

# THE BIBLE TEACHER

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## EDITORIAL

### *The Essence of Godhead*

In the Hebrew language, the language in which most of the Old Testament of the Bible was written originally, God is called Elohim, a name which is a plural of the Majesty. That, however, does not mean that there is more than one true God. There is but one God, the Bible emphatically teaches. (Deut. 6:4; Isaiah 44:6; 1 Cor. 8:4). Nevertheless, the nature of the Godhead (Elohim) is such that there coexists in it a distinction of Persons with absolute unity of essence.

When Christ was on earth He taught His disciples to pray to God calling Him "our Father" (Matt. 6:9). Christ Himself spoke of God often as the Father. (Matt. 11:25-27; John 6:27). The Father, who in the beginning created heaven and the earth, is God. (Genesis 1:1). God so loved the world that He sent the Son, who through His propitiatory death of the cross became propitiation for the sins of the world. (1 John 4:10).

The Son, the Bible teaches, is also God. Not a second God, but another personality in the Godhead. We read, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, *and the Word was God*. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made . . . And the Word became 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. (John 1:1-3 & 14). Notice, it says, the Word who became flesh or a man was God and that all things were made through Him. The very first verse of the Bible says: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Teaching

Christians to put on humility as was in Christ Jesus, the apostle Paul said, "Who being in the form of God, did not consider it to be robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a servant, and coming in the likeness of men . . ." (Phil. 2:6,7). Again, speaking of Christ in Romans 9:5 the inspired scribe wrote, ". . . Christ came, who is over all, eternally blessed God. Amen." In Matthew 16:18 Christ, the Son, had promised to build His church, which He did as we read from Acts 2:37-47. When Paul, the apostle, came to Ephesus he met with the elders of the Lord's church, and this is what he told them: "Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood." (Acts 20:28). It is ponderable that Christ had said that He would build His church; and He was the one who gave Himself for the church (Eph. 5:25); who had shed His blood on the cross for the remission of sins. Yet, the inspired apostle exhorted the elders to shepherd the church of God, which He (God) purchased with His own blood. And, notice too, that the Holy Spirit had made them overseers to shepherd the church. Here we are introduced with the third personality in the Godhead. The church is the house of God. (1 Timothy 3:15). He is the head of His house. He has the authority to appoint anyone in His house. The elders were appointed by the Holy Spirit to shepherd the church of God, because the Holy Spirit is also God.

Just as the Word, who became flesh, the Son, was with God in the beginning, when the heavens and the earth were created, the Spirit was also present with God in the beginning as we read in Genesis 1:2. God sent the Word upon earth to become a man, but He was conceived by Mary, a virgin at that time, by the power of the Holy Spirit. The beautiful and amazing story of the birth of the Son of God is found in Matthew chapters 1 & 2 and in Luke chapter 2, where we see all the three personalities of the Godhead working together for providing the plan of salvation to mankind. Then at the occasion of the baptism of Christ, which took place when he was about thirty years old, just before the beginning of His public ministry, all three persons of the Godhead are dramatically exhibited together. As Jesus, the Son, came up from the water, ". . . the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matthew 3:16,17). The Father sent the Word, and virgin Mary was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, and gave birth to the Son of God and the Saviour of humanity. Thus we see a complete and absolute unity in the three Persons of the Godhead.

God, the Father, Word, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, who is also called the Helper (John 14:26; 16:7), the three Persons of the Godhead are one true God, the Elohim, who created in the beginning the heavens and the earth and together accomplished the work of salvation of man. Of course, in accomplishing the work of salvation of humanity there is implicated a certain relative subordination in the modes of operating of different Persons, by which it is the Father who sent the Word or the Son to be the propitiation for the sins of the world; and the Son, when He, after His propitiatory death, burial and resurrection, returned to the Father for the glory which He had with the Father before the world was, sent the Spirit to apply His redemption to men. (John 14:25,26; John 16:5-15; Acts 1:1-8, Acts 2:1-4). Yet, the three Persons of the Godhead are uniformly represented in the Scripture as in their essential nature each alike God over all. This then helps us to understand why Christ commanded His disciples in the beginning of the gospel: "All Authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them **IN THE NAME** (*not names, S.D.*), of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." (Matthew 28:18,19). Likewise, when the apostle Peter, on the day of Pentecost commanded the multitude to "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." He wasn't contradicting Christ. For what we do in the name of Christ that we also do in the name of the Father and in the name of the Holy Spirit, or by the authority of all. When Ananias had kept back a portion of the proceeds from the sale of the possessions which he with his wife had promised to give that to the Lord's work, the inspired Peter said to him: "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back the part of the price of the land for yourself? While it remained was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God." (Acts 5:3,4). Notice, the fact, that in the first place he said that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and then he said that you have lied to God. That is, in lying to the Holy Spirit Ananias had also lied to God, because the Holy Spirit is God. In the Revelation of Jesus Christ to John, Christ said: "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, says the Lord, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty." (Revelation 1:8). Some eight hundred years before Christ, prophet Isaiah wrote in his book, in Isaiah 44:6, "Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, the Lord of Hosts: I am the First and I am the Last; besides Me there is no God."

There is but only one God, who is the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. When we do what the Son says it is also the will of the Father and the Holy Spirit. When we hear and obey one, we hear and obey all three; and when we refuse to do what one of them says then we refuse to do what God has said.

