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EDITORIAL

What Does The Bible Teach?

“For As many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ”

Speaking of Christ, at Colossians 1:14, says the apostle Paul: “in whom we have redemption, through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.” He also wrote the Romans and said: “There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. . .” (Romans 8:1). Again, inspired by the Holy Spirit of God, the apostle, at 2 Corinthians 5:17, said: “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. . .” Notice, the words, “in Christ.” Redemption or salvation and the forgiveness of sins is available in Christ. There is no condemnation to those who are in Christ. Anyone who is in Christ is a new creation. Christ said, at John 14:6: “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” Is there any other, except Christ, through whom we can reach God? No, if we believe in Christ and in the Bible. Now, how many times Christ had to say that for us to believe it? Is it not plain enough for us to understand? The fact of the matter is that one must be in Christ to receive all and every spiritual blessings. (Ephesians 1:3). But how does one come into Christ or get into Christ? Evidently, when one puts on Christ. And how does one put Christ on? The Bible at Galatians 3:27 says: “For as many of you as were

baptized into Christ have put on Christ." Is it difficult to understand?

The truth of the matter is, that if a person is not baptized scripturally then he is not in Christ. To be saved in Christ one must put on Christ, and to put on Christ one must be baptized into Christ. There is no other way to be in Christ. The Bible teaches that when one hears the Good News or the gospel of Christ and believes; one must then repent of sins, and confess Christ to be the Son of God and be baptized for the forgiveness of sins. At this point, one becomes a Christian or a follower of Christ, and at this point Christ adds that person to his church (Acts 2:47). Notice from Acts chapter two the following facts: Peter and other apostles preached the gospel of Christ for the first time. More than three thousand were listening. Verse 37 reads: "Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and to rest of the apostles, Men and brethren what shall we do?" Unless men are convinced that they are in sin, and in need of salvation; and that Christ is the propitiation for their sins, and believe in him, they are not going to ask "what shall we do?" But, then, notice, if you will, the apostle didn't answer them: "that now since you are convinced and believe in Christ; accept him your personal saviour, and let's pray that he may forgive you your sins." No, he didn't say that, as most preachers do today. What did the apostle say to them? In the very next verse he tells them, to answer their question: "What shall we do?", he said, "Repent, and let everyone of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." The believers in Christ were told to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins. Can one be a Christian or saved in Christ without having received the forgiveness of sins?

Now, I draw your attention to Acts chapter eight, and specifically to the story of conversion of the eunuch. Read the story from Acts 8:26, and as you come to verse 35, you read, "Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him." All it says here is Philip "PREACHED JESUS TO HIM." But what was the reaction or the response of eunuch? Wise reader, please notice, the very next words and

these are: "Now as they went down the road, they came to some water, and the eunuch said, See here is water, what hinders me from being baptized? Then Philip said, If you believe with all your heart, you may, And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him." (Acts 8: 36-38). The question is: How did eunuch come to know that he must be baptized immediately after hearing Jesus' message? From where did he learn that he need to be baptized? Why was he so eager to be baptized there and then? The answer is: The message of Jesus, the preaching of his gospel includes baptism; and eunuch wanted to put on Jesus by being baptized into him. The same was true in the case of conversion of the Jailer and his family members, as we read in Acts 16. The question Jailer had asked Paul and Silas at night was "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30). What was the answer given? "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household." But, how does faith come? By hearing. (Romans 10:17). So, next we read, that Paul and Silas "spoke the word of the Lord" to him and to all who were in his house. Notice, again, dear reader, that all it says here that they "spoke the word of the Lord." Thats all. But what happened immediately after that? We read: "And immediately he and all his family were baptized." (Acts 16:33). Why immediately, at that hour of midnight? And, how did they know that they must be baptized? The word of the Lord was spoken to them. Surely, then, in preaching the word of the Lord they were told that they must be baptized for the remission of sins; to put on Christ, in whom is the redemption and the forgiveness of sins. One does something immediately when one sees the importance of that.

