There are at least four fundamental reasons why “same-sex marriage” is not marriage at all. These are:

**1. Definitional** — Dictionaries in languages all over the world define marriage as between a man and a woman. One current dictionary definition of marriage reads, *“the formal union of a man and a woman, typically recognized by law, by which they become husband and wife.”*

**2. Historical** — From the earliest recorded history, marriage has always been considered, until recent years only, a union of a man with a woman, bound by some sort of legal, contractual or covenantal agreement. Hear what Genesis 2:24 says about the dawn of marriage:

*“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.”* Marriage was considered a covenantal relationship, entered into with God: “[the wayward wife] **who has left the partner of her youth and ignored the covenant she made with God**” (Proverbs 2:17). *“...the Lord is acting as a witness between you and the wife of your youth, because you have broken faith with her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant”* (Malachi 2:14). *“...each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband”* (Ephesians 5:33). Down through the centuries, marriage has been considered a very special and holy union, always between man and woman, not between man and man, or woman and woman.






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**3. Anatomical** — Humans, as in the animal kingdom in general, are designed to reproduce through copulation. This is the purpose for the sex organs, the male penetrating the female and depositing sperm in her uterus, where it joins an ovum, thus beginning the process of reproduction. That this act is also pleasurable is a bonus. In a gay relationship, the sex act is a perversion of the natural process. The anus is an organ of discharge, not a receptacle. Using it for this purpose can do irreparable physical damage. Moreover, such an act cannot be construed as God-designed and cannot result in conception. This is also true for lesbians who are determined to be legally married. If marriage was designed to produce children and nurture them, then gay marriage fails on the first of these two requirements, if not on both.

**4. Biblical** — Throughout the Bible, homosexual relationships have been classified as immoral and sinful. Following are specific passages on this matter: *“If a man lies with a man as one lies with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable. They must be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads”* (Leviticus 20:13 NIV). Is this not clear? *“Neither the sexually immoral...nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders...will inherit the Kingdom of God”* (1 Corinthians 6:9,10). *“Outside [of Heaven] are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood”* (Revelation 22:15).

Based on these four reasons, by no means can a sexual union between those of the same gender be considered marriage. Legally, they may perhaps receive a document stating that they are partners, but never a married couple. **To make them legally married is to completely change the definition of marriage, the historical nature of marriage, and the biblical concept of what constitutes a marriage. Both those who are joined together in a non-marriage relationship and those who legalize such a relationship in an attempt to make it a marriage fly in the face of history, God’s Word, and His judgment. As His Word states it, their blood will be on their own heads.** 

Glover Shipp is a retired preacher/missionary, living in Austin, Texas, USA.

## THE CHRISTIAN HOME


# The Pause that Refreshes

Colin McKee

Refreshment is a big thing in our society. Drinks, snacks, energy potions, and other comestibles are touted to refresh us. Down time, leisure activities, and a host of tools are also proffered to make us feel new and refreshed. We may be so focused on mental and physical refreshment that we forget that there is another kind of refreshment, which is more needed and permanent, that is, spiritual refreshment.

Paul mentions the refreshing nature of spiritual actions and relationships that strengthen the Christian.

- Titus was refreshed inwardly by his visit to the Corinthian brethren: *“And we rejoiced exceedingly more for the joy of Titus, because his spirit has been refreshed by you all”* (2 Corinthians 7:13).
- Paul and others were spiritually refreshed by Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus: *“I am glad about the coming of Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, for what was lacking on your part they supplied. For they refreshed my spirit and yours”* (1 Corinthians 16:17,18).
- Paul anticipated being refreshed by the Romans: *“..that I may come to you with joy by the will of God, and may be refreshed together with you”* (Romans 15:32).
- Paul was frequently refreshed by Onesiphorus: *“The Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain”* (2 Timothy 1:16).
- Philemon had refreshed the brethren and could also refresh Paul: *“For we have great joy and consolation in your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed by you, brother... Yes, brother, let me have joy from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in the Lord”* (Philemon 7,20).

The pause that refreshes is the pause when we take time to be in the company of those who are spiritually minded and who bring us joy in spiritual things. Our hearts are drawn closer to God and our ties to such brethren bring us inward joy when we take time to imbibe spiritual food together. Sometimes we say, “I need to just take some time out.” Let us make greater effort to ensure that the time we use also includes refreshment for the soul. That is truly the pause that refreshes. 

Colin and Ellen McKee work for the saints in Indonesia.

# Thanking God for Philippi

## Philippians 1:3-11

Gary C. Hampton

### Thankful Joy for Philippi

Paul was beaten at Philippi and thrown in prison, yet he thanked God for the Christians there (Philippians 1:3). He always remembered them in prayer. We need to remember the power of prayer (James 5:16-18). We can do nothing greater for a friend than to remember him as we approach God's throne. After all, the one who gave His life for us stands ready to mediate between us and God (1 Timothy 2:5,6). The Holy Spirit stands ready to put our desires into words, even when we do not know how or what to ask (Romans 8:26).

