

# THE BIBLE TEACHER

*Pleading for the restoration of Pure New Testament Christianity*

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## EDITORIAL

### *Wrong with Good Intention*

Depicting the day of the judgment Christ spoke these startling words: "Many will say to me in that Day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name, cast out demons in your name, and done many wonders in your name? And then," He said, "I will declare to them, I never knew you; depart from me, you who practice lawlessness!" It is important to note that in the statement of the Lord, He said, Many will say to me. They seemed to be nice folk. They had, evidently believed in the Lord, since they claimed to have done several wonderful things in the name of Christ. Also, they were too sure to get an entrance into Christ's kingdom. They had right motives and good intentions. Nevertheless, they were wrong. Because the Lord said then I will declare to them that I never knew you and depart from me because you had practiced lawlessness. In other words, even after believing in Christ and doing things in His name supposedly, they were yet living in sin. Because at 1 John 3:4 We read: "Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness." Aren't there people today who are claiming to do these very things in the name of Christ? But what about us? May be we are praying every day, reading the Bible each day, even preaching from it, and are trying to live good moral lives. Will the Lord accept us or reject us on that great day? How can we know to be sure?

The writer of the book of Romans, in Romans chapter fifteen and verse four said, "For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." So let us learn from an Old Testament example.

After Saul was anointed king over Israel, he was commanded by God through prophet Samuel to go and smite Amalek and utterly destroy all of them and whatever belonged to them. Because they had opposed God by attacking God's chosen people when they were marching towards the promised land of God. However, in verse nine we are told: "But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good, and were unwilling to utterly destroy them. But everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed." When Saul with his people was returning back, he confronted Samuel and said, Samuel, "I have performed the commandment of the Lord." But Samuel, looking at Saul said, "What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?" Saul immediately retorted, "They have brought them from the Amalekites; for the people spared the best of the sheep and the oxen, to sacrifice to the Lord your God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed." Samuel, however, reminded Saul by saying, "Now the Lord sent you on a mission, and said, go and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are consumed. Why then did you not obey the voice of the Lord? Why did you swoop down on the spoil, and do evil in the sight of the Lord?" Again, Saul vigorously retorted, "But I have obeyed the voice of the Lord, and gone on the mission on which the Lord sent me, and brought back Agag king of Amalek; I have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. But the people took of the plunder, sheep and oxen, the best of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice to the Lord your God in Gilgal." Then Samuel spoke these solemn words to King Saul: "Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is a iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He also has rejected you from being king." (1 Samuel 15:22,23).

Instead of doing exactly what God had commanded Saul to do, Saul thought it was alright not to destroy everything of the Amalekites, if he would bring them to sacrifice to the Lord. He perhaps had good intention, but he was wrong. The lesson we need to learn is that some times people can do things, understanding that they are doing those things to please God, with all sincerity and good intentions, but yet go wrong, and thus be rejected by God. That was precisely the case Jesus pointed out in Matthew 7:22,23. I believe Cain of Genesis 4:3 had good intentions when he had brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the Lord. Yet, his worship was rejected by the Lord, because it was not offered in accordance to the will of God by faith, which comes by hearing God's word. (Hebrews 11:4; Romans 10:17). Again, I believe, Nadab and Abihu, the two priests of Leviticus chapter ten had good intentions when they had brought fire in their censers to offer to the Lord as the Old Testament law of Moses commanded then. But, as the record shows, God was not happy with them, because fire went out from the Lord and devoured them right there, and the reason was the fire they had taken in their censers was not the kind God had commanded them. (Leviticus 10:1, 2; Numbers 16:46).

Today God is not punishing people as He did during the time His will for man in the Bible was being written. Christ warned, however, that in the last day, on the day of judgment, He will judge all people by the things he has spoken and which are written in His New Testament for us. (John 12:48-50). Are you ready to stand before Him? You may be keeping things alive that God wanted you to destroy. You may be offering sacrifices that God has never desired. And, you may be offering strange fires which God has not authorized. Remember, it is not your sincerity that will save you. One might sincerely drink poison believing it to be the medicine. But that will not change the truth a bit. Jesus said, "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" and then He said that God's word is truth. (John 8:32; 17:17). Have you done what He required you to do to receive His salvation (Mark 16:16 & Acts 2:38). Is your worship done according to His will? (John 4:24 & Acts 2:42). Are you living the life of a faithful Christian? (Matthew 5:13-16 & Colossians 3). Anything engaged in religiously that God has not specifically commanded or shown by an example in His Bible is

wrong, though may be done in sincerity and with good intentions.

