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EDITORIAL

The Omniscient God

Amongst the numerous attributes of God, such as, omnipotent, love, compassion, and righteous, He is also the omniscient God, that is, He has infinite or complete knowledge. He knows us all individually and He has provided for all our needs both physically and spiritually accordingly. He knows what is best for us, and we need to acknowledge this fact.

In the Old Testament of the Bible we read the story of Joseph, who was despised by his brethren, who even wanted to kill him, but later sold him to a group of businessmen who were going to Egypt. Many years had rolled by when they were all struck with a great famine. When Joseph's father in Canaan learnt that there was grain in Egypt, he sent his sons to buy food from Egypt. When they came in Egypt they hadn't realised that they had to deal with Joseph in that land, whom they had intended to destroy. By the providence of God Joseph was the Governor and incharge of the food supplies in the country. So when they approached him for grains, he immediately recognized them as his brothers, but they didn't know that that was Joseph. Of course, he was too young when they had sold him years before; he now dressed differently and even spoke the Egyptian language. Joseph was kind to his brothers and he gave them what they needed and even asked them to come again for more grains. When they later did come back for more food and as they came to know that it was Joseph who was giving them grains, life went out of them. They were struck with fear, realising what

Joseph could now do to them. However, the Bible tells us that Joseph dealt with them differently and said, "But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; **FOR GOD SENT ME BEFORE YOU TO PRESERVE LIFE.** For these two years the famine has been in the land, and there are still five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvesting. **AND GOD SENT ME BEFORE YOU TO PRESERVE A POSTERITY FOR YOU IN THE EARTH AND TO SAVE YOUR LIVES BY A GREAT DELIVERANCE.** SO NOW IT WAS NOT YOU WHO SENT ME HERE, BUT GOD; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt. Hasten and go upto my father, and say to him, thus says your son Joseph: **GOD HAS MADE ME LORD OF ALL EGYPT; come down to me and do not tarry.**" (Genesis 45:5-9).

Notice: Joseph saw the hand of God in his life, he said, "It was not you . . . but God." Even before the famine came, God knew about it. Even before they needed grain, God knew about it. Joseph trusted God; He gave credit to God for everything in his life; he had committed his life into God's hand; He tried to live by His will and gave honor and glory to Him for everything in his life. He acknowledge the fact that God is the omniscient God. He is our Creator; our heavenly Father; who knows our needs, and even before the need arise He makes provisions for us.

How wonderful it is to know, reader, that we have such a great omniscient God who would be aware of our needs and would make provisions for us even before the needs come into existence! Peter, the apostle, wrote at 1 Peter 1:18-20: "Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. **HE INDEED WAS FOREORDAINED BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD,** but was manifest in these last times for you." That is to say, that even before humans were created, even before we were born and came into existence, indeed, before the creation of the world, knowing the need of salvation of man, the omniscient Creator, had foreordained the lamb, the Christ, who is the propitiation for the sins of the world because of His blood, that was shed from the cross of calvary for the sins of the world! (1 John 4:10; John 3:16). In other words, that which was revealed later, had already taken place in the mind of omniscient God! But we need to acknowledge this fact and accept it by faith. If not God, then who can save us from the consequences of sin, the eternal damnation of hell?

Some things That Will Not Happen When The Lord Returns

J.C. CHOATE

Several things will take place when Christ returns. Some of these include a general resurrection, the destruction of the world, judgment for all, the Lord's kingdom being delivered up to God, the righteous going to heaven, and the wicked being cast into hell.

There are other things that will not happen even though the majority of the people of the world say that they will. We want to clear up some of these things at this time so that there will be no misunderstanding.

Possibly the most accepted teaching concerning the return of Christ is that he will return to Jerusalem and reign over the righteous for 1,000 years. This doctrine is referred to as pre-millinealism. Of course it is a false teaching, no where being taught in the scriptures. Christ lived in this world at one time, was rejected, crucified; and buried. We know that he was then resurrected and returned to the Father in heaven to reign as King of kings and Lord of lords. Although he promised to return (John 14:1-3), he no where said he would ever set foot on this earth again. He will not come again to reign on earth but we are told that he will come in the air and the righteous who are still living will be caught up into the air to meet him. (1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17). Also, at his return he will destroy the heavens and the earth and judge all by his word.

Tied in with the false teaching of premillinealism is the false doctrine of the rapture. It is believed that the day will come that the righteous both living and dead will be gathered together with the Lord to reign with him. The scriptures teach, however, that there will be a general resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked and then the judgment will take place. (John 5: 28,29; Acts 17:31).

Another false teaching is set forth by those who call themselves the Jehovah's Witnesses, and that is, that when the wicked or the unsaved die that they will cease to exist. The Bible, however, teaches that the soul is eternal in nature since man was created in the image of God. (Genesis 1:26, 27; Matthew 16:26). Concerning the wicked, we are told that they will go away into everlasting punishment. (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9). Then Christ says that the righteous will enter into eternal life. One is just as long as the other. (Matthew 25:46). To say that there is no

hell, no future punishment for the wicked, may be a very comforting doctrine for those who want to live sinful lives, but is certainly not what the Bible teaches. If there are those who are determined to believe that, they will be shocked after death to find themselves in torment. Read Luke 16.

