

# THE BIBLE TEACHER

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## Isolating Scriptures

It is a common practice for men to isolate specific verses of scripture in an attempt to teach and uphold certain doctrines. This is generally true with passages that have to do with faith, repentance, prayer, grace, and other similar subjects. For instance, on faith they may refer to John 3:16, Romans 10:10 and numerous other scriptures that speak only of faith or belief. It is true that the Bible teaches the importance of faith in relation to man's salvation, but after isolating all of the verses of scripture that deal with faith, the question then comes as to what to do with all of those verses that deal with other conditions of salvation? Would it not be just as fair to isolate scriptures that speak of baptism, works, and so on, and teach only those? Could the argument not very well be made that these alone save?

The fact is, however, that nothing "only" can save. Faith "only" doesn't save and neither does baptism "only" save. How could one fully read the scriptures and come to such a conclusion? The problem is that so many people are taught unscriptural

things and then they go to the scriptures to try to find verses that would support these teachings. Someone has said that you can prove anything by the Bible, and you can when you take it out of its context or misapply it. The foregoing case is a good example of this.

My friends, it is very dangerous to deal so lightly with the scripture. We should want to know what the Bible teaches and when we learn that, we should accept it whether it agrees with what we have been taught, what we believe, or whatever else might get in the way. The truth is the truth and it cannot be changed.

There are some common-sense rules that we must observe when dealing with God's word. First, we should listen carefully to what is being said. Second, we should never take a verse out of context and isolate it from other verses of scripture. Third, we should consider all of the verses on a particular subject. Fourth, we should never array scripture against scripture so that we make the Lord's word contradict itself. Fifth, scriptures that are properly understood will not divide us but will unite us in Christ. Sixth, faith only, works only, and so on with many other things, will not save anyone. Seventh, the Lord has always required faith and obedience of those who wish to follow him. And eighth, we should accept the results of our study without question.

We must also remember that Peter said that "no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation." (2 Peter 1:20). He also said, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever, Amen." (1 Peter 4:11). James says that we should be doers of the word. (James 1:22). Christ tells us that we must do the will of the Father in heaven. (Matthew 7:21).

We are further told that we are not to add to the word or to subtract from it. (Revelation 22:18, 19). Paul said that even if an angel came from heaven and preached another gospel that the curse of the Lord would be upon him. (Galatians 1:6-9). Christ

says that if we reject him and his word that we have one that judgeth us in the last day, the work that he has spoken.' (John 12:48).

The Lord has all power and authority. (Matthew 28:18). He became the word or the spokesman of God. (John 1:1-5). Even God spoke from heaven to say that he was well pleased with his Son and that we should hear him. (Matthew 17:5). Those who do so are wise. (Matthew 7:24-29). Finally we read, "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." (Revelation 22:14).

When we hear the word of the Lord, and we obey his commandments, we are only accepting the salvation that he offers by his grace. (Ephesians 2:8, 9). If we do not respect him enough to do this, or if we do not have enough faith to do what he has asked us to do, then how can we be saved?

Therefore, if we will deal with God's word fairly, believe it, and obey it, then it can lead to our salvation. If we misuse it and reject the real truth of its contents, then it will finally destroy us. As always, the choice is left up to us. May the Lord help us to take the right one.



**associate  
editorial**

## The Distinctiveness Of The Church Of Christ

No. 3

Not only the church of Christ accepts the right authority, Christ, in matters of faith, but secondly we ponder the fact that preachers of Christ's church preach today the same gospel which

was preached by the apostles. What the apostle Paul declared to the Corinthians then, faithful gospel preachers today preach the same message. The apostle said, "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures." (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). Preachers of the church of Christ do not preach, as denominational preachers preach, their own testimonies and experiences. But they preach the old gospel, which the apostles preached in the beginning because they believe that it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes. (Romans 1:16).

Thirdly, the church of Christ believe in the same plan of salvation which was authorised by Christ and declared by his apostles in the beginning. Before going back to heaven, the Lord had commanded the disciples, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." and "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15, 16). Beginning from the day of Pentecost, of which we read in Acts 2, this was the only plan of salvation which the disciples of the Lord gave to people everywhere. (Acts 2:38; 8:35-32; 22:16). There is not one example in the entire New Testament where an alien sinner was ever told to confess his sins and pray for salvation; or where a preacher ever prayed for one's salvation. They were all taught the gospel of Christ alike, and when they believed in him then they were encouraged to repent and be baptized in the name of or by the authority of Christ for the forgiveness of sins. And this is exactly what the church of Christ does, believe and preach today. There is no other way to be saved. (Galatians 1:6-9).

Now, the fourth distinctive mark of identification of the church of Christ is that the church wears the name of Christ, her builder, and members of the church of Christ are called Christians

after the name of Christ. Speaking to the members of the church at Corinth the apostle Paul said, "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." (1 Corinthians 12:27). Since the Bible says, the body is the church, (Ephesians 1:22, 23), therefore in saying that they were the body of Christ he was actually saying that they were the church of Christ. And then at Romans 16:16 while speaking of many congregations of the church, the apostle said, "... The churches of Christ salute you" The church belongs to Christ, because he built her. He did not build a material building, neither did he promise to build one. But the church he built is a body of the saved people of all the earth, in which he adds, daily such as should be saved, by faith in him and obedience to his commands. (Acts 2:47; Mark 16:16). The Bible also teaches that Christ has purchased the church with his own blood. (Acts 20:28). Therefore the church wears the name of Christ, or is called by his name, to honor him.

