

# THE BIBLE TEACHER

*Pleading for the Restoration of Pure New Testament Christianity*

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## EDITORIAL

### **Why Do People Get Their Babies "Baptized?"**

Most do this just because others are doing this; they believe that this is a very important religious ceremony which must be performed when the baby is a few days old. Where is the origin of this practice? As far as the Bible is concerned, there is neither an example where an infant was ever baptized, nor a command to baptize babies. So how did it start? A few hundred years ago, some people began to teach that infants are born in sin, in a state of sin, inherited from their parents, being by nature in sin and the children of wrath. They said, the original sin, inherited from Adam, is forgiven when the infant is baptized. And, to justify the doctrine of the original sin, they began to teach that Christ has commanded that little children should be brought to Him, and by baptizing babies we are obeying this command of Christ. Further, they taught, circumcision was performed on children as the token of the covenant under the old testament law of Moses, so now children are to be baptized and receive the token of the New Covenant, the seal of the righteousness of faith.

But what does the Bible teach? Who should be baptized? Why one should be baptized? What is baptism? First of all, there is no such thing as original sin or inherited sin ever, anywhere, found in the Bible. At Ezekiel 18:20 we read: "The soul who sins

shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself." Is it clear enough? But someone quickly want to point out what David has said in Psalm 51:5, "Behold I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me." Listen, who had brought forth David? Also, who had conceived David? in both cases, the answer is his mother. David here was pointing to his mother. Not to himself.

Again, when Christ had commanded that little children be brought to him, He wasn't asking that they be brought to Him that they might be baptized. In the setting of Matthew 19:3, 14, where we read about it, we find that parents wanted to bring their children to Christ so that He might pray for them (not baptize them), but His disciples rebuked the parents and told them not to bring their little ones. But Christ said to them: "Let the little children come to me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Doesn't this prove that little children have no sin in them? of course, it does, because Christ said, "of such is the kingdom of heaven." In fact, on another occasion, to His disciples, Christ had said, "Assuredely, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 18:3).

Little children have no sin in them. They are pure and innocent. Therefore, said Christ, "of such is the kingdom of heaven." If they were sinners, Christ wouldn't say that. Christ didn't die on the cross for sinless, but for those who are sinners. After His death, burial and resurrection He had commanded His disciples to go into all the world and preach His gospel and those, he said, who would believe, and repent of their sins, and would be baptised will be saved. (Mark 16:16; Luke 13:3,5). Little children cannot be preached to, they can't understand, neither can they believe and repent to be baptized. Baptism is for all, male and female; who can understand the preaching of the gospel and can believe and can repent of their sins, whereas, circumcision of the old testament was only for male babies. Circumcision was not for salvation, as baptism is, but it was a token of the covenant between God and Abraham and his descendants. (Genesis 17:11,12). Another important thing that we need to learn is this, that baptism is not sprinkling of water,

but it is a burial in water. Those who "baptize" babies or infants, they sprinkle a little water on their head. Please read in your Bible from Romans 6:3-5; Acts 8:35-39 and Colossians 2:12.

So what you need to do, if you believe that the Bible contains God's will for man? If you have little children, bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord. (Ephesians 6:4). If you have been "baptized" when you were babies, count it an act of ignorance on part of those who had made that decision for you. Believe in Christ now with all your heart and repent of all ignorance (Acts 17:30) and be baptized for the forgiveness of your sins, as the Bible teaches, at Acts 2:38, so that the Lord might save you and add you to His church, which is His spiritual body, His kingdom and His household. (Acts 2:47; 1 Corinthians 12:27; Ephesians 1:22,23; Matthew 16:18,19; 1 Timothy 3:15).

## ***"Who Then Can Be Saved?"***

**J.C. CHOATE**

On one occasion when Jesus was talking to the disciples about how difficult it would be for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven, then the disciples asked this very important question: "Who then can be saved?" Of course Jesus responds by saying, "With man this is impossible; but with God all things are possible." (Matthew 19:24-26).

With the world being the way it is today, and even with the religious world being so divided and corrupt, the question the disciples asked would also be a good question for us to ask. Some are of the opinion that they have sinned too much and that surely the Lord would not save them. Others think the Lord is too demanding, and how would it be possible for them to ever live up to the expectations of Him? And on and on the reasoning of the world goes.