Paul's prayers in behalf of the Philippian brethren were expressed with joy because of their "*fellowship*" with him in the Gospel (Philippians 1:4-5). The word "fellowship" carries with it the idea of a partnership or joint participation. All Christians have an obligation to preach the Gospel (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15,16). Those at Philippi partook in Paul's proclamation by praying for him and sending financial support (4:16). Such support for preaching and preachers actually began with Lydia, the first convert in the city (Acts 16:14,15). She compelled Paul's company to come into her house.

### Confidence Placed in the Lord

A man with a broken watch might take it to the repairman. The repairman, after examining it, might say he could not fix it. The only alternative would then be to send it back to the maker. Similarly, we must turn to the Maker if we would see the church grow (Ephesians 3:20,21). God had begun the church at Philippi through Paul who served as an earthen vessel to carry the precious Gospel message to the lost of that city (2 Corinthians 4:7).

Paul was confident God would also bring the work begun at Philippi to a good end (Philippians 2:13). He knew all in the church were a part of God's


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great workmanship. Every Christian's purpose was, and is, to do the good works for which he was created as a new creature (Ephesians 2:10). Paul's confidence that God would finish the work started in Philippi was based on two things. First, there was the depth of his own love for them, which led him to do all he could to help them. Second, there was the partnership he had with them in the preaching of God's Word (Philippians 1:6,7).

### Paul's Prayer for the Philippian Church

Paul prayed for the Philippians. He first called God as a witness to his love for them, which was like Christ's love (compare 1 Corinthians 11:1). He then prayed that their love might abound. This word "love" comes from the Greek word *agape* (Matthew 5:43-48). It is a love which desires the best for others (Romans 15:2; 13:8-10; Galatians 6:10). Paul wanted that love to continue to abound. Max Hughes, in his study guide, suggested the word "abound" actually "signifies running over, wave upon wave".

Paul did not want their love to be misdirected, so he further prayed their love would grow in knowledge of God's will. Their knowledge needed to develop so they could understand the difference between right and wrong (Philippians 1:8,9). All Christians should grow in knowledge so that they can teach others. The Hebrew writer was concerned because those brethren had not grown into teaching others. They were still like babies feeding on the milk of the Word. *"For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil"* (Hebrews 5:12-14).

Paul also prayed that the brethren at Philippi would follow only those things that would keep them in a right relationship to God. His hope was that they would applaud, or encourage, righteous conduct (1 Thessalonians 5:21). He wanted them to be without any offense which might prevent them from entering heaven. Thus, he prayed they would be fruitful through Jesus (Philippians 1:10,11; Galatians 5:22-25). 

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# Scavenger Hunt

## through Esther

**Rebecca Rushmore**

**(Answers inside back cover)**

1. Name the countries mentioned in the Book of Esther that still exist today.
2. Name the city where the king's throne sat.
3. What is the other name given for Esther?
4. How many maidservants were given to Esther as she prepared to meet the king?
5. About how many years passed between Queen Vashti losing her crown and Esther becoming queen?
6. About how many years passed between the crowning of Esther and Haman casting lots to begin his plan to destroy the Jews?
7. When Mordecai asks Esther to appeal to the king on behalf of her people, Esther says she has not been called by the king in how many days?
8. How many feasts did Queen Esther prepare?
9. Name the Jewish holiday established by Queen Esther and Mordecai.
10. How many people were hanged on the gallows in the Book of Esther?

# WHO LOWERED THE BASKET?

Maxie B. Boren

Soon after the conversion of Saul of Tarsus (later and far better known as the apostle Paul), he commenced to preach in the Jewish synagogues of Damascus that ***“Jesus is the Son of God”*** (Acts 9:20). He continued to boldly proclaim

this great truth for many days, confounding the Jews and incurring their wrath. Thus, they plotted to kill him, carefully watchful of his possible escape through one of the gates of the city. But disciples of the Lord, perhaps sensing his



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future value to the kingdom, ***“took him by night, and let him down through the wall, lowering him in a basket”*** (ASV, verse 25).


Our curiosity prompts us to ponder their identity. Just who were these that were instrumental in preserving the life of this one who subsequently did so much to advance the Cause of Christ? The Scriptures do not tell us how many were involved, nor who they were. We can only surmise that they were strong believers in Jesus who likely risked their own lives that this prolific preacher might live and continue to preach the Gospel! Aren't we glad they helped him in this way, lest he be killed? Just think of the impact Paul had in the spread of Christianity from the time of his conversion (about A.D. 36) until his demise in a Roman dungeon in approximately A.D. 67 or 68 (read 2 Timothy 4:6-8). Think of the places he went and the



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multitudes to whom he preached! The good accomplished was amazing, but it could not have happened except for those “*who lowered him in a basket*” that night in Damascus.

