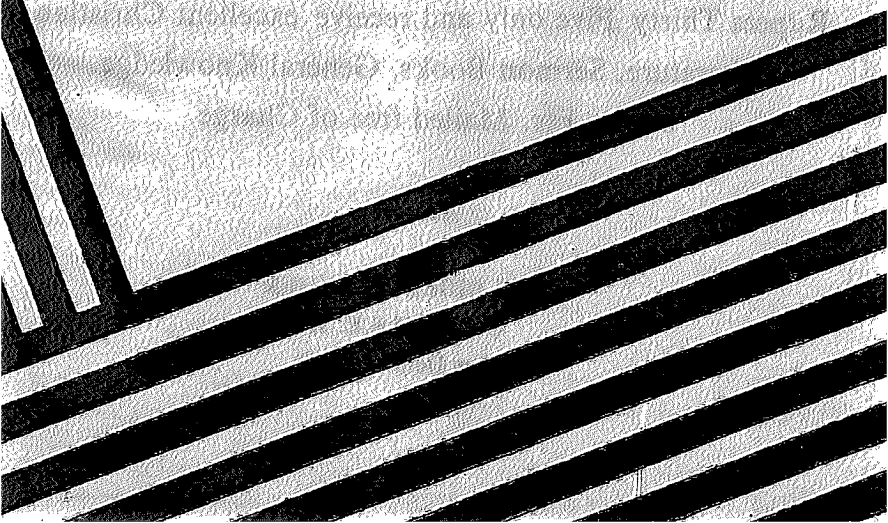


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# THE BIBLE TEACHER

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## So Great Salvation

The Hebrew writer said, "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will." (Hebrews 2:1-4).

In this passage of scripture the inspired writer is emphasizing the importance and seriousness of taking heed to the truths of God, which involves obeying the Lord, that we might have salvation. He is also warning that it is possible to take these matters too lightly and therefore to neglect our salvation. He reasons that if the word spoken by angels was important, and all

who transgressed and disobeyed that word had to suffer the consequences, then how will it be possible to escape the Lord's wrath if we fail to obey him today? The point is, there will be no escape. Those who neglect their salvation will simply be lost.

Please note that the writer here speaks of "SO GREAT SALVATION." What is this salvation that he refers to? It is the fact that man is lost, that he is in his sins, but there is a way to be saved, to have his sins forgiven or washed away. In reading through the scriptures we learn that there is only one way to be saved and that is by believing in Christ, by repenting of one's sins, by confessing Christ as the Son of God, and by being baptized for the remission of sins. There are a number of conversions listed in the book of Acts. In every case, these requirements were made of each person, and all who complied with them were saved.

But why does the writer refer to salvation as being "a great salvation?" No doubt this was an expression used to incorporate all that is involved in salvation. For sure, when one understands all that God has put into making it possible for man to be saved, he cannot help but think in terms of salvation as being great. But to help us to see more clearly, let us notice some reasons why salvation is so great.

Salvation is great because God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son to die upon the cross that man might be saved. We read, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." (John 3:16, 17). In other words, God sent his Son as a perfect sacrifice for man's sins. Man could not save himself, and neither could he do enough good works to earn his salvation. Even in obeying the Lord, still one cannot do enough to merit salvation. Therefore, Paul wrote, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." (Ephesians 2:8, 9). When we understand where man was, and what God did to make it possible for him to be saved, we can

begin to understand a little better why salvation is said to be great.

Salvation is great because Christ was willing to die on the cross that man might be saved. Paul said, "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die : yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, when we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him." (Romans 5:6-9). Christ didn't have to die for us, but he did. Imagine him dying for sinners, for those who were so unworthy. Jesus said that he came to seek and save that which was lost. (Luke 19:10). Peter said that the Lord would not have any to perish but that all should come to repentance. (2 Peter 3:9). When we understand all that was done that we might be saved, and the great sacrifice that was made on our behalf, how can we go through life and not accept the salvation that the Lord has provided ? To do so would mean that we would be ingrates and we would deserve the consequences that would follow.

Salvation is so great because we are cleansed, purified, and made whole when we obey the Lord. Christ said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:16). Peter said, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts 2:38). Just think about being saved from one's sins, having forgiveness, being made clean, pure, and whole. When one obeys the Lord's commands that is the result. It is so simple and easy to do when one wants to be saved.

Salvation is so great because when one is saved the Lord adds him to His church. We read that those who gladly received the Lord's word and obeyed it were baptized and added to the church. (Acts 2:41). In Acts 2:47 we are told concerning those who had believed in the Lord, repented of their sins, and had been baptized for the remission of their sins, "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." If one is

saved he is in the church, Christ's church, because Christ adds those who are saved to his church. If one is not in that church, it means that he is still unsaved.

Salvation is great because when one is saved, he is in Christ, a new creature, and enjoys all spiritual blessings. Paul tells us that on being baptized we enter Christ. (Romans 6:3, 4). Christ says that when we are born of water and of the Spirit we are born again (John 3:3, 5), and Paul tells us that in Christ we are new creatures or new people. He says, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature : old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (2 Corinthians 5:17). Again, he says that in Christ we have all spiritual blessings (Ephesians 1:3), and some of these blessings would be the gift of the Holy Spirit, the privilege of prayer, having the Lord with us, and all of the precious promises that are set forth in God's holy word.