It is true that a lot of people, most people as a matter of fact, cannot be saved, and may be you are one of them. Yes, the Lord died on the cross to save the world, to make it possible for all to be saved, but the reason most cannot be saved is because of their unwillingness to comply with the Lord's teaching. It is just that simple.

Please notice some that cannot be saved, at least in their present state. The unbeliever cannot be saved. We are told that without faith it is impossible for one to please God. (Hebrews 11:6). Those who do the works of the flesh cannot be saved. Paul says that the unrighteous, fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, the effeminate and abusers of themselves with mankind, thieves, the covetous, drunkards, revilers, and extortioners cannot enter the kingdom of heaven (1 Corinthians 6:9,10), but if one cannot enter the kingdom of heaven then that means that he cannot be saved because when one is saved then the Lord himself adds him to the kingdom or church. (Acts 2:47). From these verses then we learn that one cannot be saved if he is doing the works of the flesh, but also one cannot be saved if he is not a member of the Lord's church. Of course that goes against what we commonly hear in the religious world. We are constantly told that we can be saved without being a member of any church. But I refer you again to Acts 2:47 where it says that the Lord adds the saved to the church, and naturally that would be his church. But if he adds the saved to his church, then what does that imply when it comes to those who are not added. It means simply that they are not saved. Therefore, one must be a member of the church to be saved and to go to heaven.

Those who deny Christ cannot be saved. Christ himself said, "But whosoever shall deny me before men, I will deny before my Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 10:33). Now do we think for one minute that the Lord is going to save one and take him to heaven when that person has denied the Lord? Certainly not. Furthermore, those who refuse to repent cannot be saved. Christ said that we must repent or we will perish. (Luke 13:3). Paul said that God commands all men to repent. (Acts 17:30). Enough said.

Continuing, those on the broad way cannot be saved. How do we know? Because in Matthew 7:13,14 the Lord said that those are on the broad way are on the road to destruction. And finally, the unfaithful cannot be saved. That means then that once saved does not mean that one will always be saved. If one obeys the Lord, is saved, and added to the church, and remains faithful to the Lord unto death, then that is the person who will be eternally saved (Revelation 2:10), but if one as a Christian and a member of the Lord's church becomes unfaithful and remains

unfaithful unto death, then that person cannot be saved, but will be eternally lost.

But if people like this cannot be saved, then who can be saved? Well, obviously those who will hear the Lord, believe in him, repent of their sins, confess Christ as the Son of God, and are baptized for the remission of their sins, then they can be saved, and are saved, and will remain saved as they continue faithful to the Lord unto death. (Mark 16:15, 16; Revelation 2:10).

Those who obey the Lord and are saved by him, they are also added by him to his church. (Acts 2:47). The Lord adds them to his church because they are saved. Along with this, those who are in Christ are saved because they have obeyed the Lord's commands, one of which is baptism, and while scriptural baptism saves, it also transfers one from the world to that of being in Christ. (Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3, 4; Galatians 3:26,27).

Those who are on the narrow way are saved, and will continue to be saved as long as they remain on that narrow way, and that narrow way will take them to heaven. (Matthew 7:13,14; John 14:6).

Again, those who repent of their sins and are baptized according to the Lord's teaching receive the remission of their sins, which means that they are saved. (Acts 2:38). Those whose names are written in the book of life are saved. These are the ones who have obeyed the Lord, have been washed in the blood of the lamb through baptism (Ephesians 1:7; Romans 6:3,4), and as a result their names have been written in that book, meaning that they belong to the Lord and are therefore prepared to go to heaven. (Revelation 20:15; Revelation 21:27).

Finally, another way of putting it, those who remain faithful to the Lord unto death, will be eternally saved. (Revelation 2:10).

All of this means then that many will not be saved, and cannot be saved in their unbelief, refusal to obey God, or to be faithful to the Lord. But all of those who will hear God's will, believe in him, and comply with His will, can be saved. That means that the Lord has provided salvation and it is up to us to accept it. The Lord is not going to force himself on us, but it is up to us to decide what we want to do. If we want to be saved enough that we will come to the Lord in obedience and remain faithful to him, then he will save us in this world and in the world to come. But as much as the Lord loves us, and as much as he

has done to make it possible for us to be saved, if we will not respond to him, then he cannot save us. What will you do? Do you really want to be saved? If so, then don't just say that you want to be saved, but show your faith in your obedience and faithfulness to him.