## ***Who Is Accountable To God?***

**J.C. CHOATE**

We know that in this world that we are accountable to many. That includes our parents, those for whom we work, the law of our country, and to our government. Above all, we are accountable to God.

To be accountable means that we are responsible for our conduct, the things we may say, our debts, paying our taxes, and such like. To God we are accountable for our physical and spiritual lives. Paul said, "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." (Romans 14:12). In other words, we will all have to appear before the judgment seat of Christ some day to receive the things done in the body, according to the things done, whether they be good or bad. (2 Corinthians 5:10).

Although we speak of all being accountable to God, who does "all" include? We know in this physical life that infants and children are not expected to pay taxes or to be responsible for many other things. Even if a child commits a crime, and a serious crime, the law takes into account the age of this person and whether he is old enough to recognize the seriousness of his action. Certainly no court or judge would ever hand down the death penalty to a child even though he had killed someone.

In spite of the fact that much of the religious world advocates that even babies inherits Adam's sin, we must understand that the Bible teaches no such thing. Surely sin cannot be inherited as one would inherit a disease. The Scriptures say that "the soul that sinneth, it shall die." (Ezekiel 18:20). The writer goes on to say, "The son shall not bear the iniquity of father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son." (Ezekiel 18:19). Such is to say that each is responsible for his own actions.

But what about Adam's sin? Adam was held responsible for his wrong doing, as well as Eve, and the same has been true of each

person since that time. We have enough of our own sins to be accountable for without being held responsible for the sins that others have committed. With Adam's sin, death did enter the world, and physical death was passed upon all of man kind, but spiritual death comes only when a specific person commits sin or engages in wrong doing.

But doesn't Paul say that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God? (Romans 3:23). That's true, but if you will take the time to read the context you will find that those he speaks of as having sinned were those who spoke lies and were shedding innocent blood. That means then that he is speaking of adults or those who are old enough to know right from wrong. Such people then are sinners but not infants and children who are still too young to know what is good and what is bad.

Accountable people in God's word are those who are old enough to hear God's word, to understand it, to believe in the Lord, to repent or turn away from their sins, to confess with their mouth that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and to be baptized or buried in the waters of baptism for the remission of their sins. (Romans 10:17; Hebrews 11:6; Acts 17:30; Matthew 10:32; Mark 16:16). Those who are too young to do these things are not sinners but are seen by God as being pure in heart and without sin. They are spoken of by Jesus in Matthew 18:1-5, and he said that one must become like them in order to enter the kingdom of heaven.

But don't small children sometime do things that are very bad? They do, but it is often as a result of imitating some adult. Regardless, he would not be conscious of his wrong doing and would not be punished for his deed by any court, and certainly the Lord would not hold him responsible for his action.

Then the question arises about the conversion of households or families in the book of Acts. We read of Cornelius and his household, Lydia and her household, the Philippian jailor and his household, and other households, or families, obeying the Lord. It might be reasoned that surely there would have been babies and children in those families, and in such cases, did not they obey the Lord with their older brothers and sisters and parents? It is true that no doubt there were infants and children in such families but when it speaks of a family obeying the Lord, it would of necessity refer to the members of that family who had reached the age of accountability as being the ones who obeyed the Lord. Those would have been the ones old enough to hear and obey the gospel themselves. No one could have obeyed for the younger ones.

So the answer to the question, Who is accountable to God? would obviously be those who know right from wrong, those old enough to understand God's will, to realize that they are now sinners, and that they need to obey God so they can be saved from their sins.

Are you accountable to God? If you are reading this article, and you understand what is being said here, then no doubt you are accountable and you need to obey the Lord if you have not already done so. If such be true, you are encouraged to obey the Lord now that you may be saved. Our prayer is that you will do just that, and that you will do that now.

*Especially for Women*

## ***In Her Devotion to God***

**BETTY BURTON CHOATE**

Is a woman a thing of value? Ask different people in today's world, and you will get different answers. In some cultures the woman inherits everything, and the family wears the mother's name. In others, such a large dowry is demanded for a girl's marriage that she becomes a great burden on her parents. Among those who are freely practicing abortion today, girl babies are most often the victims. In some areas it is common for a girl baby to be poisoned at her birth because her parents feel they can't feed and clothe and marry her. Some religions teach that a woman has no real rights; that she can be divorced on the whim of her husband simply by his pronouncement. Another religion teaches that a "soul" cannot reach "Nirvana" from the body of a woman.

But, is the female of the human species really such a worthless thing? Since it was the plan of God that for every man there be a woman to share his life, obviously God did not count His gift as despicable. Without woman in the husband-wife partnership, humanity would have perished with Adam! And even though Eve was the one who opened the door to sin, God did not discard her. He promised that it would be through her Seed that Satan would be destroyed. (Genesis 3:15) This was accomplished through the birth of Jesus Christ—the Son of God, but born of a human mother! (Galatians 4:4) Surely God could have brought the Savior into the world in some other way, but He chose

to honor a woman—Mary of Nazareth—with the privilege of bearing His Son and training Him up as a child. When the angel Gabriel spoke to Mary regarding what was about to happen, he said, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women! Women were also honored to be a part of the group of believers who traveled with Jesus as He went about teaching the message of God. (Luke 8:1-3). It was to a woman that Jesus first appeared after He had been resurrected from the dead, and it was to a woman that He gave the message to go and tell His disciples that he lived. (John 20:11-18). He promised salvation to all who will come to Him, both men and women. (Matthew 24:40,41).

