

# THE BIBLE TEACHER

*Pleading for the Restoration of Pure New Testament Christianity*

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## EDITORIAL

### ***What Does The Bible Teach?***

"God, who at various times and in different ways spoke in the time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son"

Does God speak to man today? Yes, He does. And, the only way He speaks to man today is through the Bible, which is His written will for man. When the Bible was not written, God communicated His will to man directly, or through angels or prophets; just as it was in the case of Adam and Noah and Abraham and Moses and others. When Christ was born; almost two thousand years ago, the Old Testament of the Bible was already available to God's people. As Christ taught, he extensively quoted from the Old Testament Scriptures. He also declared to his listeners: "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the prophets, I did not come to destroy but to fulfill." (Matthew 5:17). Later, when he took three of his disciples, Peter, James and John, on a high mountain, and was transfigured before them; God let Moses, the law giver, and Elijah, the prophet, appear before Peter, James and John. That was so exciting to them, and Peter could not contain himself and said to Jesus, "Lord it is good for us to be here; if you wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." But words were still in Peter's mouth, when a bright cloud

overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him." (Matthew 17:1-5). With the coming of Christ into the world, and his death and burial and resurrection and ascension into heaven; the Old Testament, which contained Law and the Prophets, had served its purpose. Since the disciples of Christ began to preach his Gospel, and people, specifically the Jews to whom the Law was originally given, began to believe and obey the gospel of Christ, and subsequently were added by the Lord to his church; the apostle Paul said to them "Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor." (Galatians 3:24, 25). The Old Testament Law was the tutor.

Before his death Christ promisingly had told his apostles: "These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you." (John 14:25, 26). Again, he said to them: "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come." (John 16:12, 13).

Accordingly, when the apostles of Christ had received the Holy Spirit of God, as we read in Acts 2:1-4, they began to write about Christ; about his birth, life, teachings, works; about his death, burial, resurrection and ascension, etc. Inspired of the Holy Spirit of God they told people what they ought to do to be saved from sins; what the church is; how to worship God acceptably and how to live godly lives. All of these things were recorded in what we call today The New Testament of Christ, which is the second and the last part of the Bible; first being the Old Testament, which God took away, having nailed it to the cross. (Colossians 2:14; Hebrews 8:7 & 13). God has always spoken to man. In the time past He spoke to the fathers by the prophets, and all of that was written in the Old Testament of the Bible. But now in these last days God speaks to all men through His Son Jesus Christ.

Whatever is written in the New Testament books of the Bible is God's will for man today, as Christ had told his apostles. At 2 Timothy 3:16, 17, in the New Testament, we read: "All

Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." God's revelation of His will to man is fully and completely given in the New Testament of the Bible. In fact, the apostle Paul, one of the inspired writers of the New Testament, said that even if we or an angel from heaven preach something different to you, than what has already been written then do not accept it. (Galatians 1:6-9).

In the first century A.D., when the apostles of Christ were amongst the Christians, they were always correcting them by the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We read at 1 Corinthians 1:10-13 that the apostle of Christ rebuked Christians at Corinth when they were trying to create various denominations or sects. Also, he reprimanded them, as we read from 1 Corinthians 11:17-34, when they were perverting the Lord's Supper.

Today we do not have the apostles with us to correct us or to guide us into truth; but we do have their written teachings in the New Testament of Christ, which is also called the doctrine of Christ, beyond which we are commanded not to go, and not to even receive those who teach things which are not found written in the New Testament of Christ. (2 John 9-11). Inferentially, if someone want to know what one must do to be saved from sin, then the answer is found in the New Testament at Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 8:35-39; 22:1-16. To know how to worship God acceptably one must turn to John 4:24; Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:1, 2 and Ephesians 5:19. Also, if one want to ascertain whether a particular teaching or practice, religiously, is right or wrong or is approved by God or not, one must turn to the New Testament of the Bible.

Now, what about the yearly observations of Christmas and Easter, for example? Can we read about them in the Bible, in the New Testament? Does the Bible say that Christ was born on December 25th? Is there any command in the Bible that Christians should observe such days religiously? Is there any example in the Bible where we find Christians observing such days religiously. Moreover, if the apostles of Christ were here on earth today, wouldn't they say to people today, as the apostle Paul told them at Galatia: "You observe days and months and seasons, and years, I am afraid for you, lest I have laboured for you in vain." (Galatians 4:10, 11). Christ put it in these words:

"And in vain they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men." (Matthew 15:9). All men, everywhere, need to learn that God's word and not the commandments of men will save or judge humans in the last day! (John 12:48). Truly, all men everywhere need to repent, as Christ taught at Luke 13:3. God has, indeed, spoken! Will men hear!!

## ***Pentecost And Pentecostalism***

**J.C. CHOATE**

Believers in Christ are familiar with the word "Pentecost," though most would not know what it actually means. Many have taken it out of its context, drawing from it a teaching and a practice that are not taught in God's word.