## ***The Bible Speaks Necessity of Preaching***

**BILL BROWN**

"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. (Mark 16:15-16). "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." (I Cor. 1:21). The preaching of the true gospel is a most arduous effort, but it is most gratifying the most ennobling privilege, and the most tremendous responsibility ever devolving on human agents. To carry this message of light and life to those who sit in the regions of darkness, constitutes the most solemn, serious charge ever given in the hands of men. "... To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins ..." (Acts 26:18).

What the Lord had to say in his word about evangelizing the world; forms the most fearful, awesome and terrifying mandate heaven has ever deposited to our care and custody. (Matt. 28:19-20). "Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh the harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest." (John 4:35). "Pray ye therefore the Lord of harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest." (Matt. 9:38).

It is urgent that labourers must be trained and that training must begin in the home by parents who have faith, fidelity and consecration. There are some prerequisites to training labourers to carry the gladsome message to the lost. One must deepen and intensify a deep love for the Lord, his church and his word. This means there must be people who are committed, yea, converted to Christ. This may mean facing wilderness, sacrifice,

hardships, loneliness, ill health, inconveniences, and discomfort. "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, . . . shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ." It is not an accident when people become completely committed and dedicated. This comes about by recognizing the purpose, the aim, the design and reason for the existence of the church, of which we are members. (Rom. 12:4-5; Eph. 3:10). To live is Christ, and to live like this knows no obstacles. (When members become truly dedicated, things of this life will become trivial. (Gal. 2:20). We cannot stand on the far-flung outskirts of the vineyard of the Lord because of too much of self and too little of God. God intends that all people of the world be provided with the message for forgiveness of sins in every nation, tribe, and tongue. Every person has more right to hear the saving message once, more than anyone has the right to hear it twice.

A faithful gospel preacher, as a missionary in a foreign field, once said: "I would like to see about half the seats in our church buildings in Texas emptied, and get these Christian men and women, so many with dormant, unused ability, into the destitute and needed places around the world." Conversion means hearing and going and serving, being where the Lord needs you when he needs you.

## *Is It Possible To Understand?*

**BOBBY KEY**

If the Bible is completely beyond man's grasp, how could one expect to know God and be saved eternally? Doesn't it stand to reason that the God who gave us the revelation by which one is drawn to Him (John 6:44-45), and by which he will some day be judged (John 12:48), would enable man to understand that revelation? Else, where is the hope of salvation for the average person?

"Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Romans 15:4). Only through study can one "show himself approved unto God, a workman that

needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15).

Much of our failure to understand is our unwillingness to understand. There is a failure to see which comes from the refusal to see. A man can deliberately shut his mind to truth which he does not wish to see; he can be deliberately dense towards teaching which he does not wish to accept. Nicodemus was like that. If a man does not wish to be changed, he will deliberately shut his eyes and his mind and his heart to the power which can change him. When the invitation is offered by the Lord some of us could say if we were honest, "No thank you: I am quite satisfied with myself as I am, and I don't want to be changed."

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Matthew 5:6). This is God's promise to all men everywhere. The common people still hear Him gladly. Surely the average person can understand His message.

## ***The Somewhat Guilty Innocent Party***

**GLENN COLLEY**

There is clearly an innocent party implied in Matthew 19:9 when Jesus said, "Whoso shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery; and whose marries her which is put away commiteth adultery."

The one committing adultery is the spouse who puts away his wife and remarries. He is guilty of adultery. Or, the one who commits adultery while married, is divorced because of his sin, and remarries, commits adultery. Or, the one who though otherwise innocent, marries the man who was put away for his fornication, commits adultery.

In each of these cases there is another person implied. It is the one we have called the "innocent party." We mean that he or she is innocent of the fornication. The innocence leaves open the door for divorce and another God-approved marriage. But, as we often hear from the divorced guilty spouses, "innocent" shouldn't



always be considered a blanket exoneration.

It is obvious from the text that there is, in the mind of Jesus, an innocent party who is free to remarry. That much is clear, and this article is not to pour salt into the deep wounds of those who fall into that category. However, it is important to remember that while a spouse might be innocent of adultery, he or she might be guilty of contributing to the adultery of their spouses.

Jesus said, "Woe unto the world because of offenses! For it must needs be that offenses come; but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh" (Matthew 18:7). Does that principle apply only to people outside our families? Doesn't it just as well apply to our relationship with our husbands and wives?