Likewise the members of the church of Christ throughout the world are known as Christians. Again, they are called after the name of their saviour. Like we have noticed earlier they are neither Catholic nor Protestant, but Christians only. This is not true of all the other modern churches and their members who are known by some peculiar name or term which was never used in the scriptures to refer to the disciples of the Lord. This is the only name which is authorized by God. (Isaiah 62:2). We read that the disciples of Christ were called Christian. (Acts 11:26). King Agrippa knew this. (Acts 26:28). The apostle Peter, in his epistle, exhorted, "But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busy body in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this behalf." (1 Peter 4:15, 16). Then James wrote about some people in his epistle and asked, "Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?" (James 2:7). Which name would it be? What was that worthy name by which they were called? Methodist? Pentecostal? Baptist? No. Of course, Christian. (Acts 11:26).

Fifthly, the church of Christ want to abide in the doctrine of Christ, which the church received through the apostles of Christ, written in the New Testament of Christ. At 2 John 10 we read :

"Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God, He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath the Father and the Son." Some say, why bother about doctrine? John said that the doctrine of Christ is very important, and according to him he who does not abide in the doctrine of Christ, he is Christless and Godless. This is the reason why the church or Christ does not believe in many things and does not practice many things which our denominational friends believe and practice religiously. To name some, we do not believe in confirmation, baptizing babies, sprinkling for baptism, calling preachers Pastor and Reverend, etc. We do not believe in a special clergy or priesthood. We do not believe in sacraments praying to saints, and using prayer or creed books. Likewise, we do not celebrate special religious days, such as, Christmas, Good Friday, Easter, etc. All of these things and many others are doctrines and commandments of men. (Matthew 15:9). The New Testament of Christ does not teach them.

Our plea to all sincere people is to leave all human names, creed books, and all the doctrines and the commandments of men, and come back to the Bible, call Bible things by Bible names and do Bible things as is written in the book of God. We can all be one in Christ, in his church, speaking the same thing, perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment (1 Corinthians 1:10), if we all abide in the doctrine of Christ only, then we can all go to heaven together.

## The Power Of The Tongue

(Part 2)

**Raymond Elliott**

The misuse of the tongue by engaging in gossip and hearsay can cause separation among brethren, friends, and family members. "He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends." "And a whisperer separateth chief friends." "A talebearer revealeth secrets, therefore meddle not with him that flattereth with his



lips." (Proverbs 27:9; 16:28; 20:19). We should understand that among the seven things that God hates are "a lying tongue" and a "false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren." (Proverbs 6:16-19).

There are individuals who are not content with matters being as they are but will intentionally make efforts to destroy a good name and stir up strife and discord among people. "An ungodly man diggeth up evil; and in his lips there is a burning fire." (Proverbs 16:27). The New Testament writer informs us that the fuel for such a fire is derived from "hell." (James 3:6). "Where no wood is there the fire goeth out; so where there is no tale-bearer, the strife ceaseth." (Proverbs 26:20). "So the tongue also is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how much wood is kindled by how small fire." (James 3:5) ! The following is a poem entitled, "Gossip Town" and well illustrates the preceding Biblical passages :

It isn't far to Gossip Town,  
On the shores of "Falsehood Bay"  
Where "old Dame Rumor" in a rustling gown,  
Is going the live long day ?

It isn't far to Gossip Town,  
For those who want to go,  
And Idleness is the train that will take you down,  
In just an hour or so.

The "Thoughtless Road" is the popular route,  
And most folk start that way,  
But it is steep down grade, and if you don't watch out  
You will land in "Falsehood Bay."

The principal street is called "they say,"  
And "I've Heard" is the Public Well,  
And the breeze that blows from "Falsehood Bay"  
Is ladened with "Now don't you tell."

Just back of the Park is "Slander Row"  
T'was there a good name died,  
Pierced by a shaft from "Jealousy's Bow,"  
In the hand of "Envious Pride."

The people that live in Gossip Town,  
 All reap the seed they sow,  
 And you will find as they found,  
 If ever you chance to go.

(Author Unknown).

The Bible teaches that one should learn to control his tongue; otherwise, our religion is of no value. "If any man thinketh himself to be religious, while he bridleth not his tongue but deceiveth his heart, this man's religion is vain". (James 1:26).

The inspired writer instructs the Christian to "be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath." (James 1:19). Usually, the reverse is practiced. One is more apt to be swift to speak and slow to hear. No doubt much grief has been the result of such neglect of good advice. Those who truly enjoy life must practice self control in the proper use of the tongue. "For he that would love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile." (I Peter 3:10).

The tongue should be used for good. The Christian must train his tongue to speak soft words in times of anger. "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver." (Proverbs 25:11). "A soft answer turneth away wrath; but grievous words stir up anger." (Proverbs 15:1). "Pleasant words are as an honey comb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones." (Proverbs 16:24).

The Christian should use his tongue to tell the story of Jesus and his love. "The mouth of a righteous man is a well of life." (Proverbs 10:11). "If you cannot sing like angels, if you cannot preach like Paul, you can tell the love of Jesus and say he died for all . . ." (From the song, "Balm of Gilead").