When Christ comes again there will be no second chance for the wicked. If the Lord should give the unsaved an opportunity to re-think their situations, and to make amends, then who would not? But the Lord has not promised such and neither will he grant a change of heart at that time. Rather, the scriptures tell us that we have a choice to make in this life as to whether we will obey God or not. If we will believe the Lord and obey his will then we can be saved. If we choose not to do so then we will be lost. Paul says, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (2 Corinthians 5:10). Again, he says, "For he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." (Galatians 6:7,8). In other words, both the righteous and the wicked will be judged and sentenced according to their works, and it will be final.

Neither is there any such thing in the scriptures called purgatory, and by paying some one money over a period of time they can be prayed out. This also amounts to a second chance, but brought about by caring family members or friends who will put up enough money to bring about the desired results. Keep in mind, however, that once one dies, regardless of the way he has lived, his status cannot be changed. Again, read Luke 16.

Finally, one cannot be saved in the end based on a plea of ignorance. The Lord has given us his will and it is up to us to become familiar with it. If we refuse to acquaint ourselves with it, or allow man to deceive us, we will be held accountable for that and we will have to suffer the consequences. If ignorance would save us on the day of judgment then it would be in our interest to stay ignorant, and certainly to keep God's will from the masses, but again, ignorance will not excuse us from our duty and responsibility to God. Certainly in this world we are not excused for breaking the law. The judge would simply explain that we should have acquainted ourselves with the law, and then he would fine us or sentence us to a jail term based on the law broken or the crime committed. Paul said, "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." (Romans 14:12).

Be not deceived concerning these matters. Read and study God's

word and become familiar with the truths that deal with the Lord's return.

Especially For Women

The Decision

BETTY BURTON CHOATE

"... choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve ... But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15).

Mary was preparing breakfast. It was early on Sunday morning. She could hear Peter waking the children. "Come on—it's time to get up. Mother is making breakfast."

At the table Papa asked Anthony to say the prayer, thanking God for the food. As they began to eat, Papa said, "You know, Anthony, you made more decisions yesterday than you'll make on any other day of your life!"

"I did?" Anthony looked puzzled. He remembered making only one important decision—to become a Christian.

"Yes, you did, son. Let's see if you realize what you did. Today is the day of worship. In deciding to obey the gospel, did you decide to worship God every Lord's Day?"

"Well, yes, I really did, didn't I," Anthony smiled.

"That means you don't have to think this morning, 'Now, do I want to get up and dress and go to all the trouble to get to the building to worship God with the church, or do I want to sleep late, or stay at home and spend the day studying for exams, or so I want to play cricket with my friends?' No, you made that decision yesterday for *every* Lord's Day for the *rest of your life*—on Sunday, when the church meets for worship, you *will* be there unless you are too sick to go."

"you made another decision," Mama added. "In worshipping God, we give part of the money we've earned during the week, so that the church can preach the gospel and do its other work. So you decided to set aside a part of your earnings for God for the rest of your life."

"Can you think of any decision Anthony made, Aseema?" asked Papa.

"He decided to do all the things Jesus said, like in the 'Sermon on the Mountain,' about loving our enemies and going the second mile."

"And he decided to study the Bible," James said, "because he

won't know what Jesus teaches unless he knows the Bible."

"I decided to pray, too," Anthony added. "I'll need God's help to be strong enough to keep all of these decisions I've made."

"That's right," agreed Papa. "But think how much easier your life will be because of not being faced with these decisions every day! Some people get up every Sunday morning, asking, Will I go or 'Will I stay at home?' Satan offers temptations of all kinds of 'fun' things to do, so those people struggle between that and their consciences. They feel guilty because they know they ought to obey God. So sometimes they go on to worship—but sometimes Satan wins, and they *decide* the wrong decision. Then they feel even more guilty. That's a hard way to live, and dangerous, because they're disobeying God. How much easier their life would be if they said, 'No, I made that decision the day I was baptized. I *will* worship God every Sunday'."

"That means, too, that I decided to be a sweet brother."

"Oh, I like that," Aseema laughed.

"And a good son. I guess it means that since I've decided to be in god's family and I want my heavenly Father to be pleased with me, then I have to be on my best behaviour in all my relationships with people."

"And in obeying the laws," added Mother.

"So, when I decided to become a Christian, I decided to let God's word make my decisions!" Anthony exclaimed. "If I just follow what He says, the directions are there!"

"That's right," agreed Papa. "We'll talk about God's 'yes' and 'no's' later, but now we'd better go or we'll be late for worship."

"A Cake With Flour Alone"

EDDY GILPIN

To many individuals the Bible is a mysterious relic of some superstitious age past. It is viewed by them as a collection of writings too hard to understand (thus, they do not try), or so full of mystique that it must be read by the flame of a single candle as one lies prostrate on cold mother earth clad only in tattered rags and a sullen disposition. The Bible is the revealed will of God for mankind. Though it is to be revered, it was never intended to be the object of worship itself, nor the source of some esoteric aura. It has been graciously given by God to man. Because of this fact it is evident that it was intended to be understood by man and, thus, can be understood by man. Not only that,

but it can and must be understood by all alike, or else it is misunderstood.

The Bible should be handled much the same as any other literary work. Many of its masterful accounts can be read in the same manner in which one would read the morning newspaper. Just as one absorbs the events that are making headline news, he can also understand those events that have made Bible history. It should be studied in detail as one would involve himself in the intricacies of a technical instruction manual. It should be read on occasion for the beauty and comfort its poetic expressions convey, just as one would peruse a book of prose. It should be examined for its words of warning just as one would inspect the label of a volatile substance for such cautions therein contained. One should consider its phrases on the basis of the speaker, the audience, the context and the time element in much the same manner as he would examine a play or the script for a movie. Another item involved in a study of God's word is a receipt. Psalm 119:160 says, "The sum of thy word is truth" (ASV). Thus, just as one would combine all the ingredients of a recipe in the precise order prescribed in order to arrive at the desired completed product, so much he search the scriptures in order to obtain the "sum" or totality of God's teaching on every subject.