During the time of Jesus’ personal ministry, even before the church/kingdom was established (see Acts 2), there were good and faithful people who served in various ways, but who remain unknown to the vast majority of us. For a Bible example of such, who were the four that expended considerable effort to lower the man “*sick of the palsy*” from the house roof into the presence of Jesus? We don’t know, but they did what they could to help. They themselves couldn’t heal the man, but they could and did bring him to Jesus who healed him (Mark 2:1-12).

Probably your name and mine will be obscure throughout our lifetimes, and after we’ve died, too. But we can be assured that God knows what we do and the pathway we’ve chosen (Matthew 7:13,14). Our eternal destiny will hinge on that (2 Corinthians 5:10). Let’s be like one Bible character whom we do know — Mary (read Matthew 26:6-13), and do what we can for our dear Lord while we can. 

**Maxie B. Boren is a Gospel preacher and an elder in the Brown Trail church of Christ in Bedford, Texas, USA.**

In Ezekiel 12:25 we read, “For I am the Lord, I speak, and the word which I speak will come to pass; it will no more be postponed; for in you days, O rebellious house, I will say the word and perform it,” says the Lord God”. Israel had rebelled against God and His commands until He said ENOUGH! They [Israel] were led into captivity.

Today, it is the same for us. If we will hear His word, if we will believe His word, and if we will obey His word, then we will be free from the bondage of sin. We will not be led off into captivity [hell] because we believe and obey! Father, grant unto your servants your knowledge, Thy will be done! May we be a doer of the word and not a hearer only (Matthew 7:24-27).

Del Brantley

# **What Is Wrong with Esau?**

**Ardron Hinton**

*“See that no one is sexually immoral, or is godless like Esau, who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son. Afterward, as you know, when he wanted to inherit this blessing, he was rejected. He could bring about no change of mind, though he sought the blessing with tears” (Hebrews 12:16,17 NIV).*

One of the most astounding plans ever unfolded on earth concerned a previously unknown man, Abraham, of ancient Ur in what is now Iraq. That man was chosen to begin a family line that would eventually be identifiable by millions. The related plans and purposes unfolded until they reached their fulfillment with the divine Saviour becoming a human. As the older of Isaac’s two sons, Esau was in line to be honored along with his father and grandfather. We are astounded to learn that he sold this noble position for a bowl of stew!

We need to identify the weaknesses that led to this foolish choice.

**1. Esau exaggerated his problems in his own mind.** He said he was about to die of starvation, so the inheritance would be of no benefit to him anyway. However, he had walked into the house. He obviously wasn’t near death. **2. According to our text, Esau was a “godless” (profane) person.** He was busy doing the things he enjoyed (such as hunting), and he had left God out of his life. As a result, he probably understood little about this promise to Abraham and had little interest in it.

Romans 9:10-21 adds facts to this story that trouble many people. It says God had chosen Jacob over Esau before they were born. Mankind now knows that many characteristics of a person are determined by that person’s genetic code. God also has the ability to look ahead and to see what He chooses to see. He ignored the birth order and made His choice on the basis of personal qualities. God knew what was best for

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this assignment. The fact is that anyone God chooses in any situation will likely need improvement to fill the position properly.

There is another troublesome point in this. Even granting that Esau was not deserving, how could God choose a deceptive and fraudulent person such as Jacob? Some read Romans 9:15, ***“I will have mercy on whom I have mercy,”*** and think it says He has no rules or guidelines for His choices. They argue that He hardens whom He wants to harden, and that He is the potter who can make one clay pot for a lowly task, while another is made beautiful and ornamental. Then, they conclude that God makes these choices with no outside influences.

We would not add anything to this picture had the inspired Scriptures not added something. We agree that God CAN do as He pleases, consulting no one, but DOES He operate this way? Listen to Peter in Acts 10:35, ***“But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him.”*** Look at Hebrews 12:16 again. Esau had the privilege of choosing, and he made the wrong choice. Yes, God saves those He CHOOSES to save, but He tells us what kind of people He will CHOOSE – those who ***“work righteousness”*** and those who ***“obey Him”*** (Hebrews 5:8, 9), as well as those who ***“live by faith”*** and do not ***“draw back”*** (Hebrews 10:18).

But what about His choice of Jacob? If you will read the selections in Genesis that relate how God dealt with Jacob you would see that God made a different person of him, even to giving him a new name, ***“Israel”***. God chose between Esau and Jacob on the basis of which one was the better raw material, knowing all the time that the one chosen would have to be made into the proper vessel by the Potter.