The word Pentecost appears only in the New Testament. It came fifty days after the Passover, was always on Sunday. Of the three annual feasts of the Jews (the Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of the Tabernacles), Pentecost was the most popular. It was also known as the Feast of Harvest (Exodus 23:16), Feast of the First-Fruits (Leviticus 23:17), and Feast of Weeks (Deuteronomy 16:10). As indicated by these names, it was a feast at the end of the harvest season and brought Jews to Jerusalem from all over the world for the celebration.

God chose this day of Pentecost as the birthday of the church.

During His years of personal ministry, Christ had called and trained the apostles so that they could carry on His work after His departure. To be sure that no mistakes were made, He promised to send the Comforter to them, the power of the Holy Spirit, Who would guide them into all truth (John 14:26; 16:13). Through His power they would be able to remember all that Jesus had taught them, to teach only the truth, to speak in other languages, to perform miracles, and to foretell the future. Since they did not have the New Testament in written form at that time, the miracles done through the Holy Spirit would be the means of confirming the word and producing faith in the hearts of hearers so that they might obey God.

After the Lord's death, burial, and resurrection He commanded the Apostles to remain in Jerusalem until they be

endued with power from on high (Luke 24:49). Then they were to be his witnesses, in Jerusalem, Judaea, Samaria, and finally to the uttermost part of the earth (Acts 1:8). Jesus said, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matthew 28:19, 20).

— All of this was preparation for the beginning of the church, which is God's family, His kingdom on the earth. Following Christ's instructions, the apostles would be gathered in the city of Jerusalem, He would pour out His Spirit on them, and the gospel of salvation would be preached for the first time.

Thus, on this first Pentecost after Jesus' crucifixion as the Passover sacrifice, the church would be established. This would be the ideal day since Jews would be there from all over the world, and many would hear the gospel and obey it. Those who were being saved would be added to the church. After spending some time in Jerusalem, in worship, hearing the gospel preached, and enjoying the fellowship of others who had also been born into the family of God, many of the new converts would return to their respective places to plant the cause of Christ in their areas. This was God's plan from the ages past.

So we read, "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:1-4).

Everything happened just as God planned it. On the day of Pentecost the apostles were waiting in Jerusalem. They received the power of the Holy Spirit as they had been promised. As a result, they spoke in the languages of those gathered there from all over the world and they preached the gospel to them. 3,000 people obeyed the Lord and were added to the church.

But what does Pentecost have to do with the world today? Of course the Jews would still keep Pentecost as a feast day, but to believers in Christ its only significance is that it was (1) the day on which the Holy Spirit was given to the Apostles, (2) the day on

which the gospel was preached for the first time, and (3) the day on which the church had its beginning.

But we hear many religious people today speaking of "the Pentecostal experience" and calling one another "Pentecostals." Many are members of what is called the "Pentecostal Church" but other churches such as the Assemblies of God, the Church of the Nazarene, the Holiness Church, and many other charismatic-type churches refer to themselves as being "Pentecostal."

Some points about Pentecost need to be clarified. In the first place, among believers in Christ "Pentecost" has absolutely nothing to do with Christianity except for the fact it happened to be the day God chose for the gospel to be preached and for the church to begin! It was a *Jewish* feast day, not the name for *Christians* to wear as their identification! Surely the logical reason this day was chosen was because Jews would be gathered from all over the world for that occasion, enabling the gospel to be preached to a large number of potential converts and for the Lord's cause to begin to spread to all parts of the world from that day.

*Certainly, "Pentecost" was not a name that would be borne by the Lord's people from that time onward. After that day of beginning, we do not read anywhere of the apostles or the Lord's people being spoken of as "Pentecostals" or the "Pentecostal Church." Rather we read of individual followers of Christ being called Christians (Acts 11:26) and of the church being the church of Christ. (Romans 16:16).*

Next, except for the *apostles* (Acts 2:1-4), *Cornelius and his household* (Acts 10, 11), and *those on whom the apostles laid their hands* (Acts 6:1-6), we do not read of any other believers in Christ or children of God having received the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit. So if there are those today who are calling themselves "Pentecostals" to indicate that they have received the baptism of the Holy Spirit as the apostles did on the Day of Pentecost, then they are dead wrong! Why! Because none of them have been baptized with the Holy Spirit, as was done in the first century, and therefore they have no miraculous power, they are unable to speak in other languages as the apostles did, they cannot raise the dead, and they are wrong for preaching another gospel besides the one spoken by the apostles (Galatians 1:6-9).

The very fact that they call themselves "Pentecostals"

instead of Christians shows that they are not guided by the mind of the Holy Spirit. He would not teach people today to call themselves something different from what He directed in the first century. I repeat, we nowhere read of "Pentecostals" or "Pentecostal Churches" in the Scriptures!