The word of God is nowhere contradictory. Hence, when a single subject is examined in accordance with Psalm 119:160 and two or more seemingly different commands are found to be given concerning that subject, one can rest assured that all of the stipulated commands must be obeyed in order to the obtaining of the promise accompanying that obedience. Just as one must combine the prescribed ingredient of a recipe in the proper manner in order to obtain the desired product, so much one also obey every command of God that is conjoined with a related promise in order to receive the blessings of that promise. One can no more obtain the blessing of God by leaving off stipulated commands than he can obtain a desired product of a recipe by leaving off ingredients required thereby.

As an example of this principle, notice two items appropriately addressed by the aforementioned-one, a recipe for a cake, and the other, the subject of salvation. The recipe requires milk, eggs, flour, butter, sugar and various flavorings and spices all in ordered and apportioned amounts. The recipe details the order of combination of these ingredients. The subject of salvation likewise contains many "ingredients." The Bible reveals that one obtains salvation "by grace . . . through faith" (Eph. 2:8); "by works" (Jas. 2:24); "by hope" (Rom. 2:24); by "calling on the name of the Lord" (Rom. 10:13; Acts 22:16); by belief

(Acts 16:31); by obedience (Heb. 5:8,9); by repentance (Lk. 13:3; Acts 2:38); through doing good (Jn. 5:28, 29); by baptism (Mk. 16:16; 1 Pet. 3:21); by faithfulness (Mt. 24:13; Rev. 2:10), and other things as well (Mt. 10:32; Rom. 5:9; etc.). What then should be done with these two items? Should they be treated differently? Certainly not. Just as the ingredients of the recipe must be combined in order to produce the prescribed cake, so much the "ingredients" of salvation be present and properly combined in order to obtain that end. With this thought in mind, notice some applications of this principle to modern thinking.

Many individuals adhere to the erroneous doctrine of "faith only" (*Methodist Discipline*, Art. IX; *Standard Manual for Baptist Churches*, 1951, p. 62). In doing so they in essence look to the aforementioned list and "pick" one item (that of faith) from that list and feign production of salvation by it. Such is just as invalid and pretentious as picking one item (flour) from the list of ingredients of the recipe and claiming the production of the cake. One can no more obtain salvation by "faith alone" than he can produce a cake with flour alone! One is just as ludicrous as the other (Cf. Jas. 2:14-26).

Again, many contend that baptism is not essential to salvation (*Standard Manual for Baptist Churches*, 1951, p. 20). Many of these same individuals and groups teach that one "should" be baptized, but that such baptism occurs *after* salvation. The New Testament connects baptism and salvation together in only five verses. In *every single verse* baptism precedes salvation (Note Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16; Rom. 6:4; 1 Pet. 3:21). In order to say that baptism follows salvation one must reverse the order of these scriptures and, thus, rearrange God's word. Doing such is like saying that one can bake the cake and then add the flour after its completion! Neither of these can be done with the expectation of receiving the end product (Rev. 22:18,19).

Further, some contend that repentance precedes faith. In looking to the two verses that so state these two commands in this order (Mk. 1:15; Acts 20:21), one must take note of the individuals therein addressed. Here were ones who already believed in God. Their need was to turn back to God (repent) and have faith in the gospel (God's new plan). However, this order is not only irrelevant for the alien sinner today, but also an impossibility. Both faith and repentance must have a basis. The basis of faith is God's word (Jn. 20:30, 31; Rom. 10:17). The basis of repentance is faith. How can one repent (turn from one way to another) if he has neither knowledge nor faith in an alternative system (the gospel) to which he can turn? It is impossible to turn to this avenue in which one has neither knowledge nor faith. Repentance must be

preceded by the foundation of faith, which is preceded by the basis of knowledge. Thus, the question of Acts 2:37 was answered by the command to "repent and be baptized" (Acts 2:38) since the basis of faith had already been established through the message preached (Acts 2:32-37). Hence, to reverse the order of these two stipulations is to go beyond the realms of authority and possibility. In order to produce the cake in the previously mentioned recipe, one must combine the prescribed ingredients in the stipulated manner. To add to, take from or modify the stated procedure might produce a cake, but not *the* cake. In like manner, to alter the stipulations of the gospel (by reversing faith and repentance, or any other way) might produce another gospel, but not *the* gospel. Paul addressed such modifications thus: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from Him that called you into the grace of Christ unto *another gospel: which is not another*, but there be some that trouble you, and would prevent the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:6-8). therefore, alterations in the divine plan do not produce "the gospel," or even "a gospel," but the will of man.

There are many kinds of cakes and corresponding recipes for those cakes. One can choose any that best suit his taste. But, there is only one eternal salvation and one corresponding "recipe" (gospel) for its procurement. There is no liberty that allows for choice concerning it. One either accepts and obeys "the gospel" (God's plan) or he rejects God altogether. The "ingredients" must be combined in the proper manner in order to arrive at the desired result. One cannot produce a cake with flour alone. Neither can he be saved eternally by any deviation from God's plan. "The sum of thy word is truth."

Blindfolds Reveal "The Rapture"!

