

# THE BIBLE TEACHER

*Pleading for the Restoration of Pure New Testament Christianity*

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## EDITORIAL

### ***“Greater Works Than These Shall He Do . . .”***

To understand any passage of the Bible, one must keep in mind four basic things especially, namely, who was speaking, that is, who made that particular statement; to whom it was spoken; when or under what age (prior to the law of Moses was given, or after the law of Moses was given, or under the New Testament age) was it spoken; and under what context was that said. Too many things or subjects of the Bible have been misunderstood by most people because they have failed to apply these four basic ingredients in learning from the Bible.

For instance, those who claim today that they can physically heal people miraculously in the name of Jesus Christ, quote from John 14:12 to justify their claim, where Christ was speaking to His apostles, before his death on the cross and His ascension to the Father in heaven. He told them: “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father.”

Now, here Christ was speaking to His disciples, apostles, before he had died on the cross for the sins of the world, before His ascension to the Father in heaven, and before the apostles were baptized with the Holy Spirit to receive power. (Acts 1:4-6). And, what was the context of Christ's statement? Christ had just mentioned to them that He would be going back. They wanted to know where was He intending to go. Christ,

in turn told them about the Father in heaven. Philip, one of them, said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us. Jesus said to him, Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, show us the Father? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you, I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves. *Most assuredly, I say to you*, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to my Father." (John 14:8-12). From the context of the discussion it is evident that Christ wanted them, the disciples, His apostles, who were going to be His witnesses, to believe in Him that He was God. So far they had not really believed in Christ as God. A little before Philip had spoken, Peter too spoke to Christ, saying, "Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for your sake." But, Jesus answered Him, "will you lay down your life for my sake? *Most assuredly, I say to you*, the rooster shall not crow till you have denied Me three times." (John 13:37, 38). The Lord knew that even after seeing His mighty works that He had done before them, to convince them that He was God, they had not believed in Him so far that He was truly God. He didn't want them to believe in Him that He was a miracle worker, or a teacher or a superhuman. Christ wanted them, who were going to be His witnesses to all the world, to believe in Him that He is God. Therefore He told them, "he who believes in Me the works that I do he will do also, and greater works than these he will do, because I go to my Father." Notice, here Christ said three things. First, in speaking to the unbelieving apostles He said, "he who believes in Me the works that I do he will do also." What kind of works had Christ done? He had fed multitudes of people with a little food in His hand; He had raised the dead; He had healed instantly all people who had come to Him with all kinds of infirmities and diseases. The apostles, Christ said, would do the same, if they would believe in Him. In fact, even after His resurrection from the dead they had not really believed in Him that He truly was the God of heaven who had come down on earth to save humanity from sin by His vicarious death on the cross, and He is now alive forevermore. So much so that Christ, just before His ascension into heaven, had to rebuke them of their unbelief and hardness of heart, as we read at Mark 16:14. And, then the Lord told them, "And these signs will follow those who believe; In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they

drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover." (Mark 16:17,18). By seeing the resurrected Lord Himself speaking to them and seeing Him ascending into heaven, as the cloud received Him out of their sight, their faith in Him was strengthened, and they had returned to Jerusalem, as the Lord had commanded them, to wait for the Promise of the Father. (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:1-10).

In Acts chapter 2 we read about the apostles being baptized with the baptism of the Holy Spirit; and thus they received the power, as the Lord had promised to them. "And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs." (Mark 16:20). The book of The Acts of the Apostles in the New Testament is full of the accounts of the mighty works of the apostles. At one place we read, "And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people . . . so that they brought the sick out into the streets and laid them on beds and couches, that atleast the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them. Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bring sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed." (Acts 5:12-16). So, the apostles, after they had fully believed in Christ, did signs and miracles as Christ had done before them. But Christ had told them that they would do greater works than His. What does this mean? The greater works are the spiritual works. The Lord was maintaining the superiority of the spiritual over the physical in this statement. Look! the Lord Christ had fed all people of His time to take care of their hunger? Or, if he had healed physically all the people? Also, spiritual not physical. Thus three thousand souls were converted from death to life on the very first day when the apostles of Christ had preached the gospel of Christ's death for the sinners and His resurrection from the dead, as people believed in Him, repented of their sins, confessed Him as the Son of God and were baptized for the forgiveness of their sins, and the Lord added them to the number of His church, (Acts 2), a feat far surpassing anything that had ever been done before Jesus returned to the Father. The apostles were able to do both. First, the works that Christ did on earth, they did also, and they were truly baptized with the Holy Spirit as the Lord had promised to them (John 14:25, 26; 16:12-15; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:1-4). Secondly, they were able to do greater works which he did not do as long as he was living on earth, and to enable

them to do the greater works Christ must go to the Father in heaven after His death and resurrection. The greater works wrought by the apostles did not take place in spite of Christ's going to the Father but because He did go to the Father. The "greater works" the apostles were enabled to do were still truly the works of Christ, because it is through or by His death on the cross for the sinners humans are made alive who are dead in trespasses and sins.