## ***How We Got Our Bible***

**J.C. Choate**

The word "Bible" means "The Book." Even though the word itself does not appear in the scriptures, the meaning is there in that it is the book of God, the book of books, the greatest, most popular, and most read book in all the world.

The Bible is made up of two major divisions, the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament consists of 39 books and the New Testament of 27 books. Together, there is a total of 66 books.

The word Testament means covenant, will, or law. From the beginning God's intention was to make a covenant with men through Jesus Christ. But until the time was right for Jesus to come into the world, God gave a temporary law through Moses. Thus when Jesus sealed the new covenant with His death on the cross, the first one became "old." This is why we talk of the Old and New Testaments. Of course we now live under the second law or the New Testament. The people of the Old Testament period could no more keep the New Testament law than we today can keep the Old Testament law. Jesus came to fulfill the law and the prophets. He said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5:17-19). Again, he said, "These are the words which I spoke unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me." (Luke 24:44).

Paul tells us that Christ died on the cross to blot out the old law and, of course, to give a new law, his law. (Colossians 2:14).

The Hebrew writer says that God spoke in times past unto the fathers by the prophets but in these last days he speaks to us through his Son. (Hebrews 1:1, 2). He also tells us in Hebrews 9 and 10 that we are no longer under the old law but under a better law, and again that law is the one Christ came to give.

As we go through the Bible we observe that there were three great periods of time. The first is referred to as the patriarchal age, lasting for some twenty-five hundred years, from Adam to Moses. During this time God spoke directly to the patriarchs or fathers and they passed God's message on to their families. Because only a little light was given during this period, it has been referred to as the "Starlight Age."

The next great period of time was the mosaical Age, when God had given his people a written law through Moses. This period lasted for fifteen hundred years, beginning when Moses received the law from God and ending at the time of the death of Christ. That law consisted of ten basic commandments, plus many other laws pertaining to man's relationship with God and his fellowman. Since more light was given than in the previous age, the Mosaical law brought what has been spoken of as the "Moonlight Age."

Finally, the coming of Christ ushered in the Christian Age, under the law of Christ. It had its beginning with the death of Christ and will continue until his return. This is the last great period of time and already has been in existence for almost two thousand years. With the full light of truth being revealed to man, this is called the "Sunlight Age."

But how did we get the Bible itself? As explained, God has spoken in every age for the purpose of revealing his will to man. He has spoken both directly and through the written word. The Bible, of course, contains God's written laws. Through His direction, the message was written over a period of some 1600 years, by a total of some 40 men who lived in a number of countries. These writers came from all kinds of backgrounds but, being guided by the Holy Spirit, they wrote one harmonious story of the history of man and God's will for his creation. When all of the books were put together, they made one complete and accurate story.

The Old Testament was written in the Hebrew language,

and the New Testament was written in Greek. The New Testament books were sent as letters to individuals and to congregations of the Lord's people. Before the end of the first century the 27 books had been written, and many copies had been made and circulated in the church.

The original writings were known as "autographs," but with the passing of time all of the originals were worn out with use or was in keeping with God's wishes. Had the original manuscripts been preserved, written by Peter, Paul, and other great leaders of the church, men would have had a tendency to worship and idolize them.

Of course, the writings which were in general use had been copied from the original manuscripts. Thousands of copies were made. Besides the various complete copies intact today, including manuscripts called Vatican, Alexandrian, and Sinaiticus, thousands of fragments are in existence. By comparing these many copies, we can be sure that the Bible has been checked and double-checked against copyist errors.

Because the world is made up of many languages, with the passing of time, and with the need for the Bible to be available in all languages, many translations have been made. One of the most important was The Vulgate, translated into Latin and completed by Jerome in 405 A.D. All English Catholic translations came from the Vulgate rather than from the original language.

John Wycliff in 1382, after 32 years of work, brought out the New Testament in the English language. With the printing press being invented about this time, it became possible to print the scripture, thus eliminating the danger of minor copyist errors and also speeding up the effort to get the scriptures into circulation. Many translations followed in English and other languages. The King James translation or Authorized Version came out in 1611 and continues to be popular even to this day.

It should be noted that man continues to translate and to bring out new versions of the Bible. Some of these are well done, and others are not. Personal translations and paraphrases often leave much to be desired. The better translations have generally been group efforts, in which numerous scholars with different religious backgrounds have worked to bring out the most accurate translation of the original languages.