The ingredients of the gospel of Christ are: his death for the sinners; his burial; and his resurrection, as we read from 1 Corinthians 15:1—4. This is the doctrine of the gospel of Christ. When one obeys the command of Christ to be baptized, he obeys the *form* of the doctrine (Romans 6:17). The form must be similar. The gospel doctrine is the death, the burial and the resurrection of Christ. Baptism is the *form* of the doctrine. Through repentance one dies to sin or for sin; then is buried in the grave of water, and then comes out of the watery grave to

portray the resurrection of Christ. This is exactly what the apostle Paul was discussing in Romans chapter 6, as he reminded them what took place when they were baptized. Notice, he says to them, "Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death, Therefore we were 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." And, now, notice, next, what he says, "For if we have been united together in the likeness of his death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of his resurrection." (Romans 6:3-5). The apostle was discussing here baptism. And, he says, through baptism they had enacted or portrayed the likeness or form of Christ's death, burial and resurrection, which is the basis of the gospel. Notice too, that walking in the newness of life comes after, and not before, one is baptized. No wonder then as to why Ananias told Saul (Paul): "And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22:16). And, we are told, as we read from Acts 9:18, that Paul arose and was baptized.!

So What do we learn? We learn: that to be in Christ, where there is redemption and the forgiveness of sins, one must be baptized, immersed in water, by the authority of Christ or in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit for the forgiveness of sins, to put on Christ.

When Was The Church Established?

J.C. CHOATE

There are many churches and each one had to be established at some point in time. Some like to brag that their church is an old church, that it had its beginning way back in the 1800's. Others will admit that their church is much younger. But what difference does it make when a church was established? It

doesn't make any difference if one is not concerned about the Lord's church, and whether their church is that church. If one is concerned about being a member of the church that Christ built, then one of the best ways to identify that church is to find out when that church had its beginning. If that date can be determined then it means that all other churches would be churches other than the Lord's church. Is it possible to know when Christ's church was established? Yes, because the Bible gives the date, at least close enough so we can know that it was the Lord's church that was built, and that all churches that came after it were not of the Lord. In Matthew 16:18 Christ promised to build his church. That means that up to that time it had not been established. A little after that (Matthew 16:28) Christ said, "Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which will not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power." (Mark 9:1). Actually, the kingdom of God here has reference to the church as we read in Matthew 16:18,19. But notice he said that it would come or be established in the life time of some of those that were there at that time. Another important piece of information was that it would come with power, or the power of the Holy Spirit, as we will see a little later.

Now when we go to Luke 24, after the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, he commanded the Apostles to tarry in the city of Jerusalem until they be endued with power from on high. (Luke 24:49). Then in Acts 1:8, just before the Lord returned to the Father in Heaven, he told the Apostles that not many days from that time that they would be baptized with the Holy Ghost (Acts 1:5) and that on receiving the power of the Holy Ghost they would be his witnesses in Jerusalem, Judaea, Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

On turning to Acts 2, and the first few verses, we have the Apostles in Jerusalem, it is the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus Christ, a Jewish feast day that brought together Jews from all over the world, and on this occasion the Apostles were baptized with the Holy Ghost, and with that power began to preach to the people in their own languages. Preaching Christ to them, showing how the prophecies were being fulfilled,

a large number became believers and wanted to know that what they should do, and on being told that they should now repent and be baptized for the remission of their sins, they that gladly received his word were baptized and the Lord added them to his church. Read through Acts 2, but especially Acts 2:38,41, and 47.

So we have the establishment of the Lord's church, and from this point through the remainder of the New Testament the church is always spoken of as being in existence. That means then that the Lord's church had its beginning there in Jerusalem when the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Apostles, and after hearing the gospel some 3,000 obeyed the Lord and were added to the church. What date was this? According to the setting there in Acts 2, those who have studied that period of time, conclude that the date was approximately A.D. 33. Bible students and scholars in general will agree with this and of course it means that any church that was established after this was not the Lord's church. But in addition to this, there are many other marks that help us to identify this church as being the Lord's church—the one and only church of the Bible.

Are you a member of this church, the one and only church that belongs to the Lord? If not, you are not a member of Christ's church, the one he built, the one he died for, the one that wears his name, the one he is saviour of, and the one he is returning for that he might deliver it up to God. Please think about these matters and obey the Lord and he will add you to his church.

Especially for Women

Comparing With Scriptures

BETTY BURTON CHOATE

It was Sunday morning, and as they had done the previous week, Andrew and Rachel left home early in order to reach the Baptist church building before the congregation began to arrive.

They noticed on the name board that "Reverend B. Thomas" was the "Pastor". The door was open and when they went inside they were greeted warmly by a distinguished looking gentleman dressed in a suit.

"Good morning," he said. "I am the Reverend Thomas. Have you come for our meeting?"

"Good morning. Yes, my wife, Rachel, and I are interested in learning about the Baptist church and what you teach. Actually, Rachel was baptized as a Baptist when she was young. I was christened as a baby in the Catholic church. We haven't been worshipping anywhere since our marriage, but now that we have Timothy, we feel that we must practice Christianity and train him in the right way."