What are some ways I can contribute to the sin of adultery in my mate? Consider these:

1. The most obvious way is described in I Corinthians 7:2-5. "Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence; and likewise also the wife unto the husband . . . Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency." Spouses who withhold that intimacy which God made here an obligation of marriage, sin against their mates. Furthermore, they passively participate in the temptation to sin which their spouse will face.

2. A mate may become bitter and cruel to his spouse. According to Willard F. Harley, Jr. in his book "His Needs, Her Needs," wives of adulterous husbands are often shocked to learn that their husband's "mistress" is really unattractive physically, but has provided an atmosphere of warm acceptance. The same could certainly apply with equal force to the husband or wife.

When we marry we make ourselves more vulnerable and open than we've ever been before. For that reason, few people, if any, have the ability to hurt us more deeply than our mates. That's the price tag of the oneness of marriage. We know our mate in some ways better than they know themselves. We know their weaknesses, their strengths, their fears and their anxieties.

Remember that the love of marriage, for the husbands and

the wives, is a command and not just an emotion. Ephesians 5:25 says, "Husband, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it" and Titus 2:4 says, "The aged women . . . teach the young women . . . to love their own husbands. . . ."

The beauty of good marriage is that someone could know me so well, and love me so much. The curse of unhappy marriage is that someone knows me so well, and is bitter and cruel toward me.

3. A marriage partner may become too busy for his spouse. Jesus said, ". . . whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery . . ." (Matthew 5:32).

How did he "cause her to commit adultery?" By woeful neglect. He left her. A husband or wife may be guilty of neglect without actually putting away their spouse, and thereby contribute to the unfaithfulness of that spouse.

We often hear cases of men taking jobs which require lengthy separation. Gentleman, when you MUST take that kind of job, also take your wife! Occasional short separations for work may make the heart grow fonder. Long separations may put a serious strain on the mates, which gradually opens the door for a third party. The good Lord meant for husbands and wives to be together (I Corinthians 7:5)!

Good marriage is no accident. It requires a combined commitment, and love for the laws and principles of God with regard to marriage.

This article *in no way* excuses the sin of adultery in marriage or in remarriage. Being married to the worst possible mate does not scripturally license divorce and remarriage. Jesus is the One who taught that God-approved divorce and remarriage can only occur when one spouse commits fornication and we put them away for that fornication (Matthew 5:31, 32; Matthew 19:9; Mark 10:11,12). However, just as in all facets of life, Christians must work to draw others closer to Christ, and not closer to sin. Help your spouse to be faithful to you. Do all you can to make yours a lifelong marriage, pleasing to God.

# *Living For Jesus*

**JOHNNY RAMSEY**

A student dedicated to doing the best he can do is a delight to the teacher. A soldier that pursued his tasks with a purpose brave and true is a credit to his captain. A worker that is ardent and sincere makes the boss a happy man. Sadly, these kind of folk are few and far between. It is also difficult to find members of the church that can always be counted upon to give of their best to the Master. We have lived in a virtual welfare-society generation so long that many believed the world owes them a living. Such shallow reasoning has permeated the Lord's kingdom also. It is truly a tragedy that such a hellish philosophy has gained such a large following. Especially is that said in view of clearly defined teaching in the Scriptures—from cover to cover—that urges us on to loyalty in discipleship. Notice ten of the Bible's indelible passages on the necessity of devotion and fervor:

## **Verses To Ponder**

I Samuel 3:9—I will do whatever he commands!

II Samuel 24:24—I will give generously to God's cause!

Philippians 3:14—I will press on in His service.

Acts 5:29—Obeying God comes first always.

Galatians 6:9—We never tire of pleasing Him.

Acts 2:42—Steadfast devotion is our joy!

Daniel 1:8—With purpose of heart we live.

Philippians 2:5—The mind of Christ is our goal.

Ezra 7:10—We learn His word and share it.

John 15:8—Bearing fruit for Jesus is our delight.

When we wisely esteem the superlative nature of Christianity and strive to excel in God's divine arrangement we gladly give our energies into a heavenly cause. Since Jesus is everything to us we do not murmur and complain but rather rejoice with the benefits and pleasures that attend the glad tidings concerning our Savior. We have a mind tuned in to God's frequency and a golden path that leads to the land that is fairer than day!

"All the way my Savior leads me  
What have I to ask beside  
Can I doubt His tender mercy  
Who through life has been my Guide?"