The question is: Do we have the true word of God today? I believe we can definitely say YES. We should keep in mind that God wanted us to have his word, and if he had the power to give it to us, surely he has the power to preserve it for man today and for all time. We can, therefore, take comfort in the fact that we do have God's will, and therefore we may know exactly what the Lord wants us to do. As we are obedient to his will, we can be saved in this world and in the world to come.

Many statements in the scriptures indicate the fact that God has given his word, that it is inspired, and that it will stand forever. Paul says, "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 perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (2 Timothy 3:16, 17). Peter reminds us that God has given us all things that pertain to life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3), and that the word of the Lord will endure forever. (1 Peter 1:23-25). James declared, "But whosoever looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed." (James 1:25). Paul tells us that faith comes by hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17), and again James says that we should be doers of the word. (James 1:22). Christ then says that if we will keep the commandments of the Lord, not adding to his word, or subtracting from it, we will be saved. (Revelation 22:14, 18, 19).

Christ said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." (Matthew 24:35). Then he explained that if we reject him and his word, that word will judge us in the last day. (John 12:48). This means, then, that the word can save us, if we will believe it and obey it, or it can destroy us if we refuse to accept it, believe it, obey it, and live by it.

So, God has spoken. His word has been given and we have it for our guidance today. It lives, it is powerful, and it is eternal. It can save us and lead us to heaven. We should therefore love it, reverence it, read and study it, and live by it. How thankful we should be that we can know God's will and that we can share it with the world.

# **Forgiveness**

**Guy N. Woods**

Forgiveness is man's greatest need from God, and his highest and noblest achievement toward his fellow men. Our Lord said, "Be ye merciful, even as your Father is merciful" (Luke 6:36). Inasmuch as our Father has been, and continues to be, merciful to us, we must be merciful to others if we are to please him. It is, truly, the grossest ingratitude, on our part, to expect God to exhibit mercy towards us, when we refuse to show mercy to others. Our willingness to forgive others is the test of our fitness to receive forgiveness from God. "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matthew 6:14, 15).

Any wrong done to us must be, in the nature of the case, of little consequence; if we refuse to forgive the smaller indignity, it is idle for us to expect God to forgive us of the vastly greater sins against Him. It has been said that "to return evil for good is devilish; to return good for good is human; but to return good for evil is godlike." It is common for people who need the greatest mercy from God to show the least disposition to forgive those who sin against them. A man in John Wesley's presence once said, "Take care how you offend me, for I never forgive." Wesley replied, "Then I hope you never sin!" Only the merciful may expect mercy from God.

All of us need to know what forgiveness involves; we need to learn how to forgive others and we need to know how to prompt others to forgive us. It is difficult for us to forgive others without leaving the impression that, in so doing, we are conferring a favor. If a brother sins against us, and later exhibits penitence, oftentimes we react by saying, "If you'll act right, and conduct yourself properly, I'll consider forgiving you," or words signifying such a disposition. In so doing, we overlook the fact that we must forgive the penitent brother, not in order for him to be saved, but in order for us to be saved -- not in order for him to go to heaven, but in order for us to go to heaven! We have earlier noted that our Lord made it clear that He will forgive us



only when we are willing to forgive others.

Peter once asked the Lord, "How often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? until seven times?" (Matthew 18:21). It will be observed that the question which the fisherman disciple raised goes beyond an initial act of forgiveness, and raises additional queries. Suppose the erring brother repeats the sin, and again exhibits penitence? What limits may be placed on our obligation to forgive him? Seven times? the Jewish rabbis taught that if a brother sinned against you three times, exhibiting forgiveness following each offense, and you, in turn, forgave him, this exhausted reasonable expectation; even if he showed penitence following a fourth sin, you were not further obligated. Four times was enough, they thought.

Peter felt there was something too limited about this Jewish talmudical rule, and he sought greatly to enlarge it. He wanted to be especially generous; he multiplied the Jewish number by two, and then added one for good measure.

"Until seven times?" he asked. This, he felt, would surely fulfill all obligation. And, from a purely human viewpoint, it would seem to be sufficient; it is certainly far, very far beyond that which is generally practiced, even by Christians, today.

