

THE BIBLE TEACHER

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EDITORIAL

What Does The Bible Teach?

"Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it."

The Bible is a book of sixty six books. These sixty six books are divided into two parts. The first part of thirtynine books is called the Old Testament; and the second part of twenty-seven books is called the New Testament. Both, the Old Testament and the New Testament, contain the Word of God. Both were written by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God. Therefore, the Bible is called the word of God. Through the writings of the Old Testament books God had spoken through Moses and the prophets to His chosen nation Israel. And, by what is written in the New Testament books, God speaks today to us through His Son Christ and His apostles. In the Epistle to the Hebrews, in chapter 1 and verses 1 & 2, the writer says: "God, who at various times and in different ways spoke in the time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son...." Christ, before His death and burial and resurrection and ascension into heaven, had revealed to His disciples God's plan of communicating to all mankind. He told them: "These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, He will

teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you." Again, He had said to them: "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come." (John 14:25,26 & 16:12,13).

Thus, the New Testament was written by the disciples of Christ, after Christ had departed the earth and after the disciples had received the promised Holy Spirit of God. The first four books of the New Testament, i.e., Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, record the birth and life and works and teachings of Christ. Also is recorded in them the account of His death and burial and resurrection and ascension into heaven. These four books of the New Testament are therefore called the Gospel account. The book of the Acts of the Apostles, next, contains the beginning and history of the church of Christ. Then, the apostles of Christ, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, wrote twentyone letters or the epistles, i.e., Romans to Jude, to Christians or the congregations of the Lord's church in various places. And, lastly, the book of Revelation of Jesus Christ was written to the persecuted Christians of the first century, to strengthen them in their faith. Just as it was commanded to the people who had lived under the Old Testament law: "Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it." (Deuteronomy 12:32). At the end of the New Testament writings it was written: "For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." (Revelation 22:18,19).

The Bible contains the whole will of God for all humans of all ages; and God wants man everywhere to follow its precepts just as He has commanded; without any change or without any addition or subtraction. However, from the beginning man has had the tendency of changing God's word; just as Adam and Eve

and Nadab and Abihu and king Saul did. Yet, Christ, warned, again by saying: "He who rejects me, and does not receive my words has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day." (John 12:48). Just as God had told Joshua, in the book of Joshua 1:7, "do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go." So must we learn to abide by the will of God just as He has revealed, so that we might prosper and lay hold on heavenly eternal life.

Why Do So Many People Accept False Teaching

J.C. CHOATE

To those that read the Bible, and know God's will, the question arises as to why so many accept false teaching. Why are they so easily deceived and led astray? Can't one see the difference between truth and a lie?

Of course many want to be deceived. They look for a teaching that agrees with what they believe and the kind of life they want to live. Others are impressed by some personality to the point that one gets to thinking that this is the truth and if he does not accept it then he is rejecting the truth. Paul said that this was also true of those who had been deceived by the things of the world. (Romans 1:25).

A good example of how people can be influenced is to be found in the music world. You can take a mediocre piece of music or a song and play it enough and turn it into a number one hit. Another example is where someone with money can take an unknown Person and give him enough publicity and turn him into a world renowned personality.

One can be trained to like a fruit or vegetable by eating it often enough. We know in the fashion world, in sports, or with any product or activity, it can become popular when enough

publicity is given to it and enough use it or do it. Politicians are notorious for running commercials that are lies but when aired enough they have the same desired effects.

That is certainly true in the religious world. Wonder how many times the story has been told about the Thief on the Cross being saved without baptism to try to prove that one can be saved today without baptism? How many times have you heard that one church is as good as another, one can be saved by faith only, one is born in sin, and thousands of other things.

False teachings are well known and accepted because the majority of preachers and teachers are proclaiming them all over the world in a popular manner. They are well packaged in printed form, on radio and TV, in beautiful meeting houses, through schools and hospitals, and in many other ways that are appealing to the masses:

On the other hand, the Lord's church is small. We have only a few preachers who are preaching the truth, and when we condemn error and ask that people return to the Bible for God's will, we are often rejected, criticized, and portrayed as a little group who think they are the only ones going to heaven. Sometimes even weaker brethren succumb to these criticisms and rejections by giving up and joining the opposition. This is sad indeed since the majority do not make a thing right. Christ said that the majority are on the broad way and only a few are on the narrow way. (Matthew 7:13,14).