Multitudes of people today think they have power which they do not have. They are exalting Pentecost in an unscriptural way, and they are therefore deceived and lost. If you have been calling yourself by this name, we would encourage you to return to the Bible, accept and believe the word of God, and do only what it says. When you believe and obey Him according to His word, the Lord will save you and add you to His church. Then you will be Christians only and members of the church of Christ, the only church we read about in the Lord's word. Christ will be with you and bless you, and if you remain faithful to Him unto death, He will give you a home in heaven. Don't go through life, however, believing you have power that you do not have, and exalting names and days that are contrary to the Scriptures. If you do, you will be lost and you will cause many others to likewise be lost.

The miraculous power of the Holy Spirit was given to the apostles to confirm the spoken word of God. Today we have it in written form, the Bible. *Faith comes by hearing the word of God*, Paul says in Romans 10:17. There is no need for miracles today to confirm that word, because it was confirmed and sealed almost two thousand years ago. If you will not believe and obey the gospel of the New Testament, you would not truly believe even if you saw a miracle.

*Especially for Women*

## ***What Does It Mean To Be "A Helper Comparable to Man"?***

**BETTY BURTON CHOATE**

With the completion of the creation of all animal life, Adam gave names to every creature, "But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him" (Genesis 2:20). God had made man in His own image, giving him intellect, emotions, and

an immortal spirit so that there could be love and communion between God and His creation. Now, for man himself, Adam realized that there was no one of *his own kind* with whom he could share existence in the wonderful world God had made.

Actually, Adam, as man, was only half of the planned human creation! Though he could live and function, seeming to be complete within himself, God knew that sexually, physically, mentally, emotionally, socially, and spiritually, Adam must have a counter-part if he was to be whole. So, when Adam realized his aloneness, God made him sleep and took a rib from his side. From the rib—not from the earth—God made woman and brought her to the man. Adam said, "*This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman because she was taken out of Man*" (Gen. 2:23).

In today's world we see men who never marry, as well as women. In some cases they choose to devote themselves greatly to God's service, so that the love of God takes the place of love of human companionship.

In other cases, various circumstances prevent marriage, and this may be accepted with varying attitudes. But the majority of men and women follow their instinctive human need to marry and have a family. Men need the affection and care of a wife, the support of a homemaker. Women need the protection and security of a husband. Both have the inborn need for procreation, for children to live after them. These deep needs were planted in the human system by God Himself, and they cannot easily be ignored.

Compared to the likeness between man and animals, *any* woman would be "comparable" to *any* man, simply on the basis of being human. But we know that among humans, often particular men and women are not suited to each other. They are not "on the same wave length." Sometimes we see a well-educated man married to a woman who is not educated, whose interest in the world is no larger than her own existence. Sometimes we see a sensitive and intelligent woman whose great mistake in life was the choice of a small-minded man for a husband. How critically important it is, when the choice of a life-mate is being made, that all parts of both personalities be considered! How vital it is, for happiness, that the man and woman be as God intended, "comparable" to each other.

How is the woman to be a helper? As already stated, she is

the life-time companion of her husband. From the beginning God did not intend for divorce to take place. He planned that there be "one man for one woman for life." Jesus reaffirmed this fact when He said, *"Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate"* (Matt. 19:4-6).

As companions for life, they will grow in their knowledge and understanding of one another. Together, they will not be lonely, a most important factor in the happiness of humans. If they are well-suited, they will be strength and support for one another in the decisions and challenges of youth. They will be able to care for each other through the frailties and sicknesses of old age.

The idea of "a helper comparable to him" is that the woman would be able to fit in and fill the gaps left by the man, whether through his inability to fill them (as in her role as a mother), or simply through his need for help, which is often the case in his work and other responsibilities of life. Where is the farmer who does not need the competent help of his wife and children to plant and tend and harvest the crops? How many small businessmen have depended on their wives to keep the accounts or to order the fresh stock or to tend the shop? In the New Testament, Aquila was a tent maker by trade, and his wife Priscilla helped him. (Acts 18:2; 3).

Biblically, the woman's primary work is to bring children into the world, to care for them and for her husband, and to care for the home. Paul wrote to Titus, ". . . that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed" (Titus 2:4, 5). Timothy was told to instruct even the young widows (and this would apply equally to those young women who have not yet married) to ". . . marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully" (1 Timothy 5:14).

This work of bearing and rearing children, of managing the house while the husband earns the living for the family, is enough to more than fill a woman's time, if she does her work

well. Some, not realizing the extreme importance of these responsibilities have belittled the woman's role, calling it menial and boring. But God could have paid no greater tribute to woman than that of giving her the privilege of shaping the lives and souls of the next generation and for eternity. *When we look at the moral problems that are rampant in the world today, along with the rapid growth of crime, these facts tell us that mothers have abandoned their work in the home, and the home is falling into ruin as a result.* This is truly the case, for parallel to the growth in problems is the growth of the number of women who have taken up the man's role of working at jobs outside the home. Whatever the reason for this choice, whatever the seeming necessity for women to do this, multitudes of homes are being destroyed because of the lack of attention God intended the wife and mother to give them.