Salvation is great because we become Christians, children of God and sons and daughters of God. We have fellowship with God's people, the privilege of worship, and the opportunity to do good. We are told that salvation is in the name of Christ (Acts 4:12) and whatever we do we should do in the name of the Lord. (Colossians 3:17).

Finally, salvation is great because of the hope that it gives to us. Without Christ and salvation there is nothing to look forward to. On the contrary, if we neglect our salvation, if we fail to obey the Lord, Paul says that He will return to take vengeance on us. (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9). With salvation, however, we have hope in this world and in the world to come. We are told that there is but one hope (Ephesians 4:4), and that hope is in and through Christ. (Colossians 1:27).

For these reasons, therefore, and for many others that could be given, salvation is the greatest blessing that can come into one's life. It means that he believes in Christ, that he is obeying the Lord, and that he has all the good things in this world and then, in the world to come, eternal life. That is great, important, the most wonderful thing that one could ever experience.

Are you saved? Have you obeyed the Lord? Are you a Christian, a member of the Lord's church? Do you have the

hope of eternal life ? If not, let me encourage you to obey the Lord. Salvation can be yours if you will believe in Christ and obey his teachings. He and He alone can save you. Remember, life is short. What you do now will determine where you will live in eternity. Please don't neglect this great salvation.



*associate  
editorial*

## The Distinctiveness Of The Church Of Christ

No. 6

The distinctive plea of the church of Christ is unique in the sense that she is pleading in this twentieth century for the restoration of the New Testament Christianity. This can only be achieved by following the New Testament pattern. At Ephesians 4:1-6 the apostle Paul wrote, "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called. With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Thus the Holy Spirit commands that as Christians, followers of Christ, we must keep the unity. The question is how to achieve this unity of the Spirit ? In answer he further states, "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all, and in you all."

Notice, the fact number one for unity, he says, there is one body. That is, we can all have unity in the one body. What is this body, in which we can all be one ? The same writer in Ephesians 1:22, 23 points out that the body is the church. Listen, "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over

all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." So the body of unity is the church of Christ. We cannot have unity in the churches of men, denominational churches, which men have founded through the years. We cannot have unity in "your church" or "in my church" or in "our church", but we can all have the unity of the Spirit in the church of Christ, which is his body. Is it not plain enough? Therefore, if we want to be united as Christ would have us to be then we must cease to be members of those churches of which there is no mention in the scriptures, and become member of the Lord's church, which is his body.

Also, for this unity, he says that there is one Spirit. We can have the unity of the Spirit by doing what the Spirit says. The apostle Peter wrote, "For prophecy came not in old time by the will of men : but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (2 Peter 1:21). The apostle Paul, in his second epistle to Timothy said, "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). When the apostles of Christ on the day of Pentecost had received the Holy Ghost or the Holy Spirit, as the Lord had promised them (John 14:25, 26; 15:26; 16:7,8,12,13; Acts 1:8), the record in Acts 2 says that they were filled with the Holy Ghost, and by his power they spoke. The Holy Spirit inspired and guided them to write the commandments of God in the New Testament of Christ. Thus when we hear or read the Spirit's inspired words and do them as he says then we can have the unity of the Spirit. Because then we will hear the same thing believe the same thing and will do the same thing. We will be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. (1 Corinthians 1:10).

Then for the unity, the apostle reminds the followers of Christ that they have been called in one hope of their calling. Christians are the called out people. They have been once in the world, living in and for the world, but they have been called out to live in and for Christ. The gospel of Christ is the mean



by which they were called. They had heard, believed, and obeyed the gospel, and thus they were called. All Christians are called in one hope of their calling, and therefore they are required by the Lord to remain united in the one hope. Before his departure from the earth for heaven, Christ had promised, "Let not your heart be troubled : ye believe in God believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions : if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." (John 14:1-3). The Apostle Paul adds, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." (2 Corinthians 5:1). Then at 2 Timothy 4:8 he wrote, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day : and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." This is the greatest hope that the Lord's people have. Not that he will come and set up a physical kingdom on earth. But on that day when he will appear his faithful people will receive the crown of righteousness from him and will go with him to live with him in heaven for all eternity.

Declaring the basis for unity, the inspired writer in Ephesians 4 goes on to say that there is one Lord, and therefore we should all be united in him. How ? If we hear him and do what he says. "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord," said Jesus, "and do not the things which I say ?" (Luke 6:46). He also said, "But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines, the commandments of men." (Matthew 15:9). If we claim to follow Christ then we must do what he says, we must follow him according to his will and not through traditions and teachings of men. We can have the unity of the Spirit in the one Lord only when we hear and obey the same Lord. The chief reason for division among those who claim to follow Christ today is that while they are claiming to be the followers of Christ, they are, in fact, following men like Pope, pastors and bishops, and those who claim to have received special revelations from God, such as, Mary Baker Eddy and William Marrison Branham. Christ has

all the authority. (Matthew 28:18). We are warned not to accept any teaching beyond the New Testament of Christ. (Galatians 1:6-9; Revelation 22:18,19). If one goes beyond the doctrine of Christ, which is already revealed for us in his New Testament, he has no part with God, he is without God the Father and without his Son Christ. (2 John 9,10).