## Pleasing The Lord

J.C. CHOATE

Most of us like to please those around us. Husbands want to please their wives and wives want to please their husbands. Parents like to please their children and hopefully the children will want to please them. We even want to please our employer by doing a good job and of course we are pleased when he continues to work us and to give us a raise from time to time. And on and on we could go with many other examples of this practice.

This concept is also a basic principle of the scriptures. God said concerning his Son, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." (Matthew 17:5). Christ stated, "And he that loves me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always to things that please him." (John 8:29). Paul stated, "For Christ pleased not himself." (Romans 15:3). In other words, he did not do his own will but the will of the Father in heaven. Finally, John wrote, "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight." (John 3:22).

Now if God was pleased with Jesus and Jesus wanted to please his Father by doing his will, how much the more should we seek to please our Father in heaven and our Lord and Saviour, Jesus. This cannot be done, however, by those who are in the flesh. To do the things of the world and want to have them all is to do everything. Paul declared, "So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of God he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dear to the sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the

that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God." (Romans 8:8-14).

It is obvious then that we are pleasing to the Lord as we do his will. But to obey his will, we must come to know his will. This is where the scripture comes in. God has spoken to reveal his will to us (Hebrews 1:1, 2), and when we come to know it (Romans 10:17), understand it (Acts 8:30,31), believe it (Hebrews 11:6), and comply with it (Mark 16:16), then the Lord saves us and adds us to his church. (Acts 2:38, 47). Christ said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 7:21). Paul wrote the Colossian brethren, "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." (Colossians 3:17).

As Christians then, we please the Lord when we wear his name (Acts 4:12), as we worship him (John 4:24), live the Christian life (Matthew 5:16), take the gospel to the world (Mark 16:15), and remain faithful to him. (Revelation 2:10; Revelation 22:14). Paul wrote the Philippian brethren, "But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God." (Philippians 4:18). The Hebrew writer said, "Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom he glory for ever and ever. Amen." (Hebrews 13:21).

The problem with most people is that they want to do those things they want to do, things that will please them. This is the problem with most of the religious world. The majority are in false religions, in churches that you cannot read about in the Bible, wear names that are foreign to the scriptures, and worship according to the doctrines and commandments of men. Yet, they claim to believe in God and to follow Christ. It is on their terms, however, instead of complying with the Lord's wishes. This is a sad commentary on the religious people of our time.

We are sinners and Christ is the saviour. We cannot save ourselves and we cannot save our friends. Therefore, if we are wise we will forget about self, bypass those around us, and seek to please the

Lord in all things.

Who are you trying to please? God, self, or man? Your salvation and eternal life depends on the answer. Just remember that Christ said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John 14:6).

*Especially For Women*

## ***"Tell Me About Heaven"***

**BETTY BURTON CHOATE**

**"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 to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also." (John 14:1-3)**

Mary's mother died after a long illness. The family had returned after the funeral. Mary's face was still marked with tears, and everyone was filled with sadness, thinking how much they would miss Grandmother. James hugged his mother, saying, "Please don't cry."

Mary smiled through her tears. "It's only because we will miss her so much that I am crying, James. She was hurting and she wanted to leave this world. She knew that since she was a Christian she would go to be with God when she died, so she wasn't afraid."

James sat down beside his mother and snuggled up close to her warm body. "Tell me about heaven," he asked. "Will all of us go there someday, Mother?"

Anthony and Aseema sat down on the floor at their mother's feet and waited for the answer. "You know, James, the story of Adam and Eve begins with a perfect earth that God had made for them. There was to be no sickness or death, and God Himself walked and talked with them, face to face as friends.

"But Satan came and led Adam and Eve to sin, so God made them leave the garden. In the book of Romans 8:19-23 we are told that even the earth groans, wanting to be delivered from the curse of sin. Do you remember that when God talked to Adam and Eve after their sin, He said, 'Cursed is the ground for your sake.' (Genesis 3:17)? That is why so many bad things happen, even in nature. Droughts, typhoons,

earthquakes, floods, swarms of pests and insects, weeds and thorns and thistles that choke out the crops. None of these things were as God intended at the first. All of them came as punishment for sin.