"You've made a wise decision," the pastor said, approvingly. "And I'm sure you'll like our church. We are quite large, with many distinguished families from the area among our membership."

"But we need to learn more about the Baptist church before we decide which church to be a part of," Andrew explained. "We've been reading from the New Testament, trying to understand what is taught there about salvation. And to be honest with you, we're also trying to understand just what the situation is about the church, since we've read of only one in the Scriptures and yet there are many different churches with different names, even here in our city. Why is that?"

"Oh, you know how different people are!" the preacher joked lightly. "It really doesn't matter so much about the church, since the church doesn't save anyone. You do know that you are saved by your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, not by being a member of a church, don't you?"

"Well, according to what we've read, certainly we must believe in Jesus as God's Son, but at the church's beginning in Acts 2, the people were forgiven of their sins when the conviction of their faith caused them to be baptized into Christ, and then it said that God added them to the church. So, from that beginning, it seems that more than faith was required for salvation; and certainly, it shows that everyone who was saved was added to

the church. Can you tell me when the Baptist church started?"

"Some among us would say that it had its actual beginning with John the Baptist, that all of the people who came to him were baptized, which made them the first 'Baptists'. Others would say that, historically, the first organized Baptist church was started by John Smythe in Amsterdam, Holland in 1609. Because of differences in thinking, with the passing of time, more than 30 different types of Baptists can be found in the world today," the preacher explained.

"But I was sure that when we were reading from the gospel of Matthew, John had already been killed before Jesus promised to build His church, in chapter 16. How could Jesus' church have been begun by John the Baptist, or how can any church which was started by some other man in some place in Europe in the 1600's be the same as the one started by Jesus in Jerusalem a few days after His death?"

"Because we are pointing the way to Jesus! You must understand that the church is not the important thing. You can be saved without being in any church. It is our *faith* that saves us," affirmed the preacher again.

"I was so young when I was baptized," Rachel spoke up. "I don't remember anything about it except the baptism. Could you explain just what is involved?"

"Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God?"

"Of course, we do!" Andrew quickly answered.

"And you accept Him as your personal savior?"

"Of course! There is no other savior," Andrew answered again.

"Then you are saved by your faith."

"That's all there is to it?" asked Andrew. "Just like that, we have forgiveness?"

"Yes, salvation is the free gift of God." In John 3:16 we are assured, *'For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.'* And in Ephesians 2:8,9 we are told, *'For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of*

yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast."

"But what about those people on the day the church was started? Peter told them to repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of their sins," Andrew asked.

"Of course we *are baptized*, but baptism is the *outward* sign of the *inward* grace. In other words, you are saved when you accept Christ as your personal savior, and then you are baptized as a testimony to the fact that you have been saved."

"Is a person a member of the Baptist church when he believes in Christ?" Rachel asked. "If so, then all believers would be Baptists."

"No, actually one is saved by his faith, but he is not a member of the church until he has submitted to water baptism," the preacher explained.

"He would go to heaven if he died before he was baptized?" asked Andrew.

"As I showed you, salvation is God's free gift of grace. We are saved by our faith. Baptism is not involved in salvation."

"But the way you are using the verses in Ephesians, they conflict with what people were told to do in the book of Acts. Shouldn't the Bible agree?" Andrew asked.

"If God says He will save me by His grace, that's enough for me," the preacher assured him. "I don't have to look further, and you don't either."

"So, just as I am, I can walk out of this building a saved man, and if I died in an accident on the way home, I would go to heaven?"

"If you truly believe in Jesus."

"But you don't accept me, on faith alone, as a member of the Baptist church?" clarified Andrew.

"No. If Rachel desires to be a member of this church, she would need to bring her letter of good standing from the pastor where she was baptized. And if you want to join our church, Andrew, you would be presented as a candidate for baptism to the congregation. The members, seeing your sincerity, would

approve your membership with us upon your baptism.”

“Thank you for discussing these things with us,” Andrew said. “We want to continue to study and to be very sure that we are doing just what the Bible teaches. We also wanted to see what your meetings are like, because we’re trying to understand how God wants us to worship. Last Sunday we went to the Catholic church. In outside appearance there is much difference between your church and that one.”

“Oh, yes. There are no robes or statues or prayers to the saints here. You are most welcomed to our meetings.”

To be Continued . . .

Who Is A Pastor?