DILLARD THURMAN

An adage often quoted is: "There is none so blind as one who will not see." Many wear the blindfold of sectarian doctrine and cannot see revealed truths, but clearly see that which they want to believe! A good example of this serves as the basis for our study. A friend gave me a booklet for my examination and evaluation. It is entitled, '*The Rapture Comes Next*,' and is authored by J. Vernon McGee, Th.D., LL.D., and is long on bold assertions, but entirely lacking in the "book, chapter and

verse department." This is just one of the many wild, illusionary writings on the fanciful notion of *"The Rapture."* That you may examine this false doctrine, we will quote from the book (in quotes and italicized), and then compare it with what the Bible teaches. It is utterly impossible to examine all the hallucinations, for most statements are not close cousins to what is actually said in Scripture! But for your edification, here are some basics errors presented.

"THE RAPTURE COMES NEXT"

"Why do we believe the Rapture comes next? If you are a believer today and are trusting Christ, you are next on the program of God—as far as prophecy is concerned."

If you believe the Rapture comes next, yours is not a biblical faith! *"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."* (Rom. 10:17). Search as you may, you will find no mention of *The Rapture* in God's Holy Writ! This whole fanciful notion is fabricated in the fertile minds of false teachers! Now, I am not afraid of any term used in religious circles if I can find its function in the Bible! But the Bible has no scriptural proof of this concocted idea of *The Rapture* that is bandied about by the pre-millennialists! "As far as prophecy is concerned" there is not a proofest they use that did not have its fulfillment before the New Testament was delivered in written form!

"I believe it is tissue-thin between where we stand today and the Rapture of the Church. There are no signs, no Tribulation, no anything to be fulfilled before Jesus takes the church out of the world."

It is far more than "tissue-thin" for Jesus said more than 1950 years ago: *"Ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world."* (Jno. 15:18). Paul assures us that the church has been separated from the world for God *"hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son."* (Col. 1:13). Nothing is more forcefully taught in God's word than a saint's separation from the world (Rom. 12:1-2). We study this more further on!

"Then after that we believe there will be a time of Great Tribulation, which is concluded with the return of Christ to the earth to set up His Kingdom."

All these false teachers speak of the *Great Tribulation* as though it is yet to come! Have they not read of the upheaval of the Jewish world with the destruction of Jerusalem, as foretold by our Lord in Mt. 24? Jesus pointed out the tribulation then imminent, and warned of its trials and hardships. But where did these folk find the idea of Christ returning to set up His kingdom? That was the reason for His resurrection, to set

up His kingdom on Pentecost! Listen to Peter's words concerning David and his throne: *"Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up one to sit on his throne; he seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ."* (Acts 2:30-31). Note that God raised up Christ to sit on David's throne! Was he able to crown Him King of kings and Lord of lords? Peter said so! *"Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, . . . The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool."* (Acts 2:33-35). Years later Paul wrote that God *"hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son."* (Col. 1:13).

Before leaving the earth, Jesus stated: *"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."* (Mt. 28:18). He was to retain that power and authority as long as He reigned as King of kings! Paul shows the end of that reign over His kingdom: *"Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death."* (1 Cor. 15:24-26). When you study this passage, you find no place for another kingdom to be set up when He returns! Just the opposite, He is coming back to abdicate that throne, giving it back to His Father!

"There are those who deny the Rapture because the Bible does not teach it. I categorically deny that, because of 1 Thes. 4:17. The word 'harpazo' translated 'caught up' can be translated Rapture!"

That word, *harpazo*, is used 13 times in the New Testament, and no where is it translated *Rapture*! Look to that passage: *"And the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."* (1 Thes. 4:16-17). Do you notice that the dead and the living are joined with the Lord—and together in the air? And thus they will remain with the Lord: not on earth, but apart from the earth! This is a far cry from their *Rapture* doctrine that embraces a thousand year reign on earth! Isn't it strange that great biblical scholars and translators were not able to find *The Rapture* in the word *harpazo*, but this Johnny-come-lately readily finds just the word needed to bolster his doctrine!

"Christ doesn't return until the end of the Great Tribulation period (which obviously is that seven-year period that Daniel outlined for the children of Israel which is yet in the future."

Herein is another wild assertion without proof! if Daniel outlined

this period for the children of Israel, you can mark it down: it has been fulfilled! There is not a prophecy concerning Israel that was not fulfilled before that nation was overthrown with the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. Isaiah had informed Israel of old: *"For the Lord God shall slay thee, and call his servants by a new name."* (Isa. 65:15). Israel, as a branch, was broken off to allow the Gentiles to be grafted in: and the only way the Jews can be saved is by faith in Christ and obedience unto Him (Study Rom. 11:17-24). But Daniel's prophecies were for Israel of old, and not for the twentieth century!

"At the Rapture, Christ does not come to the earth. However, at the Revelation He does come to the earth to set up His kingdom."

Now we have some more hallucinations to deal with. He teaches Christ will make more than one appearance, and outlines an agenda for the Son of God! But the Bible is not the author of such! Yet, pompous men draw up His schedule! Then it is claimed that the Lord Jesus was the first to mention the *Rapture* when He said: *"In my Father's House are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you."* (Jno. 14:2). Now from this simple, direct promise from the Lord that He will come for His own, these fanciful dreamers concoct the whole fabric of the *Rapture* idea! So they now claim it comes from the Bible! But where does this tie in with any period of Tribulation (such as they knew when Jerusalem was taken)?