"But Jesus said that He has gone to prepare a new place for His family—for those who love Him and obey Him. He promised His disciples that even though He was going away, He will come again and take us to be with Him. It has been a long time, now since He left the earth, and many people doubt Him. But Peter wrote (2 Peter 3:1-13) that, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is long suffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."

"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?

"Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which dwells righteousness."

"So Jesus promised that this earth, so broken by sin, will be destroyed and that a new and perfect heaven and earth are being made for us to live in, with Him, eternally. In Revelation 21, the apostle John saw that new place and he described it for us: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband, And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God."

"And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying; and there shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

"Then heaven is really a new world where we will always live with God?" asked James.

"That's right," Mary answered. "God's Holy Spirit used beautiful words to explain to John what that new place will be like. He wants us to know, so that we will want to go there."

"What else did God say about heaven, Mother?" asked Aseema.

"John wrote, 'And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb . . .'"

"Who is 'the Lamb,' Anthony?" Mary asked.

"It's Jesus, Jesus is called 'the Lamb of God' because He died like a lamb being sacrificed for our sins," Anthony answered.

"You're right," agreed Mary. "I'm glad you understand what He did for us, and that He is with God now, making that place for us, John said, 'In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life . . .'"

"The same tree of life that God put in the Garden of Eden for Adam and Eve?" interrupted James.

"The same one," smiled Mary, "in the first book of the Bible and again in the very last part of the last book of the Bible! God is telling us that He has always wanted His children to live with Him forever. And that's what heaven is really all about: A perfect place that God has prepared, where we will live always with Him and will never die."

"Will everybody go to heaven, Mother?" asked James. "I want all of my friends to go there!"

"I wish everyone *could* go there, James, but if we stop and think about it we will know that not all people belong in that wonderful place. You know there are bad people who do terrible things and if they were in heaven, it wouldn't be such a wonderful place, would it?"

"No, I guess they would ruin it," agreed James.

"Let's see more here in Revelation," Mary said. "John wrote about those who will be in heaven. He said, 'Blessed are *those who do His commandments*, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.' (22:14) So, if we want to go to heaven, we must obey Him in this world, because that place is prepared for only God's family—His children.

"But what about all the other people?" Aseema asked. "What will happen to them?"

"When Daddy comes home from work tonight, let's ask him," Mary answered "God says a lot about that place, too. It's just as real as heaven—but *we don't want to go there!*"



# ***The Bible Speaks Why You Should Be A New Testament Christian***

**BILL BROWN**

Many cannot give a scriptural reason why and what they are religiously. "... and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear". (I Pet. 3:15). Therefore we can give you many sensible and scriptural reasons why you should become a New Testament Christian.

Alien sinners are not in a condition to meet God. "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." (Rom. 3:23). "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life". (Rom. 6:23). "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear." (Isa. 59:1-2).

But God so loved that he revealed the one plan whereby through obedience to that plan all people of the earth could be saved. "But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." (Gal. 4:4-5). "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." (Heb. 5:8-9). So, you should prepare to meet God, "and it is appointed unto man once to die, but after this the judgement". (Heb. 9:27). A person is in an awful condition to be lost and without hope. "That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometime were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ". (Eph. 2:12-13).

Knowing that man would be lost because of sin, God has provided salvation through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ which was necessary for forgiveness of sin through obedience to his will. "... and without the shedding of blood is no remission" Heb. 9:22. Not only is the blood necessary for the forgiveness of sins, but Christ purchased the church with his own blood that he will add you to, upon obedience to the

gospel. Acts 20:28; Acts 2:47; Rom. 6:16-18.

God offers you salvation now, and the gospel is universal in its application, it is relevant, and the great invitation has been given, Matt 11:28-30; Rev. 22:17. Do not delay in obedience, for "NOW is the accepted time, behold now is the day of salvation". II Cor. 6:2. Life is uncertain "and there is but a step between me and death", I Sam. 20:3. Eternal punishment awaits all who do not obey the gospel. (II Thes. 1:7-9). But for those who obey the gospel from the heart and follow the teaching will receive eternal life. (II Pet. 1:3-11). Do not delay, hasten to obey.

## *The 'Stones, Sinatra, And Stephanas'*

JIM FAUGHN

Recently, while doing a little "channel-surfing" on T.V., I saw part of an interview with Keith Richards, one of the members of The Rolling Stones. He was telling how the group decided on the opening song for their most recent concert tour. It was chosen because of its very first line: "I'm gonna tell you how it's gonna be."

He said that he and the rest of the group thought that line made a statement about how they viewed life. In essence, he said that they were determined to live their lives by *their* rules. If anybody was going to "give orders," it would be them. They weren't about to submit to anybody else.