Besides the work of caring for the children and for the home, "the woman comparable to man" should want to prepare herself to stand at her husband's side as an asset to him. She should dress so that he will approve her appearance. She should develop her mind so that she is able to share her husband's thinking, his awareness of the problems and needs in their own world, as well as the rest of the world. She should be sensitive to his emotional needs, making it her goal to bring happiness and good things to his life. The husband of the successful wife will find in her his best friend, his closest confidante.

The wife "comparable to man" will cultivate a good relationship with her husband's family, knowing that enmity with any loved one will bring stress to their own relationship. Jesus' advice that we be willing to "go the second mile" (Matthew 5:38-42) works wonderfully in overcoming the human shortcomings in families.

Most important of all, the wife should share spiritually with her husband. If he attends the worship assemblies while she stays at home with the children, neither she nor the children will grow very well spiritually. In fact, even the husband will not grow as he should, because he is growing alone. God intended that mutual growth in a family be the basis of greater spiritual development of each individual. Sharing spiritual thoughts, reading and discussing the scriptures together, praying together—these activities help all members of the family to grow in the knowledge of God.

The apostle Peter wrote to women: "... let your beauty... be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible ornament of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God... Likewise you husbands, dwell with them with understanding, giving honour to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered" (1 Peter 3:4, 7).

When Paul wrote the Christian women in Ephesus, "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord" (Eph. 5:22), was he saying that the husband is authorized by God to have his foot on his wife's neck? Is she not to have a thought of her own? Does she have no rights, no feelings? Certainly, this is not what God was saying.

The woman is truly to respect her husband, but she is neither to abuse him nor to be abused by him. In matters pertaining to the personal things of the home, and even the spending of money for the personal things, the knowledge and experience of the wife may qualify her to do these jobs better than her husband. In other things pertaining particularly to her realm as mother and homemaker, her judgment should be valued. In decisions that must be taken, both she and her husband may discuss the points and weigh what would be best. She may strongly influence his decision, but the biblical authority for leadership in the home is with the husband.

If the wife sees some point—in attitude, knowledge, judgment—in which she truly believes her husband needs advice or further knowledge, it is her duty as a "helper" to offer her thinking, in a gentle and loving way. No matter how right her knowledge may be, and how wrong her husband may be, it is never right for the wife to "boss" her husband, to order him around, or to command him to change. To take such an attitude would not only weaken her husband's leadership but would also be disobedience to God. For a husband to tolerate such behaviour would not only weaken himself and strengthen the bossy attitude of his wife, but it would also be disobedience to God. *We can never forget that, finally, all of us must answer to God for our behaviour toward each other.*

The loving examples of our Lord and the church are held up to the husband and his wife, as a guide in their treatment of each other: "... let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband"

(Eph. 5:33).

## ***Baptism Is For The Dead***

**FRANCIS DAVID**

All over the world baptism is a very controversial subject. The religious world is confused about this command of God. Since baptism is a command of God and the part of great commission of Christ, therefore it could not be taken lightly. Yet we see that worlds of people say that baptism is not essential for salvation. They preach and teach that one can be saved without baptism.

How sad it is to know that people do not divide the word of God rightly. We need to divide the word properly and rightly. (2 Tim. 2:15). One good thing about the Bible is that it does not contradict itself. The Bible will not teach the different ways of salvation.

As we turn to the Bible, we see there, Paul writing by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. (Rom. 3:23). Man has a sinful nature. John says, "Whosoever commits sin also commits lawlessness and SIN is lawlessness" (1 John 3:4). Because of the sinful nature of man, God cannot have fellowship with him. Man is separated from God (Isa. 59:2). Since he is separated from God, he is dead in sins. According to scriptures if he wants to get freedom from sin, he needs to obey God. God's book, Bible tells us that in order to have the forgiveness of sins one needs to be baptised. (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). The important thing that we want to see is this that Baptism is for the Dead People. The people those who are dead in their trespasses. When a sinner confesses his faith in Jesus and repents of his sins and is buried in the watery grave of baptism, he dies to his sins. As he comes out of the watery grave his old manner of life has died now and he is a new person. Apostle Paul says "Therefore we are buried with him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." So we see here that in baptism, the body of sins done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sins (Rom. 6:4-6). We go further and read in the same chapter verses

7 & 8 that when a person has died, he has been freed from sins. He has died with Christ and he needs to know that he shall live with Christ. He has crucified himself on the cross like Paul (Gal. 2:20). As we come to the verse we see here, he says, you consider yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Since we have died to sin we cannot continue in sin. Paul talking to the brethren at Corinth says: "What will they do who are baptised for the dead"? A person who is dead in sins is the subject for baptism. When this dead person obeys the command of baptism, he comes forth from the watery grave and thus becomes a new person in Jesus Christ. His old man or old manner of life is buried now. (2 Cor. 5:17). I have heard in Latin America when they baptise a person they often utter these words "I kill you in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." This particular statement shows us that how a person before his baptism is a dead person. Yes, we see that baptism is for the dead people.