"However, at the Revelation He will come to the earth. He will touch down on the earth (Zech, 14:4) This is so specific, dealing with geographic places, that we are to take it literally. That is, when Christ comes the second time, His feet will touch down on the Mount of Olives."

Again we have a good example of how these pre-millennialists wrest the scriptures in a vain attempt to prove their point! Notice just what Zechariah foretold. *"In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and uncleanness."* *"And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea; in summer and winter shall it be. And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one."* (Zech. 13:1; 14:8-9). Taking the whole context, Zechariah was using prophetic language to foretell the blood of Christ flowing from the cross for the sins of man: both in the Old, and in the New Testament! *"And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the*

promise of eternal inheritance." (Heb. 9:15). Zechariah was not speaking of things to transpire 1950 years after Jesus died! He was speaking of that death and its benefits! Only zealous false prophets grasp prophecies in symbolic language and wrest the scriptures to "scotch up" their fabricated notions!

I have stood in the "Chapel of the Ascension" on the Mount of Olives, listening to guides spout off the accepted pre-millennialist line, as they point to the very stone with its footprint, where Jesus last stood on the earth! Then they assure one and all that Jesus will come back to reign in Jerusalem for a thousand years, and when He does, His foot will land on that very self-same rock! And when He crosses the Kidron Valley, the "Golden Gate" of the temple area wall will miraculously open, and He will march through in triumph! Great idea—but it did not originate with God! As a matter of fact, Luke tells us Jesus ascended from Bethany, about a mile and a half Southeast of that spot (Lk. 24:50-51).

BEWARE OF SUCH FALSE PROPHETS!

Any tract, booklet or article that is filled with factual assertions, but lacking in "*book, chapter and verse*" proof, must be taken with skepticism! One of the artful dodges of false prophets is to state a thing as fact, knowing that many will not really investigate the matter. Of old, Israel was warned: "*To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.*" (Isa. 8:20). This J. Vernon McGee shows that he is a prophet without light, for he has openly twisted and wrested scriptures to find *The Rapture*, where the Bible is completely silent on the term, the doctrine, and all the entanglings notions that go with it! Friends, let the Bible speak!

"And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified." (Acts 20:32). Isn't that enough for all?

"Lord Jesus, Come Into My Heart"

BASIL OVERTON

Nothing is more important to anyone than Christ being in his heart.

Therefore nothing is more important to anyone than his understanding what the New Testament teaches to dwell in his heart.

Many Television and Radio Evangelists

Many television and Radio evangelists tell lost people something like this. "Bow your head right where you are and repeat after me. Say, 'Lord Jesus I know I am a sinner. I believe you died on Calvary for my sins. I repent of all my sins, and I am sorry for the sins I have committed. Please, Lord, forgive me and come into my heart'."

Then these evangelists will say something like this, "Now that you have prayed, Jesus has forgiven you; you are saved; and Jesus has come into your heart." My love for people compels me to say this is an awful deception, because there is absolutely no evidence in the Bible that this is the way for those not Christians to be forgiven and become Christians and have Jesus to come into their hearts. I am grieved and my heart aches because so many are deceived by this teaching on television, Radio and in other ways.

Those who teach and practice such on television or anywhere else, may be completely sincere, and those who are deceived by such teaching and practice may be absolutely sincere. However this does not mean they are right.

Feelings And Faith

One's feelings come as a result of what he believes. If he believes truth which generates feelings in his heart, his feelings are not proof that he has believed truth. Truth is not truth because people believe it. Truth is truth because it is true, or because it is so. And it is true, or it is so, whether anyone believes it, or does not believe it.

If one believes error, thinking it is true, his feelings will be just the same as if what he believed were really true.

Some Who Prayed

Jesus said a publican prayed, "God be merciful to me a sinner," and that this publican was saved or justified (Luke 18:13,14). However, this publican was a child of God under the old covenant, or law of Moses. That covenant was abolished when Jesus died on the cross (Ephesians 2; Colossians 2; John 1:17). Therefore, the case of this publican is not an example of how one became a Christian, and how Jesus comes into the heart of one who is not a child of God, or not a Christian.

Saul of Tarsus prayed after Jesus appeared to him on Damascus road (Acts 9:10-16). But this case does not prove that an alien sinner

(as Saul was at that time) was saved from his sins by the Lord Jesus Christ, by his praying. Instead this case is proof that an alien sinner is not saved by praying, because the Lord Jesus told Saul on Damascus Road, "Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do" (Acts 10:6).

When Saul got into Damascus and was lodged in the house of Judas on Straight Street (Acts 9:11) the Lord instructed a disciple in Damascus named Ananias to go to Saul to tell him what he had to do.

Did Ananias tell Saul to repeat after him and say, "Lord Jesus, I am a sinner, and I am sorry for my sins. Please forgive me, and come into my heart?" No, indeed! Instead Ananias told Saul "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 Ananias told Saul of Tarsus to do shows us clearly how one can call on the name of the Lord. This obviously means that when one is baptized he calls on, or relies on the name, or the authority of Jesus Christ, and he reaches the saving power of the blood of Jesus because he is baptized into Christ (Romans 6:3) where he reaches the washing, or cleansing power of the blood of Jesus (Ephesians 1:7).

All TV/Radio evangelists, who have not done so, should do what Saul of Tarsus did in order to have his sins washed away in the blood of Christ, and then they should tell all those out of Christ who are penitent believers what Ananias told Saul, instead of having them to repeat after them a prayer like that in the second paragraph of this article!