FRANCIS DAVID

Apostle Paul, Peter, Timothy and Titus were gospel preachers. They were evangelists and ministers of the Gospel of Christ. Their work was to preach and teach the message of Jesus. Nowhere in the Bible we read that anyone of them introduced anytime to anyone as Pastor Paul or Pastor Titus. There is much misunderstanding among the people today about the word Pastor. Majority of people are being ill-informed about this word. People call any church leader a Pastor. If we see the word of God and sincerely check it, we would find that the word Pastor in the Bible is used to mean “Shepherd”. These Pastors were also called “elders, bishops, ” (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:1-3, Eph. 4:12). There is a difference between the work of a preacher and the work of a pastor. Pastors are like shepherd and their work is to oversee the flock. (Heb. 13:17). All elders or Pastors are preachers but not all preachers are pastors. The word pastor or elder is applied to same man. All these names are given to one office.

There are many who feel honoured to be called as pastors or chief pastor, chief elder or chief bishop. In the scriptures nowhere do we read these terms. Only Jesus our Lord is worthy

to be called as Chief elder or pastor. Please open your Bible and read First Timothy chapter three and here we clearly see the qualifications of "an elder or pastor." A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife (should be a married person), vigilant, sober, of good behaviour (not rude), given to hospitality, apt to teach (good student of the Bible), not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre, but patient, not brawler, not covetous, one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity (for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?). Not a Novice (not a new convert) lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and snare of the devil. If a person does not possess these qualifications he is unqualified for this job. Without these qualifications he cannot be appointed as Pastor or elder in the Lord's church. You may also read about these qualifications in Titus chapter one. There is another important thing that I would like to mention here that in the church of Christ there are always more than one elder.

We need to see that the term elder means and older person. Older in age and experience. A young man cannot be appointed as elder or Pastor. An evangelist or preacher can be young man or old man. Timothy was a young preacher. An elder or pastor must know how to run his own house (take care of his wife and children I Tim. 3:15). Age and experience are essential for this job. All preachers must prepare themselves for this work. They must study well the word of God and make themselves as good teachers of the Bible. They must grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ and one day with age and experience they would be qualified to be appointed as elders.

Are you a Pastor? Do you possess these qualifications which we have just seen in the scriptures. Do you call yourself a pastor, elder or chief bishop? Please do not misuse this word. We must also understand that word pastor is not a title. Where do we stand in these matter?

“Be Not Conformed To This World”

GARY MCDADE

By the inspiration of God, the apostle Paul wrote, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Roman 12:1,2). **Conforming or compromising** is the tendency cautioned against in this text of the Bible. Adherence to the Will of God insures against compromising with the present age. The subject to be declared or preached to God’s people is the Word of God. Again, Paul wrote, “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears”(II Tim. 4:2,3).

The late brother Gus Nichols once astutely observed concerning compromise: “As far as the denominational world is concerned, our greatest danger, no doubt, lies in the temptation to compromise and become a sister denomination with the sects around us. People want to be like the crowd. It was this desire that led Israel to demand a king (I Sam. 8).” When we were weak the sects blustered and challenged for debate. They publicly reviewed our sermons and fought us openly and bitterly, but they soon found their doctrines and practices were no match for the ‘Thus saith the Lord,’ which our preachers hurled back at them with withering force and power. They next began to fight us to our backs and secretly organised against us, and tried to create all the prejudice against us they could; but they saw us grow in spite of their most powerful weapon. It is compromise.

The church does not belong to popular and influential preachers among us, who may at whim introduce practices new to churches of Christ, which have usually been long since discarded by denominational churches in exchange for more

costly and extravagant innovations. The church belongs to Christ (Mt. 16:18; Acts 20:28; Eph. 1:22,23). Accordingly, only those teachings and practices which are authorized within the Word of Christ (Col. 3:16) may be engaged in without "conforming to this present world." Not a few oppose this suggestion as is illustrated in the often-heard statement, "The Bible doesn't say we can't." Examples include: "The Bible doesn't say we can't applaud at a baptism or following an inspiring sermon;" "The Bible doesn't say we can't have a guitar solo before worship;" "The Bible doesn't say we can't substitute a dramatic skit in the place of the sermon;" and "The Bible doesn't say we can't have special musical presentations like solos, choirs, and group singing in the worship." Yet, the Bible does say, "And **whatsoever ye do in word or deed do** all in the name of Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Col. 3:17). "In the name of the Lord Jesus" simply means "by the authority of the Lord Jesus." Doing that which is not authorized by the Word of God is conformity or compromise with this present age.