What’s wrong with Esau? Wouldn’t you say he had the same problems many have today? He fit quite well with his worldly neighbors, but he had little interest in the affairs of God. Many are still selling their spiritual inheritance for a ridiculously low price. Like Esau, many finally realize what they have done, but they find no way to undo the damage. God doesn’t want you to be like Esau. If you profit from his mistake, you won’t sell your birthright. ✝

**Ardron Hinton (1929-2015) was a preacher of the Gospel living in Blair, Oklahoma, USA.**

# WHAT ABOUT BRAIDED HAIR?

Wayne Jackson

**In Paul's first letter to Timothy, he seems to forbid a woman wearing her hair braided (2:9). Can you comment on this? What would be the reason behind this prohibition?**

The full context of any passage, plus other relevant information elsewhere in the Bible on the same topic, must be employed to bring any ambiguous passage into clear focus. So it is with reference to 1 Timothy 2:9: *"...in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing."*

The passage is enjoining "modest" (well-ordered, decent) clothing, and is designed to insulate the Christian woman against the inordinate attention of others. A woman (or man for that matter) may be immodest either by being *underdressed* or *extravagantly dressed*. The emphasis of this passage is upon the development of inner spiritual qualities, which could be obscured by outlandish dress.




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Paul is not condemning the items mentioned per se. What he is prohibiting is that excess which would detract from the woman's spiritual charms. It would not be sinful for a Christian woman to wear a wedding ring of gold, though gold is mentioned. It is, however, in my judgment, a sign of ostentation to see women wearing rings on virtually every finger, some on her toes, and three or four in each ear — not to mention nose and eyebrow rings, studs, etc.

Historical sources indicate that in that era, it frequently was the case that women would braid their hair high atop their heads, having it intertwined with jewels, etc. It was a showcase — so elaborate as to be a sensation. One certainly may array himself or herself with pride and dignity, but to dress so as to flaunt the physical is not consistent with the will of Christ. Even preachers who are such flashy dressers that they distract from the Gospel message are not exercising spiritual judgment.

Moreover, Paul's prohibition includes "costly raiment". How much does "costly" cost? Compared to what many folks in third world countries wear, virtually anything we put on is costly. The way we dress within our culture is, therefore, to some degree a factor in exercising good judgment. When the Christian visits certain poor countries, he may need to "dress down" somewhat.

In a passage of similar import, Peter condemns "*putting on apparel*": "*Do not let your adornment be merely outward — arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel*" (1 Peter 3:3). Clearly this injunction is not intended to be **absolute**; rather, the language is **relative**. The point is this: for both women and men, one may dress well, and even fashionable within his cultural circumstances; however, he or she should avoid being show-offish. Inner traits should be paramount in our public demeanor. Christ should be magnified in us. "*... according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death*" (Philippians 1:20). 

Wayne Jackson is the Editor of the *Christian Courier* [www.christiancourier.com], which covers multitudes of subjects from the Scriptures with clarity.

# **“I Am Saved, I Can’t Be Lost!”**

**Charles E. Burch**

I was discussing the Bible with a man with the idea of setting up a systematic Bible study, but he said, “I am saved; I can’t be lost.” He spoke with great boldness and confidence in what he believed to be true as he explained, “I have accepted Christ as my Savior, and it is impossible to fall from grace.”

Can a Christian fall from grace and be eternally lost in hell? To answer this question we must go to God’s Word, the Bible — not to the opinions and doctrines of men.

The Almighty God has solemnly warned that if His people forsake Him, then He will forsake them, but if they do not forsake God, then He will never forsake His children. God warns, “...*hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin; The Lord is with you, while ye be with Him; and if ye seek Him, He will be found of you; but if ye forsake Him, He will forsake you*” (2 Chronicles 15:2).

The apostle Paul warned God’s people of the danger of falling. “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth *take heed lest he fall*” (1 Corinthians 10:12). As Paul considered his own personal responsibility, he wrote, “*But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway*” (1 Corinthians 9:27). Paul realized there was the possibility of being lost himself, although he was a faithful Apostle of Christ.

The Apostle Peter made it very definitely known that a child of God may fall away and be lost. “*For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them*” (2 Peter 2:20-21). Notice the identity



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of the people and the final results. They had escaped the defilements of the world. Their escape was through the knowledge of Christ. Then, they had turned from the holy commandments. They had again become entangled and overcome. Their last state would be worse than the first!

The great apostle Paul stated by inspiration, *“You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace”* (Galatians 5:4 NKJV). Notice what Paul said: If you attempt to be justified by the law, *“You have fallen from grace.”* Paul knew that Christians could fall away.

Christ told John to write, *“...be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life”* (Revelation 2:10). The reward is given only to those who remain faithful.

Yes, a child of God *can* fall from grace. This should encourage each Christian to remain faithful in God’s service. 

Charles E. Burch is a retired preacher of the Gospel living in St. Elmo, Alabama, USA.



*“But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: ‘A dog returns to his own vomit,’ and, ‘a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire.’”*

(2 Peter 2:22 NKJV)

# Jesus to Judge Sheep and Goats?

Owen D. Olbricht

Does anyone believe Jesus will sit on His judgment throne and separate sheep from goats? He said concerning Himself, *“And He will set the sheep on the right hand, but the goats on the left”* (Matthew 25:33). Jesus was very graphic in His speech. Many times He used comparisons, figures of speech, or representative language in His teaching. Some people mistakenly have taken literally His figures of speech. Notice Jesus’ figurative language in the following:

- *“You are the **salt** of the earth”* (Matthew 5:13).
- *“Let your **light** so shine before men”* (Matthew 5:16).
- *“False prophets in **sheep’s** clothing, ...inwardly they are ravenous **wolves**”* (Matthew 7:15).
- *“He who does not take up his **cross** and follow after me”* (Matthew 10:38).
- *“Take My **yoke** upon you”* (Matthew 11:29).
- *“A good man out of the good **treasure** of his heart”* (Matthew 12:35).
- *“Beware of the **leaven** of the Pharisees and Sadducees”* (Matthew 16:6).