Our Lord answered, "I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven" (Matthew 18:22). Seventy times seven is four hundred ninety. We may be sure the Lord did not intend a literal interpretation of this figure; to do so would be to put a limitation on the duty of forgiveness, the very thing He was teaching should not be done. The number was made so great -- so far beyond the likelihood of ever occurring -- that it seems clear that He was simply teaching that our duty to forgive our penitent brethren is without limitation. We are to forgive as often and as long as our brethren cease their wrong doing and show genuine penitence for their sins. It is obvious, from these words of our Lord, that it is improper for us to keep books on our brethren. Brotherly love is not a matter of mathematics.

"Soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger." (Pro. 15:1).

# ***The Reward for Being Good***

**Steve Williams**

"I am continually with thee; thou dost hold my right hand. Thou dost guide me with thy counsel, and afterward thou wilt receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is nothing upon earth that I desire besides thee. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever" (Psa. 73:23-26).

In Psalm 73 the author, Asaph, struggles with the problem of the prosperity of the wicked and the problems of the righteous. This seems backwards from how it ought to be. Asaph's concerns in Psalm 73 was not a selfish, embittered desire for reward. His concern was for God's name, for God's reputation. Because of the prosperity of the wicked people were taking against God. They were doubting God's ability and desire to govern the world in righteousness (Psa. 73:9, 11). Asaph's concern was for purpose and meaning in life. What was the use in being good? Why be good if being good only resulted in misery? It appeared on the surface as if God was blessing those who are evil more than the righteous. Was there any reward for being good?

The solution to the problem of evil in Psalm 73 was an attitude of trust that was so wrapped up in fellowship with God that there was no more jealousy over the seeming good fortune of the wicked. On the other hand, there was little concern for problems and suffering which the righteous endured. The pure in heart had God--nothing else mattered (cf. Psa. 16:2; 42:1-2; 63:1). God was the "portion" of the righteous. He was everything. Those who were separated from God were destined for ruin and destruction. Those who stayed near to God had the best "goodness" man could desire.

Is good rewarded? Yes. It is not rewarded in a mechanical way with material prosperity, but it is rewarded with God himself! "Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is nothing upon earth that I desire besides thee" (Psa. 73:25). Fellowship and communion with God are the reward for being good. Everything else pales into insignificance by comparison.

# ***Why Should I Give?***

**Roy H. Lanier Jr.**

The apostle Paul expressed a principle of his work and conduct while among the Ephesians by giving a quote from the Lord. It was previously unrecorded in any inspired record and the world is blessed so greatly by knowing this truth:

*It is more blessed to give than receive (Acts 20:35).*

Yet, Paul had other expressions about his motivation and work: *Woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel (1 Corinthians 9:16).*

Could it be said with accuracy that a principle of truth might be stated this way: "Woe be unto me if I do not learn to give"?

## **WRONG REASONS TO GIVE**

One must not make the mistake of Ananias and Sapphira and give to satisfy longings for approval and commendation (Acts 5:1-11). One must avoid giving with personal regrets (2 Corinthians 9:7). One must be careful not to give simply out of feeling it to be necessary (2 Corinthians 9:7). One should know giving is commanded, but should not give only for that reason (2 Corinthians 8:8). And one must not fall prey to giving for vanity's sake (Matthew 6:1-4).

A modern problem, perhaps unmentioned directly in the Bible, is a source of concern to Christians in the modern centuries. One ought to avoid "giving to a budget"! By this, it is meant that a correct view of giving to the Lord and His work does not mean one gives only because the "Church must meet its budget for this year." Whether the church is behind or current in its budget should not be the only determining factor in one's giving. A Christian will "lay by in store" generously regardless of the condition of the budget. (It is right to plan and spend by budgeting, and churches ought to use such methods. Yet, the Christian has his own responsibility to learn liberality whether or not a church ever uses a budget.)

## **RIGHT REASONS TO GIVE**

One should give because of the needs of brethren (Acts 11:27-29).

It becomes a true evidence of where one's heart is (Matthew 6:21). It assists one in learning higher love of God.

The entire scope of salvation, one's own forgiveness of sins, is based on God's gift of His Son (John 3:16; Romans 5:6-8; Titus 2:11). One gives because one has been recipient of the greatest of all gifts.

It is true that those blessed are obligated in turn to be a blessing to others (Genesis 12:2). One gives because one has been recipient of the greatest of all gifts.

It is true that those blessed are obligated in turn to be a blessing to others (Genesis 12:2; James 1:27; 2 Corinthians 1:3-4; 9:8). Who has been more blessed than Christians washed in the precious blood of the Lamb?

One of the truths of the universe ordained by God is that Christians will reap what is sown and as it is sown (Galatians 3:7-8; 2 Corinthians 9:6).