The apostle then said that there is one faith. There is one faith and therefore we can all have the unity if we possess the same faith. Faith comes by hearing. (Romans 10:17). When we all will hear only the word of God then our faith will be alike as was of the Christians in the first century, regardless of what we are and where we are. Just as a carrot's seed will only produce carrots, no matter where the seed is sown, if it will produce anything then that would be carrot only, and nothing else. Right? Likewise if we will preach today the same Bible, the word of God only without mixing with any denominational doctrine whatsoever, then we will all have the same one faith of the Bible. Today there are several different faiths or beliefs among those who are claiming to follow the Bible because there are so many different doctrines being preached in the name of the word of God. Many are causing divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine of Christ, and by good words and fair speeches are deceiving the hearts of the simple. (Romans 16:17, 18). Simple and plain scriptures are being twisted and replaced by human teaching. The doctrine of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, which is taught everywhere in the Scriptures, is being rejected, and in its place it is taught that Jesus is the only person in the Godhead. Many New Translations of the Bible are mere words of men, they are teaching things which the Holy Spirit never taught. Truly, they are deceiving the hearts of the simple. Why do you believe what you believe and why do you do what you do, in the name of religion? Is it a command of God or commandments of men? (Mark 7:7). Unity in the one faith of the Bible can only be achieved when we will all hear the Bible only and will speak and do the Bible only. Remember: "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Romans 10:17). This is the faith necessary for the unity.

Again, mentioning of another link of the chain of unity, the apostle said, there is one baptism. Now, remember, he is showing to the followers of Christ how they can have unity by pointing out some of the very important things necessary for Christian unity. He says, there is one baptism. He is mentioning baptism because baptism puts one into Christ (Galatians 3:27). By submitting to baptism one emulates the gospel, which is the death and burial and the resurrection of Christ. (1 Corinthians 15:1-4; Romans 6:17). By being baptised one is planted together in the likeness of Christ's death and raised from the watery grave of baptism in the likeness of Christ's resurrection. (Romans 6:5). For the forgiveness of sins one must be baptized. (Acts 2:38). Christ put faith and baptism as a condition for salvation. (Mark 16:16). So baptism is important. But, he reminds us that there is only one baptism. He is not talking about the Holy Spirit baptism or about baptism of fire, but he is talking about the one baptism that Christ commanded for all people, which is in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. (Matthew 28:19). This one baptism of the Bible put all people into one body, the church. (1 Corinthians 12:13). One does not become a Baptist, or a Pentecostal, or a Brethren, or a member of the Jesus Only denomination by being baptized scripturally. The one baptism of the Bible will unite us all in the one body of Christ, his church.

Finally, the writer of the Ephesians' epistle says, there is one God. He is the God of unity and harmony. He is not the author of division or confusion. (1 Corinthians 14:33). He is one. He is the Spirit. (John 4:24). He has spoken and has revealed his will for man. (Hebrews 1:1,2). Man must hear him and do his will to be saved. (Matthew 7:21).

This is the only basis of the unity. One body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God. All of these are necessary ingredients for the unity. Yes, this is possible for all who claim to be the followers of Christ to be united in one body, as one church, one people of God, by following the plan of unity God has revealed for us in his word. Human teaching will divide us, but the word of God will unite

us. The grand plea of the churches of Christ therefore is that we must all go back to the Bible for every thing we believe and do; speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent. We invite you to join us in this plea.

## She Shall Be Called Woman

Betty Burton Choate

### To Be A Wife

What does it really mean to be a wife? Young girls look toward the day of marriage with thrills and excitement. They have planned long toward that one particular day, with their parents. In many cases they have saved money and bought household things, carefully packing them away, waiting for that special day to come. Sarees, clothes, jewelry have been bought and kept for the bride's use. All of the attention seems to be focused on that one day and that all-important word: marriage.

But what about "after the marriage"? What does it really mean to be a wife?

If the marriage is a "love marriage" it means the continuation of growing together, of developing a deeper love and a more complete knowledge of each other. Faults and weaknesses will be discovered that were not readily seen before.

In an arranged marriage, the challenges are even greater because often the bride has suddenly become the wife of a stranger and a member of a family entirely new to her. If she is happy about the marriage she will probably have a positive attitude and will begin from the first day to build a good life together.

But for either type of bride, there are specific instructions in the scriptures for her guidance: The older women are encouraged to teach "...the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands..." (Titus 2:4, 5).

Ephesians 5:22, 23 gives instructions to wives : "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church..."

It is a wonderful thing that a woman is to be loved and protected and cared for by her husband. Verses 25-31 of Ephesians 5 teaches husbands to, "...love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it...So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it...For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and he joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."

If a woman truly loves her husband, or learns to love him, she will grow in all of the other areas of being a wife. In this scripture, the meaning of the word "love" is not the twittersy excited feeling of emotional attraction, but rather it is the kind of love that seeks always what is best for the one who is loved. When a woman has this type of love, she will be conscientious about looking after her husband's needs. She will be aware of what makes him happy and she will try to please him. She will take the greatest care of his home, his children, his possessions, in order to show her love.

A woman who loves her husband will encourage him to talk of his work, his associates, his thoughts, so that she can share in all parts of his life. 1 Corinthians 7:3-5 says, "Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body but his wife does. Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control."

So, it is the wife's privileges and responsibility to love her husband and, in loving him, to look after his physical, mental, and emotional needs. She no longer belongs to herself, or her family, but to her husband, and her husband belongs to her.

Together they must work to develop the pure and beautiful and selfless oneness God planned in marriage.