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- *“Strain out a **gnat** and swallow a **camel**”* (Matthew 23:24).
- *“I am the **bread** of life”* (John 6:35).
- *“He who eats My **flesh** and drinks My **blood** abides in Me”* (John 6:56).
- *“He who follows Me shall not walk in **darkness**”* (John 8:12b).
- *“I am the **door** of the sheep”* (John 10:7b).
- *“I lay down my life for the **sheep**”* (John 10:15b).
- *“I am the **vine**, you are the **branches**”* (John 15:5).

The figures of speech in these verses illustrate how Jesus spoke many times in a representative manner.

## Figures of Speech

Surely no one has concluded that Jesus believed He would change the nations of people into animals because He referred to them as sheep and goats (Matthew 25:33). Almost all people will realize that He was speaking in a representative way. The sheep represent the good people and the goats the bad people. No one needs anyone to explain that Jesus is speaking about people and not about sheep and goats, but how can we tell when Jesus is speaking literally and when figuratively? Either common sense and/or the context will reveal the answer.

## Jesus' Body and Blood

Concerning the Lord's Supper, the context lets us know that Jesus was speaking figuratively in a representative way. He did not turn the bread into His body and the fruit of the vine into His blood. The apostles knew that His body had not been offered and His blood had not been shed. Jesus did not have to explain to them that the bread was to be honored as though it was His body. *“He took bread and broke it and said, ‘Take, eat; this is My body’”* (Matthew 26:26).

Paul wrote that in observing the Lord's Supper the Corinthians broke bread and ate bread: *“The bread we break”* (1 Corinthians 10:16); *“As often as you eat this bread”* (1 Corinthians 11:26); *“Therefore whosoever eats this bread”* (1 Corinthians 11:27); *“Let him eat of the bread”* (1 Corinthians 11:28). The Corinthians broke and ate bread, not the body of Jesus.

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After the apostles ate the bread, Jesus gave them the cup and said, ***“This is My blood of the new covenant”*** (Matthew 26:27). Jesus knew there was no blood in the cup, for He went on to say, ***“I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on”*** (Matthew 26:18).



Because Jesus frequently used figurative speech, the apostles would have concluded that they would eat bread and drink the fruit of the vine. The bread had not become His body, and His blood was not in the cup. He expected them and us to eat the Supper ***“in remembrance”*** of His body and blood (1 Corinthians 11:23-25), not in order to eat His body and drink His blood.

### Conclusion

We no more eat the body and drink the blood of Jesus than Jesus will separate sheep and goats on the Day of Judgment (Matthew 25:31-40). He did not change the bread into His body and the fruit of the vine into His blood any more than He will change the nations of people into sheep and goats to separate them. Both the sheep and goats and His body and blood are used in a representative way. However, the question confronting us is, “Will I be counted as a SHEEP or a GOAT?”



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

# WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?

Matthew 22:42 ; Matthew 16:13-19

J. C. Choate

### INTRODUCTION:

- ◆ There are different beliefs concerning Christ.
- ◆ Most of them are wrong.
- ◆ Christ asked what others thought about Him.
- ◆ It might be well to consider these as we think about today's situation.

### DISCUSSION:

#### I. *“What think ye of Christ ?” (Matthew 22:42).*

- ◆ Christ did not ask if they *thought* He was the Messiah.
- ◆ He asked for their opinion as to Whom He is.
- ◆ Knowing the Scriptures, they answered, *“the Son of David”*.
- ◆ Then the Lord wanted to know why David called Him Lord.
- ◆ David was led by the Holy Spirit.
- ◆ But if David called Him Lord, then how is He his Son?

**They cannot answer and respond with silence.**

#### II. *“Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?” (Matthew 16:13,14).*

- ◆ Christ wanted to know what the general public thought about Him.
- ◆ Some said John the Baptist, some Elijah, some Jeremiah, and others one of the prophets.

**Naturally He was none of these, and so the answers were not acceptable.**

## CHARTS & OUTLINES

### III. “But whom say ye that I am?” (Matthew 16:14-17).

- ♦ He now turned to the apostles and asked what they thought.
- ♦ Peter spoke for the apostles and declared Christ to be the Son of God.

**Christ was pleased with this and promised to build His church, not on Peter [stone, in Greek], but on the rock [a ledge of rock, in Greek] of the fact which Peter had confessed.**


### IV. Answers that are given today:

- ♦ A good man.
- ♦ A prophet.
- ♦ The Son of God.