The senseless Epicurean philosophy never appeals to those who earnestly follow the man of Galilee (Revelation 14:4). The pitfalls along the rugged journey of life never deter loyal pilgrims who press on to the heavenly frontier.

"Beautiful isle of somewhere Land of the blue  
Where we live anew  
Beautiful isle of somewhere."

And, to the Christian, filled with purpose and dedication, that somewhere is *heaven* of which Paul eloquently spoke in the fifth stanza of II Corinthians—

"A house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Just to know the Lord and the power of His resurrection is incentive enough to spur us on to glory (Philippians 3:11 and 21).

Christ, our loyal friend (John 15:13), in deep concern for others (Mark 16:15), challenges us to fervent commitment for the souls of lost mankind (John 4:35). How we need to heed the call and lead lost souls to the gracious Redeemer!

"Lovingly, tenderly calling is He  
Patiently waiting there Standing I see  
Jesus, the Savior divine."

There are at least four blessed things about Christ we should forever adore.

His Cross—Galatians 6:14  
His Commands—John 15:14  
His Church—Ephesians 3:21  
His Coming—Revelation 22:20

The Savior is near and dear to us because He is the one and only mediator between men and God (I Timothy 2:5). This gives us boldness and encouragement to take our prayers to the Father through Jesus Christ, our friend and elder brother in the family of heaven (Romans 8:17). The very One born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2) is precious to us because of the once for all time sacrifice He made for us at Golgotha (Hebrews 9:28;

10:12). He is our example of righteousness that compels us to follow in the steps that lead to glory (I Peter 2:21). He is our forerunner to heaven above (Hebrews 6:19) and the only indispensable person who has ever been upon this earth (II Corinthians 5:14 and 8:9). Thanks be unto God for such an unspeakable gift! With rich resolve and definite dedication let us serve Him diligently every step of the way.

“Beyond this desert dark and drear  
The golden city will appear  
And morning's lovely beams arise  
Upon my mansion in the skies  
Beyond the sunset's radiant glow  
There is a brighter world I know.”

What grander, nobler purpose could ever occupy our attention in time or eternity? Let us glorify God in all that we do!

## “*God Will Take Care Of You*”

ALLEN WEBSTER

Do you ever worry about getting your bills paid? Are you uneasy about the future? Do you find yourself concerned with physical things more than you should? There is an answer!

“Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? . . . Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof” (Matthew 6:30, 31, 34).

In this section Jesus is condemning *worrying* over future needs, but not planning for the future (II Thessalonians 3:16, 17; I Timothy 5:8). Surely, God could not be charged with watching out for sparrows and neglecting His children! Benjamin Franklin, the great patriot, exclaimed before the Constitutional Convention that gave birth to the United States of America, “God governs in the affairs of man; and if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground

without His notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without His aid?" One's life is of greater value than the nourishment it uses, and the body is worth more than the clothing it wears. God has provided us with the greater things, is it not wise to trust Him for the lesser ones (Matthew 10:29-31; cf. Romans 8:32)?

### **GOD'S TRACK RECORD**

When one is looking for a firm to help advise about financial investment, usually the first question he asks is, "What kind of track record do they have?" He wants to know what they have done in the past because it is a good indicator of how successful they will be in the future.

God has a good track record! He has always met the physical needs of His children. In the Old Testament, Adam and Eve had the fruit of the Garden (Genesis 2:16, 17); the children of Israel had manna and quail (Exodus 16:12-14); priests ate part of the offering (Leviticus 8:31); Elijah was fed by ravens (I Kings 17:4-7); and Elisha and the widow ate from a barrel that never emptied (II Kings 4:1-7).

In the New Testament, five thousand ate from five loaves and two fish (Matthew 14:17-21) and more than four thousand were nourished by seven loaves and a few fish (Mark 8:5-9). Widows were to be cared for under specific guidelines (I Timothy 5:9-10) and the fatherless were to be the object of helpful visits (James 1:27).

### **GOD'S SUCCESSFUL PRESENT PLAN**

Since God has such a past track record, does one suppose that he would cease to care for the physical needs of His people in the present (cf. Matthew 6:8, 11, 33; 7:11)? Of course not! He has an excellent plan for meeting all their needs.

God no longer sends ravens with lunch or multiplies small fish into a quantity sufficient for a large lakeside picnic (cf. I Corinthians 13:8-10)! But God does still provide for the physical needs of His people. Generally speaking, God provides for them by giving one health and ability to earn a living (cf. I Timothy 5:8).