Friend, have you been baptised? if not, then you must think about it and act accordingly. You need to die to your old life which is sinful and no doubt you can be sure that in Jesus your sins are washed away (Acts 22:16).

## *A Book From God*

GARY C. HAMPTON

Before we start to study the Bible, we need to recognize that it is God's word. Such recognition will help us to study with a more serious attitude.

The Bible lays claim to inspiration. Paul told Timothy, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Paul used the Greek word *theopneustos* in the place where we find "inspiration." *Theo* means "God" and *pneustos* means "breathed," thus, God breathed, or God breathed out. The idea is that God spoke, since we exhale, or breathe out, through the vocal cords to speak.

Peter explained inspiration when he wrote, "For prophecy

never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21). The Hebrew writer must have recognized this as he often said God said a certain thing, when we know man did the actual writing (see Hebrews 1:5, 8 5:5-6).

Many Old Testament writers claimed inspiration, as did some New Testament writers (see Isaiah 1:1-2, 10; 24; Jeremiah 1:1-2; 2:1; Ezekiel 1:1-3; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Peter 3:2). Jesus considered Old Testament scriptures inspired and used them as authoritative (Matthew 4:4, 7, 10). His whole purpose in coming to earth was to do God's will by fulfilling Old Testament prophecy (Matthew 5:7-18; John 15:25). The New Testament writers considered Old Testament writers inspired (Acts 1:15-16; 4:25; 28:25-27; Galatians 3:16-19).

The writers of the New Testament also claimed inspiration for the New Testament writers. Jesus said the apostles would be guided by the Holy Spirit (John 14:25-26; 16:12-13; Hebrews 2:1-4). The clearest and perhaps most intriguing of all these statements is that made by Peter about the writings of Paul. "And consider that the long suffering of our Lord is salvation—as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures" (2 Peter 3:15-16).

However, such internal claims would be meaningless if they were not supported by evidence. In fact, such claims force us to test their validity. We can know the Bible is from God because of the scientific facts which were written in it long before man recognized them or knew about them. In Genesis 1:11-12, 21, 24-25, we find the expression "after his kind" in reference to the grasses, trees, fish, birds, cattle, and other beasts. These statements are made despite the fact that man, even hundreds of years later, believed in spontaneous generation. Only recently doctors have found certain special elements in the blood of a boy baby eight days old which help to heal. Yet, Moses, thousands of years ago, wrote by inspiration that boy babies were to be circumcised the eighth day (Leviticus 12:3).

In George Washington's time, doctors believed "bleeding" a patient would rid the body of impurities. Now, doctors realize that

the blood is the life of the body, just as Moses wrote in the long ago (Genesis 9:4; Leviticus 17:11, 14). Thompson and Jackson note that the Mississippi River dumps over 6 million gallons of water per second into the Gulf of Mexico. One might ask, "Where does it all go and why is the land not flooded?" The answer was revealed by God through Solomon. "All the rivers run into the sea, Yet the sea is not full; To the place from which the rivers come, There they return again" (Ecclesiastes 1:7). In 11:3a, he flashes out the explanation by saying, "If the clouds are full of rain, They empty themselves upon the earth." Amos concurs with Solomon when he describes God by writing, "Who calls for the waters of the sea, And pours them out on the face of the earth- The Lord is His name" (Amos 9:6b).

Specific prophecies about an event hundreds of years in the future could only come true if they were inspired of God. The Bible has many examples of such specific prophecies that were fulfilled. Just in the case of Christ, we find prophecies made from 400 to 700 years before the event which are true in details that could not have been guessed at. The place of his birth and fact that his mother would be a virgin are found in Micah 5:2 and Isaiah 7:14. Matthew tells us he was born of a virgin in Bethlehem (Matthew 1:20-2:1). His triumphant entry into Jerusalem is foretold in Zechariah 9:9 and fulfilled in Matthew 21:1-5.

The miracles worked in the Bible prove the spokesmen who worked them were from God. God gave Moses certain miraculous signs to use in proving to the Israelites that he was from God (Exodus 4:1-5). The miracles worked in bringing the ten plagues upon the land of Egypt were done to prove there was one God in the world and he was with Moses and the people (Exodus 7:5, 17; 8:10, 22; 9:14, 29; 10:2; 11:7; 13:3; 14:14). Christ was raised from the dead to prove he was God's spokesman (Romans 1:4). That the apostles were speaking by God's direction is clear because of the signs they were able to work (Mark 16:14-20; Hebrews 2:3-4).

Other areas of proof could be explored, such as: the historical accuracy of the Bible; the unity of 66 books written by about 40 writers, in different languages, over 1600 years; geographic accuracy; and the greatness of the message. However, I believe we can already see that the Bible claims to be "God-breathed" and there are undeniable proofs that it is.