Giving becomes one of the best investments known to man, or it is good eternally (Matthew 6:21).

Giving is protection against apostasy (2 Timothy 4:10).

Giving builds fellowship between brethren (Acts 2:45).

Proper use of one's monies helps one to prosper in wisdom and avoid foolishness (Luke 12:20-21).

God will bless faithful obedient Christians with opportunities and abilities to do even more (2 Corinthians 9:10-11), if they will earn generosity.

It pleases the Lord for one to give generously and regularly (1 Corinthians 16:1-2).

## **CONCLUSION**

Proper giving has always been involved with the highest of motives: entering the rest prepared for the faithful: heaven and the fellowship of Jehovah (Hebrews 4:1, 6, 9, 11). Also, one's fondest memories in this life will almost without variance involve

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times of giving and sharing. (Think of the joys remembered which involve children, grandchildren, parents, needy friends and neighbors, destitute travelers, etc.)

The formula for contentment is still: "Lose yourself in unselfish giving and service to God and fellowman." Gaining the entire world would not compare with this (Matthew 16:25). Money is only something that buys everything but happiness, and takes a man everywhere but heaven.

It really is more becoming to the Christian to give than to get and keep.

## ***Declaring His Righteousness***

**Mike King**

While in Chattanooga this past August, Sheila and I decided to stop by the I-75 and Ringold exit to encourage the troops enroute from Ft. Campbell to the Middle East.

As we stood on the overpass watching the convoy pass by, we were speechless. The police escort had their lights flashing, flags were waving, horns were blowing, signs expressed love and support, radio stations had live coverage, and servicemen were waving and giving expressions of love and appreciation for the send-off. Had we tried to talk we would have been choked by our own emotions. Our eyes labored to hold back tears. Though proud of them, our country, and the hundreds who were present for the send-off, we were sad to see our young men go. We felt a strong outpouring of support, loyalty, and unity for those who possibly could be giving their lives for our freedom. I was impressed!

My mind raced to the cross, not to detract from what was taking place before my eyes, but because God loved us so much that He has already given His Son to die for a sinful world. I kept asking myself, why doesn't the church get more excited about honoring Christ for providing our freedom? Why can't we get more excited about the send-off of a missionary to spread this freedom? If we could manifest some of the same unity and loyalty to the cause of Christ as I saw being shown, the world

would know that we are Christians by our love! Dear reader, we need to wave our Christian "flag of freedom" by the demonstration of a Christlike example and commitment.

## *We are Saved by Grace*

**M.L. Sexton**

"And if by grace, then it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work" (Rom. 11:6).

In the days of Ahab, Elijah thought all Israel had gone into idolatry. God told him there were seven thousand men "who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal." At the time of the writing of the book of Romans most of the Jews had rejected Christ, but Paul reminds the Christians at Rome that at the "present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace" (Rom. 11:5). This refers to those Jews who had become obedient to the gospel of grace through Christ. Under the gospel system there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile (Rom. 10:12; Eph. 2:12-18). God chose to give His Son to die for us so we may have life eternal (John 3:16; Rom. 6:23).

Many people will read these verses in the eleventh chapter of Romans and conclude that salvation is by God's grace to the exclusion of God's law, or plan. When they do this, they take the scriptures out of context, "which the ignorant and unsteadfast wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction" (2 Peter 3:16).

### **THE LAW THAT COULD NOT SAVE**

When God brought the children of Israel out of Egypt He made a covenant with them in Horeb (Deut. 5). They were to teach the law to their children, and grandchildren diligently (Deut. 6). This covenant was enjoined on them with the blood of animals (Heb. 9:19-20). They could eat the flesh of the animals offered, but were forbidden to eat the blood, for "the blood is the life" (Deut. 12:20-28).

There has always been efficacy in blood. Though there was life in the blood of these animals, the sacrifice of the animals could not take away sins (Heb. 10:4). Under this system, there was a remembrance of sins every year (Heb. 10:4). There was no hope of eternal salvation under the Law of Moses. This law was weak through the flesh and could not make one free from the law of sin and death (Rom. 8:2-3). The weakness was not in the law, but in the people. God found fault, not with the law he had given, but with them (Heb. 8:8). It was necessary for God to make other provisions for man's salvation (Heb. 9:23-28).