We must remember that the Lord's word is truth (John 17:17) and that only the truth makes free. (John 8:32). Christ also said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but by me." (John 14:6). Finally, Christ said that if we reject him and his word that we have one that will judge him in the last day. (John 12:48).

Keep in mind that even though the majority may believe and practice something, that does not make it right. Don't follow man and his teachings since in all probability they are wrong. Hear the word of the Lord, believe it, and obey it, and only then will you be right. Remember that God's way is right even though all may be against it. Do it God's way if you want to be right.

I Want To Join Your Church

FRANCIS DAVID

There are many sincere people today who are ignorant about the true new testament church. There are some who do not understand the real meaning of the word "Church". There are hundreds of churches existing in our country and in all over the world. Many think that church means a concrete building, or a place of worship. For some the church is Catholic and for some it is protestant. Some say this was my father's church or Mother's church and that is why I am a member of this church. Yet others say: "I have been attending this church since my childhood and this is my favourite church."

A lot of people have misconceptions about the church. First of all I would like to tell you that the church is not mine or yours. The church belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ since he promised to build it. Jesus in Mathew chapter 16 and verse 18 claimed that He would build his church. The Bible tells us the right meaning of the word church. The new testament of the Bible was written in greek language originally, and in Greek the word church is used as 'Ekklesia' and the meaning of this word is 'Called Out.' The people those who are chosen and called out for a special purpose are called church. The church is not a building as many think and it is not a social organisation. Since Jesus said "I will build my church" he meant what he said. He used the word church and not churches. He is the owner of this church. He bought the church with his own blood (Acts 20:28). He gave his life for the church (Eph. 5:25). No human has authority over this church because Christ Jesus himself has all the authority and he is the head of this church. (Colossian 1:18). Today the churches of Christ (Romans 16:16) may be found all over the world. The churches of Christ shun all human doctrines and always strive to walk by the Bible. The Bible, inspired word of God is their sole authority and standard (2 Tim. 3:16).

What we see today that people try to change the churches

of their choice from time to time. They often visit various churches and try to accomodate themselves in one of those where they feel more comfortable. Still if they are not satisfied they will switch over to the other one. Sometime it is easy for them to join the one of their choice. Now, we need to understand that we cannot do something like this with the Lord's church. Some people say that they want to join the church of Christ, and I have heard people saying that we want to join the church of Christ. The Bible never talks about someone joining the church. Joining the church is a wrong statement. You just can't join the church. We need to understand that church is not a club or a social institution. It would be easy for someone to go and join a club or an institution or one of the denominations but not the church which Jesus built. If you really want to find the right church, then please turn to the Bible and you will discover it is there. We turn to the book of Acts. In this book we find the establishment of the church. When this church was started, there were about three thousand people who became the members of this church. In Chapter two we see the location was Jerusalem. There is a huge crowd gathered there and they are listening the preaching of Peter one of the apostles of Jesus. Apostle Peter is preaching Jesus and his message. In his message to this people he said: "... let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." (Verse 36). When they heard this they were cut to the heart, they got convinced and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren. What shall we do?" (Verse 37). What did Peter say? Did he say? I am so glad that you all believed in Jesus and I want you to, join the church. No, he did not say like this instead he said and told them: "REPENT, and let everyone of you be BAPTISED in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Verse 38). What happened then? In verse 41 we read and it says: "then those who gladly received his word were BAPTISED, and that day about three thousand souls were ADDED to them. These people were added and the adding was done by the Lord himself. Lord does the adding. We read the 47 verse and it says: "Praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were

being saved." Here we see the establishment of the Lord's church.

I would urge you to please read your Bibles and see for yourself and study sincerely and you will find the one true church which was built by the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the church of the Bible. Why not become the member and a part of the same church? This church was established in AD 33 in Jerusalem. This is a universal church. Wherever in the world the word of God which is the seed (Luke 8:11), is planted there we see it produced the churches of Christ which is made up of christians (Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Pet. 4:16). We follow Christ and his teachings. We don't have our own readymade creeds and doctrines. We speak where the Bible speaks and we are silent where the Bible is silent. Today, yes today, you can become a part of this church, which is the body of Christ. (Eph. 5:30). Just obey the commands which are being specified in the Scriptures and become a member of the Lord's church. Dear friends, we encourage you to become the part of this true new testament church by believing in God and His son Jesus, confess Jesus as God's son, and repent of your sins, and be baptised and by doing this you will put on Christ who is our saviour. (John 3: 16; Acts 2:38; Acts 8: 35-39; 16:31-34; 22:16; Romans 6:6-6, Gal 3:27). As you do this you will be added to the church by the Lord himself. Remember, you can't join the church of Christ but Lord will add you to the church.