Our tongues should be used to encourage others in life. We need to speak words of encouragement to the young, the middle age person and the very elderly person. We need to say kind words to those who are sick and those in bereavement over the death of a loved one.

"Don't wait to give your flowers,  
 Till some lonely soul has gone;  
 Give them while he's living,  
 Time passes swiftly on.  
 Kind words that are timely spoken,  
 Flowers that are given today  
 May heal some heart that's breaking  
 Or brighten someone's way.  
 So don't wait to give your flowers,  
 Tomorrow may be too late,  
 The soul you meant to comfort,  
 May have passed beyond the gate."

The greatest confession that one can make in this life is that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Paul mentioned to Timothy the "good profession" (confession) which he (Timothy) had made "before many witnesses." (I Timothy 6:12). That confession was what Timothy believed in his heart. "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Romans 10:9, 10). Philip, the evangelist, taught the man from Ethiopia of Jesus Christ. The eunuch became a believer in the Son of God. He then desired to be baptized into Christ for the remission of his sins and inquired of Philip why he could not be baptized that moment. "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." Then Philip baptized the penitent believer as commanded by the Lord. (Acts 8:35-39; Mark 16:15, 16). Have you made the good confession today?

## What Constitutes An Offense ?

**Bob Duncan**

Words do not always mean the same thing in all their occurrences. The modern dictionary definition of a word might

not be the meaning attached to the same word in some Bible passage. For example, according to the *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, to *baptize* means, among other things, "to sprinkle water on." Careful Bible students know that the word never has that meaning in the Bible nor in any writings of the Bible period.

According to this same dictionary, an *offense* is "The act of offending or causing anger, resentment, displeasure, or the like." Unfortunately, this is the meaning so many attach to the word when they see it in the New Testament, and the results can be quite troublesome. While it is true that this is the most common usage of the word at present, in the New Testament the word never has precisely that meaning. When Paul said, "It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak" (Romans 14:21), he was not saying that one should never do anything to cause his brother to be angry or displeased. He was saying rather that one should not do anything to cause his brother to commit sin. That is the very idea inherent in the word translated "offended" in this passage. The noun form of the same Greek word occurs in verse thirteen of this chapter, and is there rendered "occasion to fall."

The same Greek word is used twice in I Corinthians 8:13, where Paul wrote: "Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend." The apostle here shows his genuine concern for the welfare of a brother who might be weak, and who might easily be caused to sin. The context shows that under consideration is a brother who, for lack of instruction, believes it sinful to eat certain meats. But in his spiritually weak condition he might eat those meats even in violation of his conscience if he should see a mature Christian like Paul eating them. Such eating, Paul says, while not sinful within itself, could cause the weak brother to sin by eating and violating his conscience.

A failure to understand the significance of the word *offend* in the New Testament has led some to misuse these two passages, as

well as some others. Applying the commonly understood meaning of the word has caused some to argue that certain good works should be abandoned merely because there are some who are displeased by our engaging in them. This is a shameful perversion of the teaching of the New Testament.

## The Fatal Night Of Daniel 5:30

John G. Shaver

Belshazzar was the descendant of Nebuchadnezzar, who flourished between five hundred and six hundred years before Christ. During his reign, the city of Babylon, the metropolis of the Chaldean empire, was in its greatest glory. It is said that this city was fifteen miles in length and width; that it was surrounded by a wall of bitumin, eighty seven feet thick, and three hundred fifty feet high. It had a hundred gates; that is, twenty five to each of the four sides of the city; these gates with their posts, were all of brass; there was a street, corresponding with each gate, fifteen miles long, and one hundred fifty feet wide; and it had six hundred seventy six squares, of two miles and a quarter in circumference. In addition to this, the city possessed splendid hanging gardens and terraces, two magnificent palaces, and the renowned temple of Belus. The city, in addition to its impregnable wall, was defended by the deep bed of the river Euphrates. Such was this famous city at the time to which our text refers. At this period, the Jews were within it, in a state of captivity. The overthrow of Babylonian power had been clearly predicted by Isaiah some two hundred years before; and now this is literally accomplished, the last grain of sand is falling in the hourglass of Belshazzar, his cup of iniquity is full, his career of impiety ended, the sword is suspended, the fatal arrow is aimed, and is about to be directed by the finger of God. Observe the circumstances connected with this momentous night.

It was a night of dissipation and sinful pleasure. The wicked monarch convenes the company of his princes, nobles and concubines; the evening is devoted to banqueting and intemperance;

the intoxicating goblet is passed around freely, and nothing is heard but the sounds of revelling, and the din of maddening mirth. How many has the love and practice of sensual pleasure destroyed; our country has lost some of its most able and talented people by the destructive influence of sinful pleasure; hundreds and thousands of parents have gone down to a premature grave through the revellings of their dissipated children; homes have been desolated, wife's hearts broken, children worse than orphans through fathers being addicted to sinful pleasures; eternity alone will disclose the unnumbered multitudes that the tavern, the race-course, and other sinful practices have destroyed forever.