We don't usually think of Frank Sinatra and The Rolling Stones as having much in common, do we? Although they dress differently and sing different styles of music, they apparently share a similar philosophy of life. In recent years, Mr. Sinatra's anthem seems to have become the song in which he boasts of having lived his life "My Way."

While The 'Stones and Sinatra are very famous, few have heard of Stephanas. Those who have heard of him may recognize his name as one that is in the Bible . . . *somewhere*. All that we know about him is found in 1 Corinthians. In the first chapter, we learn that members of his household were among the few whom Paul personally baptized (v. 16).

However, it is in chapter 16 that we learn of his greatness. As you read this chapter, you do not learn of any great sermons he preached;

we are not told whether or not he held any "official position" in the church; there is no mention of anything which most people associate with greatness. It is simply stated that he and his household had "... addicted (or devoted; NASB) themselves to the ministry of the saints" (v. 15). You will notice as you read that chapter that the Christian were told to be subject to him and others like him.

On the Day of Judgement, all of us will see clearly what really was important in life. Hell will be full of people who were seen as great, powerful, influential, and independent in this life. On the other hand, those who quietly and often anonymously served the Lord by giving of themselves will enjoy His company *for ever!*

Who "calls the shots" in your life?

## ***What About Your Attitude?***

**DILLARD THURMAN**

Paul told certain Jews: *"It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken unto you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo we turn to the Gentiles."* (Acts 14:46). Even in those days there were those who rejected God's word; yes, kicked it out that they might hold to that they had previously been taught! But this was never Paul's attitude, for he stated, *"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth: to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."* (Rom. 1:16). He staunchly affirmed, *"I am set for the defence of the gospel."* (Phil. 1:17). Paul was careful to *"declare unto you all the counsel of God"* (Acts 20:27). He well knew the worth of that message, and cultivated the right attitude toward it at all times (1 Cor. 15:1-2).

But my religious friends, what would have been your attitude had you been placed in his position and circumstance? How would you have reacted to open opposition and persecution, to slander, taunts and open denial of all you proclaimed? Would your attitude have changed when you were tried, flogged and imprisoned for the gospel? But to make it more pertinent to our times, let us transfer this scene to our modern setting for the question!

## WHAT WOULD BE YOUR ATTITUDE IF

Jesus Christ entered your community and personally established His church? What if you heard Him declare that He *"loved the church, and gave himself for it"* (Eph. 5:25)? What if Jesus spoke of *"the church of God, which he purchased with his own blood?"* (Acts 20:28). What if His chosen apostles followed Him, preaching that God was to be *"glorified in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end"* (Eph. 3:21), and further that this *"house of God is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth"* (1 Tim. 3:15)? Would your attitude toward that church be radically changed by this revelation? Would you then contend, "One church is as good as another"? Would you contend that one can be saved out of the church as well as within it"? Or would you honestly accept the words of Jesus Christ and His apostles, and become a member of that blood bought church according to the terms which He set forth? Would your attitude allow you to do all your benevolence where God is glorified?

## WHAT WOULD BE YOUR ATTITUDE IF

Jesus Christ came into your community and openly condemned every religious order which He had not established? What if He said to religious leaders: *"Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch."* (Mt. 15:13-14). Just what would be your attitude towards One who so forcefully opposed false teachers and their churches? What would be your attitude if you heard Jesus praying for the unity of His disciples, but praying against every preacher and church that would disrupt that unity (Jno. 17:23)? Would you be willing to become a member of that church and work and plead for that unity of believers? Could you overcome bias and prejudice and work for the terms of pardon which Jesus set forth?

## WHAT WOULD BE YOUR ATTITUDE IF

Jesus Christ came into your community and preached, *"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."* (Mk. 16:16). If you knew these were the words of Jesus Christ, would you be willing to climb on the same platform and declare: "He that believeth and is NOT baptized shall be saved"? Or would you be willing to contend, "He that believeth and is baptized is already

saved"? If you heard these words from the lips of our Saviour, would you then argue, "Baptism is non-essential. You can be saved just as well without it"? If Jesus preached this before your family and friends, would you then contend, "But there are different ways you can interpret this"? Would you face Jesus and argue that His statement could not be understood by all honest souls who were seeking for His salvation?

### WHAT WOULD BE YOUR ATTITUDE IF

Peter, Paul and other apostles came to your community, saying, *"Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."* (2 Cor. 5:20). If after the claim, they confirmed their word with signs of apostles, then preached the gospel with old-time power and authority, condemning false doctrines, divisions, factions and schisms as they did in that "First Century Church," what would be your attitude toward them and their message? How would you respond when they speak: *"Now I beseech you brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment"* (1 Cor. 1:10)?