## Doing Evil That Good May Abound ?

Raymond Elliott

There were false teachers in Paul's day who accused him of affirming, "Let us do evil, that good may abound". (Romans 3:8). This certainly was not the truth with reference to the great apostle Paul. However, there are free thinkers today who would endeavor to justify sin and wrong doing by rationalizing that some good can be accomplished from such acts.

There was a very hot issue being debated by our lawmakers during the last session of the legislature, namely, that of legalizing gambling in Montgomery County for charitable reasons. It was called the "Bingo Measure." There were some who voted against the measure because of conviction, believing that all types of gambling are wrong. They understood that gambling violates the principle of the golden rule as taught by Jesus in Matthew 7:12; also, that men should, "provide things honest in the sight of all men." (Romans 12:17).

One senator from Montgomery County voted against the bill because the bill would not include IRS approval, giving his reason as follows: "I'm just not going to let nobody gamble unless I know it's going to charity". (*Montgomery Advertiser*, May 19, 1981). Notice that he was against gambling "unless I know it's going to charity." That is what is called "situation ethics," that is, gambling is wrong unless it is for a good cause. It is wrong at one time but becomes right at another time. This is the same reasoning (?) that a young couple makes about fornication, saying that the act is sinful unless both parties involved are in love with one another. Then the act is no longer sinful but beautiful and becomes a very meaningful relationship. In other words, there is not a set standard of right and wrong with reference to morals. An act may be wrong on one occasion but right on another, depending on the situation.

Today, society in general argues that while drinking may be harmful and even evil, it is best to legalize the sale of alcoholic beverages in order that money can be raised to help finance various public organizations. There is a failure to see that millions of dollars are spent to house the alcoholics and the criminals who have purchased the beverages. Besides this, the taxpayers are burdened often with supporting many families left destitute due to a husband/father who spends his money on liquor. Also, it is a fact that half of the highway fatalities in our nation are traceable to drunken drivers. The amount of money brought into the state treasury is indeed small when compared to the cost in wrecked lives, financial support of prisons and other institutions and deaths brought on by the consumption of alcoholic beverages sold legally in our nation.

We must understand that sin is sin, regardless of the situation. A nation cannot justify gambling, the sale of alcoholic beverages, and other evils and please God. "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil... Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes and prudent in their own sight". (Isaiah 5:20, 21).

## We Are No Sect

Benjamin Franklin

We belong to no *sect* or *heresy*, no "denomination," and recognize none in any sense, only as existing in opposition to the will of God—in a rebellion against the government of God. We know sects only as antagonistic powers to the law and kingdom of God. They are heretical and schismatical, in alienation to each other and to the kingdom of God. We find them in no complete union on anything of importance, except in opposing the gospel of Christ. In this they are a unit. Never did loving brethren more completely unite than they one and all do in this. One voice sounding out the gospel precisely as preached by the apostles, and propounding the terms of pardon as they came from the ambassador of Jesus, to whom he gave the keys of the kingdom of God, will silence all their jars among themselves,

their differences and disputes, and bring them all around side by side, facing the common foe. It will call out their confusion of tongues, and the cry, "Lo here and lo there," will be heard on all hands. The cry is raised. "To your tents, O Israel! Danger! Danger! dangerous doctrine! Do not hear him! Keep away! Keep away! He will unsettle your views!"

Why are they all opposed to this? There is a very good reason for it. It is opposed to all of them. In its very nature it proposes to sweep them all away. It leaves not an inch of ground for one of them to stand on. We came not with a new doctrine, but with the gospel of Christ, a distinct entity in itself, not only having no fellowship with any other gospel, but pronouncing a curse on man or angel who shall preach any other, no matter whether near like it or not near like it—a perversion of it or mutilation. The gospel of Christ itself is the thing to be preached, and nothing else; the power of God to salvation to every one that believes; the preaching of the cross, the wisdom of God, and the power of God. To this nothing is to be added, and from it nothing is to be taken away. In this gospel, Christ, the "one Shepherd," is presented, and the one kingdom of God, or one body of Christ. All the followers of Christ are members of this one body, or citizens of this one kingdom. There are no "denominations" of them. They are all members of his body, citizens of his kingdom by faith, the children of Abraham, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, saints, holy brethren. They know no other king but the "King of kings, and Lord of lords." Their King, one day will "show who is the only Potentate." Their King has no negotiations with any other spiritual kings. He puts them down *against him*. He has no communications nor negotiations with Pope Pius, or any other Pope. He has no *fraternal greetings* for any of them, but his Father has sworn with an oath that he shall reign till he shall put down all rule and all authority and power—till he has put all his enemies under his feet.

The kingdom of Christ recognizes no other kingdom. It is an absolute monarchy. Christ is the Monarch. He has no Parliament, no Senate or Congress, no legislative body in his kingdom. As the rightful Sovereign and the absolute Monarch,



he is the Lawgiver. His will is the law, as spread on the pages of Scripture—the absolute authority—and his subjects have simply to consult the law, ascertain what it requires, and *obey it*. They are not responsible for the law. They need not trouble themselves about results or consequences. Do as the Supreme Authority commands, and leave the consequences with him. He is so wise, good and great, that he will bring all out right, for all those that put their trust in him. His subjects stop not to counsel with those who have other laws, to compare them with the law of the Lord Messiah, to see how near they are to his, or how far from it. They have no authority to make any other laws, no matter how near like his law, or how far from it. Their business is to throw aside all other laws, and accept him as their Monarch, and *his law*, and *obey it*. This is simply all there is of it. He who is not for him is against him.