# ***"You Can't Argue With A Skunk!"***

**CLEM THURMAN**

One of the first and most important lessons that any hunter, or hunting dog, must learn is, "You can't argue with a skunk." The only way to handle a confrontation with one of those critters is to make a hasty and well-organized retreat. It just doesn't help to argue about "right-of-way" or "personal rights." The only safe course, the only sensible course, is flight. Those that don't learn that lesson pay the penalty for their ignorance. In much the same way, God has taught His children to flee from certain things. Even though we are told, "*Fight the good fight of faith*" (1 Tim. 6:12), there are still times when a hasty retreat is the only path to victory. Reason must over-rule valor, and courage must be tempered with judicious discernment.

The Christian is exhorted, "*Be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil*" (Eph. 6:10-11). We are to be prepared to fight against Satan, and we are told plainly, "*Resist the devil, and he will flee from you*" (James 4:7). Christians are expected to be strong in the Lord to stand up to Satan and do battle. But we also must be sensible enough to turn to retreat where a victory cannot be won by direct engagement. For instance; "*Abstain from every form of evil*" (1 Thes. 5:22). It is interesting to learn when the Christian ought to take a stand and fight, and when he should forsake the battlefield and retreat. Let us go to the Scriptures and find some passages that give us examples.

## **"Flee Youthful Lusts"**

The apostle Paul wrote to the young preacher, Timothy, "*But flee youthful lusts, and follow after righteousness, faith, love, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart*" (2 Tim. 2:22). The apostle John refers to the "*lust of the flesh*" (1 John 2:16) as being enmity with God. Such lusts are opposed to godliness and will sap the spiritual strength of any Christian. Even though Timothy was a godly man, he was warned to take all possible care in guarding against the youthful lusts. Instead of trying to "stand up to" the temptation, he is informed that the best defense is flight! You can't argue with a skunk. And we dare not

try to reason with lust, nor see how close we can get without "getting caught." That man who subjects himself to lustful temptations will surely, sooner or later, be overcome. The wise course is to flee.

Joseph had been sold into slavery by his brothers, and was taken to a foreign land. He wound up as a slave in the service of Potiphar, who was "captain of the guard" to the king. Because God was with him, it wasn't long until Joseph was given great responsibility and privilege. But then trouble arose. Potiphar's wife propositioned Joseph to commit adultery with her. He refused. His reason was clearly stated: "*My master [Potiphar] . . . hath committed all that he hath to my hand; there is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back anything from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?*" (Gen. 39:8-9). Finally, she "*caught him by the garment, saying, Lie with me: and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out*" (v. 12). The time for argument was past. He ran! His loyalty to God kept him from trying to overcome temptation in the woman's bedroom! He got out. "*Flee youthful lusts.*"

### **"Flee from the Love of Money"**

Jesus, in Luke 12:16-21, told the story of the rich man who thought only of himself and what he wanted. Even with his "*greater barns*" he was miserably poor, for his affections were directed toward the wrong object. Paul wrote to Timothy, "*Godliness with contentment is great gain . . . They that are minded to be rich fall into a temptation and a snare and many foolish and hurtful lusts . . . For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil . . . But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness*" (1 Tim. 6:6-11). As before, Timothy is told to take flight from those "*fleshly lusts, which war against the soul*" (1 Pet. 2:11). Not only was Timothy told to flee, he was also given some directions about what course to take as he fled: "*Follow after . . .*"

Christians today have a great need for the warning to flee from materialism, which threatens the soul. Because we have so much, and life is so easy (especially compared with former generations), the temptation is great to take all this for granted and use our material prospering for our own selfish purposes. A rich young ruler once asked Jesus, "*What good thing shall I do,*

*that I may have eternal life?"* The Lord replied, *"If thou wouldest be perfect, go, sell that which thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me. But when the young man heard the saying, he went away sorrowful; for he was one that had great possessions"* (Matt. 19:16-22). How sad! His focus was on his material things instead of on Jesus. God's people today must flee from the love of money.

### **"Flee from Idolatry"**

Sitting in the middle of the Greek culture and Roman commercial trade route, Corinth was uniquely situated. Immorality abounded, and the Lord's church there evidently had a difficult time keeping worldliness out of the lives of the Christians. So the apostle Paul warns them, *"Wherefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry"* (1 Cor. 10:14). We, too, must flee idolatry, for it has engulfed so many to their eternal ruin and shame. Idols always stand as rivals of the one true God. God told Israel, *"Thou shalt have no other gods before me . . . Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image"* (Ex. 20). When Israel engaged in idol worship, they were guilty of spiritual adultery (Jer. 3:8, 20; 5:7; Ezek. 23:37).