Would your attitude change if they preached there is just ONE body of Christ, the church, and that Christ is the Head of that body, and its Saviour (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18; Eph. 5:23)? Or would you still join men in saying, "We thank God for the many churches, so that each may join the church of his choice"? Since Christ is the Saviour of His body, the church, would you still argue one can be saved in man-made churches as well as in the one Christ purchased with His blood (Acts 20:28)? Or would your attitude be such as to lead you to become obedient to the gospel of Christ, and enter His church?

### WHAT WOULD BE YOUR ATTITUDE IF

Peter, Paul and other apostles appeared in your community preaching Jesus Christ as the risen Lord, and telling believers, *"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. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all them that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call"* (Acts 2:36-37)? Would your attitude be to scoff and ridicule the idea of obeying this command

to obtain remission of sins? or would you humbly submit to the gospel's call?

What would be your attitude if you heard an inspired preacher tell a penitent, praying man, *"And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord"* (Acts 22:16)? Would you readily accept the teaching, and obey without question? or would you oppose this teaching because it did not agree with previous tenets of faith? What would be your attitude if these inspired men taught you, your neighbors and friends, that one enters into Christ by baptism (Gal. 3:26-27)? and that every spiritual blessing is in Christ (Eph. 1:3)? Would you then contend that one can be saved from sin and enjoy eternal life **outside** of Christ and **without** baptism? If inspired men taught that we are baptized into Christ and into His death where His saving blood was shed (Rom. 6:3-4), would you yet contend that one can be saved without reaching that blood shed in His death? Would you argue with them that one is saved before being inducted into Christ (Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3-4; 1 Cor. 12:13; 2 Tim. 2:10)? What is your present attitude in this matter?

### WHAT WOULD BE YOUR ATTITUDE IF

The Holy Spirit came directly on you, and by signs, wonders and miracles confirmed all these things which we have suggested, and presented unto you *"a more sure word of prophecy"* (2 Pet. 1:19), what would be your attitude toward the Spirit's testimony? What if you had God's Word that what we have suggested is His Truth, and fully confirmed in that *"more sure word of prophecy"*? *Would you haughtily discard the whole thing, saying, "I don't care to investigate it"? Friends, we have given enough scriptural citations to help you begin a personal investigation that could enrich your life both here and hereafter! Just suppose that God and His Son gave you an autographed copy of the Bible, Signed, Sealed, and Delivered! Would you respect it enough to carefully and prayerfully study it? No, They won't personally deliver it, but They have given you that life-giving volume! Are you willing to lay aside pride and prejudice, and study it to find what you must do to be saved? If you were called now to face the Judgment, could you honestly say that you treated this matter fairly?*

*"And now, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."* (Acts 20:32). Has your attitude changed?

# ***The Purpose Of Life***

**JOHNNY RAMSEY**

In the busy hustle-bustle of life it is good to pause frequently and soberly ask ourselves: "What is the purpose of living? Why am I here? What shall I do with my talents and abilities? What heritage shall I leave my children?"

These questions are of the utmost importance because, as Edgar A. Guest so graphically wrote:

"One day we will stand with empty hands,  
and wonder what we were worth."

At the close of time, before God's judgment, we will count as vain and foolish the material possessions acquired on earth. All those things that perish with using and that shall be consumed in the brightness of the Lord's coming, are certainly inferior to the eternal values of spirituality. In II Peter 3:11 the context discusses the end of the world and all that exists therein. Notice the emphasis of that verse:

"Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved.

What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy living and godliness."

When time shall be no more and that great day of reckoning arrives we shall have lost all interest in houses, land, fancy furnishing, automobiles, credit ratings and the finery of mundane affairs. Only those things that have been done for Christ will last.

It is so foolish to spend our sojourn here below trying "to keep up with the Joneses." About the time we catch up with them they just "refinance" and off we go again in the absurd "rat-race" of materialism.

Epicurus, who lived several centuries before Christ, taught that man was wholly mortal. Therefore, since "this life is all," he said: "Eat, drink and be merry—for tomorrow we die!" Epicurus has many followers in the Simi Valley today! Is it possible that some are even in the church?

Daniel Webster, one of America's all-time great speakers, once said:

"If we write on marble it will perish.

If on brass time will efface it.

If we rear temples they will crumble into dust

But if we work upon immortal minds  
And imbue them with the just fear of God  
And love for their fellowmen  
We write upon those tablets something that  
Will brighten for all eternity."