"For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). Moses' law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. After faith comes, we are no longer under the schoolmaster (Gal. 3:24-25). The death of Jesus abolished the law of Moses (Eph. 2:14-17). We are dead to and delivered from the law of Moses (Rom. 7:1-6). If the law of Moses could save, then salvation would have been by works of that law, and not by grace (Rom. 11:6-7; Gal. 5).

## **THE GRACE OF GOD**

God has done for man what man could not do for himself. It is by the grace of God that we have bread to eat. In this production, man cannot provide the soil, light, heat, atmosphere, rain, and seasons. He can prepare the soil, plant the seed, cultivate and gather the crop. He can convert the fruit of the crop into bread. God by His grace has provided the means, but if we do not use the means, we will surely die. We must accept the laws of nature and obey them to live.

God has provided the means by which we can be saved. Again, He has done for man what man could not do for himself. It is by the grace of God that we have "the bread of life" (John 6:25-38). Man could not provide himself an offering that could take away sin.

"We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb. 10:10). "For the grace of God that bring the salvation hath appeared unto all men" (Titus 2:11). Man could not provide the blood, nor the word that gives life, and saves. He can receive Christ and His word into his heart. He can

cultivate the heart and "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18). If we reject God's law, we reject His grace, and are without hope. To refuse law is to refuse grace. To refuse grace is to be lost.

"The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8:2). Jesus said, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63).

We are freely justified by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ. God sent Jesus to "be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins. . . ." (Rom. 3:24-25). Justification is by grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. He is the propitiation through faith in His blood. If there is no faith, there is no propitiation. If there is no propitiation, there is no redemption. Where there is no redemption, there is no justification by grace. "Therefore, it is of faith that it might be by grace" (Rom. 4:16). God has perfected the plan of justification in the gospel (Rom. 1:16).

## **LAW AND GRACE**

The law of Moses was enjoined upon the people with the blood of animals. The law of Moses is done away in the death of Christ. When Jesus began the Lord's Supper, He said, "This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matt. 26:28). This was the blood of the sacrificial Lamb that could take away sins completely (Heb. 9:24-28). Israel was serving under a law that could not take away sins completely (Heb. 10:4).

By the grace of God, we are serving under a law that can make us free from the law of sin and death (Rom. 8:2-3). When man thinks he will be saved by grace without law, he rejects the very grace God has provided for his salvation. We may have the blessing of salvation, but only through obedience to the commands of God. "He that saith I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (1 John 2:4). "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous" (1 John 5:3).



Law is a rule of action. Grace is gift, or favor. God's grace permitted sinful man to approach Him through the Jewish system of worship (Ezra 9:8). "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" makes us free from the law of sin and death in the Christian age (Rom. 8:3). God's grace did not extend to free man from the guilt of sin under the Old Testament law (Heb. 10:1-4). Under New Testament law "the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men" (Titus 2:11).

It is a fatal mistake to conclude that God's grace in the Christian age forgives sins without works, or obedience to God's law. When we sin, we show "despite (contempt) unto the Spirit of grace" (Heb. 10:29). It is by the grace of God that we have a covenant, brought in by the blood of Jesus Christ, which redeems us (1 Peter 1:18-19; Heb. 9:14-15). "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).

Any view that ignores the biblical obligation of the sinner to obey the commandments of God is a perversion, and will cause people to ignore the very grace that brings salvation. We must work righteousness. Man's faith is God's work (John 6:28-29).

We do not earn salvation by obeying God. To say we earn salvation when we obey God is to place little value on the soul. Eternal life is so precious that no amount of service will earn salvation. Some say that if we must comply with the commandments to be saved, it is legalism. This idea is both false and foolish, and repudiates the apostles and their teaching (2 Thess. 1:7-9).

Peter's words are clear, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (Acts 10:34-35).

Jesus "became the author of eternal salvation unto them that obey Him" (Heb. 5:9). This excludes those who disobey Him. It is by the grace of God we have a Savior. He authors salvation to the obedient. Obedience brings, and does not dispense with, grace.

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction." (Pro. 1:7)

# ***I Can Hear the Angels Sing!***

**H. Hembree**

"The morning stars sang together," (Job 3:7). The Angels sang "Glory to God in the highest" (Luke 2:13-14) "I heard the voice of many angels. . ." (Rev. 5:11). God is the source of all that is bright and beautiful. How would you like to have heard the melody when the morning stars sang together? How would you like to have heard the angelic chorus singing to the shepherds? How would you like to hear the voices of the singers John heard?