The citizens of his kingdom have no authority from him for negotiating with any sectarian party, about union with his people, comparing their views and determining how nearly they agree. He has left them no discretionary power to compromise with any body, or to stipulated terms of union and fellowship. He has stipulated the terms for us all. If we comply with these terms he receives us, and we are bound to receive each other, and certainly will desire to do so. If we comply not with these terms he will not receive us, and no saint has any right to receive us. No man has a right to prescribe terms on which to receive any man. The terms are already prescribed in the law of the great King. We must not go to man, but to the King, to know who shall be received. It is not a question whether man will receive us, but whether the *Lord* will receive us.

## A Deceptive Picture

Basil Overton

A very popular weekly magazine had a picture on its front cover of a preacher pouring water on the head of a crying infant which was being held by a woman, presumably its mother. And this picture is supposed to represent the action of "Christian

baptism." What a deceiving picture ! No wonder so many think that sprinkling or pouring water on one is baptism. No wonder so many think that infants are subjects for the baptism authorized by Christ ! The baptism of the Great Commission of Christ cannot be administered by pouring water on a subject, or by sprinkling water on a subject. The baptism of the Great Commission of Jesus Christ is a burial in water. (Romans 6:3, 4; Colossians 2:12; Acts 8:35-39).

Even if sprinkling and pouring were baptism, infants could not be scriptural subjects of such.

Those baptized by the authority of Christ must first be believers. (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:36-38). You may say : "What difference does it make ?" Reader, it is a difference that will determine whether you are faithful and loyal to Christ, or faithful to your own inclinations; whether you wholeheartedly subscribe to Christ and his word, or to the creeds and traditions of men. The difference is the difference in reaching the blood of Christ by obeying him who is the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him (Hebrews 5:8, 9), or failing to reach the blood of Christ and remission of sins !

Remember, we cannot include in Christianity, or call a thing Christian that is not taught in Christ's word. Let us be fair with Christ and not say that he taught something which he did not teach. Pouring or sprinkling water on an infant or on anyone else is no part of Christianity. There are many who refuse to be baptized on the ground that they were "sprinkled" or "poured" when they were too young to even remember it. If all were to succumb to the traditions of men it would not be long until there would not be a believer immersed on God's earth. Read the Bible.

### **BAPTISM IS A BURIAL.**

A modern dictionary may define "baptism" as being a rite of immersing people, or pouring, or sprinkling water on, people, because the dictionary defines words in keeping with the way they are used and understood. But, the Bible definition of "baptism" is not as inclusive. The New Testament was written in the Greek language. The Greek word from which we get

the word "baptism" is defined in any reliable Greek lexicon as being an immersion, or burial. The Greek lexicon defines words as they were used in the New Testament. The Bible says that baptism is a burial. (Romans 6:4; Colossians 2:12).

The practice of sprinkling and pouring water on people for baptism was begun many years after the apostles were all dead by an apostate church which became what we know as the Catholic Church. This denomination and some others still administer sprinkling and pouring for baptism. Such practice is done by human tradition, or denominational dogma, and not by Bible teaching.

With sprinkling and pouring men have made of "none effect, the commandment of God." (Matthew 15:6). Some may say: "What difference does it make?" Dear reader, it is all a matter of accepting by faith what God says. God puts our faith to its real test in seemingly insignificant, little matters more than anywhere else. Many say: "How one is baptized, or whether he is baptized at all does not matter, what counts is whether one treats his fellow man right, etc."

To be a Christian one must treat his fellows right, and be a good moral man. But that is not all. Such a conception of the gospel makes it purely a "social gospel" and is designed to dethrone Christ and cause men to ignore his authority.

Both, the one who baptized and the one who was baptized went down into the water in the case recorded in Acts 8:35-40. Some insist that Phillip on that occasion led the eunuch down into the water and poured some water on him. Why do not preachers who sprinkle people today immerse about half of one's body in order to sprinkle the other half. You may say: "Common sense would keep them from doing that." "Did Phillip have any common sense?"

## Is It Possible To Earn Our Salvation ?

Jimmy W. Garner

I was recently asked: "Do you think that you can earn your salvation?" No, no one can earn salvation by any

kind of works. However, the sinner who obeys the gospel of Christ is not trying to earn his salvation—he is simply accepting that matchless gift! Gospel obedience does not make void salvation by grace through faith. Let's notice some examples of God bestowing a blessing on men by his grace.

### NOAH SAVED BY GRACE

Noah was saved by grace yet he obeyed God. "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord." (Genesis 6:8). The Bible says that Noah was saved by grace; it also says that he was saved by faith. "By faith Noah, being warned of Good of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house . . . ." (Hebrews 11:7). Noah's faith moved him to obey God in preparing the ark. He and his family were saved from the world wide flood. (Genesis 7:23). Did Noah earn his salvation? No, certainly not! He simply did what God commanded him to do. "Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he." (Genesis 6:22).

### JERICO A GIFT

The Lord gave the city of Jericho to Joshua and Israel. "See, I have given into thine hand Jericho . . . ." (Joshua 6:2). Did they have anything to do to receive Jericho? Yes, God commanded them to march around the city one time a day for six days, and march around it seven times on the seventh day. (Joshua 6:3, 4). They obeyed God and the wall fell down flat. (Verse 20). Did Joshua and Israel earn Jericho? No, God gave Jericho to them, yet they had to comply with God's conditions! They had to march around the walls of Jericho.