It was a night of impious profanity. Revelling leads to profanity; purity of speech is soon lost in the carousing bowl; here, on this occasion, nothing will serve the infatuated monarch, but that the vessels of the Lord's house must be introduced, to bear the intoxicating draught around to the thoughtless assembly. No doubt this was an affront to the captive Jews, and in contempt of the God they worshipped. Surely, Belshazzar must have known the events of his grandfather's reign, how the God, to whom these vessels had been consecrated, had driven him to herd with the beasts of the field; but revelling and dissipation had prepared him for everything wicked and daring. Allow me to say, that infidelity and contempt for everything sacred, is generally produced under similar circumstances; skepticism is seldom the result of deliberate reflection, but of the love of sinful pleasure. A certain amount of infidelity is necessary to render the goblet sparkling, and the draught delicious.

It was a night of recklessness and apathy. They were aware that the enemy, a powerful army, was at their gates, yet relying on the security of the city, they gave themselves no concern. Now was time for reflection, but reason is dethroned; now they should have been watchful and vigilant, but they were sunk in intoxicating stupor. What a scene! A city engulfed in dissipation, and a powerful army undermining her walls. Yet recklessness is the natural consequence of dissipation and pleasure; these scenes blind the eyes of the mind, they deaden the moral feeling, they brutalize the passions, and sear the conscience as with a hot iron. How rarely are men drawn from the whirlpool of pleasure; friends

admonish, but they hear not; ministers preach, but they hear not; health is undermined, and often, even when the last enemy is known to be at the door, they persist in their course of sin and death.

It was a night of supernatural warning. See the banquet hall; behold the sinful guests; the king elevated, the goblets passing around; but behold, the countenance of the wicked monarch changes, his eyes indicate terror, his knees smite together, his whole frame trembles, the mirth is interrupted, fear comes upon the impious assembly as a whirlwind. What has produced this astonishing change? Behold, upon the wall there is the appearance of the hand of a man; he leaves an inscription, which outglares the dazzling light of the banquet hall; a few words are written, and the ominous hand retires. The wise men and soothsayers are called in to interpret, but all in vain. At length, the queen mother is called in, and she recommends Daniel. Daniel, the servant of God is introduced; he refers Belshazzar to the history of Nebuchadnezzar; then he refers to his wickedness (Dan. 5:22-23), and at last, he gives the fearful interpretation. *Mene*, which signifies numbered or finished; thy days are numbered, this is the last of them. *Tekel*, 'weighed': the balance is against thee. *Upharsin* 'divided': thy kingdom is divided, the Medes and Persians are now entering the city, and thy reign is ended.

It was a night of fearful realization. The enemy had changed the course of the river; the keepers of the gates, in their revelings, had left them open; the army passed in to the city. The palace is besieged, and the banquet of wine is exchanged for the flowing of blood, and that night Belshazzar was slain. Such is truly typical of the end of the sinner; he may revel, and laugh, and scoff, but the end will come, the results will be appalling; the sequel is inevitable death.

When will mankind ever learn? When will we ever come to the realization that there is no security against God's displeasure? May we take warning from this illustration from Holy Writ and apply God's infallible word to our lives.

# Elected Unto Salvation

John Waddey

Many profound doctrines are revealed to us in God's Word. These are described as strong meat (Heb. 5:14), and things hard to be understood. (II Pet. 3:16). One of these, difficult but beautiful and encouraging, is the doctrine of *election*. Paul wrote that God "chose us in [Christ] before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish before him... having foreordained us unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ . . ." (Eph. 1:4-5).

The word *elect* means to be chosen or selected. Election is the divine selection of human objects so as to bring them into a special or saving relationship with God.

We read in Scripture of the election of individuals to perform some particular service for God which has no necessary connection with their salvation. Cyrus, king of Persia was chosen to restore captive Israel to her homeland. (Is. 45:1-4). Jesus chose the apostles to carry his message to all the world. (John 15:16), yet he said, "Did not I choose you the twelve and one of you is a devil?" (John 6:70). Paul was separated from his mother's womb to be an apostle to the Gentiles, yet many years were first spent fighting against God. (Gal. 1:15-16).

God calls communities or bodies of people to special privileges in order to bless yet other people. God chose Israel to be his covenant people, that he might bless all mankind. Through Amos he said, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth" (3:2). With them alone he shared his covenant. Moses taught Israel. "Jehovah thy God hath chosen thee to be a people for his own possession, above all peoples of the earth . . . not... because ye were more in number . . . but because Jehovah loveth you, and because he would keep the oath which he sware unto your fathers . . ." (Deut. 7:6-8). If we look to the original giving of that oath, God chose Abraham's seed that in them all nations of the earth would be blest. (Gen. 12:1-13). This election did not secure personal salvation to any one of them automatically. Each had to obey God in faith himself to be saved. (Rom. 9:6-8).



The church of Christ is an elect race, "that (we) may show forth the excellencies of him who called [us] out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Pet. 2:9). This election of the church does not guarantee the salvation of every individual member of it. Only those who are faithful will be blest eternally. (Rev. 2:10).

Election is *Christ centered*, Isaiah described the coming Messiah as God's "chosen", (Is. 42:1-4). Christ is the *source* or the *foundation* of our election. (Eph. 1:4). Also, he is the *instrument* or *cause* of our election. It was done "through Jesus Christ". (Eph. 1:5). He gave "his life a ransom for many". (Mk. 10:45).