Some Thoughts On Ephesians 6:1-4

MEL FUTRELL

One of the very first passages of Scripture I put into memory as a pre-teen was Ephesians 6: 1-4. Little did I realise way back then that this verse would hold just as much meaning and responsibility for me now as a parent as it did then for me as a child. When was the last time you considered it?

"CHILDREN, OBEY YOUR PARENTS IN THE LORD: FOR THIS IS RIGHT. HONOR THY FATHER AND MOTHER; WHICH IS THE FIRST COMMANDMENT WITH PROMISE; THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH THEE, AND THOU MAYEST LIVE LONG ON THE EARTH, AND, YE FATHERS, PROVOKE NOT YOUR CHILDREN TO WRATH; BUT BRING THEM UP IN THE NURTURE AND ADMONITION OF THE LORD."

Between Ephesians 5:21 and 6:9, the great apostle offers a bit of family advice. He speaks to husbands and wives, parents and children, and masters and slaves. What he says is revealing to say the least. These four short verses (6:1-4), contain admonitions concerning how children and parents are to BEHAVE themselves in their respective roles.

In the first verse one word jumps out at us; OBEY. Thayer's Greek Lexicon says of the word obey in Ephesians 6:1 it is "to hearken to a command, i.e. to obey, be obedient unto, submit to", page 638. Brethren, at time I wonder if the word obey is still in the vocabulary of boys, girls, men, and women, If there were ever a relationship where obedience should be stressed, surely it is the one of parent and child. Yet, today it's not uncommon to encounter families where it appears the roles are reversed as children run roughshod over their parents. One should note that the phrase in the Lord', "is best connected with obey rather than with parents" (Turnbull, Proclaiming The New Testament, 1964, p. 187). Thus what is being emphasized is the divine duty of children to obey, and not that one's parents must be Christians before one is required to obey them. The Bible commentator, Matthew Henry, said long ago that, "It is the order of nature that parents command and children obey." Any reversal in this "order of nature" will result in rebellion to the established rule of GOD, and that's no laughing matter. It is not by chance that verse one ends with, "FOR THIS IS RIGHT."

The apostle in verse two makes reference to Exodus 20:12, which states the fifth of the ten commandments under the law of Moses. No doubt one needs to view obedience as springing from honor of one's parents which is the divine mandate. In verse three a promise is connected to the imperatives of verses one and two which deserves consideration by us all.

With verse four, the behavior of fathers is highlighted. Might there be some significance here to the fact that mothers are not mentioned, yet fathers are? Might not dads bear a greater responsibility in parenting than many have before imagined? Yes, I believe so. Yet I would be quick to add that although moms are not mentioned here the responsibility of parenting extends in both directions. The sin of many fathers may very well

be in their ignorance of or refusal to comply with Ephesians 6:4. Our children are a part of us, thus the instruction of verse four is so much the more important. Fathers are to bring up their children in the nurture ("paideia" — general education and culture) and admonition ("nouthesia" — correction, see also 2 Timothy 3:16) of the Lord. It would be my studied judgment that what is commanded here most certainly involves religious education. The statement "provoke not you children to wrath" appears to be the flipside of "children obey your parents."

Brethren, there are only two ways a man can build up his family; by adding to it and/or by strengthening those who are in it. The latter is the subject of verse four. And the whole of Ephesians 6:1-4 is a matter of stern importance.

Barsabas Was A Great Man, Too

NEAL POLLARD

Having fallen from grace, Judas soon thereafter fell headlong a corpse and a reminder of the depths to which sin will take an individual (cf. Acts 1:17-20). Though he had a part in the ministry of God the Son, he chose a commission as henchman in the army of perdition.

His death, as apostle, left a vacancy in the overseership of the handpicked, special followers of Jesus (cf. Acts 1:20). By divine guidance (Acts 1:24, 26), the apostles chose a man among men to pick up the armor vacated by the deserter. The man chosen, Matthias, was a great man. This is obvious, for his appointment was based upon his spiritual character (cf. Acts 1:21). However, what of the man Barsabas, about whom very little is spoken? Was he not also a great man?