### A BLIND MAN HEALED

Jesus commanded the blind man of John 9 to: "Go wash in the pool of Siloam . . . ." (John 9:7). The blind man obeyed Jesus and received his sight. Did this man earn the blessing of his precious eyesight? Surely no one would argue that this man earned his sight! The Lord Jesus gave his sight to him! Yet, this man had to obey Jesus' condition of going and washing in the pool of Siloam. Would this man have received

his sight if he had stubbornly refused to go and wash as commanded? Definitely not! But he did believe in Jesus and showed it by going and washing in Siloam as the Lord commanded him.

## **SAVED BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH**

Sinners are not trying to earn their salvation by obeying what Peter and the apostles commanded in Acts 2:38. In that passage, sinners are commanded: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins..." Surely no one will claim that in obeying this God-given command we are trying to earn our salvation.

God's gift of salvation is conditional, and sinners must meet his conditions of repentance and baptism in order to receive salvation. If you have not been baptized, are you ready to repent and be baptized (immersed in water) that you might receive the remission of your sins? You must repent and be baptized to be saved. Don't delay! Why don't you obey the gospel of Christ immediately? Any gospel preacher will be glad to assist you. Why not contact one today?

## **Singing The Lord's Song**

**Frank Starling**

"How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" (Psalm 137:4). Though the author of this plaintive utterance is unknown, scholars are in agreement that it was most probably composed by one of the Jewish exiles while in Babylonian captivity, reflecting a personal involvement. Indications deriving from the context suggest that it was written after the return from Babylon, before the temple was completed, amidst the ruins of the beloved City of David.

It most surely was with great difficulty that the Israelites maintained a closeness to Jehovah. And, yet, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego demonstrated an unwavering loyalty to the living God. (Read Daniel, chapters 3 and 6). In a strange

and forbidding place, they **SANG THE LORD'S SONG** through every word, every action.

## **THE EARLY CHURCH**

In the infancy of the Lord's church, the New Testament record vividly portrays the steadfast dedication and accelerating zeal of so many of those early Christians who were willing to give their possessions, yea, their very lives, to advance the cause of Christ. (Acts 2:41-45; 7:54-63; 12:2; 14:1-21; 28:1-31). The apostle Peter wrote, "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul. Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation." (1 Peter 2:11-12). The Holy Spirit thus exhorted the first century Christians to "sing the Lord's song" even while making their way in a strange land overshadowed by pagan unrighteousness.

## **SO SHOULD WE**

As with Israel of old and Christians of the first century, those who now wear the name of Christ, are exhorted to "sing the Lord's song" even among the multitudes consumed by the pursuit of hedonistic gratification of their sensual desires.

Satan has always found mankind willing, even eager to embrace the supposed "pleasures of sin for a season," by way of one, or all three avenues of temptation, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. (1 John 2:15-17).

Of all the periods of time down through man's extended stay upon the earth, none would outdistance our own in terms of Satanic influence and dominion over the lives of both men and women. Immodesty, immorality, impropriety—descriptive words, indeed, keying on the shameful conduct of the majority of the world's populace in the present age.

The masses give graphic and sickening evidence of stupefying addiction to every debasing urging of the flesh. Satan and his salacious servants of sin and degradation busily mine the fertile

fields of man's vulnerable and unstable carnality, victimizing multiplied millions. How many who profess to belong to Christ, have joined Satan's chorus, instead of SINGING THE LORD'S SONG ?

### EVILS ARE RAMPANT

The purveyors of pornography invade our lives today as never before with their pernicious works of unrighteousness. Scandal stalks the halls of Congress, robs and defiles the business community, even assailing very small children placed in the charge of degenerate men and women. But, it does not have to be this way for anyone. James wrote, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." (James 4:7). No, it isn't easy to "sing the Lord's song" in a land that too often of late seems a strange contradiction to the godly design of the founding fathers. However God's arsenal is far from depleted. (Psalm 119:105; Matthew 4:4; John 8:32; 17:17; Romans 1:16, 17; James 1:21).

If your resistance level is showing signs of wearing down, may we suggest a heavy dose of "thus saith the Lord" ? It wasn't easy in Babylon, to sing the Lord's song." But, to be pleasing to God, it was necessary. The reward to the righteous will be eternal life. (Romans 6:23; Matthew 25:46; Revelation 22:14). Let Jesus Christ direct your song in an increasingly strange land that can be likened at times to ancient Babylon. And at the close of life's "little day" (2 Corinthians 5:10), receive the crown of life (James 1:12; 2 Timothy 4:8); proclaiming with the apostle Paul, "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Corinthians 15:57).

## Christ—The Suffering Saviour (Isaiah 53)

Gary C. Hampton

The Ethiopian eunuch read from Acts chapter eight. (Acts 8:26-35). Philip used the passage as a springboard into preaching

about Christ. God had, in the long ago, planned to allow Christ to suffer so that sin's debt might be paid and we might be saved. (Genesis 3:15; Ephesians 1:9-10; 2:15-16).