### V. What do you think of Christ ?

- ♦ Do you believe in Him as being the Son of God ? ***“And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased’”*** (Matthew 3:17).
- ♦ Do you believe in Him enough to obey him? ***“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”*** (Matthew 7:21).
- ♦ Do you believe in Him enough to worship Him? ***“Then he said, ‘Lord, I believe!’ And he worshiped Him”*** (John 9:38).
- ♦ Do you believe in Him enough to follow Him daily? ***“If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me”*** (Matthew 16:24).
- ♦ Do you believe enough to be faithful? ***“Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life”*** (Revelation 2:10).

### CONCLUSION:

- ♦ Christ said ***“Ye believe in God, believe also in me”*** (John 14:1).
- ♦ The right faith in the right person is what gets the right results. 

J.C. Choate (1932-2008) was the founding Editor of *The Voice of Truth International*.



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# FROM THE HEART OF *WHAT HAPPENS*

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## *WHEN YOU DIE?*

Demar Elam

### **First Corinthians 15**

Many people desire to know the answer to this question. It is important to people of all ages because all of us will eventually die. Our study will focus on 1 Corinthians 15, referred to as the great “resurrection chapter” of the Bible. The people of Paul’s day, like we today, asked the same question. God’s Word has the answers.

The Bible gives us many assurances that there will be not only a resurrection, but it will be a BODILY resurrection (1 Corinthians 15; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). It is rather startling to discover how many people today have not comprehended the Bible teaching on this subject. God’s Word teaches that our vile bodies will be changed and fashioned like unto His glorious body (Philippians 3:20, 21). Flesh and blood will not enter the eternal kingdom (1 Corinthians 15:50, 54), but in the heavenly abode we will definitely have bodies — immortal bodies (1 Corinthians 15:42-49).

The Bible doctrine of resurrection is not exclusive to the New Testament. It was first made evident in the Old Testament Scriptures (1 Kings 17:17-24; 2 Kings 4: 8-37; Genesis 5:21-24). Abraham “... *waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God*” (Hebrews 11:10). David said: “*But now he is dead; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me*” (2 Samuel 12:23). Daniel stated that, “*And many of those who sleep*

## **FROM THE HEART OF**

*in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt.”* (Daniel 12:2).

It is in the teachings of the New Testament, though, that a clear picture is revealed of the bodily resurrection of man.

### **Jesus Taught a Bodily Resurrection**

Jesus spoke to Martha, the sister of Lazarus, and said, *“I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live”* (John 11:25). If one embraces the Bible as being the inerrant, Holy Spirit-inspired Word of God, then the resurrection cannot be denied. Did Jesus rise BODILY from the tomb? *“And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty”* (1 Corinthians 15:14). The Gospel of Christ consists of the death, burial, and resurrection: *“For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures”* (1 Corinthians 15:3,4). The empty tomb, where Christ was laid, bears testimony of Christ’s BODILY resurrection. Man must believe in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ or forfeit eternal life.

In order to understand how we will be resurrected, we need to deal briefly with the empty tomb and some additional facts from the Bible establishing the truth that we, too, shall experience a BODILY resurrection.

### **The Apostles Taught the Bodily Resurrection**

Luke records that Peter taught the people the resurrection of Christ from the dead: *“Now as they spoke to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them, being greatly disturbed that they taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead”* (Acts 4:1,2). The priest, the captain of the temple and the Sadducees were grieved that Peter taught this great truth. The apostles were trustworthy, respected, and upright individuals, and they gave witness to His bodily resurrection. Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene:

*“But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down and looked into the tomb. And she saw two angels in white*

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*sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. Then they said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping?' She said to them, 'Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him.'*

*"Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?' She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, 'Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away.'*

*"Jesus said to her, 'Mary!' She turned and said to Him, 'Rabboni!' (Which is to say, Teacher). Jesus said to her, 'Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.'"* Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things to her" (John 20:11-18).

Please note that Jesus, in His resurrected physical body, was standing and speaking to her.

### **Jesus Appeared to His Apostles after His Death**

*"Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, 'Peace be with you.' When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord"* (John 20:19-20).

Thomas was not with the apostles at the first appearing (John 20:26-28), and he had said, *"Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe"* (John 20:25). Eight days later the Lord appeared to the disciples again, and this time Thomas was there. Jesus said to him, *"Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing"* (John 20:27). When Thomas saw His hands and His side he said, *"...My Lord and my God!"* (John 20:28).

Jesus showed Himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias (John 21:1). Luke records, *"to whom He also presented Himself alive*

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*after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God”* (Acts 1:3). Jesus also appeared to two disciples on the road to Emmaus and one of those disciples, Cleopas, talked with Him (Luke 24:18).