What on *earth* are we doing for Heaven's sake? Jesus said: "Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God" (Matthew 6:33). As Edwin Markham so aptly put it:

We build cities in vain—unless man, the builder, also grows! Let us do more than tear down barns and build greater barns (Luke 12:15-21). God called the one who did this a fool! Our purpose in life is to build greater people—always fashioned *in* and growing *unto* glorious image of the Lord. Notice the powerful, compelling language of Peter 2:11:

"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul."

May we never again put a premium on the cotton-candy froth of temporal things. Let us press on to that "city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:10). Then we can sincerely sing:

"Take the world but give me Jesus  
All its joys are but a name But His love abideth ever  
Through the endless years the same."

#### First Things First

One of the strongest passages in the Bible emphasizing the wisdom and necessity of putting the Lord absolutely first is Psalm 132:3-5:

"I will not enter my house or get into my bed; I will not give sleep to my eyes or slumber to my eyelids until I find a place for the Lord, a dwelling place for the Mighty One of Jacob."

May we wisely make this our emphasis in life!



# ***“Whom Thou Servest Continually”***

**ROBERT R. TAYLOR, JR.**

These quoted words form a prominent part of that beautiful tribute King Darius paid the devout Daniel at the end of his sleepless night during which Jehovah's faithful prophet had boldly and bravely confronted the vicious lions. The kings had been tricked into signing a Medo-Persian law (where repeals were impossible) forbidding any person in the empire to ask a request of any save the king for thirty days. Such a decree did not detour Daniel from his devout life of prayer day by day. He prayed thrice daily just as in former times when no decree was binding to prohibit such prayers. Daniel's enemies the law. The king sought vainly to deliver Daniel but was unable to achieve success in the expended effort. This law was above the king's repeal when once signed into law. The Persian monarch assured Daniel that "The God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee" (Daniel 6:16). After passing a sleepless night accompanied with fasting the king hurried to the lions' den the next morning. With stirring tones of lament in his voice the moved monarch said, "O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions" (Daniel 6:20)? With a valient victory in his trusting grasp Daniel answered in the affirmative for the deeply moved Persian ruler.

Daniel's light was not concealed amidst the Medo-Persian Empire. It shone brilliantly. His king and his adamant enemies knew of his constant attachment to the God he served with force, fervency and frequency. His was no seasonal religion. His light of religion burned boldly and brightly at all times. Daniel's religion was of conviction—not convenience.

What of us? Do our associates picture us as people who serve God continually? There is a great deal of difference between serving when it is convenient and serving continually. Felix wanted a religion of convenience in Act 24:24ff. Convenience paves a sure way to Hadean torments and hell at last.

# ***Is Everything A Man Does In His Christian Life Worship?***

**GLENN COLLEY**

## **—A LOOK AT ROMANS 12:1**

This title raises an interesting and heavily discussed question, and to answer it one meant by "worship." The most common word in the New Testament translated "worship" is PROSKUNEO. It is always translated "worship." Thayer defines this word, "To kiss the hand (toward) one, in token of reverence . . . In the New Testament by kneeling or prostrating to do homage to one or to make obeisance, whether in order to express respect or to make supplication." Out of the 72 times the word worship is found in the King James Translation, 59 of those come from the original word, PROSKUNEO. A clear illustration of the word is found in Matthew 4:9, 10: ". . . and saith unto Him, All these things will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and worship (PROSKUNEO) me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, thou shalt worship (PROSKUNEO) the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."

While PROSKUNEO is the Greek word most commonly found translated "worship," it is not the only word translated "worship." SEBOMAI, occurring ten times, means, "To reverence, hold in awe." While PROSKUNEO emphasizes the outward show of reverence, this word emphasizes the inward feeling of reverence or awe.

LATREUO is sometimes translated "worship." It occurs 21 times, and means, "To render religious services or homage, to worship." It is a broader, more general word than the other two, in that it refers to all of Christian service, not just worship. It is true that all worship is service, but not all service is worship. All that a man does in his Christian walk is service to God and glorifies Him, but not all a man does in that life is worship. LATREUO can be translated "worship" correctly if the context permits the usage.

That brings us to Romans 12:1. Consider three different translations of this verse:

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which

is your reasonable *service*." (King James)

"Therefore I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer yourselves as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—which is your spiritual *worship*." (New International).

"I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual *service of worship*." (New American Standard)

I have underlined the key words for our consideration. This informative and precious verse describes at the Christian lifestyle as a "living sacrifice." That is, all we do in our lives as Christians is in service to our Maker. As Paul wrote later, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (I Corinthians 10:31). The Greek word in question is LATREUO.