***"Come to Me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."*** (Matthew 11:28).

Often women feel that their sphere of influence is so small that their love and devotion to God are not worth much. Women do not lead the public worship; women do not preach. What can a woman do that shows her faithfulness to God? How can her life count to really make a difference in the world?

I know a Christian woman. She didn't go to college. She never wrote a book. She has taught very few ladies or children's classes in the church. She has never been on a mission trip.

What has she done? Through almost 60 years of marriage she has been a faithful child of God. Her spiritual strength was also a spiritual strength to her husband, and her children's constant memories of "home" are coloured with her faith. Through personal teaching many have learned the Gospel and have become Christians. Through the faithfulness she instilled in her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren have been brought up as active Christians.

Also, among her children is a missionary family that has devoted more than 30 years to building the Lord's Church in foreign fields. They have used radio and literature as mass media tools. Working with supporting American Christians and with Christians on the foreign fields as writers and radio speakers, together they have seen many souls saved and many churches established. The seed of Truth has been sown far and wide through their combined efforts.

Looking back over the years to this woman's youth, who would have thought that so many would have had opportunity to know God because of her dedication? When neither her parents nor her brothers and sisters were Christians—when she stood alone in her commitment—who would have envisioned an influence that would be

felt around the world and for many generations to come?

So, Christian women, be strong in your devotion to God. In your hands, in the form of your children, is the soft clay of humanity. How it is shaped—how wide that influence spreads—depends on your own faithfulness. Through study of God's word and then through making Him the most important part of your life, you can imbed those truths and that faith firmly in the hearts of those you love. No other life is greater.

## ***Ten Commandments & Sabbath!***

**DILLARD THURMAN**

Constantly we are flooded with a barrage of letters from those who would bind on Christians a law given to another people in another age, that became obsolete almost two thousand years ago! In their frenzied efforts to promote this doctrine they try to show the Sabbath observance binding upon all God's people from Adam down to Moses! But that is not true! let God speak through Moses on this: "*The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb (or Sinai). The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us even us, who are all of us here alive this day.*" (Deut. 5:2-3). Very emphatically God herein explained by Moses that this covenant was not given to any prior generation; no, not their fathers who had died! It was given first to that present generation; to those who were there at Sinai (Horeb). In this address (Deut. 5), Moses recites the "ten commandments," with the sabbath law given as found when given in Exo. 20. Yes, indeed, God rested on the *seventh day* of Creation, but this was not known by the sons of men until God made it known by Moses 2500 years later!

### **THE PREFACE TO THE TEN COMMANDMENTS**

It was at Sinai (Horeb) that the Ten Commandments were given; as recorded in Exo. 20. In the *Preface*, God is very specific in revealing: "*And God spake all these words, saying, I am thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me . . .*" (Vs 1-2ff). The use of *thee*, *thou*, *thy*, and such pronouns in this chapter, shows this is limited to only the nation of Israel, separated from Egypt! Thus the "Ten Commandments" covenant was limited to the descendants of Jacob, and to them only! It was never declared "for all nations."



Since the *Preface* or *Introduction* is attached to the Ten Commandments, it is wrong to separate it from that which follows! Yet that is precisely what the Sabbatarians do! They omit the *Preface*, and then seek to attach the sabbath law to all people! Moses straitly informs us as to HOW and WHY the two tables of stone were given to the children of Israel: "*And the Lord delivered unto me two tables of stone written with the finger of God; and on them was written all the words, which the Lord spake with you in the mount in the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly.*" (Deut. 9:10). It is evident that God intended that the *Preface* or *Introduction* should go wherever the Ten Commandments did! It shows to whom the commandments were given, and disallows the efforts of any who would bind the sabbath commandment on any other than the people, of ancient Israel!

### **WHAT WAS SAID OF THE SABBATH!**

*"And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all the work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made."* (Gen. 2:2-3). This is recorded in the second chapter of the Bible: but when was it made known unto man? There is not the vaguest hint that Adam, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, or any other man knew of this until it was revealed to Israel, 2500 years later, and Moses recorded it after that! The first mention of this to man was after Israel had been delivered from Egypt, and were given directions for gathering manna, with the double portion supplied on the sixth day. (read it carefully in Exo. 16:19-30). These detailed instructions would not have been necessary had the sabbath been made known before!

But the Lord reinforced this later, speaking by Moses: "*Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you. Ye shall keep my sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: everyone that defileth it shall surely be put to death . . . Whosoever doeth any work in the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death.*" (Exo. 31:13-15). This was reinforcing what was stated in the Ten Commandments, and setting forth the penalty for any infraction! Anyone who tries to bind the observance must also bind the penalty that is attached thereto! But WHO are those to observe the sabbath? "*Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their*

*generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever.*" (Exo. 31:16-17). Notice that this covenant did not include other than Israel; and God said it would be so throughout their generations! That arrangement was not subject to change or alteration! Those who seek to appropriate the sabbath observance show no regard to property rights, and utter contempt for what God ordained in the sabbath decree!