Christ Does Come In

When one does what Saul of Tarsus did, Christ does come into his heart. Christ dwells in the hearts of Christians by faith (Ephesians 3:17). If you study the New Testament you realize that this has to mean that the evidence that Christ dwells in one's heart is not his feelings, but his faith. This faith comes by hearing God's word (Romans 10:17).

God's word teaches that Christians are in Christ, and Christ is in them (Colossians 1:2,27). So, the only evidence that this is true is the fact that God's word says it.

A Christian feels good when he believes he is in Christ, and Christ is in him, but the evidence that had is in Christ and Christ is in him is not that he feels good, but the evidence is that God's word says he is in Christ and Christ is in him!

We do not have to understand, or rationalize how Christ can dwell in our hearts in order for him to dwell in our hearts. Neither do we have to rationalize how we can dwell in Christ in order to dwell in him. We cannot rationalize one of these any better than we can rationalize the

other, but we can believe both, because God's word says both. We accept both by faith. All we have to go by on these great concepts is what God said about them!

What Is A Blessed Man?

GLENN COLLEY

Those of us who enjoy studying the Word of God are always eager to broaden our understanding of oft used and familiar passages and words and doctrines. Consider the word "Blessed."

For years, while teaching from Matthew 5 on the Beatitudes, men have said, "Blessed means happy." In fact, a couple of translations translate the word "Happy." We are convinced that the word means much more.

In the King James Bible translation of the Bible, there are two major words translated blessed. They are "Ulogeo," and "Makarios." Makarios is the original word for blessed in the Beatitudes.

Thayer says the word carries the idea of congratulations, with the reason expressed by a noun or predicate in the verse (Page 386, #3701).

I suggest that the word blessed in these verses (Matthew 5:3-11) is actually a congratulation which means, "*approved of God*." This definition holds true in many other verses as well. It is clearly the case in Matthew 25:34 where the King will say, "Come ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

Keeping in mind our "Approved of God" definition, read these verses containing the word *Blessed*:

"And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women" (Luke 1:28).

"Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching . . ." (Luke 12:37).

"Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" (John 20:29).

"Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin" (Romans 4:7,8).

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried,

he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him" (James 1:12).

"But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed" (James 1:25).

"Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein; for the time is at hand" (Revelation 1:3).

"And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, "Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them" (Revelation 14:13).

"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).

There are of course other uses of the word blessed, and perhaps they all would imply happiness in some respect. When it comes to our eternal destiny however, we do not simply want to be happy. We first want to be approved of God. May we all live prepared for His return so that when the trumpet sound we will hear those sweet words from our Master's lips, "Come ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

Dramatic Bible Verses

JOHNNY RAMSEY

There are many startling words, verses and thoughts in the Holy Scriptures. The sacred text is never dull and often fascinating literature. After forty years of almost daily study it never ceases to amaze me how enthralling the Bible truly is. Take, for example, the word found in II Kings 18:4.

Nehushtan

Hezekiah was purging idolatry from Judah and found the brazen serpent God commanded Moses to place before Israel as recorded many years previously in the book of Numbers. It has been preserved but now was used for idolatrous purposes. The king declared that it was *nehushtan*—only a piece of brass! What once had been a symbol of Jehovah's authority was now used as vain worship.

Another dramatic occasion in the Old Testament is found in II Samuel 18:33 where David, with broken heart, learns of the death of Absalom. That son of the king ended life in rebellion to God and his father. In earnest anguish of soul, the sweet singer of Israel hauntingly cries:

O Absalom, my son, would God I had died for thee . . .

David had earlier, by his own iniquity, sown evil into the family of God and had set in motion what Nathan had promised:

The sword will never depart from thine house . . .

In Revelation 6:17, with language borrowed from the prophets, we read of the great day of the Lord—impending judgment—coming for wicked men. Such ungodly ones will pray rocks and caves to hide them from the fierce wrath of God when so few will be spared. What an awesome occasion it shall be when the final confrontation with Deity arrives for sinful mankind. Brother Teddlie wrote this powerful gospel song:

Someday you will stand at the bar on high

Someday your record you will see

Someday you will answer the question of life

What will your answer be? . . .

In Hosea 11:8 Jehovah faces the challenge of wrath and love meeting in His dealing with Israel. As bondage stands in the balance, the Creator acknowledges the struggle He has with the disobedient ones of Abraham's seed:

O Ephrim, how shall I give thee up?

To be consistent, in the process of ungodly people reaping what they sowed, God had to release them for punishment by an evil-nation but, still, it broke His heart. When mercy and truth meet together the Judge of all the earth will do what is right (Genesis 18:25). Abraham learned that lesson when ten godly men could not be found in Sodom!

In I Samuel 12 we see the heartbreak of Samuel in dealing with the carnality of Saul and the nation he led. The gracious prophet said to the King:

God forbid that I should cease to pray for you . . .

In accord with Jehovah's word to Jeremiah concerning Judah years later we come to understand Samuel's plaintive cry. In three chapters of Jeremiah we find these sad words from God:

Do not pray for these people.

Why? Their heart was an adamant stone as Zechariah 7 clearly enunciates. The clay would not bend to the potter's will (Jeremiah 18; Romans 9:20-22). Exhortation and bold rebuke must precede prayer in

certain situations because of the hardness of heart in the rebellious lives of mankind (Hebrews 3:13-15).

My stubborn will at last has yielded.

I would be thine and thine alone . . .