If for some reason one is unable to earn his own living (sickness, injury, retardation, temporary unemployment), his family is to see that his needs are met (I Timothy 5:16). In the event that the family is unable (non-existent, financially limited) or unwilling (selfish, unloving), then the church is instructed to

assist them (I Timothy 5:9, 10).

### GOD'S INSURANCE POLICY

God's record is so sure that He even provides a care-free insurance plan. He does not want His policy holders to have to fear about their investments, so He has given safeguards against worry.

How do Christians keep from worrying? (1) *By investing time in working instead of worrying.* Ants do not waste time worrying about the future. Instead, they work constantly to prepare for the future (Proverbs 6:6). (2) *By seeking to fulfill needs instead of wants.* God has promised to fulfill all the Christian's needs, not necessarily all his wants (Philippians 4:19). "If you worry about missing the boat, remember the Titanic" (Reader's Digest).

(3) *By concentrating on today instead of yesterday and tomorrow.* Philippians 3:13 teaches one to forget the things of the past. Matthew 6:34 teaches that each day has enough trouble of its own. A little old lady said, "I always feel bad, even when I feel good, because I know that it will not be long before I will feel bad again."

God wants us to walk in the light He gives us, and not worry about the darkness beyond. When we get there, His light and help will make it clear. When we drive our cars at night, the headlights do not shine all the way to the destinations. They shine just a few feet in front of the cars, but as we move forward, they keep ahead of us. God's light works the same way. The Master is saying, "Live one day at a time."

(4) *By focusing thoughts on God instead of problems.* Martha was troubled about many things, but Mary was sitting at Jesus feet (Luke 10:38-42). Which was commended? "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed in thee: because he trusteth in thee" (Isaiah 26:3). We must learn to trust in the Lord (Proverbs 3:5; Psalm 9:10). God is unlimited in what He can do (Romans 8:28; Ephesians 3:20; Philippians 4:19). A minute of prayer is better than an hour of worrying (Philippians 4:2). We read where Jesus spent an entire night in prayer, but never where He spent one minute in worry.

Yes, God has promised to take care of us. We need to trust Him every day and all the way to heaven.

# ***“Who Hath Believed Our Report?”***

**CECIL MAY, JR.**

When New Testament writers quote the Old Testament, they sometimes use it typically, (Matt. 2:15; Hos. 1:1) or even allegorically (Gal. 4:22-24). Usually, however, they use Old Testament passages with exactly the meaning the Old Testament context itself suggests. If the New Testament student will turn to the Old Testament passage cited and read its entire immediate context, he will often find his understanding of the New Testament passage greatly enriched. Often the New Testament writer chooses his quotation to bring to mind, not just the words quoted, but the whole thought of the passage cited. A case in point is the New Testament usage (John 12:38; Rom. 10:16) of Isaiah's question, "Who hath believed our report?" (Isa. 53:1).

In John 12, Jesus shows himself to be King by riding into Jerusalem "sitting on an ass's colt (John 12:15) to fulfill Zechariah's prophecy of the King coming "meek and lowly" (Sech. 9:9). A king coming on an ass's colt, instead of in a chariot with horses, would be akin to our President coming in a 1970 Chevy instead of a Cadillac limousine.

Jesus' "Hour is come" (John 12:23). He is ready to declare himself King, but he wants to redefine what the Jews thought being involved. The prophecy of Zechariah helped do that. He next speaks of being "lifted up from the earth . . . thus signifying what death he should die" (John 12:32-33). Then John says, "But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him, that the saying of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom the arm of the Lord been revealed?" (John 12:37-38).

That says, of course, that there are those who will not listen. They do not listen to Isaiah; they will not listen to Jesus. See how the whole point is enriched, however, by noting the context of the Isaiah passage. "Who hath believed our report?" are the opening words of Isaiah 53, the prophecy of the suffering, atoning work of God's servant, surely it was intended that we should recognize this context and the suitability of the question's application to



those who were rejecting Christ and lifting him up in death.

In Romans 10, the topic is whether Israel's no longer being God's people mean God's promises to Israel have failed. Paul answers: God has not rejected them; they have rejected God by rejecting Jesus. Whoever will call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. To call requires believing and believing requires hearing. They have heard; therefore, they could believe, for "faith cometh by hearing." They do not believe, just as Isaiah said: "Who hath believed our report?" (Romans 10:13-18).