### **DURATION OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS**

Nehemiah records how Israel stood before the Lord, and cried: *"Thou camest down also upon mount Sinai, and speakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments. And madest known unto them thy holy sabbath, and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant."* (Neh. 9:13-14). Very plainly is it shown that it was at mount Sinai that the Ten Commandments were given, and the sabbath was made known unto Israel! But how long was that covenant to be in force? We return to Exo. 31:16 for the answer. *"The children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant."* This means the sabbath was for Israel only *"throughout their generations."* Others could not properly observe it in its duration, for they had not been delivered from Egyptian bondage! But Israel would not continue as God's chosen, and their generation was to pass away! The prophet Isaiah points to this event! He speaks to sinful Israel, saying, *"And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen: for the Lord God shall slay thee, and call his servants by another name."* (Isa. 65:15). *"Israel"* gave way to *"Christian"* as the national entity was supplanted by the universal reign of the King of kings!

### **THE HANG-UP ON "PERPETUAL COVENANT"**

Some vociferate that the sabbath law could not pass away, for it is *a perpetual!* But look to the passover feast: *"This day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever."* (Exo. 12:14) Friend, that makes the passover feast a *perpetual covenant*, even as the sabbath! But again, look to the burning of incense: *"When Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it, a perpetual incense before the Lord throughout your generations."* (Exo. 30:8). Does this differ from the sabbath as a *perpetual* observance? Don't overlook the

burnt offering in this regard: *"This shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generation at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord."* (Exo. 29:42). And, oh yes, there is also the feast of first fruits: *"it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations."* (Lev. 23:14). Friends, you would tire of reading all the citations where God spake of *perpetual, for ever, throughout your generations*, etc., in addressing Israel! Many things appertained to that nation in a peculiar and unique way; and among them you find the sabbath, burnt offerings, passover, burning of incense, etc. But all those applied to Israel alone, and were not bound on Christians!

### **JESUS OBSERVED THE SABBATH!**

Jesus was born, lived and died while the Ten Commandments covenant was intact! *"But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."* (Gal. 4:4-5). Christ came to redeem man from the curse of the law (Gal. 3:13), but while He lived under it, He not only was obedient to the law, he taught His disciples to obey it (Mt. 23:1-4). Jesus said, *"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."* (Mt. 5:17-18). But when Jesus Christ died on the cross, He could say, *"It is finished!"* The law had served its purpose, and could pass away. But while it stood, every descendant of Israel had to keep the sabbath day holy! And this was true of Jesus and His disciples!

### **"WHEREFORE THEN SERVETH THE LAW?"**

The purpose of the law, and its duration, was answered by Paul in these words: *"Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator."* (Gal. 3:19). The law was added to the promises which God had made to Abraham (v. 16), but it did not nullify the promises (v. 17). Because of the transgressions of Israel, the law could not save them! *"For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God."* (Heb. 7:18-19). But the Ten Commandment covenant had to be removed for Christ to save! *"Then said he, Lo, I come to do*

thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second, By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Christ once for all." (Heb. 10:9-10). When the law had served its purpose, it was removed (with the sabbath within)! Paul could later write, "Wherefore the law was our school-master to bring us to Christ that we might be justified by faith." (Gal. 3:24). It had achieved its purpose!

## REMOVING HANDWRITING OF ORDINANCES

Jesus Christ released us from the law by "*Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances which was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.*" (Col. 2:14). That is graphically chronicled as Paul spake of God; "*Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit; for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away; how shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious?*" (2 Cor. 3:6-8). He asserts that the new covenant is better than the old, and is more glorious than that received by Moses! But of what was he speaking? Of that which Moses received of God, written on two tables of stone, which included the sabbath law! Then after showing that the gospel is far superior, he shows why: "*For if that which was done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious.*" (v. 11). Certainly Paul confirms that the Ten Commandments (with the sabbath law) was done away!

That which was taken away was that also which came with such glory that Moses had to put a veil on his face! That was when God gave him the two tablets of stone on which the Ten commandments were written! Paul said, though glorious, that passed away; but the more glorious (the gospel) remains! "*The ministration of death*" was the Ten Commandments, for that alone was given at the time of the shining and veiling of Moses' face! (See Exo. 34:27-35). This "*ministration of death.*" "*the letter,*" and "*ministration of condemnation*" "*is done away in Christ*" (2 Cor. 3:6,7,9,13,14). The whole of the law passed also. "*For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us [the law which separated Jew and Gentile]; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man; so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto*

*God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby.*" (Eph. 2:14-16). Thus Jesus Christ removed for all time *"the handwriting of ordinances . . . and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross."*

### **THE CHANGE OF THE PRIESTHOOD AND LAW!**

Jesus Christ could not have been our High Priest under the law of Moses: *"For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood."* (Heb. 7:14). Thus Christ could not be a High Priest while in the world! *"For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law."* (Heb. 8:4). Some changes had to be made to allow Christ to enter that high office! *"For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law."* (Heb. 7:12). That must be emphasized: *"there is of necessity a change also of the law."* Not one "jot or tittle" had been changed till it was fulfilled, and removed by Jesus Christ at the cross! Then in its completeness it was done away! (Col. 2:14-15). Christ could then become mediator of His new testament, *"For where a testament is, there must of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead."* (Heb. 9:15-17). We now answer to Christ; not Moses!