We may think that idolatry is not really much of a problem for us. But the warnings are there for a reason! *"My little children, guard yourselves from idols"* (1 John 5:21). Israel had trouble with idols, and not just those made of marble or metal: *"These men have set up their idols in their heart . . . Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idols in his heart"* (Ezek. 14:3-4). An idol is that which comes between God and man, which man worships instead of God. Material possessions, ambition for power or prestige, even family can become an *"idol in the heart."* I am convinced that many who would never think of bowing down to a graven image are still guilty of idolatry! *"Flee from idolatry."*

### **"Flee from Fornication"**

As mentioned above, the city of Corinth was in a grossly immoral society. The church, therefore, was warned, *"Know ye not that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take away the members of Christ, and make them members of a harlot? God forbid . . . Flee fornication . . . Or know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye*

*have from God? and ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body" (1 Cor. 6:15-20). We dare not take the members of Christ and engage in fornication, thus defiling the temple of the Holy Spirit! "Flee fornication."*

Remember the example of Joseph (Gen. 39). The Lord doesn't expect us to stay in the place of temptation and put up a fight. He warns us to flee! Flight is nearly always the best defense against the sin of fornication. Get out of the situation, get away from the temptation, get away from the one (or ones) that help to put you in that place of temptation. Remember, "Evil companionships corrupt good morals" (1 Cor. 15:33). Change your circle of friends, change channels, change locations! Just get out: flee! God doesn't ask us to prove our strength against this sin by seeing how much temptation we can stand. You can't argue with a skunk. Flee the temptation.

### **"Flee from the Wrath to Come"**

John the Baptizer spent much time preaching and baptizing: *"But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said unto them, Ye offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" (Matt. 3:7). John gives clear acknowledgement that it is important to flee from "the wrath to come," in spite of the shallow and pretentious religion of these two sects of the Jews. God's people have been given many plain warnings about "the wrath to come." Jesus warned the Jews of His day, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my sayings, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day . . . And books were opened, and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works" (John 12:48; Rev. 20:12).*

The judgment is certain for all of us: *"It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this cometh judgment" (Heb. 9:27). The basis of the judgment is clearly stated. "For we must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. 5:10). None of us will escape that call: "So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. 14:12). The judgment scene is revealed for us in the words of Jesus, when the righteous and wicked will be separated and each hear the Savior's sentence: "Come, ye*

*blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world . . . Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. 25:34, 41). That separation will be eternal, forever: "These shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life" (Matt. 25:46).*

John pictures the "lake of fire and brimstone" (Rev. 20:10) as the final abode of Satan and those who serve him. He also adds, "If any was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire" (Rev. 20:15). God wants all men to be saved (1 Tim. 2:4). That is why He sent His Son into this world to die for our sins (John 3:16; Heb. 2:9). The apostle writes, "To you that are afflicted rest with us, at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with angels of his power in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus" (2 Thes. 1:7-8).

Friend, there is a time to stand and fight. But there is also a time to flee. It is senseless to try to fight against Satan on his terms and on his turf. You just can't win an argument with a skunk. Stand with Jesus Christ, resist the devil on God's battlefield, and the Lord will make you victorious. If you have not obeyed the gospel, you are warned to "flee from the wrath to come." Flee from sin, flee from temptation, flee from the wrath to come—by fleeing to Christ for refuge!

## ***Death—As God Views It***

**JOE E. GALLOWAY**

Man, limited in so many ways, often does not see things as God sees them—thus, as they really are! God told Samuel, "The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (I Samuel 16:7). Not only is man limited by only seeing the outward appearance, he is also limited by time, seeing only that which is temporal. Paul wrote, "For the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (II Corinthians 5:18). In the same verse he suggests that we can look at "the things which are not seen." Of course we may do this only by means of what God has revealed to us in the Bible!

Apart from what God has revealed, man tends to view death much differently than does God. We tend to think of the death of a good man as a horrible tragedy. We seem to consider only how much better it would be if this good person were still alive and were still a positive influence to his family, friends, and all with whom he would be in contact. In contrast, we often think it good when a wicked person dies, thinking that surely heaven rejoices. But, God does not view death as we view it!

### **The Death of the Wicked**

God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked! When a wicked person dies his eternal doom is sealed. God does not want a single person to perish (II Peter 3:9), but wants all to be saved (I Timothy 2:4). "Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" (Ezekiel 33:11).

### **The Death of the Righteous**

The death of faithful Christian is precious to God. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints" (Psalm 116:15). The purpose of our being here on earth is to prepare for living with God eternally. We make such preparation by learning God's will and living by it to the best of our abilities. The "whole of man" is to "fear God, and keep his commandments" (Ecclesiastes 12:13). When one has faithfully lived for the Lord, his death transfers him from this realm of preparation into the realm of being with the Lord, which is a far better situation (Philippians 1:23; II Corinthians 5:8). No wonder such a death is "precious" in God's sight! "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them" (Revelation 14:13).

### **Lessons For Us**

First, since God views the death of the wicked as a tragedy, we need to do our best, not only to live righteously ourselves, but to teach and influence as many others as possible to be saved! James wrote, "Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins" (James 5:20).

All of us have opportunities to influence many toward salvation. We have our immediate families. Some Christians have husbands or wives who are not saved; with some it is a

brother or a sister; and we have our children to bring up "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). We must teach these loved family members, or arrange to have them taught. To not act on this need is to callously let them live and die without doing the most loving thing we can possibly do for them: to try to help them prepare for their eternal happiness!