The risen Lord was given *“a piece of broiled fish and some honeycomb, and He took it and ate it in their presence”* (Luke 24:42,43). Our Lord appeared to Cephas (Simon Peter) (Luke 24:34; John 21:15-17; 1 Corinthians 15:5); James (1 Corinthians 15:7); over five hundred at once (1 Corinthians 15:6); and lastly to Paul (1 Corinthians 15:5-8). The number of witnesses and their veracity attest to the BODILY resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The empty tomb, the missing body of Christ, and literally hundreds of reliable witnesses should silence the unbelievers — replacing their unbelief with belief in the risen Lord. However, the controversy concerning the empty tomb continues to be an issue today. Numerous theories are offered, but they fail the acid test of investigation. These theories are: The Delusion theory, The Deception Theory, and The Visional Theory. The Visional Theory is the one most relied upon by the infidels, and it suggests Jesus’ appearance to His disciples as mere visional or subjective hallucinations. In a sermon by Dr. Rex A. Turner, Sr., the following points demonstrate that the Visional Theory is totally inadequate:

- 1) It fails to explain the empty tomb;
- 2) It fails to harmonize with the character of the first witnesses;
- 3) It fails to account for five hundred simultaneous eyewitnesses;
- 4) It fails to account for the testimony of the apostle Paul;
- 5) It fails to account for the sudden cessation of the visions; and
- 6) It fails to account for the glorious results of the resurrection.

The tomb of Christ remains empty and unexplained unless He did, in fact, arise from the dead and bodily ascend back to Heaven, as the Bible states He did (Acts 1:9).

Every Christian should read 1 Corinthians 15 often. The resurrection should thrill our thoughts with the grandeur that is to come and should cause us to prepare accordingly. When you believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, transforming power occurs in your life. On the other hand, unless you believe that Jesus was who He claimed to be (God’s Son), you

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cannot be saved (Hebrews 11:6; John 8:24). *“And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!”* (1 Corinthians 15:17). Your belief in the resurrection will determine where you spend eternity.

### **Christ Will Return to Judge the World**

When Christ returns to judge the world, there will be a shout and the trump of God shall sound (1 Thessalonians 4:16). Time as we know it shall end. The Lord Jesus will return in like manner as He left, in the clouds of the air. Daniel tells us, *“And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt”* (Daniel 12:2). John, the beloved disciple, wrote: *“Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth — those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation”* (John 5:28,29). The seas will give up the dead in them (Revelation 20:12-15). All nations of people will be gathered before Christ and judged (Matthew 25:31-46; Revelation 2:12-15). The righteous will go away into eternal life and the wicked into eternal punishment (Matthew 25:41). Paul says, *“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad”* (2 Corinthians 5:10).

He also wrote, *“And to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power”* (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

### **What Will Happen When the Dead Are Raised?**

Christ will change our earthly bodies like unto His glorious body, *“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself”* (Philippians 3:20,21).

In 1 Corinthians 15, we learn that our bodies are going to be changed:

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*“So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, ‘The first man Adam became a living being.’ The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual. The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven. As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly.”* (1 Corinthians 15:42-48)

*“Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. 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. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory.’”* (1 Corinthians 15:50-54)

We will have bodies suited for eternity. The body is sown in corruption, in dishonor, and weakness, and it will be raised in incorruption, glory, and power (1 Corinthians 15:42-44). **Please note that we will not be ghostly spirits floating around in the air, but will be housed in incorruptible bodies that will live eternally.**

The righteous dead will be raised first, *“For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first”* (1 Thessalonians 4:16). Then, the righteous living shall be changed in a moment in the twinkling of an eye (1 Corinthians 15:50-54). Both shall then be caught up together in the clouds to meet the Lord, *“Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore, comfort one*



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*another with these words*” (1 Thessalonians 4:17,18).

Jesus is presently reigning and will reign *“...till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death”* (1 Corinthians 15:24-26). Paul informs us that death is swallowed up in victory at the bodily resurrection of the redeemed of all the ages: *“So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory’”* (1 Corinthians 15:54).

### What Is the “It” of 1 Corinthians 15:42-44?

Some teach that there will not be a bodily resurrection. The assertion is made that we receive our immortal body at the moment of death. Nothing could be further from the truth of the divine revelation. To deny the bodily resurrection is to deny the plain teaching of the Scriptures. The word “resurrection” means, “coming to life again of that which is dead.” W.E. Vines defines resurrection: “(Anastasis) A raising up or rising up — to cause to stand.” The idea is to stand up again. Just as surely as Christ experienced a bodily (literal) resurrection, so will we! Christ stood up again; the tomb was empty. The literal body of Jesus had been resurrected. *“But the angel answered and said to the women, ‘Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay’”* (Matthew 28:5,6).

What is the “it” of 1 Corinthians 15:41-44? *“It is sown”* refers to one’s dead body and *“it is raised”* refers to that same “it” or “body” that was sown. The body sown will be the same body raised. If such isn’t true, then it calls for a “re-creation” rather than a “resurrection.” In 1 Corinthians 15:42-44, “it” is used eight times—there is a point here, and I hope to make it perfectly clear. Granted, our bodies will be changed when this resurrection occurs (1 Corinthians 15:51,52) but there will be a LITERAL BODILY RESURRECTION! The change that will occur is the *corruptible* putting on *incorruption* and the *mortal* putting on *immortality*.