HE WAS FAITHFUL TO CHRIST (Acts 1:22)

Sweet explains faithfulness of Christ (as in Revelation 2:10)

as proving". . . thyself loyal and true, to the extent of being ready to die [for Christ's sake]" (*The Apocalypse of St. John*). The word faithful suggests reliability and trustworthiness, as well as submissiveness. All of this describes Barsabas. From the ministry of The Baptizer to the ascension of The Savior, Barsabas was numbered among the disciples. Apparently, he withstood even the difficult teaching of Christ (See John 6:66-69). He did not turn away, even after the seeming defeat of Calvary (Acts 1:22). Faithfulness is, in God's eyes, a sign of greatness.

HE WAS RECOGNIZED AS A SPIRITUAL LEADER (cf. Acts 1:23)

This is very subjective. The author sees the appointment of Barsabas as the result of his spiritual excellence among the "company". Assuming that, Barsabas would appear to have been perceived as a leader. Truly, fervent, humble, and obedient discipleship sets one apart (1 Peter 2:5-9) as salt (Matthew 5:13) and light (Matthew 5:14) in this world.

HE WAS WILLING (cf. Acts 1:22-23)

Apparently, from the text, Barsabas did not shrink the call to duty. No excuses could have been uttered, for the apostles were left to "give forth their lots" (see Mc Garvey's *Original Commentary On Acts*, 22) to pick Judas' successor. How seemingly rare to find men both qualified and eager to serve, men of Isaiah's stripe who cry, "Here am I, send me" (Isaiah 6:8). Willingness precedes work, and Barsabas appeared ready to "take part in this ministry and apostleship" (Acts 1:25a).

Faith, works, and attitude all add up to greatness in God's eyes, even if not in men's blinded vision. Though not God's choice to fill the shoes of an apostle, Barsabas was distinguished as His servant. How wonderful one day it will be to walk with Barsabas on the street of gold and thank him for his example of greatness in service to our Eternal King!

Are You Doing Your Duty?

W.A. HOLLEY

Solomon the King, recognized the importance of appointing certain ones to perform various tasks" . . . as the duty of every day required" (II Chronicles 8:14, ASV).

All duty is to enhance the glory of God. We read, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do to the glory of God" (I Corinthians 10:31, ASV). Hence, one cannot commit sin to the glory of God.

Jesus, your Savior, and mine, said, "Even so ye also when ye shall have done all the things that are commanded you, say, we are unprofitable servants; we have done that which it was our duty; we do not expect special praise for doing our duty.

Duty implies obligation. Such is the constitution of the human mind that no sooner do we perceive a given course to be right than we recognize also a certain obligation resting on us to pursue that course.

Duties can be classified according to one's particular relationships. We shall name some of these relationships which involve our duties—

1. You have a duty to yourself. Are you true to yourself? Are you doing the very best you can? Could you do better if you really wanted to? Do you practice acts and habits that really destroy yourself? Drunkenness, adultery, stealing, drug addiction, et al, contribute to one's selfdestruction. The "thou shalt nots" of the Holy Writ were reissued for man's good (Exodus 20: 1 ff; Romans 13:9-11).

2. You have a duty to your family. "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh (Matthew 19:5; Mark 10:6-7). Whether we wish to admit it or not, the family is the great foundation of all human society. Today the family structure is being undermined by godless and humanistic forces. Just look at the thousands and thousands of children who have never had a father or a mother. What is the result? Drive-by shootings,

robbery, murder, babies having babies, outlaws, all in the fullest sense of the world. Parents, it is time for you to get back to the basics. (Proverbs 13:24;19:18;22:6, 15;23:13-14;29:15-17; Ephesians 6:1-4; Colossians 3:20-21).

Children are to be desired and are to be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. (Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 6:1-4). For example, Jesus was brought up to be a carpenter; Paul to be a tent maker (Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3; Acts 18:3). Idleness is a great curse to children who are allowed to have nothing to do. "An idle mind is the devils's workshop."

3. You have a duty to your nation. "Be subject to every ordinance of men for the Lord's sake. whether to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as sent by him for vengeance on evildoers and for praise to them that do well. For so is the will of God. Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king." (I Peter 3:13-17, ASV).

The quickest way to destroy your nation is to destroy the people's confidence in their leaders. Crime, like cancer, is rapidly eating away our moral fiber. God is ruled out, anything, goes—nothing is wrong anymore. This same tone was set in the days of Judges. Hear the word of God: "In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judges 17: 6;18 :1;19:1;21:25; Deuteronomy 12:8). The "Talk Shows" bear witness to what we have said. For shame!! Somehow absolute authority in the minds of many does not exist anymore! (Matthew 28:18-20; Colossians 3:16-17). Today God rules and reigns through his word (Romans 1:16; Acts 2:36-38,47).