Delitzsch says of Isaiah 53 that a "we" introduced suddenly in prophecy, as in verse 2, is always Israel speaking, along with the prophet. So, verse 1 wants to know "who hath believed our report," or "who hath believed the report that was common among us?" This is parallel with the second question, "and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?"

The word "arm" is used to designate power and might. For instance, one who made flesh his arm, trusted in man's power instead of God's. (Jeremiah 17:5). God's arm is strong and will break the arms of his enemies. (Deuteronomy 4:34; 5:15; Ezekiel 30:21).

Israel should have seen God's power in the works of Jesus. (John 20:30-31; Acts 2:22; Matthew 12:22-30; Romans 1:4; 1 Corinthians 15:1-8). Those who reject Jesus today have simply closed their eyes to the truth as revealed through that powerful display. (2 Corinthians 4:3-4).

Jesus grew up under God's watchful and protective eye. (Matthew 2:1-23; especially 12-13). Jesus had a lowly beginning in a land of conquered people and from a house as good as dead, thus he sprang up like a tender plant from the root of a tree cut down and now in dry ground. Yet, God had promised a saviour from the house of David. (Acts 2:29-31; Psalm 132:11). The people looked for someone with a special background and attractive appearance. (See 1 Samuel 9:2; 10:24; 16:12). Instead, as Delitzsch translates, "We saw him, and there was nothing in his appearance to make us desire him, or feel attracted by him."

Jesus was born in a stable and laid in a feed box for animals. (Luke 2:1-7). Joseph was a carpenter, not a king. (Matthew 13:55). Jesus was not born in Jerusalem, but was born in lowly Bethlehem and raised in Nazareth. (Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:23; John 1:46; 7:52). His teaching was contrary to that which was desirable to man. (John 3:19-21; 1 Corinthians 2:4).

Ultimately, Christ was crucified, which was not an end most had in mind for a ruler. (1 Corinthians 1:21-24; Luke 24:21).



Jesus asks his followers to admit they are sinners, which is a blow to pride, and put self last, which is contrary to man's normal selfishness. (Luke 13:3; 9:23).

Christ was looked down upon and held in contempt (meaning of despised), even by the very people he came to save. (John 1:11; Hebrews 12:3). He experienced all forms of sorrow, such as, the death of a close friend, betrayal and desertion by his closest companions, denial, and last, separation from God. (Hebrews 2:9-10; 5:8-9; John 11:1-38; Matthew 26:47-50, 56, 69-75; 27:46). The idea at the end of verse 3 is that Jesus' face was repulsive, so we turned away and refused to look at him. Also, we counted him as being worth nothing.

"Griefs" were illnesses or diseases, and "sorrows" were pain and mental stress. Jesus did spend considerable time helping the people with these and his miraculous healings are said by Matthew to be a fulfilment of this. (Matthew 8:16-17).

Remember, Isaiah 53 is Israel looking back at the proofs of Christ's Messiahship and bemoaning the fact that the Israelites ignored them. Miracles were a proof of Christ's deity. (Hebrews 2:1-4). They counted him as a sinner being punished by God because he endured such hardships.

Verse 5 says, literally, he was pierced and crushed on account of our iniquities. This describes the horrible death he suffered. (Matthew 27:26). He suffered the chastisement, or discipline, which leads us to peace with God. The scourging he endured forms the healing medicine for our sin sickness. (2 Peter 2:21-25; 3:18). Israel, in verse 6, is described as a scattered flock of sheep without a shepherd. They had come to their exile because of selfish rebellion against God. The punishment for their guilt fell upon Christ. (Matthew 20:28; 1 Timothy 2:6; Titus 2:14). As Bales says, "Through his sacrifice for our sins, through his suffering love, Christ calls men from their own ways to God's way." (See again 1 Peter 3:18).

Jesus endured the suffering voluntarily, like a sheep led to the slaughter. He made no defense at his trial, but stood like a lamb dumb before its shearers. Jesus had already proved who he was by his actions, so said nothing in his own defense at the

trials. (Matthew 26:57-68; 27:11-14; Luke 23:1-11; John 19:1-13). He was carried out of the unjust judicial system by death for the angry mob's sin. (2 Corinthians 5:21).

By the general practice, Christ should have been buried with the wicked since he was crucified between two thieves and was accused of blasphemy, which called for a disgraceful burial. However, the Romans let Joseph of Arimathea have the body. (Matthew 27:57; John 19:21). Man intended to bury him with the wicked, but evidently God would not allow it because of his innocence.

Though man wickedly put Jesus to death, God was using it to his purposes. (Acts 2:23). Jesus was an offering for sin. (1 Corinthians 5:7; Ephesians 5:2; Hebrews 10:10; 12:24; 13:10; 1 Peter 1:2). While he did die for our sins, Isaiah foretells God's plan to raise him, else how could he "see his seed." The meaning here is that he would see children come out of that sacrifice. (Hebrews 2:10-13; 1 Peter 1:23).

God's "pleasure" is to save man (John 3:16-17; 2 Peter 3:9), and Jesus would see that purpose prosper because of his work says Isaiah. Because of his sacrifice, verse 11, Jesus will see God's purpose fulfilled and be satisfied. Those who learn from Christ and do his will, will be saved. (John 6:44-45; Romans 1:16-17; Colossians 1:13-14).