The God of Heaven made an arrangement by which we can become participants in the great harmony of Heaven. The order is two-fold: Revelation and Creation. God wants us to see and hear it (Rom. 1:16-20).

Look at the beginning. Light, day, night established in succession. The seas called into place. The dry land appears. Vegetable life and the laws to maintain it are ordered. The creatures come into existence, bringing forth after their kind. Then came mankind, the crowning glory of creation. All is very good. The heavenly symphony has begun. All creation moves at the will of the Creator. There is not a discord.

The systems continue working together. The sunshine, seedtime, harvest, rain, day, night, weeks and years continue to declare the glory of God, and show his handiwork (Ps. 19).

Man has the ability to interrupt the harmony. He can obey God, or deny Him. The angels rejoice when man decides to submit to the will of the Mighty Maker. "Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth" (Luke 15:7). The just shall live by faith" (Rom. 1:17). Those who obey the Son, become members "of the choir invisible." They sing his praises from a heart overflowing with love and joy (Eph. 5:19). There is one Chief Shepherd, one flock, one people, one Lord, one body, one faith, one baptism, one God, one Father, one Spirit, one Hope. The melody is flawless, and moves toward a grand finale. Can you hear the harmony? Are you a participant?

# ***Calling Evil Good***

**Allen Robertson**

"Woe unto them that call evil good and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight" (Isa. 5:20-21).

"Be ye not unequally yoked with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness: and what concord hath Christ with Belial: or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel: And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God: as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (2 Cor. 6:14, 16).

Some answer Paul's questions by saying, Much in every way. We are told that we must reach accord with the religious world, and become recognized by the denominations. Do they have any truth the word of God does not furnish us? Has our love for the truth grown so weak that we now must seek peace by collaboration, or strength by negotiation?

Put on the whole armor of God (Eph. 6:13-18). Armor is heavy and cumbersome, and it will make you uncomfortable only if your aim is peace at any price, and you want merely to lay down and sleep.

The church is powerful when the saints resolve to "come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. 6:17-7:1).

Denominational bodies are saturated with error. We must give all diligence to confront false prophets, and proclaim truth. The church is the pillar and ground of truth, and disciples are to contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints. "Prove the spirits" is the command of the Lord, and the duty of

his children.

It is our task to make clear the difference between Bible truth, and denominational error. It is sad when people become so infatuated with popularity they no longer can tell the difference between dark and light, or between sweet and bitter, or between truth and error.

## ***There Is Power In Small Things***

**Edsel Burleson**

Everybody's life includes far more little things than big things. In fact, comparatively few "big things" characterize the life of the average person. The Lord had Zechariah ask, "For who hath despised the day of small things?" (4:10.) Jesus referred to the significance of small things when he talked of the Heavenly Father's concern for a sparrow that falls, or a cup of cold water given in his name. (Matthew 10:29, 42).

A little poem, whose author is unknown, said it beautifully in these words:

Isn't it amazing how a little drop of oil  
Makes the wheel run smoother,  
and lessens sweat and toil?

Isn't it amazing how a little drop  
of rain

Lifts the drooping flower, so it  
will bloom again?

Isn't it amazing how a kindly  
word of praise

Cheers the heavy laden, and helps  
the burden raise?

Someone wrote a fable of a nail that told of a new place of worship being completed. People came from near and far to see it. They admired the beauty of its windows, the frescoing of the walls, and the carpet on the floors. Preachers were carried away

with the handsome pulpit Bible.

On the roof a little two-penny nail held down a shingle. This little nail heard the people praising everything else, but none mentioned the shingle nail or seemed conscious of his existence.

The little nail became angry and said, "If I am that insignificant, nobody will miss me if I quit." So the little nail pulled out, raced down the steep roof and fell to the soft ground below.

That night, a big rain came and shingle nail was buried in the mud. The difference between being buried in the mud and holding down a shingle is this: before, the nail was obscure but useful. Now, he is obscure but useless. Furthermore, before, he was protected in his dry place under the shingle. Now he will soon be eaten up with rust. The worst of the story is yet to come.

The shingle which the nail held down was now loose, and, without the co-operation from the nail, it blew away, leaving a hole in the roof. The same big rain that buried the nail leaked in through the vacant spot where the shingle was, running into the beautiful auditorium. The water ran down the walls, leaving them all marred. It leaked upon the Bible and stained the pages. It leaked upon the carpet and beautiful rug was stained.

All this, because one little nail in a fit of jealousy refused his job.