The Concerns of Christ

WINFRED CLARK

One does not read any chapter of the Bible in which Jesus is found, without seeing and sensing his deep concern. He was on a very serious mission in this earth and he did not have time to waste. We find his concerns expressed in a number of things that are his concerns even in our day. They will help us to better understand the Son of God and to more clearly see our

responsibilities as his followers. Those who travel with him through the events of John 4 will surely more fully understand the nature of the Son of God.

1. HIS CONCERN ABOUT KNOWLEDGE

This is seen in the Lord's response to the woman who came to draw water from the well (John 4:7). When he asked for a drink she was shocked that Jesus would speak to her, but his response was, "If thou knowest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water" (John 4 :10). Jesus was concerned about what this woman did not know. What she did not know limited her in what she would do. He took the time to inform her of who He was. He led her by teaching to the point where He could say, "I that speak unto thee am He" (John 4:26).

The very nature of the great commission shows a concern about the right kind of knowledge. Does not our Lord say, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, (Matthew 28:18)?" Does this not imply that knowledge is imparted by teaching? That Jesus would send these men to teach implies his concern for men knowing what they need to know about the Son of God.

2. HIS CONCERN ABOUT MORALITY

This is seen in the statement our Lord made to this woman about a husband. Jesus let her know that he knew her state for he said, "Go call thy husband" (John 4:16).

Her response was, "I have no husband" (John 4:17).

Jesus said, "Thou saidst well, I have no husband: for thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband" (John 4:18). Here is evident concern expressed by our Lord about this woman's immorality. He would not pass over it as though it did not exist. He would not treat it in some flippant fashion. He brought her face to face with the facts of her life and when she saw his knowledge she later said, "Come see a man that told me all things that ever I did" (John 4:29). She came to know that she could not hide her sinful state of affairs from the Son of God.

3. HIS CONCERN ABOUT WORSHIP

As the conversation between Christ and the woman progressed, she brought up the subject of worship. She spoke of the worship of the Samaritans (John 4:20). She was also aware of the worship of the Jews in Jerusalem (John 4:20). Jesus let her know the truth about the matter of worship, for he was concerned about worship.

Notice what Jesus had to say about worship: "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:24). In this language our Lord spelled out the parameters of worship. He showed his worship. He is not only concerned about the *fact* of worship, and the *must* of worship, He is also concerned about the *One to be worshipped*. He said, "they that worship him" (John 4:24). God is the One that is to be worshipped. He is the one to be glorified and honored.

Jesus is also concerned about the attitude one has in worship. Such is not to be approached in an insincere or casual way.

He is concerned about one following the proper course of action. It is to be "in truth" and that is according to the truth. Such is spelled out in the word of the Lord and we cannot allow ourselves to think that we can do just anything in worship. Our practices must be taught in the word of truth and must be in harmony with the truth. If we do not show this sort of concern, we do not show the concern that we find shown by the Son of God.

4. HIS CONCERN ABOUT GOD'S WILL

When the disciples returned from the village, they asked the Lord to eat. His response was, "I have meat to eat that you know not, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me and to finish his work" (John 4:32, 34). The first priority of Jesus was always the will of God. That was the first thing that was in the mind of Jesus. It came before food, sleep or other matters. The will of God was supreme and He was concerned about doing his Father's will.

5. HIS CONCERN ABOUT THE LOST STATE OF MAN

The very fact that Jesus spent the time that He did with this

woman shows His concern for the lost. Here was one single soul that was lost and He was concerned. Some of the greatest truths that we find coming from His lips were spoken to this lady. But such was not wasted! Her soul was precious in the sight of Jesus for He was concerned about her lost condition.

Take note of what he said to the apostles about the crowds coming out of village: "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white already unto harvest" (John 4:35). Here are all kinds of opportunities to reach lost people, and that is the way our Lord saw them. He was concerned enough about the lost to die for them. That is the measure of his concern.

Yes, John 4 shows a number of concerns our Lord had. May they also become ours.