Verse 12 describes a conqueror who will receive the spoils. (Philippians 2:5-11). Jesus' death stood as a part of his exaltation. (Luke 24:25-27). In fact, his suffering and death had to come for him to triumph. (Acts 2:36-42). He was a great conqueror in that he bore the sins of many (Hebrews 9:28) and made intercession for those who transgressed in crucifying him. (Luke 23:34). But, they had to repent and turn to him to receive his help. (Acts 3:12-19).

## How Can One Become A Christian ?

Maynard Meguiar

### ONE MUST HEAR

In Romans 10:13-14 Paul says, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they

call upon him in whom they have not believed. And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard ?”

## ONE MUST BELIEVE OR HAVE FAITH

Hebrews 11:6 says, “But without faith it is impossible to please him. For he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”

How does one get faith ? In Romans 10:17 Paul says that, “Faith comes by hearing by the word of God.”

What is faith ? Faith is an unshaken belief or conviction of a truth, based upon testimony.

To believe God is to obey him. In Matthew 7:21 Jesus said, “Not every one who says unto me Lord, Lord shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.”

Doing the will of God is the key to salvation. When does faith become a saving faith ? When it leads a person to obedience to God.

Faith led Enoch to walk with God. Faith led Noah to build the ark. Faith led Abraham to do the will of God. His faith was perfected by works. Paul opened and closed the book of Romans with the expression “obedience to the faith.” (Romans 1:5; 16:26).

Is the faith that justifies with works, or without works ? If it is with works, then it is not by faith alone. If it is without works, then it is a dead faith and avails nothing. The only passage in the entire New Testament where faith and only are linked together is found in James 2:24. It says, “Ye see then now that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.” Works here has reference to the works God commands in the gospel and not the works of the law of Moses. (Galatians 2:16).

## ONE MUST REPENT OF HIS SINS

In Luke 13:3 Jesus says, “I tell you nay, but except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish.” This makes repentance a condition of salvation. In Luke 24:47 Jesus says that, “Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”

## ONE MUST CONFESS CHRIST

In Romans 10:14 Paul says, "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

In the confession man expresses with the mouth what he believed in the heart. Verse 9 says that, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in thine heart, that God has raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." Belief and confession are here made conditions of salvation.

In Matthew 10:32 Jesus says, "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess before my father which is in heaven."

## ONE MUST BE BAPTIZED FOR THE REMISSION OF HIS SINS

In Mark 16:16 Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved"

What he is it that shall be saved? The he that believeth and is baptized.

If the Lord will save us without baptism why did he command it? On Pentecost, Peter's hearers realized that belief in Christ was not sufficient. So they asked him, "What must we do?" Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." (Acts 2:38).

We have here the infallible guidance of the Holy Spirit, leading men step by step into the church, unto the remission of sins. If we can receive remission of sins without baptism, why did Peter say that baptism is for the remission of sins?

I have heard much preaching and teaching on baptism during the last three quarters of a century, but I learned more from a little ten year old black boy at Parker's Chapel, one night on the action of baptism than I had ever learned all put together.

He began like this, "Now you women can understand what I am going to say, better than you men. You have put clorox in your washing machine, and put a soiled, dirty garment in the

water where it came in contact with the clorox. When you took the garment out of the water it was clean, white as snow.

"Now you believed that the clorox would cleanse the dirty garment, but you also knew that it would have no effect on the garment unless it came in contact with the clorox. The same is true with a person who is stained with sin."

We all know that we are saved by the blood of Christ. (Romans 5:9; Acts 20:28). But how do we contact the blood of Christ?

Well where did Christ shed his blood? In his death. But how do we get into his death?

The apostle Paul in Romans 6:3-4 said, "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death, therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so, we also should walk in newness of life." In this new life in Christ all spiritual blessings are found.

When a person is immersed in water by faith he comes in contact with the blood of Christ and comes forth from the watery grave of baptism cleansed of his sin, white as snow. The guilt is blotted out by the Lord when one is baptized. He is a new creature. He has been born again. (John 3:5). Born spiritually born into the family of God.

If the Lord will save without baptism, why did Paul put newness of life after baptism and not before it. It would not be inappropriate when a person arises from the watery grave of baptism, to say to him, "Happy Birthday".

On another night some 2000 years ago a man named Nicodemus went to Jesus to learn more about the kingdom of God. Jesus said to him, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3).

Nicodemus knew that he had been born once, (physical birth), but did not understand how he could be born again. Jesus

informed him that he was talking about a spiritual birth. In John 3:5 Jesus says, "Verily, verily I say unto thee. Except a man be born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of God."

So when one hears the voice of the Spirit, through inspired men preaching the gospel, the incorruptible seed of the kingdom and receives that seed into his heart, and obeys it, he is born of water and the Spirit. Because the Spirit leads him by faith in Jesus Christ, to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus, for remission of sins.

Baptism stands between the believer and salvation. We all realize how important it is to have a birth certificate. (Physical). It is even more important to have been born again, born spiritually.

The greatest disappointment, that will ever come to any man will be on judgment day when the Lord will say. "I am sorry sir, but I do not find a record of your birth certificate." Remember, that he who is born twice, will die only once. But, he who is born only once, will die twice!

There is nothing difficult about being born again, about being born spiritually into the family of God, about becoming a Christian. It is a birth by or through faith.

The gospel is God's power to save. (Romans 1:16). When people hear the gospel preached, and believe it, and are moved by it to repent of their sins and to confess Christ as the Son of God, and to obey God in baptism, they are thus born again. It is that simple.

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