### **A LOOK AT THE LAW AND THE SABBATH**

1. The sabbath was given to man after Israel left Egypt. (Exo. 16:23-26; Deut. 5:2-3. Was not observed before).
2. Given only to those delivered from Egyptian bondage. (Exo. 31:12-17; Hos. 2:11; Deut. 5:15. Not given to us).
3. They were not to build a fire on that day. (Exo. 35:3).
4. They were not to leave the house. (Exo. 16:29).
5. They couldn't bake nor boil on that day. (Exo. 16:23).
6. Sabbath kept from sunset to sunset. (Lav. 23:32).
7. Any sabbath violater to be stoned! (Exo. 31:12-17; Num. 15:22-38). Sabbath keeping demands penalty!
8. Sabbath a part of Law of Moses. (Exo. 20:8-11; 24:12).
9. Law nailed to the cross. (Col. 2:12-16; Eph. 2:13-15).
10. To be justified by Law is to fall from grace. (Gal. 5:4).
11. Sabbath given at Horeb (Sinai). (Deut. 5:2).
12. But we are not come to mount Sinai. (Heb. 12:18).
13. There were 2 covenants: 1st, 2nd. (Heb. 8:7; 9:1,15).

14. Sabbath observance in first. (Deut. 5:1-4; 1 Kgs. 8:21).
15. First made way for second. (Heb. 8:7-10; 10:9-10).
16. "Law by Moses; Truth by Christ." (Jno. 1:17).
17. Christ is end of law. (Rom. 10:4; Col. 2:12-16).

### **LIMITATIONS OF THE SABBATH DAY**

Under the law, the Jews looked to the *seventh day* of each week, and observed a temporary rest. The weekly observance emphasized its instability! Heb. 4:3-11 speaks in detail of that sabbath day rest, but also about the Christian's sabbath (his day of rest). Notice the points made: "*For if Jesus [Joshua in O.T.] had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another rest.*" (v. 8). Israel had Jehovah as their only Lord, and He gave them His sabbath rest, which they observed. But Jesus Christ, the Son of God, redeemed us from the curse of the law and its sabbath observance, to set our hearts on a rest promised to us! Christ spoke of another rest, and established it for us! "*For he [Christ] that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.*" (v. 10). When God finished His work. He entered into His rest; and when Christ had finished His, He also entered into His! That is the rest that saints long for! Heaven is offered as the eternal rest for those who serve God! "*let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.*" (v. 11).

Here the works and rest of God are distinguished from the works and rest of Christ, and promise to Christians the eternal rest into which Christ entered on leaving his earthly life. There is no "seventh day rest" that can compare with that which is prepared for Christ's followers! Thus we warn all: "*Let no man judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days; which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.*" (Col. 2:16-17). Christians are not to live under the shadow of the law! Turn from Judaism to follow Christ!

## **When God Can't Save!**

**JERRI MANASCO**

The God we serve is the God of salvation. He is "the Saviour of all

men, specially of those that believe" (I Timothy 4:10). It is God "who will have all men to be saved" (I Timothy 2:4). The Father sent the Son that through Jesus the world might be saved (John 3:16). How we glorify God for the matchless salvation he offers! How we praise him for that remarkable plan by which he redeems us from sin! Yet in view of all that we have said to this point, **THERE ARE SOME PEOPLE WHOM GOD CANNOT SAVE! THERE IS A TIME WHEN GOD CANNOT SAVE!**

God cannot maintain his integrity and turn against his own will! God cannot maintain our trust in him if he proves to be an arbitrary God who acts without a set pattern! The very fact that God cannot lie is the very reason we can trust him to do as he says he will do (Hebrews 6:13ff). He who cannot lie has promised eternal life (Titus 1:2). He has also let us in on the fact that he *cannot* grant eternal life to certain people! I am not teaching Calvinism. I am not saying that God **WOULD NOT** save these people if they would change their ways. The fact remains, however, that God cannot save anyone on that person's own terms.

*God cannot save the unbeliever.* "He that believeth not is condemned already" (John 3:18). "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24). "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life" (John 8:36). "He that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). That is plain enough for anyone to see. People just simply cannot be saved in the Bible way by finding God in their own way.

*God cannot save the disobedient.* I can find in the Bible that God says he will save those who obey. Where can you find in the Bible that God will save those who will not obey? Has God promised to save those who will not respond in a positive to his word? Jesus is the author of eternal salvation to those who obey him (Hebrews 5:9). Those who are disobedient are in the camp of the unrighteous and are not promised salvation; in fact, the disobedient are plainly promised destruction (Romans 2:5-11).

*God cannot save the worldly.* Those who are worldly are sure to perish (I John 2:15-17). The works of the flesh are so clearly spelled out and the consequences thereof are so clearly manifested that it is a marvel that people (even church members) seem unable to get the point that God cannot save people in sin (Galatians 5:9-21). Certainly these folks can repent and become Christians (I Corinthians 6:9-11), but, yes, **THEY MUST REPENT AND BECOME CHRISTIANS!!!** They have to give up their sins! God cannot save a worldly person as a worldly person. Why is that so hard for people to understand?