"For We Have Sinned"

NEAL POLLARD

How many people, solicited for help, turned Sam Walton down? He probably offered stock for start-up cash, their investment in the future. He had an idea, needed help, but promised rewarding dividends. Those who had faith in Mr. Walton had a long wait, but soon saw the fortune he vowed. Those who turned him away probably forgot about him until his franchise, *Wal-Mart*, was the top grossing retailer in America. Undoubtedly many tried to get in on his prosperity too late.

Such a mistake as a bad financial decision can smart, but it cannot begin to compare with the mistake Israel made in Numbers 13 and 14. Who does not recall the story of the twelve spies? When only Joshua and Caleb returned with a positive report? The ten doubting spies drew the people away from the Lord and the nation's murmuring became a deafening roar against the divine plan for taking Canaan. What was the price for their faithlessness and rebellion? Everyone over the age of twenty, save Caleb (14:24) and Joshua (14:30), would have their

carcasses fall in the wilderness (14:29). The ten rebellious spies died immediately (14:36-37).

The result of Israel's mistake and God's ensuing judgment was national mourning (14:39). With the stench of death from ten of their highest leaders in their nostrils and the fear of a doomed future pounding in their hearts, the people were now ready to submit to the Lord. They ascended the mountain and eagerly reported, "Here we are, and we will go up to the place which the Lord has promised, *for we have sinned*" (14:40) In Moses' reply, Israel learned the high price attached to sinning against God (14:39-45).

SIN IS THE SOURCE OF SORROW

"The people mourned greatly." Why? Their lack of faith was sin, which led to divine punishment. Plato said, "sin is disease, deformity, weakness." Ask a woman who has mutilated her body through abortion. Ask the homosexual whose body is withering from AIDS. Ask the alcoholic, whose liver is eaten with disease. Are these happy with their sin? James tells certain sinners to "weep and howl" for eternal miseries their sins were producing (James 5:1-6). David's sins brought tears to his eyes (cf. Psalm 51). The sin of a greed caused the rich young ruler sorrow (cf. Matthew 19:22).

SIN IS TRANSGRESSION OF THE LORD'S COMMANDMENT (41)

Moses said, "Now why do you transgress the command of the Lord?" Their present sin was their attempt to take the land which God said was now off-limits to them. While He wanted them to go before, now God wanted disobedient Israel to wander in the wilderness. Their formation on the mountain top was transgression of the Lord's command. So, too, all sin is a breaking of God's law (cf. I John 3:4).

SIN IS AN UNPROSPEROUS PROPOSITION (41)

Seeing Israel's preparation to take Canaan, Moses warned, "... This will not succeed." Sin deceives. That is why so many do what is so wrong. It looks good, it feels good, so it must be good (cf. I John 2:15-17). Sin is spiritual pestilence (Romans

3:23). Sin is spiritual privation (cf. James 4:4). sin is spiritual poison (Romans 6:23). But, sin is never spiritual prosperity!!

SIN IS GOD-LESS ACTIVITY (42)

Moses warned the people that "the Lord" was "not among" them. Anything we wish to do that we would not want God to see us doing is, it is safe to say, sin. anything we wear, anywhere we go, and anyone we choose as companion and mate must be such that we know God approves.

SIN IS DEFEATING (43, 45)

While we can do all with divine assistance (cf. Philippians 4:13), What can we hope to do without the Lord? Moses said, "... The Lord will not be with you." They decided to go toward Canaan anyway, only to be attacked and driven back by the Amalekites and Canaanites (45). When before they decided they could not do God's will with God's help, now they figured they could do their own will without God's help. What happened? They were defeated. Even if we gain the whole world, if we lose our own souls we have suffered utter defeat (cf. Matthew 16:26).

SIN IS PRESUMPTUOUS

The prelude to their defeat was their presumption. Deuteronomy 1:43-45 gives the rest of the story. They willfully sinned, were chased and driven back, and came back to Kadesh weeping before the Lord. The price for presumptuous sin under the Law of Moses was indeed high for the Old Law declared, "Now the man who acts presumptuously and will not heed the priest who stands to minister there before the Lord your God, or the judge, that man shall *die*. So you shall put away the *evil* person from Israel" (Deuteronomy 17:12). The false teachers in the New Testament were labeled "presumptuous and self willed" individuals who respected nothing but their own lust (II Peter 2:10). Willful sin, for those who have obeyed the truth, is not covered by the blood of Christ unless one repents of it (Hebrews 10:26).