In our service to the Lord there are no unimportant jobs. Whatever place you fill is significant. Many tiny strands, each weak in itself, but united in a common effort, become a rope strong enough to bind a giant. It is the little things that combine to make for unity and power.

"Shamgar had an ox goad,  
Rahab had a string,  
Gideon had a trumpet,  
David had a sling,  
Samson had a jawbone,  
Moses had a rod,  
Dorcas had a needle,  
ALL were used for God."

# **NOAH, A Preacher of Righteousness**

**Eddie Whitten**

"And Lamech lived a hundred and eighty and two years, and begat a son: And he called his name Noah, saying, This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed" (Gen. 5:28-29). Noah's father thought this baby boy would be special, as indicated by the name given to him, which means "rest." Noah was the tenth generation from Adam.

Wickedness became great in the land as men multiplied upon the earth. The degree to which man degraded himself is unimaginable. Try to think of living in a land where there were no laws observed and respected; no restraint exercised regarding individual rights; no consideration for the dignity of manhood, or womanhood; no principle of right or wrong; where every man was a law unto himself. Because of total iniquity, God determined to destroy "both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air." God repented that he had made man.

In the midst of this evil, "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord" (Gen. 6:8). Because Noah, in the face of a tragedy of wickedness, found grace in the eyes of the Lord should give every Christian the needed courage to face the evil of our day undaunted! God notices the righteous deeds of godly men and women, though the world may be heedless of their good works.

"Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God" (Gen. 6:9). Popularity should not be our priority! We must walk in the ways of the Lord, though we walk with few human companions. If we abide in God, he will abide in us (John 15:4; Heb 8:10). If God is our companion and is with us, who can be against us?

God told Noah to build an ark out of gopher wood. He gave Noah instructions how it was to be built (Gen. 6:14-16). "This did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he" (Gen. 6:22). We, too, will find grace in the eyes of God, when we obey Him.

The apostle Peter calls Noah "a preacher of righteousness" (2 Peter 2:5). The word translated "righteousness" means "upright, virtuous, keeping the commands of God. . . To perform completely whatever is right." The negative idea in the word is "innocent, faultless, guiltless" (*Thayer*, pages 148-149).

Noah did not preach to amuse the people. He did not resort to social sophistication with which to pacify a self-serving audience. He preached against sin, and urged obedience to God. He was not popular with the people of his day, and his preaching probably did not draw large crowds.

The people rejected Noah's preaching. Noah, his wife, his sons and their wives were the only humans to enter the ark. Only eight people on the earth listened to the Lord, obeyed his commands, and were saved. All others rejected Noah's preaching and perished in the waters of the flood.

Noah was not the first nor the last preacher turned away by the masses by not being accepted. John said of Jesus, "He came into his own, and his own, received him not." Think of Jeremiah who preached forty years without favor. Think of Paul and his trials. Think of the prophets.

The word of God is often opposed and scorned. "Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you" (1 John 3:13). People who live by the rules of earth, and not by the word of the Lord "are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them" (1 John 4:5). "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8:7). "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James 4:4).

Many preachers and multitudes of our brethren think we must "lighten up" on doctrine to seek the favor of men. It would rejoice our hearts to see 3,000 baptized every time the gospel is preached. Forcing converts, however, is not our business. The important thing is to preach the gospel. Multiplied millions of disciples are of no value, unless they are disciples of Jesus. Our charge is, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2

Tim. 4:2).

We must not become discouraged because sinners refuse to obey the gospel message. We must ask, Am I doing my part to see that all men learn about God? If I am faithful in proclaiming the soul-saving-gospel of our Lord, my work is acceptable to God! Jesus said, "It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me" (John 6:45). Some hear but do not learn. "Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (2 Tim. 3:7). Those who hear, and learn, come to Christ. Our job is to do the teaching, and not worry so much about image, and results. It is God who gives the increase (1 Cor. 3:6).

"And God blessed Noah and his sons. . ." (Gen. 9:1). God made a covenant with Noah and put a rainbow in the cloud as a sign of that covenant (Gen. 9:11-13). God's gracious gifts follow strict obedience to his word.

It is also true that God's anger and destructive might are provoked by disregard for his word, and rebellion to his will. God told Noah He was going to destroy all flesh with a flood, and he did it. He tells us He is going to destroy the earth with fire, and He will.

Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being over-flowed with water, perished: But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men" (2 Pet. 3:3-7).

**"Better is a little with the fear of the Lord, than great treasure with trouble" (Prov. 15:16).**