Election is *realized within the Lord's* church or family of obedient children. He chose *us* (Eph. 1:4); that is, Christians as a body. Election unto salvation is in the kingdom and the individual enjoys the blessing only as he is identified and associated with the elect body of Christ. The church was a vital part of the eternal purpose of God. (Eph. 3:8-11). The Colossian brethren were elect (3:12) in the Son's kingdom. (1:12-13). Unbelievers can be grafted into the body of the elect when in faith they obey Christ. (Rom. 11:5,20,24).

God has definite purposes in electing us: (1) "That we should be holy and without blemish before him in love . . ." (Eph. 1:4). (2) We are saved "unto good works which we should do in his name. (Eph. 2:10). (3) That we should live righteously, teach others God's will, obey Jesus, and praise God's name. (Col. 3:12-17). (4) That we "may show forth [his] excellencies". (1 Pet. 2:9).

Election is *available to all men*. God does not wish "that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (II Pet. 3:9). God "would have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth". (II Tim 2:3-4). Such passages could be multiplied. Here Calvinism obviously contradicts God by arguing that only a portion are given opportunity to be saved.

Election is *conditional*. God has ordained that a certain class or kind of people can be saved, i.e., those who believe and obey his Son. Paul writes that "God chose you . . . unto salvation in sanctification of the Spirit and *belief of the truth*".

(II Thess. 2:13). Peter tells us that we are elect "unto *obedience* and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus..." (I Pet. 1:1-2). In Christ God did all that needs to be done, and that could be done to reconcile men, except what men themselves must do. That is, "Be ye reconciled unto God". (II Cor. 5:20). This occurs when we believe and are baptized. (Mark 16:16). We are saved by God's grace, but grace must be accepted or received. (John 1:12; Rom. 5:17-18). An elected saint must give all diligence to make his calling and election sure or he will surely fall. (II Pet. 1:10-11).

Election is *never based upon our personal merit*. Paul eloquently showed the Jewish brethren, "Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace" (Rom. 11:5). Moses taught ancient Israel the same lesson which they subsequently forgot. (Deut. 7:6-8).

Election was *done in eternity*. "He chose us in [Jesus] before the foundation of the world..." (Eph. 1:4). Paul wrote Timothy that God "*called us . . . before times eternal*." (II Tim. 1:9). Remember this calling was not for particular individuals but of a certain type or kind, i.e., those who would submit to Christ as Lord.

From Romans 8:28-30 we notice just a few of these rich blessings of God's elect: (1) All things work together for their good (vs. 28); (2) Justification (to be treated just as though you had never sinned) because of Christ (vs. 30); (3) Glorification in heaven one day (vs. 30); (4) God's divine help and assistance (vs. 31); (5) All spiritual blessings (vs. 32); (6) Christ's intercession (vs. 34); (7) Ultimate victory (vs. 37-40).

With Paul we sing, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift" (II Cor. 9:15). Brethren, let us give all diligence to make our calling and election sure. (II Pet. 1:10).

## Abuses Of The Lord's Supper

W. Edwin Kearley

Facing unwanted facts has always been a problem of man, Many in fear of a terminal disease put off going to a doctor until

it is too late. In religion multitudes will not hear teaching from God's word that conflicts with traditions of family, friends, etc. We must consciously embrace the fact "ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32). Also, we must accept the only source of spiritual truth. Jesus prayed, "Sanctify them in thy truth, thy word is truth." (John 17:17).

The Lord's supper has not escaped from the hands of false teachers. John wrote the following warning: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son." (II John 9).

There are those who say doctrine does not matter. This statement shows a lack of understanding of the meaning of the word doctrine. It is a synonym for teaching. Surely everyone agrees that teaching matters. If it does not matter the murderer would be just as good as the one who respects life, and the rapist would be just as good as the one who respects women and God's placing sex in marriage. Yes, doctrine or teaching does matter. Our doctrine must be the doctrine taught in the word of God.

The first error we shall discuss is THE DOCTRINE OF ADMINISTRATION OF THE CLERGY. The false teaching involves the untrue idea of the priesthood. Certain religious groups call their preachers priests. Only the priests can administer the rites of the church. The Lord's Supper, or as they call it, the mass, is one of them. The Bible teaches all Christians are priests. (I Pet. 2:9). Christ is the only high priest in Christianity. (Heb. 7:12; 8:1-4).

Others who have a special clergy class do not hold the title of priests but behave as if they think they are priests. They too have a class system called the clergy and laity. The New Testament teaches no such distinction among members of the church of the Lord.

THE DOCTRINE OF TRANSUBSTANTIATION is another innovation of error. Those who believe in this doctrine quote John 6:55, which states, "For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." They say concerning Jesus' statement,

"all must believe that literally and really they were to eat his flesh and drink his blood." (Holy Communion by John Bernard Dalgirns, pg. 4). The whole chapter shows that the flesh and blood is just as figurative as Matt. 26:28. In this instance Jesus held the fruit of the vine in his hand and said, "This is my blood of the New Testament which is shed . . . for the remission of sins." Jesus' blood was running in his veins. The bread and fruit of the vine represent the body and blood of Christ. The Bible does not teach the priest has power to change the bread and fruit of the vine into the actual flesh and body of Christ by his blessing. It is only an effort to enslave the minds of the people.