SIN IS A DEPARTURE FROM GOD

When Israel took to the mountain, "the ark of the covenant of the Lord [and] Moses" stayed back in the camp. When one decides to sin, he decides to leave God (Isaiah 59:1-2). One cannot walk with God and run with the devil (cf. Matthew 6:24). No wonder Christ calls sin the "far country" (cf. Matthew 15:13). Remember Silesius' lament, that "Sin is nothing but turning from God one's face and having turned it thus, turning it toward death." The faithful child of God strives to live the words of John, who said, "Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God" (I John 3:9).

"Preacheritis"

JOHNNY RAMSEY

A study of the third chapter of I Corinthians ought to be necessary, required reading for all brethren who preach. Through the years a lot of damage to the cause of Christ has been the result of men who thought more highly of themselves than they should. One of the most foolish things brethren can do is to pit favorite preachers against other servants of God who also labor in the vineyard of the Lord. The church in Corinth, many centuries ago, was guilty of this shallow exercise in human wisdom. The party spirit has always been cultivated by Satan and is a plague in our midst even today. Preachers who encourage such action in order to feather their own nests are most unwise and weak. Historians tell us that major streets in ancient Corinth had been named for famous orators. This esteem of public speakers carried over into the body of Christ and brought division (I Corinthians 1:10-13). Paul, inspired to write by the Holy Spirit (2:13), sternly rebuked such sectarian strife and let it be known that belonging to Christ ought to be enough for any saint. Since we all (Paul, Peter, Apollos) belong

to the Savior we find our center of gravity in Him was the great apostles argument. It is even so today. Every Christian elevates the Redeemer and we each serve one another. Individual talents must be used, lovingly, to build up the body of the Lord (I Corinthians 12; Romans 12:1-5; I Peter 4:11). We do damage to the church when we build cliques around men. The clergy-laity concept of denominational structure is man's invention rather than divine mandate (I Peter 2:9). Each servant of Jesus, utilizing his own talent (Matthew 25) glorifies God. Oh, how we need this lesson!

"We share our mutual woes
Our mutual burdens bear
And often for each other flows
A sympathizing tear."

In the balance of the third stanza of I Corinthians the writer sets forth how imperative it is that we build solidly upon Christ, the one and only foundation (3:11). We must take heed to build well and solidly. For, regardless of how sincerely we try there will be human failure. Some of the material will not endure. Sadly, some folk just do not stick to the loyalty that is so essential to success in heavenly matters. How it grieves us when folk return to the beggarly elements of the world (Galatians 4) or to the pollutions from whence they were once delivered (II Peter 2:21).

"O for a faith that will not shrink
Though pressed by every foe
That will not tremble on the brink
Of any earthly woe."

Christians must not allow envy, strife, pride or schism to deter them from being God's building, heaven's husbandry, for being laborers together with the Almighty is a high compliment. We must take heed how we build! May we never glory in men but in the living God. May it always remain in our memory that we form the temple of Jehovah and as living stones built upon the solid foundation of Christ Jesus we are a spiritual habitation of God. Noble words ring out this brilliant third chapter of the first Corinthian epistle... "And you belong to Christ." Let us,

therefore, put forever out of our lives the insidious sin of "preacheritis" for we all belong to one another because of the love of the Father Found in His beloved Son!

"Jesus, Jesus, Jesus
Sweetest name I know
Fills my every longing
Keeps me singing as I go."

Preaching The Word of God

ELWOOD HOLT

THE WORLD NEEDS THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

The world has had too much philosophy and not enough Gospel. The fundamental duty of the Church is to preach the truth of Christ. The Church is a preaching institution. But most people have forgotten this if they ever knew it. With some the Church has become a bazaar for the distribution of food and clothing. With some it is no more than a soup line, existing for the sole purpose of meting out "loaves and fishes." With some it is an institution for the promotion of selfish interests. But with the Lord it is the institution burdened with the responsibility of preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Jeremiah 23:29 declares the Bible to be a "hammer and a fire." Paul in Hebrews 4:12 declares it to be "two-edged sword." A hammer has power to break—a fire consumes, and a knife cuts. These figures accurately describe the power of the word of God over sin. But too many people in today's society want a hammer with a slick head, a fire that won't burn, and a knife too dull to cut. The word of the Gospel is powerful when employed correctly. The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16). Perverted it becomes a potion of death and destruction.