### How Are the Dead Raised Up?

Paul replies to the question of how the dead are raised with these

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words: *“But someone will say, ‘How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?’”* (1 Corinthians 15:35).

Please do not misunderstand what has been taught in this chapter concerning the BODILY resurrection. A careless reading of this article might lead you to conclude that we are teaching that you will have a physical body for eternity. However, that is not what is meant when we refer to a BODILY resurrection. Paul told his audience: *“Foolish one, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies. And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be, but mere grain — perhaps wheat or some other grain”* (1 Corinthians 15:36,37). Paul speaks of wheat or grain. Let’s use a kernel of corn to illustrate what Paul meant.

A kernel of corn is planted in the ground, and we know what it looks like. However, when it springs forth out of the ground, it has a new form and a new look. Green leaves appear first, then a stalk and then ears of corn. The kernel of corn has been transformed before our eyes. Someone might say that is not the same kernel of corn we planted and that it is in fact something else. However, that is not true. It is the same kernel of corn we planted. It has been transformed and has a new appearance, but it is the kernel of corn. The same will be true concerning our bodies. Our physical bodies will be sown (buried) and then we will spring back to life again. When we are thus resurrected, we will stand up again and be transformed and take on a new look. We will have a glorious body like that of Christ, the first fruits of the resurrection. Our new spiritual bodies will no longer be flesh and blood—they will no longer grow old, decay, and die. When the dead are raised, the old mortal body is changed and puts on immortality. The old corruptible body becomes incorruptible. This will enable the righteous to live in the presence of God for eternity. 

**Demar Elam, Athens, AL, works with the Amridge University and Open Door Ministry in the Philippines.**

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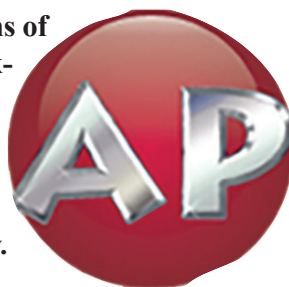


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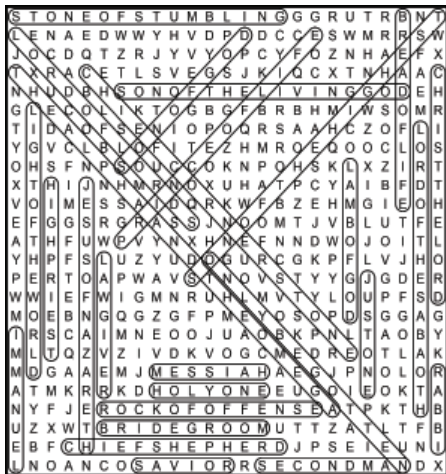


## ANSWERS TO PUZZLES

### Verse Search (from Page 32)

1. As to carnal men
2. Milk, solid
3. Envy, strife, and divisions
4. Ministers
5. Planted, watered, increase
6. Neither. All are the same, simply
7. Fellow-workers
8. Building upon it
9. Jesus Christ
10. Gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw
11. Day of Judgment
12. Temple of God
13. Spirit of God
14. Destroy him
15. Foolishness

### Bible Find (from page 41)



### Scavenger Hunt (page 87)

#### Answers:

1. India, Ethiopia (Esther 1:1)
2. Shushan (1:2)
3. Hadassah (2:7)
4. 7 (2:9)
5. 4 (3rd year, 7th year) (1:3, 2:16)
6. 5 (7th year, 12th year) (2:16, 3:7)
7. 30 (4:11)
8. 2 (5:4-7, 7:1-2)
9. Purim (9:18-32)
10. 13 (2:23, 7:10, 9:14)

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:**

# Bonnie Sue (Reed) Rushmore

December 25, 1956—May 18, 2015

Bonnie Rushmore was the wife of Louis Rushmore for 42 years and the mother of a daughter and two sons—all Christians. Her accomplishments are many, foremost of which being that she was a faithful Christian and a relentless servant of Jesus Christ. Bonnie was a capable teacher of women and children—in six countries on three continents. Her books and religious articles reach farther than that. Bonnie was a missionary along with her husband. She played a significant role in the layout and production of the quarterly magazine *The Voice of Truth International*, besides writing for *Gospel Gazette Online* and *Global Harvest* journals.

Bonnie Sue Rushmore leaves a deep void in the lives that she touched—family, fellow-laborers, friends and literally brethren throughout the world. Those left behind will need to shoulder her workload in the kingdom, though Bonnie now rests from her labors (Revelation 14:13) and from the pain of pancreatic cancer that took her earthly life (Revelation 21:4). Nevertheless, she lives on (2 Corinthians 5:1; 1 John 2:25). “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord... that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them” (Revelation 14:13 NKJV).