**FOOTWASHING IS NOT A PART OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.** Several smaller religious bodies practice foot washing as a part of the Lord's supper. It is true that Jesus washed the disciples' feet on the same occasion when the Lord's supper was instituted (John 13). But when Paul corrected the church at Corinth, he did not mention washing feet. (I Cor. 11). The only other time foot washing is mentioned in the New Testament is in I Timothy 5:10. Washing feet in this passage was listed in a number of home duties as qualifications of "the widow indeed." When Jesus washed the disciples' feet, it was done as an act of humility, and to effect ceremonial purification. He said, "If I then your Lord and Master have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet." Washing feet is a service of the home, not an act of worship.

**ONCE A MONTH. SEMI-ANNUALLY OR ANNUALLY IS NOT THE SCRIPTURAL TIME TO OBSERVE THE LORD'S SUPPER.** The only time mentioned to observe the Lord's supper is on the first day of the week. (Acts 20:7). Every week has a first day. In Acts 2:42 we read, "And they continued **STEADFASTLY** in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in **BREAKING OF BREAD**, and in prayers." The church was commanded to assemble on the first day of the week. (I Cor. 16:1-2). "The disciples came together to break bread" on the first day of week. (Acts 20:7). The Lord's supper was the centre of their worship. Therefore, when a church comes together on the first day of the week and does not observe the Lord's supper, it does not do what it came together to do.

There are other errors. It is hoped this discussion will cause you to go to your Bible to study the Lord's supper. Let us observe it at the proper time and as the Lord would have us do it.

Yes, the teaching or doctrine of Christ does matter!

## How Far Do You Trust A Compass?

**Dillard Thurman**

Uncle Zeb was overly fond of coon hunting. But he had no sense of directions after dark, and would customarily show up for breakfast after the sun rose to show the way home. To solve the problem, his family gave him a fine compass, explaining he could always find due north by reading the compass. Overjoyed, he set out the next night to give it a try! And then showed up the next morning, after being lost all night! To answer the question as to what was wrong, his simple statement was: "When I looked at that compass about midnight, that hand was pointing southeast!" Uncle Zeb didn't trust the compass because it didn't point the direction he thought it should! A compass won't do much good if you do not trust it!

### God's Word is Our Compass!

There is one compass that directs men from earth life to heaven! That compass is the word of God! But it can't lead to heaven if one is not willing to trust it. The Psalmist declared, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." (Psa. 119:105). It can light your way to God if you only trust it implicitly! God spake in old times by the prophets, but now speaks by His Son. (Heb. 1:1-2, Mt. 17:5). Therefore Jesus Christ said: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." (Jno. 12:48). Men may reject that compass here, follow their own contrived way, but they will face that word at the judgment! Uncle Zeb wouldn't trust his compass, and remained lost! Even so, many reject God's compass, and are lost! "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the

end thereof are the ways of death." (Prov. 14:12). If you reject God's compass, and go about your own way, you have only yourself to blame in the judgment ! You did not have sufficient faith to trust God's compass !

### **The Compass Points to One God !**

The fuzzy, equivocating thinking pervading the world of many gods disregards the true compass given to direct our steps. "Hear, O Israel : The Lord our God is one God." (Deut. 6:4). That settles the matter right there ! "The Bible said it; I believe it; that settles it !" Jesus pointed out this salient truth in Mk. 12:29; and Paul stresses this further by writing : "There is none other God but one. For though there be that are called gods . . . But to us there is but one God, the Father, and we in him; and One Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him." (1 Cor. 8:4-6). This basic truth must be accepted by all, for our spiritual compass points this out ! "But without faith it is impossible to please him : for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (Heb. 11:6). The atheist doesn't trust the compass, and turns from his Creator. Truly, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." (Psa. 14:1).

### **Compass Points to One Saviour !**

Even before Jesus was born, it was declared of Him : "And thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins." (Mt. 1:21). The compass points on to Him ! "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12). Christ stands alone as a Saviour, "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that cometh to God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." (Heb. 7:25). many have rejected the divine compass that points to Christ as Saviour; and have turned from His admonition : "Trust in the Lord with all thy heart; and lean not unto thine own

understanding." (Prov. 3:5). The Father, the compass, and all saints point men to Christ as Saviour !

### **The Compass Points to Our Salvation !**

With true consistency, the compass points to one plain, clear and simple plan of salvation for all men ! When Jesus gave the commission to His disciples, He told them to preach to (or teach) all nations (every creature). Men were then to believe on Jesus Christ, and were then to be baptized to be saved. (see Mt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15-16; Lk. 24:46-47). This was fully carried out when men first were saved by the gospel. (Acts 2). They heard the word preached, they believed in Christ, they were told to repent; and were also told to be baptized. This pattern was effective ! "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized : and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." (v. 41). From that first gospel sermon to the close of the book of Acts, the book of conversions, this order prevailed ! There was the preaching of the gospel, men believed, they repented, and were then baptized—and only then did they rejoice in salvation !

### **When the Compass is Discounted**

The word of God is simple, but emphatic. It is clear and unmistakable in its directions. But men often spurn the compass, following their preconceived ideas and biased opinions. Let's take some examples of this. Elisha told Naaman to dip seven times in Jordan to be healed of leprosy. But Naaman at first refused ! Why ? He said, "Behold, I thought, He will surely come out . . ." He had already decided how God would heal him, so the compass had to be off centre ! (Study 2 Kgs. 5). Sure, he thought God could heal him, but it had to be done according to his preconceived idea ! Men are still like that, even to this day ! They discount what God plainly says, all the while trying to justify their own feelings, their biased opinions, and their preconceived ideas and notions !