A fearful responsibility rests upon the Church as it preaches the truth. Falsehood never liberated a single soul from the

bondage of sin. And it never will. One can't warp falsehood up in enough sincerity to save a single soul. The truth of Christ is not compatible with error. Where truth is planted error is uprooted. There is too much preaching now about the Bible and not enough preaching from the Bible itself. An old preacher said to a young preacher once, "Abe, when you preach, always take a long text: that much of your sermon will be right, whether the rest is or not." And friends, all too often, about the only meat a congregation receives is the long text anymore. Human hearts still cry out for the bread of life. Many have cried out for the "bread of life" only to receive a serpent. God's word, the New Testament, is sufficient. It is all the human heart needs for its present and eternal satisfaction. The word is not a dead letter as some claim. It is alive and active. It is sufficient for conversion (Psalm 19:7). It furnishes unto all good works (II Timothy 3:16,17). It gives us all things that pertain unto life and godliness (II Peter 1:3). We must neither add to it nor take from it (Revelation 22: 18, 19). It is truly the creed that needs no revision. It meets the needs of the whole world (Matthew 28:19). It is pure (Psalm 11:40). It is perfect (Psalm 19:7). It is enduring (Luke 21:33). We shall be judged by it (John 12:48). Our objections to human creeds are many. They are not inspired of God. They do not meet the needs of the whole world. They are not perfect. they must be revised every few years. We shall not be judged by them. They make void God's word. They teach things contrary to the word of God. they are the main instruments in keeping religious people divided. We plead for the acceptance of God's word.

Oh, it will be a dark day when gospel preachers—true and faithful preachers—substitute book reviews, current events, science, philosophy or anything else for the word of the living God. Over many pulpits in days of old were the words, "Preach the Word." Webster said when the preacher took his text from the Bible and preached from the newspaper, he preferred to stay at home. Might not this be the cause of so many empty pews today?

Many things the Lord commands us to do seem to be very foolish to some. In fact, Paul, in the first chapter of I Corinthians

discusses some things that men count foolish. But, he adds, "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." He didn't say that foolish preaching pleased God, but the foolishness of preaching. There is entirely too much foolish preaching in the world today. People in Paul's day looked upon preaching as so much nonsense . . . some have the same attitude now. But the preaching was not foolish; men just looked upon it as being foolish. IT IS NEVER FOOLISH TO DO WHAT GOD COMMANDS. Oh "we" of little faith!

Sincerity About Doctrine?

MIKE BENSON

Is doctrine really all that important? Shouldn't we be more concerned about our relationship of God and being sincere, rather than putting so much emphasis on what we believe?"

Several passages of scripture come to mind as I consider this question. Please study the following carefully:

1. SINCERITY IS IMPORTANT

Paul wrote, "that you may approve the things excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ" (Philippians 1:10). See also Ephesians 6:24. Recognize however, that it is possible for an individual to be very sincere—but to be sincerely wrong. Saul of Tarsus is a prime example. He was a sincere man with a clear conscience (Acts 23:1), who felt that it was his duty to persecute Christians (Acts 26:9-11). He later learned that he was wrong, even in his sincerity (I Timothy 1:13-15).

I was recently told that a close friend had been injured in an automobile accident. I had no reason to doubt this message nor the person who shared the information with me. The next day I learned that my friend had not been in an accident, but that he was in the hospital due to an illness. For several hours I sincerely believed that my friend had been hurt in an accident,

but I was mistaken. Regardless of how sure or sincere I was about the incident, I was wrong. What is the point? Simply that sincerity is important (in fact, we cannot be saved without it), but it must not be held in higher regard than truth!

2. DOCTRINE IS IMPORTANT

We are told to give attendance to doctrine (I Timothy 4:13), to take heed to doctrine (I Timothy 4:16) to labor in doctrine (I Timothy 5:17), and to "speak the things which are proper for sound (healthy) doctrine" (Titus 2:1). Doctrine is important! Paul wrote, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine . . ." (II Timothy 3:16).

3. WE MUST BE SINCERE AS WELL AS DOCTRINALLY ACCURATE IN ORDER TO BE PLEASING TO GOD

John wrote, "Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds" (II John 9-11). Jesus Himself taught, "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). Could Jesus say, "Depart from me" even if we are sincere and say, "Lord, Lord" and do many good works? What does the Bible say?