Now, remember that LATREUO can be translated "service" or "worship," depending on the context. The translators of the KJV believed that to take a context that obviously depicted the whole Christian life and call it worship would contradict what they knew from other passages about the nature of worship. Their translation is the right one. All of Christian living is to the glory and service of God. All of Christian living is not worship.

Read through the Old and New Testaments where worship is discussed, and note the fact that where details are given, worship is punctuated by a beginning and an ending. For example, Abraham said, "I and the lad will go yonder and worship" (Genesis 22:5). The wise men said, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the east, and are come to worship Him" (Matthew 2:2). Paul said, "Because that thou mayest understand, that there are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem for to worship" (Acts 24:11).

Because worship must be "in spirit and in truth," (John 4:24), it is important that we understand the difference between Christian service and Christian worship. There are many things which would be suitable for me to do in my private life, which would be wholly inappropriate in worship to God.

# ***What Kind Of Church Member Are You?***

**W.A. HOLLEY**

It is time for members of the Lord's church to take an inventory of themselves. What are you worth to the church? Are you an asset or a liability? Do you help or hinder the progress of the church? Do you use your talents or bury them (Matthew 25:14-30).

If you read the history of the Lord's church as it is recorded in the New Testament, you will find we have always had good and bad members. What about Ananias and Sapphira (acts 5:1-11)? A Corinthian church member married his father's wife (I Corinthians 5:1-13). Hymenaeus and Philetus had erred from the truth (II Timothy 1:17-18). These represent but a few of those early Christians who turned away from the faith.

Herewith, we shall list a few examples of what we have in mind:

(1) There are those members who follow "afar off." At the time of Jesus' crucifixion, Peter followed Him "afar off" (Matthew 26:58). Many church members, like Peter, don't want to be too closely involved in the work of the church. These hang back, but they will reluctantly serve if they are pushed.

(2) Some become members of the church because they are "bread seekers." Jesus said of some who came to him, "Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled" (John 6:26). Some have selfish motives. This preacher can relate stories of some who were baptized in order to obtain aid and in some instances to get a wife or husband. The genuine spirit is giving, not receiving (Acts 20:35).

(3) Some members of the church are "glory seekers." They will serve if they can be in charge. Diotrephes was such a member. He had to have the preeminence. Those who stood in his way, he cast out. He had a "Big I, and little you," complex. He was the boss and wanted everyone to know it.

This sort of thing causes many problems. In the army not every soldier can be a general. The Lord recognized this problem when He set certain qualifications for elders and deacons (1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4). Like Haman, one can have such high regard for his position it is easy for him to be offended (See the Book of Esther).

(4) Some members become super critics. These are skilled at finding fault. Jealousy breeds criticism. Dear Christian friend, never point a finger of scorn at another, for in so doing you are pointing three fingers at your own self. Those who are working to please God must remember, criticism comes with the territory. "To avoid criticism, do nothing, say nothing, be nothing" (E. Hubbard).

In John 12:3-8, Judas criticized Mary's anointing of Jesus. Remember, no matter how unfounded adverse criticism may be, there are those who join in and echo it.

Judas wanted to give to the poor, he claimed, but the truth was, he was a thief who stole from the funds given to aid the poor (John 12:4-6). One's reason for criticism may be very different from what he says. There may be impure motives.

Remember, Jesus Christ was the finest person who ever lived, but He could not avoid criticism (Philippians 3:18).

(5) Are you a busybody, a meddler, a whisperer, or a backbiter? A backbiter is one who engages in secret slander (II Corinthians 12:20; Romans 1:29-30). One can be a busybody in the affairs of others. There are some who are not busied in their own business, but are overbusied in that of others.

Brother W. Claude Hall advised his preacher boys: "Spend half of your time in taking care of your own business, and the other half in letting others alone."

(6) Are you a fussy, irritable member who has a hard time getting along with others? Paul wrote, "I exhort Euodia, and I exhort Syntyche, to be of the same mind in the Lord" (Philippians 4:2, ASV). These were two prominent women in the Philippian church who were irritating each other. To "be of the same mind," means to cultivate harmony of thought and disposition. Reconciliation, where differences exists, is always in order (I Corinthians 7:11; Matthew 5:24). "No Christian should attend the Lord's assembly with his fighting clothes on" (Brother Gus Nichols).

(7) Christian friend, do you attend the Lord's assembly reluctantly, somehow wishing you did not have to be there? Is your attendance a sort of distasteful chore which you somehow endure?

David, Israel's sweetest singer wrote: "This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it" (Psalm 118:23-24). The Lord's day belongs unto Him (Revelation 1:10). It is a sin to visit Grandma when you ought to be assembling together with the saints (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1-

2; Hebrews 10:24-26).