*God cannot save the morally indifferent.* If the morally indifferent can be saved in their moral indifference, then it is difficult to understand any advantage in being morally and spiritually upright! Paul describes those morally indifferent (Ephesians 4:18-19). He hardly pictures them as redeemed souls! In the first chapter of the Roman epistle Paul forcefully shows the hopelessness of moral indifference. These people (Paul said) had been given up to their sins and as a consequence would face "death" (Romans 1:24-32). Are we being self righteous and judgmental when we cite what the inspired penmen have said about this? The morally indifferent have no promise of salvation!!

*God cannot save the stubborn.* Stephen preached to such a crowd of people. He pointed out their stubbornness and they didn't appreciate it! He said, "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye" (Acts 7:51). Could they be saved? If they repented of their stubbornness and submitted to the truth of the gospel, they certainly could be. But in their continued rebellion they could not be! Paul preached to some who had put away from themselves eternal life (Acts 13:46). These had refused the message and had tried to persuade others to quit listening to it. The fact is, God saves through his word and these people had not been attentive to that word. Paul later wrote concerning some who had so stubbornly persecuted the way of truth that wrath was coming upon them to the uttermost (1 Thessalonians 2:16).

What has been written in this article is not intended to be the mandate of the preacher! These observations will hopefully not be looked upon as self-righteous ravings but as the simple truth revealed in the Bible. We need to get back to the Bible on the question of who will and who will not be saved! God has told us already what we must do to be saved. He has warned us of what will hinder and prevent that salvation. It is not my place to judge, but it is right to study and learn what is expected of all of us. My appeal to all who read these things is that you will not try to excuse sin or find hope where there is no hope, but that we might help one another avoid the blockades to salvation!

## ***Overcoming Satan***

**CECIL MAY, JR.**

"Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our



God, and the power of his Christ; for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night, and they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death" (Revelation 12:10-12).

By three things Satan is overcome and cast down.

*The blood of the Lamb.* Victory over Satan is certain and at the end will be clearly decisive. It will not, however, be won in accord with the premillennial vision of a battle of Armageddon fought with carnal weapons and the shedding of rivers of blood. It is won through Christ's atoning death, the shedding of his own blood.

He "spoiled" Satan and his angels and "triumphed over them openly," "in his cross" (Colossians 2:14-15). He became flesh and blood that "through death" he might destroy the devil (Hebrews 2:14). Satan's power is in the sin with which he enslaves us and in the death which sin brings. In Christ "we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Colossians 1:14). With forgiveness of sins comes life and freedom from Satan's clutches.

*The word of their testimony.* "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strongholds" (II Corinthians 10:4). In our vocabulary, "carnal" does not stand opposite to "mighty," but biblically, it does. Isaiah had said to Judah long ago, "The Egyptians are men, and not gods; and their horses flesh, and not spirit (Isaiah 31:3). The weapons of the spirit are the mightiest, and our "sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Ephesians 6:17) is the mightiest of all. "The gospel . . . is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes" (Romans 1:16).

"The word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword" (Hebrews 4:12). Jesus defeated Satan with three passages of scripture. Slaves are freed by knowing the truth (John 8:32). The engrafted word is able to save our souls (James 1:21). Satan still cannot stand against the word of God, the gospel.

*They loved not their lives unto death.* The early Christians' commitment to Christ and utter disregard even for their lives, when it came to practicing their faith and following their Lord, was the third factor in their victory over Satan. They had "washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Revelation 7:14), but also they "were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and the word of God, and had not worshiped the beast nor his image" (Revelation 20:4).

Seek first the kingdom. (Matthew 6:33). Set your affections on

things above, not on things on the earth (Colossians 3:2). The priorities of the overcoming Christian are clear. Here, perhaps, is today's missing link. The blood of Christ is still adequate to wash away sin. The word of God is still powerful to pull down evil's strongholds. Do we have the dedication? Can it be said of us, "They loved not their lives unto death"?

## ***"Those Who Despise Small Opportunities Never Get Large Ones"***

**EDSEL BURLESON**

Daniel C Steere, in "I Am, I Can" wrote: "Several years ago, I found a quaint old book in a secondhand bookshop. It is bound in leather and was published in 1876. It is called *The Royal Path of Life*, by T.L. Haines and L.W. Yaggy. The language is stilted and old-fashioned. So are many of the ideas in it. Still, there is a certain charm in the old book. The chapter titled 'opportunity' contains these thoughts which are still good advice:

"Great opportunities are generally the result of the wise improvement of small ones. Wise men make more opportunities than they find. If you think your opportunities are not good enough, you had better improve them . . . As a general rule, those who have no opportunities despise small ones; and those who despise small opportunities never get large ones."

The parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30) emphasizes the Lord's blessings upon those who take advantage of their opportunities. To the servants who doubled their talents through use, their lord said, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (verses 21 and 23).

There is another side to the story. Those who refuse to take advantage of their opportunities shall finally lose them. The servant who did not use his one talent heard his lord say, "Take therefore the talent from him and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto everyone that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath" (verses 28 and 29). Alexander G. Bell once wrote: "When one door closes, another

opens. But we so often look so long and so regretfully upon the closed door that we do not see the one which has been opened before us."