"God Is Not The Author Of Confusion"

FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

"For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints" (1 Cor. 14:33). Nothing could be

stated any clearer than this. Yet today there IS "confusion among religious people about many Bible topics. For example, there is "confusion" in the minds of many regarding who should be baptized. Some think babies and other innocent children are fit subject for baptism, while others insist that it is for accountable people only. But God is not to be blamed for the division or confusion on this [or any other] subject.

Please remember: One cannot be taught wrong about who should be baptized, and be baptized right!

God Is Not The Author Of Confusion About Who Should Be Baptized

The Roman Catholic Church and some Protestant Denominations "baptize" babies. However, God plainly teaches that before baptism one must be taught. Jesus Christ himself said: "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them . . . (Matt. 28:19). There is no Bible authority to baptize an infant, nor a little child—one not capable of first being taught. In the Bible, people "gladly received his word" before they were baptized (Acts 2:41). Teaching must precede Bible baptism. God is not the author of confusion on this point.

(2)—God plainly teaches that before baptism one must believe. Prior to being baptized, one must believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, Jesus sent his apostles to "Teach all nations" (Matt. 28:19), or to "preach the gospel to every creature," promising: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:15-16). Jesus did not say, "He that is baptized when he is a baby, and later is taught, and becomes a believer, shall be saved." It does not read that way in anybody's Bible! One who does not believe in the resurrected Christ (Rom. 10:9) will remain condemned, even if he could find someone who would "baptize" him! You see: man is condemned at his first refusal to obey God! Hence Jesus says: "But he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). This ("Shall be damned") would be true, even if he got someone to "baptize" him—for without faith such a bogus or counterfeit "baptism" would not please God (Heb. 11:6).

A man from Ethiopia wanted to be baptized. He asked an inspired evangelist named Philip: "what doth hinder me to be

baptized? And Philip said, if thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God . . . And he baptized him" (Acts 8:36-38).

Likewise we read of the Samaritans that "When they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women" (Acts 8:12). Note clearly that only "believers"—no babies!—were baptized" (Acts 18:8). No unbelievers—and all babies are incapable of believing the gospel!—were baptized in the New Testament.

Today, should unbelievers be baptized? No! "God is not the author of confusion" on who should be baptized! It is for believers, not for unbelieving babies.

(3) God requires repentance before one is baptized. To the apostles, Christ promised the Holy Spirit "will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13; 14:26). They were directed to preach 'repentance and remission of sins . . . in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:46-49). thus, what began at Jerusalem is for all nations. But on the beginning day Pentecost, (Acts 2) the Holy Spirit guided Peter to demand that they "repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). Notice the order: (1) Repent, then (2) be baptized. No sins will be forgiven until we repent of them. Jesus declared: "Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3). And the Holy Spirit, sent by God not the apostles, teaches that before one is baptized, he must repent (Acts 2:38). This excludes infants from being baptized for three reasons (A) Infants do not have any sins of which to repent. (B) Infants are not capable of repenting, Which is defined as "a change of mind for the better, heartily to amend, with abhorrence of past sin." This is something which babies cannot possibly do. And (C) infants do not need forgiveness or "remission of sins." Therefore infants are not to be baptized. "God is not the author of confusion" on this point.

Who then should be baptized? One who has been taught the gospel of Christ, one who believes that "God hath raised him from the dead" (Rom. 10:9), must repent of his past sins (Acts

2:38), before he is baptized. "God is not the author of confusion" about who should be baptized!

Please remember: One cannot be taught wrong about who should be baptized, and be baptized right!

Will Your Children Go To Heaven?

JASON R. ROBERTS

The above question should stimulate interest within the hearts of every mother and father who are privileged to have children whom the psalmist referred to as "... an heritage of the Lord" (Psalm 127:3). Children are indeed the product of something Divine (cf. Gen. 2:7; Zech. 12:1; Heb. 12:9). Consequently, they have an immortal soul that will one day spend an eternity with the Lord in Heaven or an eternity in Hell with the devil and his angels. Consider the following.

Some parents today are concerned about whether or not their son will be the star Cricket, football, or basketball player. Others are concerned about whether or not their daughter excels in the given sport in which she has developed interest. There are others who may be wondering where their children are going to go to college, and what they will become career-wise. And these concerns in of themselves are not wrong. However, when mothers and fathers are more concerned about the "secular welfare" of their children rather than their "spiritual welfare" they have failed as parents.