4. You have a duty to the local Church of Christ where you assemble each Lord's day (Romans 16:16; Hebrews 10:24-25; Acts 20:7; 2:36-38, 42<47). There is New Testament example (I Timothy 4:12; I Peter 2:21). New Testament Christians met upon the First day of the week (Acts 20:7), gave of their earnings (I Corinthians 16:1-2; ate the Lord's supper, (Acts 2:42); sang songs that taught and admonished each other in the right way of the Lord (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; James 5:13); read and studied the word of God (Acts 2:42; I Corinthians 7:17; 14:37); and prayed (Acts 2:42; I Timothy 2:1; I Peter 3:7, 12;

Revelation 5:8). These are the five items of Scriptural Worship.

Brethren, if you do not lend the church your moral support in your community, who will?

5. Your neighbor must be included in your duty toward God Almighty. We must love our neighbors (Matthew 22:37-40; Mark 12:28-33). You have an obligation to your neighbor: Set the finest example of conduct toward him and teach him the truth of God (II Timothy 2:2). Begin where you are: On the job, across the street, in the doctor's office, et al.

Perhaps you will say, "I don't know enough Bible to teach my friend." Do you know what you did to become a Christian? If you know this much, you know enough to teach your friend. Open your Bible, find Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47; Acts 2:36-38. Memorize these passages and teach them to your friend.

Would you want to go to the Great Judgment with the blood of your friend on your hands? Paul said, "Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:26-27).

To have a clean hand and a pure heart, you must do your duty before God (Job 9:30; 17:9; Psalm 24:4). These words are written for those who wish to be prepared to meet God (Amos 4:12).

"What About David?"

MIKE BENSON

"Since David used instrumental music to praise God, isn't that sufficient authority for our doing so today?"

Let us examine it in light of what the Bible has to say.

1. David lived and worshiped under the authority of the Mosaic Law. He lived under a law that demanded circumcision as a religious rite, the keeping of the sabbath day, the officiation

of the Levitical priesthood, the playing of instruments during worship, the offering of animal sacrifices, the burning of incense, and a whole host of other religious practices. God authorized all of these practices . . . but for WHEN? Only in the worship of the Old Testament under the Mosaic Law. See Hebrews 9.

Even John Calvin, founder of the Presbyterian Church, realized and taught that the Old Testament is not our source of authority for new Testament worship. "Musical instruments in celebrating the praises of God would be no more suitable than the burning shadows of the law." (Calvin's Commentary on the Twenty-Third Psalm.).

2. Christians today are not under the authority or direction of the Old Testament. "Having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross" (Colossians 2:14). "Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, (so as to create) in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace" (Ephesians 2:15). "But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter" (Romans 7:6).

3. The only authority we have on the question of church music is "Christ".

"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth" (Matthew 28:18). "And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, (giving) thanks to God the Father through Him" (Colossians 3:17). Since Christ is the sole authority in matters of religion, anything He or His apostles authorize in worship we must use. Anything without His sanction we must exclude from our worship.

Below you will find a list of all that Christ prescribes concerning music in New Testament worship. Read these passages candidly and prayerfully:

Matthew 26:30 - "sung a hymn" Acts 16:25 - "praying and singing hymns" Romans 15:9 - "sing unto thy name" I Corinthians 14:15 - "singing in spirit and understanding" Ephesians 5:19 - "speaking, singing" Colossians 3:16 -

"teaching, admonishing, singing" "admonishing, singing"
Hebrews 2:12 - "sing thy praise" James 5:13 - "sing praise".

We are not to use mechanical instruments of music in worship because we are to hear Christ, not David. David had eight wives, danced in worship, did not observe the Lord's Supper, and did not pray in the name of Jesus-yet he was living up to the demands of the law of Moses in so doing. However, if we try to take him as an example in worship by bringing in instruments of music and other shadows of the law, we are hearing Moses, not Christ; and in so doing we will be severed from Christ and ultimately lost. "You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by the law; you have fallen from grace" (Galatians 5:4).

Identifying Christ's Church

DALTON KEY

The church of Christ of New Testament times was built by Christ (Matthew 16:18), saved and healed by Christ (Ephesians 5:25), and stood alone and unique as His body (Ephesians 1:22,23;4:4).

Today's church, in order to be Christ's church, must be identical in fundamental and substantive particulars to that church about which we read in the New Testament. The Bible provides no license for doctrinal mutilation or creed-based mutation of this divinely bought body.