Cliff Mann recently included in the "Friendly Visitor" of the Auburn church, an interesting story about not letting opportunities pass us by. A young man was courting a farmer's daughter. After a while the farmer realized that the young man was getting pretty serious and even looking towards marriage. One day the farmer told the young man, "I'll give you my daughter for your wife, if you can catch one of these bulls I've got in my pen." The young man agreed and decided to try and catch the bull by the tail. The farmer proceeded to run the first bull down a chute with the young man standing on the fence above it. The first bull came charging through. He was big and fierce and had very long horns. The young man decided he would wait for the next bull. The second bull then came running down the chute, he was not quite as big nor hardly as mean, but still the young man was scared enough to wait on the next one. The third bull then came trotting down the chute and the young man knew this was his last opportunity to win the farmer's daughter, so just as the bull got near him he jumped off the fence to catch hold of his tail, only to hit the ground as he realized that the bull was bobtailed!

An unknown author, in the following lines, challenges us to recognize opportunities when they come our way:

The stairs of opportunities  
Are sometimes hard to climb  
And that can only be done  
By one step at a time.  
But he would go to the top  
Ne'er sits down and despairs:  
Instead of staring up those steps  
He just steps up the stairs.

## ***A Modern Parable***

**JOHN RICE**

A man got married. After the honeymoon, he disappeared. His wife heard nothing from him except that she received a check from him once a month. One evening, he walked in, kissed her, and sat down to be fed. She was incensed!! Bewildered, the man asked, "What's the matter? I married you; I send you a check every month. What more do you want?"

A child enrolled in school. For several days, he was absent. When the truant officer came around, his mother said, "Oh, we feel that Jimmy can be as good a scholar at home as school, so we let him play in the backyard and learn from nature."

A man volunteered for the Army, took the oath of allegiance and was inducted. But he failed to report for duty. When the military police came, he said, "I've been shooting guns since I was a kid. I don't have anything to learn from the Army. You just call me when you're ready to fight."

And once upon a time, a family obeyed the gospel and became members of the church . . .

## ***"Doubting" Thomas And His Faith***

**T. PIERCE BROWN**

Most of us probably have not done justice either to Thomas or the subject of faith as we have discussed them.

First, we have little reason to apply the pejorative appellation "doubting" to him any more than to the other apostles. (You may now suspect what the "T" in my name stands for!) But Mark 16:11-14; Luke 24:11-41, and other references show that the other apostles had also heard that he was risen and "believed not."

Although it behooves us to be skeptical of many reports about miraculous events and supernatural things, I am not particularly interested in upholding the skepticism of Thomas in this instance—though it does have some redeeming features. He at least expressed the willingness to believe when he was presented with what he considered adequate evidence, and was not intellectually dishonest! He did not disregard it when it was available.

But my purpose now is to suggest some additional thoughts on the scope, nature, and basis of faith. Most of us in the Lord's church have properly emphasized the biblical truth that "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). But John implies (John 20:21) that faith also comes by sight, or as a result of sight. The fact that "we walk by faith and not by sight" (II Corinthians 5:7) does not mean they are antithetical.

This involves another truth that we seldom emphasize: There is a difference in a general "faith" in a person, and specific "faith" in a proposition. Suppose we had been in the presence of Jesus and had seen him raise the dead, cast out demons, and do all the other mighty works that he did, and someone had asked us: "Do you believe in Jesus—that he is indeed the Christ, or that he has power to cure blind eyes?" We could answer, "Yes," even though we had not heard him say, "I can cure blind eyes." That faith would not have been produced by hearing the word of God on that particular issues, but by seeing the acts of Christ in various other circumstances. But of a particular proposition such as, "I have faith that Christ will cure the blind eyes of John Doe," we have no right to say this unless we have heard his word with reference to opening John Doe's eyes.

Paul illustrated this truth in Romans 1:20,21 when he says "they are without excuse" because they should have had faith in God (recognized his eternal power and Godhead) as a result of what they had seen—"the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made." The atheist, who does not believe in the person of God is guilty and without excuse, not because he has not read the word and allowed it to produce faith, both in God, and in propositions about God; but because he has not been honest with what he has seen. "Faith" in the reality of God can come from seeing nature, as well as by hearing the word of God. But faith in a particular proposition may come only by hearing that proposition. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" is a proposition that can not be believed simply as a result of looking at nature; but this is believed by hearing it because of a prior faith in the person of Jesus who said it.

Notice another important thing: If one has proper faith in Jesus (or anyone else) as a person, it necessarily involves faith in any proposition he may announce, or statement he may make. But the converse is not necessarily true. That is, one may believe a particular statement of a person without having faith in that person. For example, an atheist who is a known liar may say, "You can buy chickens at the grocery store for 39 Cents per pound." And you may believe that statement, without having any faith in the person. But if you have faith in a person as a truthful, trustworthy person, and he says, "You can get them today at this grocery store for 29 Cents a pound," you will believe that statement no matter how improbable it may be because you have faith in the person who made it. Thomas acted improperly in rejecting the testimony of credible witnesses. But it was not a result of an atheistic disposition

nor a deliberate refusal to examine testimony. When he saw Jesus and heard him speak, he then had faith in the person of Jesus, and as a necessary consequence, faith in anything that Jesus might say.