Again, it is no mere coincidence that "Who hath believed?" comes from Isaiah's prophecy of the suffering of God's Messiah and in Romans is applied to those who refuse to believe that very truth.

The Bible is its own best interpreter. The best commentary on any Old Testament passage is a New Testament writer's inspired explanation of it. Never think the New Testament writers used Old Testament passages carelessly or without regard for their context. We should know the Old Testament and use it so well!

## *What Do You Do For Fun?*

**JACK W. CARTER**

Several years ago a Christian girl told me about an incident with a young man who had been asking to date her.

He was not a member of the church and they didn't have anything in common. She had turned him down twice and now she had said "no" to attending a rock concert with him.

In a kind of mock exasperation the young man asked, "What do you do for fun? You don't dance, you don't drink, you don't attend rock concerts, what do you do for fun?"

Though she related her answer to me in a way that made it seem as though it was a simple response, it was actually a classic message from all Christians with conviction.

To the young man she had replied, "For fun I get up in the morning without feeling embarrassed, ashamed, and guilty about what I did the night before." The young man had nothing more to say.

It's true. That is fun! Come to think of it, there are many things in her life that are fun. She is married now to a fine Christian man. They have a little girl and are building an outstanding Christian home together. I am thrilled thinking about the fun she is having.

She is having fun every day living without the affliction of deep scars and regrets from her past. It's fun getting all prettied up each afternoon to receive a husband home from work, knowing that he won't be stopping off at a local bar for a few with the boys.

It is fun knowing that while he is away from her, his Christian conduct won't allow infidelity or even flirting. It's fun watching him hold his little girl on his lap with loving protecting arms.

It's fun knowing that her little girl will never see her father in a drunken stupor or experimenting with drugs. It's fun living with the assurance that the home will be led by a spiritual leader who will guide each family member towards heaven.

The list of fun things for Christians is endless. WHAT DO YOU DO FOR FUN???

## ***“Honor . . . Thy Mother”***

**DAVID WADE**

In this time of rampant divorce and family disintegration, it is very appropriate for us to reflect on the biblical teachings regarding the calling, responsibility, and honour of Christian motherhood. It seems in our day that God's beautiful picture of the loving husband and wife, as devoted parents, with obedient children, is a lost art. Christian mothers have a very important role to fulfill in perpetuating God's plan for the home.

First, your role as Christian wife and mother is your greatest calling in life. Uniquely, God has given you the power to produce another human being. At Cain's birth Eve said, "I have gotten a man from the Lord" (Genesis 4:1). Using the illustration of the mother's sorrow in labor and joy after birth, Jesus stresses the joy his resurrection would bring, "A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is

delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you" (John 16:21-22).

When a woman conceives, God places the very spirit of the child in the mother's womb. By giving birth to her child, her mother cooperates with God in one of his marvelous wonders. When contemplating how he came to be, David exclaimed, "I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well" (Psalm 139:14).

Each year thousands of sightseers visit the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. In the centre section, which is open in front, sits a gigantic statue of Lincoln by Daniel Chester French. Who is greater of the two, the sculptor who carved the stone, or the mother who made the man? Lincoln said, "All that I am or can be, I owe to my angel mother. . . . No man is poor who has had a godly mother."

While women may excel in many commendable endeavors outside the home, yet there is no greater calling than that of Christian wife and mother. She fulfills her unique role in God's plan which cannot be fulfilled by any other. As Emerson has said, "The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world." Second, the role of Christian wife and mother is a woman's heaviest responsibility. There is a sense in which her duty toward her husband is greater than her duty toward her children. The leaving of father and mother and cleaving to one's mate (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:5-6) is the foundation on which a home is to be built. The house is not greater than its foundation (Matthew 7:24-27; I Corinthians 3:11). Children are properly loved and feel secure only when the marriage relationship is filled with love and is secure.

As Christian wife and mother, the home is first and foremost her domain. Wives and mothers are commanded to be "wonders at home" (Titus 2:5 ASV), and to "guide the house" (I Timothy 5:14). The virtuous woman of Proverbs 31 is commended, not only for her industry outside the home, but also because, "She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness" (verse 27).