The Church of Christ was clearly identifiable and distinctive during ancient times. Imagine this: what if there had been a First Church of Apollos, teaching only the baptism of John (Acts 18:24-28)? Would this have been the church Jesus promised to build? Could His church have been distinguished from such a group? What if there had been a Church of the Divine Circumcision, promoting Old Testament adherence and justification through obedience to Moses' law (Galatians 5:1-4)? Would this "church" have been confused with Christ's church?

What about a Will-Worshipping Church, teaching "the rudiments of the world" (Colossians 2:20-23)? Could the church of Christ have been distinguished from such?

The first century church of Christ was easily identifiable, and clearly unique, as a body which, among other factors, "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine. . . ." (Acts 2:42). They realized that leaving or going beyond this teaching, which was tantamount to the doctrine of Christ, would result in their separation from the very God who had saved them (2 John 9). Thus, they spoke "as the oracles of God," and "the things which (became) sound doctrine" (I Peter 4:11; Titus 2:1).

Can Christ's church be identified as His one body, and distinguished from other religious organizations, in the same manner today? If not, why not?

Where Do Christians Grow Best?

GLENN COLLEY

I remember as early as my childhood hearing preaching about the work of the church being divided into three major categories: Evangelism, benevolence, and edification. It is still valid. We are familiar with the meaning of evangelism, the taking of the Gospel to the lost; and we are familiar with what benevolence means, hearts and actions which care for those in need. But what do you know about edification? What exactly does it mean?

The Greek word for edify is *oikodomeo*. It is most often translated in the KJV "build", or "built". For example, when Jesus taught us about the wise and foolish men, He said, "Whoso heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man which built his house on the rock. . . ." The word "built" in this verse is elsewhere translated "edify".

In Luke 12:18 Jesus taught the parable of the rich fool who

used this word when he said, 'I will pull down my barns and *build* bigger ones. . . ." This is why we sometimes refer to a building as an "edifice."

Buildings are not the only things which are built up. Christians are built up or edified.

Paul wrote, "Rooted and built up in Him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught. . ." (Col. 2:7)" In II Corinthians 13:10 he wrote, "Therefore, I write things . . . to edification, and not to destruction."

In what atmosphere do Christians grow best? In what atmosphere are we best edified?

Christians Grow Best in an Atmosphere of Peace

In Acts 9:31, after the wicked Christian-hater Saul had repented and been baptized, the Bible says, "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified." Peace in the body of Christ is not more important than truth being taught and believed, and when truth is being challenged it must be defended (Jude 3). Sweet peace among brethren is often sacrificed in the process. No one enjoys that fact. Yet, if we forfeit truth in order to have peace, we will have a peaceful existence which accomplishes little and profits nothing.

Having noted that, we should realize that peace is of great value. Christians need to be edified, and are edified or built up best in an atmosphere of peace in the church. Paul wrote in Romans 14:19, "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify one another."

Christians Grow Best in an Atmosphere of Sound Doctrine

A popular and grievous mistake is to believe that churches which aren't concerned about any doctrine over which there is some controversy, will grow better. It isn't true. Edification is not just found in socialization and pot lucks. It is more substantial than that. It is to speak and write and encourage one another with reference to right living and faith in the Lord. Paul wrote in 1

Timothy 1:3-4, "As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith."

Christians Grow Best in an Atmosphere of Selflessness

I Corinthians 14 is primarily known as a chapter about the miraculous ability to speak in tongues, and the will of the Lord regarding it during the time miracles were being practiced in the early church. But look at the chapter again. A strong argument can be made to support the idea that this is a chapter about edification! The word, or its derivative, is used six times, (Verses 3, 4, 5, 12, 17, 26). Paul is making the point in this chapter that to preach or prophesy is much to be preferred over speaking in tongues because preaching/prophesying edifies, the whole church, and speaking in tongues does not. Perhaps the one with the ability to speak in tongues would enjoy showing his great ability, but Paul maintains, ". . . in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue," (vs. 19). Edification occurs in an atmosphere of unselfishness.

With reference to the eating of meat which had been sacrificed to idols, the apostle wrote, "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient; all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not, (I Cor. 10:23)." While we might be prone to shout, "My rights! My rights!", Paul teaches that what is good for edifying our brothers and sisters in Christ is more important. This should be a governing consideration with all Christians as they make daily decisions. We must ask ourselves "Is this productive or counter-productive to edification in the Lord's church?"

May we all work in Christ's kingdom as those who deeply value the ability we have to edify one another.

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