Multitudes harbor preconceived ideas as to just how God will save them. When they read the plain words of Christ : "He

that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mk. 16:16), they still assert, "But he that believeth and is NOT baptized will be saved also!" Why do they say this? The reason is very obvious: They don't have sufficient faith in Jesus Christ to correctly read the spiritual compass! As Uncle Zeb thought the compass was pointing southeast, so they think Mk. 16:16 points in the wrong direction—and in both cases not enough trust is placed in the compass! The Lord pointed toward heaven in saying, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." But men point in the opposite direction, saying, "He that believeth and is NOT baptized shall be saved." Now, who has his directions mixed up?

### Checking Prayer by His Compass

Many people spurn the spiritual compass in the matter of prayer. Jesus taught His disciples to pray: "Our Father which art in heaven." (Lk. 11:2). But many false teachers who ask alien sinners to pray to a father in heaven have not checked the compass, and are turned around! The Lord said of aliens, "Ye are of your father, the devil." (Jno. 8:44). The alien who prays toward a father in heaven has his directions confused, and is turned around! His father is not in that direction—not until he has become a child of God by obedience. (Heb. 5:8-9). That is why no inspired man ever commanded an alien sinner to pray, or a saved man to be baptized: Sectarianism rejects the compass, and does just the opposite! Any one who rejects God's spiritual compass, and pleads for one to save him, is just as ridiculous as Uncle Zeb rejecting his compass, while yelling for his family to seek and save him!

### Paul Trusted His Spiritual Compass

Have you ever wondered at results if Paul had not trusted God's word? When Ananias came to him, saying, "And now why tarriest thou? arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22:16). What if Paul had said, "Go along! I think I can be saved without that I think I can be just as good a Christian without being baptized"? Paul became an outstanding apostle for the Lord, but what if



he had not trusted God's compass when it pointed to what he should do ? Paul was to fully preach the gospel in four provinces of Europe, throughout all Asia Minor, and on to Jerusalem, (Rom. 15:19), and also write fourteen books of the New Testament. Isn't it grand that he was willing to trust God's compass, and follow its directions ?

But what about you, my friend ? Are you now willing to lay aside every prejudice, and honestly face God's word ? For this spiritual compass, are you willing to discard every human creed, party name, human doctrine, and counterfeit religion, and just accept God's word as a sole authority in all religious matters ? It still takes the kind of faith and trust that Paul had ! But by trusting God's compass and following His divine directions, you will be no longer lost, but can arrive safely home at last !

## Some Keys To Answered Prayer

Clem Thurman

One of the greatest privileges of a Christian is prayer, the right to call upon God as Father with the assurance that He will hear us. "The prayer of a righteous man availeth much in its working". (Jas. 5:16). We are also told, "In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanks giving let your requests be made known to God". (Phil. 4:6). In times of trial and turmoil, what comfort it is to be able to pray and know that God will hear because "he careth for you". (1 Pet. 5:7)!

It is a sad thing, though, that many people have no right to expect God to hear the prayers they offer. "God heareth not sinners" (Jno. 9:31), "Your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear" (Isa. 59:2), "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is abomination unto him." (Prov. 28:9). When one refuses to listen to God, He promises, "They shall call upon me but I will not answer". (Prov. 1:28). Yet, for the Christian, "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help

in time of need". (Heb. 4:16). So, God answers some prayers, but others He will not answer. What makes the difference? Let us study some "Keys to Answered Prayer."

### **An Attitude of True Humility**

When Israel had strayed, God's call for them to come back was: "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land". (2 Chron. 7:14). One of God's most valiant servants was Ezra, "For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments". (Ezra. 7:10). But when Ezra prayed, he said, "O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens". (Ezra 9:6). This kind of humility caused the prayer of Ezra to be effective.

Jesus showed the hypocrisy of those who "love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward". (Matt. 6:5). The Lord told a very beautiful story about prayer in Lk. 18:10-14, "Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed . . . God, I thank thee that I am not as other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican . . . smote his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted". If I expect God to hear my prayer, I must humble myself. I cannot come with the attitude of that Pharisee, "God you ought to be proud of me!" and expect Him to hear and answer my prayer.

### **The Proper Attitude About Sin**

There must be a willingness to recognize sins and repent of them, if one would expect God to hear his prayer. "I acknowledged

my sins unto thee, and mine iniquity did I not hide : I said, I will confess my transgressions unto Jehovah". (Psa. 32:5-6). Set forth in this passage is awareness of personal sin, plea for its forgiveness and prayer which results in the forgiveness of God ! As noted above (Ezra 9:6), Ezra had this attitude, and his example caused many in Israel to "make confession unto the Lord God". (Ezra 10:11). Basic to acceptable prayers is that set forth in the model prayer which Jesus gave, "Forgive us our debts". (Matt. 6:12). As John writes, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." (1 Jno. 1:8-9).