Another verse of deep pathos is found in John 6:67 where our Lord fervently asked the intimate few who followed Him:

Will you also go away?

Many turned away from the Savior when they learned that truth was more important than loaves and fishes. Material values were secondary to spiritual devotion in the kingdom of God. Just as in our day, that consideration was repulsive to the masses.

My hope is build on nothing less

Than Jesus' blood and righteousness.

The rich young ruler of Mark 10 went away in sorrow when he counted the cost of discipleship and was unwilling to pay the price. So many follow no longer in the way of Christ when they learn indeed that grace is not cheap!

One of the strangest passages in the Bible is I Corinthians 16:22. Therein is the key to heaven or hell. If unprepared when Jesus comes we shall be cut off without the favor of God.

Anathema Maranatha

Those unusual words, in this text, point out the tragedy of going through our earthly existence emphasizing the wrong things. To find God's disfavor at judgment will be a loss difficult to contemplate. To miss heaven will give full meaning to the phrase . . .

Lost Beyond Recall

Or, at the last, shall it be mine to find

All that I worked for, I left behind.

But, by far, the most dramatic Bible verse is Matthew 27:46 wherein Jesus cried:

My God, why hast thou forsaken me?

The willingness of Christ to die for us and bear the burden of our sins upon the cross (I Peter 2:24) is proof of the deepest love the world has ever known. When Jehovah laid on Him the iniquity of us all (Isaiah 53) the most eloquent display of vicarious concern and suffering was demonstrated to mankind. In the words of a provoking hymn:

Hallelujah—What a Savior!

Hebrews 2:3 dramatically asks us a burning question . . . How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?

The richness, beauty and appeal of Scripture warms our heart and

thrills our soul. To God be the glory for all the great things He has done!
He bore it all that I might live . . .

Christ At The Door

ROBERT R. TAYLOR, JR.

The closing verses of Revelation 3 portray one of the most lamentable yet mercy-filled scenes found in Holy Writ. Lukewarmness had conquered Laodicean hearts and the saving Jesus has been rejected. Had our lovely Lord possessed less than perfect mercy and long-suffering, He might have cast them forever to their deserved fate. But with the Lord "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other" and "Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face" (Psalm 85:10; 89:14). His compassionate mercy prompted Him to linger at the door of each Laodicean's heart with the hope of re-entrance. In the Lord's marvelous message which He vouchsafed to John on Patmos and which was to be conveyed to the Laodiceans, we observe unmerited favor towards faltering saints in heavenly action, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" (Revelation 3:20). The Messianic pleader at the door in this passage has inspired many a sermon, prompted musical poets to set the pathetic scene to hymnal music and has furnished the challenge for gifted artists to portray the rejected Redeemer upon lifelike canvas. As a little child my very first Bible contained a picture of Jesus knocking at the door. That picture was stamped indelibly upon my mind as the Interested Intercessor pleaded for an invitation to re-enter. More than a quarter of a century ago the following story was told in my presence. It, too, forms a fixed memory in my mind. I think you will find it of interest.

A famous artist was moved by Revelation 3:20 to paint the Saviour of men standing before the door. With brush in hand and a canvas before him that gifted mind and talented hand began the long and painstaking process. Finally, the great picture stood completed. The artist was ready for the revelation of his work to fellow artists. As they surveyed the picture one of them pronounced it is a masterpiece but offered one criticism. He remarked that the artist had Jesus standing before a door minus a knob. There was no apparent way for Jesus to re-enter! The artist quickly explained that such was not an oversight on his

part but that the doorknob had been purposely omitted. "You see," said the artist, "the doorknob is on the inside, not the outside. The one on the inside alone can open the door." The artist had recognized the Biblical doctrine of man's free agency.

Jesus desires entrance initially into alien hearts and re-entry into backsliding hearts such as modern day Laodiceans. But as desirous of human communion as He is, the very nature of His religion forbids His making a compulsory entrance. The doorknob is still on the inside of your heart and mine. Unless we allow Him the desired entrance He will remain outside. Those who keep Him outside in the here and now will be OUTSIDE heaven in the there and then.

Dear reader, perhaps you have never allowed the Stranger at the door of your heart in though multitudes of times He has knocked lovingly and mercifully through the marvelous medium of His proclaimed word. Will you not let this faithful friend in? The sweet consolations of His redeeming love can be yours upon complete submission to His prescribed conditions of salvation. Perhaps Jesus was once very much a part of the lives of some of you. You've heard Him preached, believed upon Him from the heart, repented of your sins, graced your lips with that memorable confession and through baptism the door was fully open for Him to come into your hearts, which He did, your early Christian life was warmly engaged with activity as you heartily rendered loving service to your newly accepted Lord. Are you still rooted and grounded in His love and find your deepest satisfaction in serving Him or are you among those who have turned their backs upon man's great benefactor? If in the latter group you find yourself, then Jesus is truly outside again. Will you not read carefully what Peter told Simon in Acts 8:22, what James told his readers in James 5:16 and what John wrote his dear children in I John 1:9? I plead with you to let Him back in today for He stands there NOW as Saviour; TOMORROW you may stand before His door of judgment. Remember what you do with Him today at your door determines what He will do to you when before the door of His judgment you once shall stand.

The Effect Of Preaching

WINFRED CLARK

All of us who preach want our preaching to be effective. That means it will accomplish something that is good. We want it to please

God first and foremost. We also want it to bring about the desired spiritual results in the lives of those who listen.