Will your children go to Heaven? There are many things that a parent learns by means of rearing children. Parents are going to make mistakes. But there is one mistake that parents cannot afford to ever make, and that is they must never willfully endorse anything that will jeopardize the souls of their children, and yet do parents really want their children to go to heaven when the following takes place?

Will are children go to heaven when we encourage them to excel and excel in their school homework so they will graduate with honors, make it to a prestigious University, and one day make lots of money, and yet fail to encourage them to excel in their Bible school homework which will prepare them for the ULTIMATE and FINAL graduation day (2 Tim. 2:15; Rev. 20:11-15)?

Will our children go to heaven when we encourage them to excel in athletic events so they can win first place and fill the house with hundreds of trophies, and yet fail to encourage them to excel in winning the greatest race or event ever to take place (Heb. 12:1-2 cf. Eph. 6:10; Philip 3:13-14; 2 Tim. 2:2-5), which offers the greatest reward (Rev. 2:10; 1 Pet. 5:4)?

Will our children go to heaven when we attend their championship football or baseball game when the game was scheduled on Sunday or Wednesday or during a gospel meeting at our home congregation, knowing full well that God expects us to be at the meeting house?

Will our children go to heaven when we tell them that it is alright for them to make the decision to go to this year's prom or school dance even though we feel that it is wrong, knowing full well that God has already made that decision (Gal 5:19-21; cf. Gal 2:20, 1 Cor. 15:33)?

Will our children go to heaven when we tell them that it is alright for them to go to the party after the Friday night football game when we know that alcohol will be there, even though we are aware of the fact that God specifically condemns social drinking and carousing (Gal 5:19-21 cf. Eph. 5:11)?

Will our children go to heaven when they see us sing, "Oh How I Love Jesus," and "All to Jesus I Surrender" on Sunday morning, and yet we refuse to bring ourselves and them on Sunday night and Wednesday nights (Heb. 10:25; cf. Matt. 6:33)?

Will our children go to Heaven when they see how we've treated the precious bride of Christ, knowing that one day they will be making a choice to become or to not become a member of that church, even though that salvation is only found in His Church (2 Tim 2:10, Gal. 3:26-27; Eph. 5:23b)?

Will our precious children, whom God has graciously given us, go to Heaven, when the "kingdom of God and His righteousness" are not the first two items on our list (Matt. 6:33)?

God only knows how many mothers and fathers will be lost at the judgement as a result of encouraging their children to walk down the pathway of destruction.

A better and more fitting question should be, "Will we parents go to heaven if we have willfully encouraged our children to live a life of sin, knowing that they died in rebellion to the one who gave them to us?"

"Out Of The Same Mouth"

DALTON KEY

Some hypocrisies are more easily concealed than others; hiding a forked tongue is almost impossible. If those who make a habit of speaking out of both sides of their mouth could only hear themselves as others hear them, perhaps they would think more and say less.

Most of us are growing weary of hearing . . .

. . . a brother or sister in Christ who praises someone to his face, only to riddle him with carping criticism the moment his back is turned.

. . . fellow-Christians who sing, "I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord," during the Sunday morning services, and then tear the church apart over lunch.

. . . brethren who speak words of piety before the church and words of vulgarity before the world.

. . . Christian husbands and wives who speak with warmth and kindness to everyone—except one another.

"Blessing and cursing come out of the same mouth. My brothers, these things ought not to be so. Does a fountain give sweet and bitter water from the same opening? My brothers, can

a fig tree produce olives, or a vine figs? Neither can saltwater yield sweet" (James 3:10-12, McCord).

We may attempt to deceive; we may be quick to deny. But we deceive no one but ourselves and deny nothing but the painfully obvious: "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Matthew 12:35).

Stand Up For Truth

JIMMY JIVIDEN

When Israel was preparing to enter the land of Canaan, Moses gave this exhortation:

"So you shall observe to do just as the Lord your God had commanded you; you shall not turn aside to the right or to the left" (Deuteronomy 5:32).

They had a body of revealed truth to keep without compromising with the culture of Canaan. To the degree they followed this exhortation, they remained faithful to God. To the degree they refused, they apostatized.

Historians have often observed the process of apostasy. At first there is a people grounded in the truth with a desire not to wander either to the right or to the left. Compromise with error is first resisted. After a time, compromise is tolerated. After a period of toleration errors is espoused. Finally the espoused error is defended. Apostasy has taken place. All that it takes for error to triumph is for good men to say nothing.

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