Part of my purpose in this article is to suggest that we need to do more than have faith in particular propositions; we need to so examine the evidence that we have faith in the person of Jesus, and therefore be willing to trust in any statement or proposition he makes. In addition to that, we need to trust in him to the extent that we are willing to commit all our lives to him beyond any reference to any particular statement about specific events, or belief in any particular proposition. It seems apparent that one of our failures is that we may have equated belief in a particular proposition of or about Jesus with trust in the person of the Saviour. They are different things. For example, you may believe that Jesus arose from the dead, but not be willing to trust him with your life. You may believe that "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," and be not willing to do that. You may admit the proposition expressed by Jesus that "All authority is given unto me in heaven and on earth" (Matthew 28:18), and that which Paul expressed in Colossians 3:17, "Whatsoever you do in word or deed do all in the name" (or, "by the authority") of the Lord Jesus" without actually trusting the Lord enough to do that!

So the following things should be realized:

1. Belief in the being of a person or a proposition about a person, and faith in the person himself are two different things. You may believe that God IS, or that a doctor has a degree without being willing to let either of them operate on you! 2. Faith in a person may come in two ways: (a). By hearing (Romans 10:17; John 20:31), or (b). By seeing (John 20:29). 3. Faith in a particular statement of a person, or about a person comes by hearing. For example, you might say, "I have great faith in you, so I believe you will take me to store tomorrow." You have no right to do that, for faith in a proposition, "I will take you to store tomorrow" comes by hearing. If you have faith in me either because of what you have seen or heard, and you heard me say, "I will take you to store tomorrow," you would have a right to believe that proposition. Otherwise, it is merely an opinion.

The religious world in general continually makes the kind of mistake suggested above. Because they have a general kind of belief in the person of Jesus, they assume this gives them the right to believe almost any kind of specific proposition they can imagine as if he had said it. That is not "faith," but opinion, and some of our brethren seem to be as guilty of such as any member of denomination.

# *Why Preach The First Principles?*

WALDEON LANGFIELD

In a recent conversation this writer was told by another Christian, "The first principles should never be taught from the pulpit." He cited Hebrews 6:1-2, "Wherefore leaving the doctrine of the first principles of Christ, let us press on unto perfection; not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith towards God, of the teaching of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment."

Is the writer of Hebrews instructing all churches to abandon all preaching on the foundational truths? Certainly not. Rather he is commanding Christians who have refused to go beyond a mastery of the first principles to move on to maturity. The first principles are to the whole truth like a "foundation" to a building (v. 1). While a well-laid foundation is absolutely essential to any building, a frame, walls, roof, etc., are necessary for its completion. Likewise, this passage, is teaching that to be a complete "building" in Christ, a congregation must have more than a knowledge of rudimentary truths. The first principles, then, are not the only truths to be preached. There are reasons, however, why they need to be preached in every congregation regularly.

First, they need to be preached because they are in the Bible. All of the word of God is inspired, or "God-breathed," and the entire body of inspired writing is necessary to make us "complete, furnished completely unto every good work" (II Timothy 3:16-17). Timothy was instructed to proclaim all of inspiration's message—to "preach the word" (II Timothy 4:2). His instructor, Paul, had set the example, presenting "the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27). Therefore all of the Bible—the Old and New Testaments, the accounts of the lives of the patriarchs, Israelites, and Christians, as well as the subjects of baptism, the one church, and the instrumental music question, must be presented.

Secondly, they need to be preached to teach new members in our congregations. To assume Hebrews 6:1-2 forbids the preaching of first principles is to assume congregations are full of people already well-grounded in these fundamental truths. Such is rarely the case. Visitors who are not Christians and new converts, need to be thoroughly taught the basics. Members from other congregations where first principles might not have been presented need to be grounded in the truth.

Recently-restored brethren, likewise, need to again hear these foundational truths.

Among the new members should certainly be included our young people, many of whom may have been recently baptized. If Christian youth cannot learn the basics in the church of Christ, just where are they going to learn these things? The failure of many congregations to proclaim the truth about baptism, the church, the Holy Spirit, etc., has already given rise to a generation in many places, like that spoken of in Judges 2:10, "that knew not Jehovah."

Thirdly, first principles need to be preached as a reminder to mature Christians. Faith comes from hearing God's word (Romans 10:17). When there is little hearing belief grows dim. Several years ago this writer preached a fairly basic sermon dealing with the operation of the Holy Spirit, an otherwise well-grounded deacon's wife complimented the sermon, commenting afterward: "I hadn't heard anything about the Holy Spirit in so long, I had begun to wonder how he does operate."

We tend to forget spiritual truths that are not constantly before us. Peter wrote his second epistle in order to put the brethren "in remembrance" (II Peter 1:12). He reiterated shortly thereafter: "I stir up your sincere mind by putting you in remembrance" (II Peter 3:1). As God looks down upon congregations where the basics are almost never preached, and therefore not strongly believed by their memberships, perhaps the lament of Jeremiah 2:32 is on his mind: "My people have forgotten me days without number."

God intends for his entire word to be boldly proclaimed. Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). let us as preachers keep the congregations where we labour well-indoctrinated in the first principles. Teachers, present lessons on the basics to your classes. Elders, demand that these truths be vigorously taught to the congregations under your charge. Preachers, present these basic, yet critical, truths boldly and frequently.