We know that often our preaching does not have the effect that we would want, but it does have an effect. There are times when people do not respond in a positive fashion, though they do respond. This should come as no surprise. Our Lord forewarned us of this in the parable of the sower (Luke 8:4-15). Out of the 4 kinds of soil described, only one kind would respond in the right way. That means that 3 out of 4 would not.

Take the time to read another section of the New Testament and you will find a case where there was an effect but it was less than a desired effect (Acts 24:22-27). Here Luke describes the case of Felix. He was a Roman governor in the time of Paul. It was to him that Paul was given the opportunity to preach. This seems to be the second time Paul had been before Felix, and this time he had with him his third wife, Drusilla. What would this great apostle have to say to such people? Remember that what he said was directed by the Holy Spirit. What was his subject? What did he discuss?

Note it is said, "And he reasoned" (Acts 24: 25). This is used in other places in the book of Acts such as, 17:2. Here it is said, "he reasoned out of the scriptures." He showed how Jesus was the fulfillment of what the Old Testament had said concerning the Christ. So the preaching that Felix would hear was that which could be supported by the scriptures. But what was the effect? How did he react to what he heard? It is said, "Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time: when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee" (Acts 24:25). What caused him to react in this way? What was it that Paul said on this occasion? What did he talk about?

1. RIGHTEOUSNESS THAT HE DID NOT RESPECT

"And as he reasoned of righteousness" (Acts 24:25). Various translators say "he reasoned of justice, morality, uprightness, purity, goodness or morals." They are surely on track as Thayer says righteousness means: "the state of him who is such as he ought to be, the condition acceptable to God, integrity, virtue, purity of life, uprightness, correctness in thinking, feeling and acting." This is the sort of thing that protects one from a life of sin. Take note of what Paul had to say to those at Corinth, "Awake to righteousness, and sin not" (I Corinthians 15:34). It is that which the child of God is to "follow after" (I Timothy 6:11). It is that which is set in contrast with iniquity (Hebrews 1:9).

This is something that is abundantly supported by the scriptures.

Again and again will you find the Lord and the apostles urging men to practice a life of righteousness (I John 2:29, 3:7, 3:10). It is also something that sets the standard by which man is to live. In fact, we are told that we shall be judged by this very standard. "He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained;" (Acts 17:31). We are not left to wonder about the standard, for it will be that standard that is righteous, the standard for right living and acting. It will mean measuring up to the standard that God has set for us. But this is the thing that Felix did not respect. He walked to the beat of a different drummer.

II. SELF CONTROL THAT HE DID NOT PRACTICE

Notice that he not only reasoned of righteousness but he also reasoned of "temperance." This is "self control, continence, mastery of passions, self mastery." It is said of Felix that Drusilla was his third wife. He would have been right at home in our modern society and in some cases even with those who are in the church. He would live by the code "if it feels good, do it."

Paul surely describes such a life style in his enumeration of the "works of the flesh" (Galatians 5:19-21). Here he says "Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, drunkenness, revellings and the such like." Surely one can see in that catalogue of sin a lack of self control.

Move to that section of Romans where Paul deals with much the same thing. He speaks of the "wrath of God revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men," (Romans 1:18). He goes on to show how man becomes foolish in his thinking, really thinking that he is wise. These are the men of which it is said, "Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts to dishonor their own bodies between themselves: . . . And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the women, burned in their lust one toward another" (Romans 1:24, 27). Here is a picture of man who is lacking in self control, in fact he is living a life that is out of control. He does not respect God nor himself. Here is surely a picture of people who lack self control and they would be the same kind of people Paul found in Felix.

III. JUDGMENT FOR WHICH HE IS NOT READY

Paul not only reasoned of righteousness and temperance, he also reasoned of "judgment to come." Paul knew there was a coming judgment. He also knew that this was certain and such needed to be discussed.

If there was no judgment to come then Felix would not have to be concerned and neither would we. But that judgment is certain and Paul knew it. He was not about to try to ignore it nor would he allow Felix to do so.

He could surely speak of the fact of the judgment. This can be done because the Lord sets forth the fact that it is a fact. Listen to some statements the Lord made: "Shall be in danger of the judgment" (Matthew 5:21, 22), "For Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment" (Matthew 10:15), "the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48). All of these passages and more speak of the fact that there is a judgment to come. So, Paul's preaching was supported by the Lord himself.

He could speak of the judgment being universal. Paul knew this would be the case for all men for we are told "it is appointed unto man once to die and after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). The judgment will be just as universal as death, and that is as universal as you can become. Paul knew that Felix would be there. He would not escape anymore than any of us will be able to by-pass or escape it.

He could also speak of it being something that was final. There will be no appeal beyond the judgment. One has but to read some relevant passages to know that this is the case (Matthew 25:31-46).

Yes, the judgment was made known to Felix from one who was inspired. There could be no doubt about it, and it does not seem that Felix doubted what was being said.

What was the effect on Felix? How did he react to what Paul had to say? Did he deny what he said? Did he try to dispute what was said? Absolutely not. It is said, "Felix trembled" (Acts 24:25). So we know he heard what was said, we also know he understood what was said, and we know that he also knew that what was said applied to him. He did not try to ignore it as being applicable to someone else other than himself. There was a reaction of concern. He saw himself as God saw him and knew that there was more than he needed to do. He even left the impression that at a later date he would do what he was supposed to do. Did he ever do so? We have no account of this being the case but we know what he should have done. Paul's preaching had reached the heart but it was now up to the man that heard. He must obey.