We also have close friends, acquaintances at work, and neighbors who need salvation. As those saved by the grace of God (Ephesians 2:8-10), we are "debtors," as was Paul, to do our best to teach the gospel to all who are lost (Romans 1:14-15). One cannot have the "mind of Christ" (Philippians 2:5) and not be concerned for the salvation of all who are lost.

Second, since God has pleasure in the death of the righteous, we need to "rejoice in hope" (Romans 12:12) when a faithful Christian dies, even though we may grieve because of our separation from him at this time. Paul wrote, explaining the future hope of those in Christ, in order that Christians would "sorrow not, even as others who have no hope" when their beloved Christian friends die (I Thessalonians 4:13-18).

Finally, we need to look forward to that time when WE can depart this world to be with the Lord. Paul wrote, "For in this [body] we groan, EARNESTLY DESIRING to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven" (II Corinthians 5:2). As the faithful Christian grows older, and more and more of those whom he has loved dearly have died in the Lord, he will have less attachment to this life, and a growing desire for the life to come.

We all need to heed these words of Paul: "Set your affections on things above not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory" (Colossians 3:2-4).

## ***How And Why Are We Called To Be Saints?***

**CLIFFORD DIXON**

That man is "called" of God is found many times in our New Testament. In I Corinthians 1:2 Paul states that they were "called to be saints." In Ephesians 4:11 we are told to "walk worthy of

the vocation wherewith ye are called." II Timothy 1:9 states God "hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling . . ." In I Peter 2:9 we are told that we are "called out of darkness into his marvelous light." II Peter 1:10 states that if we add the Christian graces we make our "calling and election sure."

The question is not whether we are called of God, but **HOW ARE WE CALLED OF GOD?** The answer to this comes from II Thessalonians 2:13-14: "But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ." So man is called by the gospel. This is the reason it is stated, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). When we accept and obey the gospel, then we are the children of God (Galatians 3:26-27; Hebrews 5:8-9).

When we consider man's history of rejecting the commands of God, and in general has rebelled against the standard God has given we pose the question, **WHY DOES THE LORD CALL US?** Just why would he give us the opportunity to be saved by giving us the gospel that will save our souls if we with meekness will receive it? (James 1:21).

God needs the help of good men to show him and his will to the world. Paul stated that he and the apostles had "this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us" (II Corinthians 4:7). God had angels to be his messengers; yet he chose that through men whom he inspired, the gospel be given to the world.

God has also Passed down the task of teaching that gospel to the world, into the hands of men. Timothy was told that the things he received at the mouth of the apostle Paul, he was to commit "to faithful men," who would teach others also (II Timothy 2:2). If you will check out your New Testament cases of conversion, you will find every time a man was told what to do to be saved, he was always told by another man. Never did an angel tell anyone what to do to be saved. Never did God reveal what to do to be saved in a vision, nor in a dream. Angels, visions, and dreams had their part during the formative days of the gospel; but the message of salvation was always delivered by men. You see, God has chosen that "by the foolishness of preaching" men believe (I Corinthians 1:21). God still needs

good men who will "live soberly, righteously, and godly," to preach the gospel to the lost world (Titus 2:11-12). He needs men who are "rocks" like Peter, who said: "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). He needs committed men like Paul—men who "live by faith," and who are "set for the defence of the gospel" (Galatians 2:20; Philippians 1:17). God needs disciples who are faithful like John, who at an old age was exiled to Patmos, but he was still "in the Spirit on the Lord's day" (Revelation 1:10). Yes, God still needs good men to represent him upon earth to their fellow men. Will you hear his call and obey it, so that you will also be one of these who teach others about God?

God has restoration of the human race in mind by giving humanity the gospel call. In Acts 3:21 we read that the heaven must keep Christ until "the restitution of all things." This restoration is not a physical restoration of the earth to a paradise as is taught in so many religions. This is rather a "restoration" of the soul to communion and fellowship with God. Jesus Christ brought this about by his death on the cross (Ephesians 2:16); but man must respond to the teaching of Christ in order to enjoy it. This restoration begins when we heed the gospel call by being "born of water and of the Spirit" (John 3:5), which means to believe, repent, confess Christ, and be baptized (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16). This restoration continues as we who are "risen with Christ" "seek those things which are above" (Colossians 3:1-16). The revamping of life comes when we put off sinful things and put on right things according to God's standard. If we stumble along the way, provision is made for us to repent, confess our faults, and pray for forgiveness (Acts 8:22; I John 1:9-10). This restoration will be complete when we receive eternal life (Mark 10:30). A glorious resurrection of the righteous dead will mean that the corruptible will put on incorruption, the mortal shall have put on immortality, and death is no more (I Corinthians 15:53-54). The Lord will take such to meet him in the air (I Thessalonians 4:16-17).

The most important thing in life for any of us is to heed the call of God through the gospel. We need to "hunger and thirst after righteousness" (Matthew 5:6). If we do so, God will fill our needs and bless us eternally. There is a yearning in man for his Creator. Do not squash it down with worldly pursuits! Take time for the things of God before it is too late.