With willingness to confess our sins to God, there must also be willingness to repent. Over and over the warning is given to us : "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish . . . Repent, and turn again . . . God commandeth all men everywhere to repent". (Lk. 13:3; Acts 3:19; 17:30). To repent means to determine to quit the sin and live as God directs us. And this is the very reason Jesus died for us : "He died for all, that they that live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto him who for their sakes died and rose again." (2 Cor. 5:15). Only when we recognize our sinfulness, confess the same to God and determine to leave sin and live for Him, only then will our prayers be effective.

### Obedience to the Will of God

I cannot ignore God's purpose for my life and still expect Him to hear my prayer ! And the purpose of every man is shown clearly in Eccle. 12:13, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter, Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man". When King Saul did what he wanted instead of what God had commanded, Samuel asked him, "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord ? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams". (1 Sam. 15:22). Later, when Israel turned from God in idolatry, wickedness and rebellion (Jer. 7:2-13), God warned Jeremiah, "Pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither

make intercession to me : for I will not hear thee". (Jer. 7:16). Because they would not obey God, He would not hear their prayers.

When Jesus healed a man blind from his birth (Jno. 9), the unbelieving Jews inflicted numerous hardships upon the man. Finally, the man replied, "Why, herein is the marvel, that ye know not whence he is, and yet he opened my eyes. We know that God heareth not sinners : but if any man be a worshipper of God, and do his will, him he heareth." (Jno. 9:30-31). In that statement the man summarized all the Jews had been taught throughout the Old Testament about whose prayer God will hear ! And it is still true today : Whatsoever we ask we receive of him, because we keep his commandments and do the things that are pleasing in his sight." (1 Jno. 3:22), and "The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears unto their supplication : but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil." (1 Pet. 3:12). Only when I willingly submit to God's will by an obedient life will my prayer be heard and answered.

### Acceptance of Jesus Christ

Acceptance of Jesus Christ, as the Son of God and our Saviour, is also a key to answered prayer. With His death upon the cross, Jesus not only became our Saviour and our Redeemer, but He also entered heaven as our High Priest : "But Christ having come a high priest of the good things to come . . . through his own blood, entered in once for all into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption." (Heb. 9:11-12). But Christ is not our High Priest just because He died for us, but because He was raised from the dead : "Wherefore also he is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." (Heb. 7:25). Thus, because of His death and resurrection, He is at the right hand of the Father to intercede for us, to make our prayers effective. "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by the way which he dedicated for us . . . let us draw near with a true heart in fulness of faith." (Heb. 10:19-22).

Some still question whether acceptance of Jesus is necessary for one's prayer to be heard, but He settled it long ago : "Except

ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins . . . I am the way, and the truth, and the life : no one cometh unto the Father, but by me . . . And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." (Jno. 8:24; 14:6; 14:13). The apostles set forth the same truth : "And in none other is there salvation : for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved." (Acts 4:12).

### A Vital Relationship with God

The apostle wrote in Rom. 8:14, "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God." Then in verse 31, "If God is for us, who is against us ?" To call upon God as "Father" requires that we be His "children." Paul writes of the promise to Abraham, "For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ . . . If ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, heirs according to the promise." (Gal. 3:26-29). If I have the right to call God "Father", it is because I have been "led by the Spirit" (Rom. 8:14) to be "baptized into Jesus." (Gal. 3:26-27). If I am not His child, I cannot properly call God, "Father."

To those who belong to God, the apostle said, "Ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light". (1 Pet. 2:9). Then John wrote of "the light" in 1 Jno. 1:5-7, "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth : but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin." And, because we are "in the light," we "have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." (1 Jno. 2:1). When God's children, walking in light in humble obedience; pray to their Father, He will hear and answer : "For he is faithful that promised." (Heb. 10:23).

Just before His death on the cross, Jesus went out to Gethsemane to pray. His prayer is the great example for us. Not just if we say the words, but if we really live them, our prayers

will always be effective. May that attitude, then, expressed by Him, be ours : "Father, not my will, but thine, be done." (Lk. 22:42).

## "A Thousand Years As One Day"

Tom Childers

"But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing; that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. (II Peter 3:8).

This passage has been misused and misunderstood in many ways. Several years ago I heard a preacher use this passage in an attempt to explain Genesis 2:17 where God said, "for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." The preacher pointed out that Adam and Eve did not die the same day that they ate the forbidden fruit. He explained the difficulty by saying, "In God's sight they died the very same day because one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."

The key to understanding Genesis 2:17 seems to be that the Lord is talking about spiritual death and not physical since Adam and Eve lived many years after they ate the fruit. They died spiritually the very day they ate; they died physically years later.

The key to II Peter 3:8 is to understand that the Lord has promised to come again and he will not forget his promise just because many years come and go. The Lord's promise is just as fresh on his mind as if it had been made yesterday when in fact it has been hundreds of years since the promise was made.

To illustrate, I recently was studying this passage with our teenage Bible class. I told them if they would remind me one year from now (December 16, 1982) that I would buy all of them a Cock. However, I quickly pointed out that I had no fear about having to buy about twenty Cokes because in the passing of one year either I would forget the promise or they would. They seemed determined to remember my promise. We shall see.

II Peter 3:8 is not a coded timetable to unlock difficult passages in the Bible. Peter's point is this : Man makes promises but with the passing of time, he often forgets. Not so with God, for he remembers and keeps his promises regardless of how much time passes.

This fact should serve as a warning to the sinner and give hope and assurance to the faithful.

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