Christian friends, what kind of a church member are you? Do you know that you must answer to God Almighty for your deeds? "Shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart" (Psalm 44:21).

"What then shall I do when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him" (Job 31:14)?

## ***Poor, Foolish, Lost, And Uninformed***

**NEAL POLLARD**

Who would God describe in such a way? Over whom could God look and fail to find a real man in the streets of their chief city? To whom could God be referring when He calls this people false swearers? What godless nation would bow at the altars of adultery, treachery, and idolatry? Surely, such iniquity was not whispered even in the camps of Admah, Seboim, Sodom, or Gomorrah! The people described by God through Jeremiah could not have had any exposure to the providence, miracles, or judgment of the Almighty! Could they?

Jeremiah five is completely filled with the judgments of God against Judah. Despite the heritage and promise they owned as descendants of Abraham, these Jews had taken a vow of spiritual poverty (4). Even though they had the wisdom of the law, the chosen nation was overrun with fools (4). Though they had the directions of God at their disposal, they had wandered aimlessly away from the right way (4). Heedless of God's unchanging judgment, they had degenerated into religious illiteracy (4). Why would a prophet of God call the people of God such names?

**They were stricken, but not grief-stricken (Jeremiah 5:3).** Since He expelled Adam and Eve from the garden, God has demonstrated that He will punish wrongdoing. Such is a part of God's immutable holiness. On Judah He had showered punishment for sin (cf. Jeremiah 2:29-30). Like those to whom Paul speaks in Titus 1:16, Judah professed that they knew God, but in works they denied Him (5:2). While from the tongue of the weeping prophet flowed the warning of imminent captivity to punish sin, they happily continued in hypocrisy and

immorality. They could not shed tears, even with the knowledge that they were hurting God with their crimes.

How is the conscience soothed? Either an individual will flee sin or fellowship it. When a person is engaged in iniquity, he will either buckle under his guilt or he will sear his conscience to keep the guilt away. Judah could not, in good conscience, commit spiritual adultery. Hence, they killed their conscience. Truly, a man suffers a legion of spiritual wounds from sin. To live with himself and continue in sin, a man must insulate himself from remorse. Such a quarantine separates a man from God and salvation.

**They were consumed, but not consumed with obedience (Jeremiah 5:3).** In the furnace of correction, God had consumed His children with the fire of denunciation. Using His prophets as His mouthpiece, God instructed Judah to obey Him. Unlike the prodigal son in the far country of sin, God's chosen had learning nothing from their punishment. In contrast with such a defiant spirit, one finds Jeremiah, though desiring to refrain from speaking the word of God, unable to keep away from his task (cf. 20:9). Unfortunately, Jeremiah's attitude toward God's will was far from infectious.

A beautiful picture of obedience is painted by Luke in Acts 4:20. There, the account of Peter and John before the council records Peter's brave response, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye, **FOR WE CANNOT BUT SPEAK THE THINGS WHICH WE HAVE SEEN AND HEARD.**" Completely convinced that the Lord's way is not just the best way, but also the right way, the truly converted Christian will be consumed with their desire to please the God who gave His very best to be the propitiation for their sins! The committed child of God is determined to obey. They would never act like Judah, immaturely setting their face in defiance.

**They were determined, but not determined to return to God (Jeremiah 5:3).** They were lost, but they refused to return. Conviction is more attractive than is fickleness, but a resolve to live in sin is fatal. Judah was wallowing in apostasy, but had already made up their mind to keep away from the very Power which sustained them. Jeremiah lamented the stubbornness of his brethren.

Resolve is a wonderful thing, if a person's goal is to preserve for righteousness' sake! But, what thing is important enough to cause a man to remain on the wrong side of the divine standard? What earthly treasure can compare to the riches of God's grace? What lust of the flesh can measure up to the pure love of God? What goal surpasses the

beautiful home of the soul? Foolish is the determination to prevent one's self from inheriting eternal happiness!

Because Judah was so well acquainted with the holy nature of God, Jeremiah could only conclude, "Surely these are poor; they are foolish: for they know not the way of the Lord, nor the judgment of their God" (5:4). The condition of alien sinners is pitiable, for they are ignorant of the full, serene life available to the Christian. They do not know the peace available to the faithful, obedient (cf. John 14:27). How much worse is the condition of one who was once enlightened, but who falls away (cf. Hebrews 6:4)? What is the latter end of those who are entangled again in that woeful life they had escaped by becoming a new creature (see II Peter 2:20-22)? Gushing forth from the fountain of life are the spiritual blessings to those children of God who are sorry for their sins, consumed by their desire to obey the Lord, and determined to come back home when they are engaged in sin.

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#### Form IV

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