Furthermore, a mother bears a heavy responsibility as her

child's first teacher. As a child, Timothy learned the holy scriptures from his mother and grandmother (2 Timothy 1:5; 3:15). The Godly mother "... openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness" (Proverbs 31:26). It has been said that, "The mother in her office holds the key of the soul; and she it is who stamps the coin of character and makes the being, who would be a savage, but for her gentle cares, a Christian man! Then crown her the queen of the world" (Old Play).

Finally, every child should strive to bring honour to his mother., Children are commanded to "Honor thy father and mother ... ." (Ephesians 6:2 AVS). Honor is evidenced by obedience to godly parents (Ephesians 6:1). I ran across this poetic line which seems appropriate, "For God, who lives above the skies, Would look with vengeance in his eyes, If I should ever dare despise—My mother." Every husband and child should strive to honor his godly wife and mother as proclaimed by Solomon, "Her children arise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her" (Proverbs 31:28).

"Honor ... Thy Mother"

## ***God Is On The throne—Not On Stage***

**DALTON KEY**

The God we serve is an august, spiritual being both deserving and desirous of our deepest respect. Though described in scripture as a friend to man (Isaiah 41:8; James 2:23), He is not some sort of "good buddy" to joke with or about. Our God is still on the throne (Psalm 45:6), his ways remain higher than our ways (Isaiah 55:9), and his authoritative word still promises to judge us in the Last Day (Revelation 20:12).

No measure of self-appointed, flippant familiarity with the God of heaven detracts one bit or whit from his inherent majesty. Our God is eminently worthy of our reverence, thus we must serve him "acceptably with reverence and godly fear" (Hebrews 12:28). Truly, reverence is "the very first element of religion"

(Charles Simmons).

Moreover, our periods of public worship should express this spirit of reverence. "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him" (Psalm 89:7). Worship performed "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24) suggests a demeanor of awe and reverence.

We agree that our worship services should be permeated with expressions of joy and thanksgiving—they should not come to resemble a congregational visit to the dentist; but neither should the reverent worship of our heavenly Father be confused for a carnival or a rock concert. Whether our worship is that offered during a Sunday morning service, that which involves a lectureship assembly, or that which is engaged in by a zealous throng of young people attending a Youth Rally—regardless where, when, or by whom the worship is performed—it must be characterized by reverence and decorum. "Let all things be done decently and in order" (I Corinthians 14:40).

The worship assembly is not the proper setting for screaming, whistling, clapping, and stomping the feet in response to a speaker's message or a vocal group's selection. We do not gather to pay homage to men, but to worship God. We do not come together as to a football game or a stage band concert; we come to worship God. We do not assemble with the intent of being entertained or sensually excited; we come to worship God. Any assembly of saints with the purpose of worshipping and praising the God of heaven should reject that which emphasizes the carnal emotions and minimizes the spiritual man. An outsider should be able to attend one of our Sunday assemblies, or one of our many youth gatherings, and note a marked difference between the worship of God and the Johnny Carson Show.

In the realm of worship, "zeal without knowledge" paves a dangerous road toward pagan, flesh-oriented and riotous assemblies. Most of our denominational neighbours have long since gone this route, with services geared more toward entertaining man than worshipping God. May we learn to temper our joy in Christ with a Christlike reverence for things holy. And may we teach our children so.

Remember, our God is on the throne—not on stage.

# *Why We Should Believe In Jesus Christ*

FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

And "many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of their graves after his resurrection and went into the city, and appeared unto many (Matthew 27:52-53). The fact that they were raised after his resurrection, accounts for his being referred to as "the first born among many brethren" (Romans 8:29). The people knew that their kinfolk who had been out there in that cemetery were alive again. This marvelous resurrection of many others after his resurrection proves that he is the Son of God (Matthew 27:51-54).

One of the greatest proofs of the deity of Jesus, one which establishes the genuineness of the evidence on which our faith rests, is the fact that his followers gave up everything, even life itself, in order to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ. They spread the "gospel" (good news) to every creature (Colossians 1:23); and they preached it in spite of persecution! Driven away from home, their goods confiscated, they were beaten and killed—yet, not one of them ever recanted; not one! Not one of those witnesses ever "took it back," or said "we have been lying about Jesus; he really is a deceiver!" Not one of them ever changed his story! They went to their death teaching and preaching that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Does that not make you want to believe in him?

Jesus promised one thing with which I close this study. Peter had just said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16-18). Jesus promised that upon this fact, this fundamental truth—that I am the Son of God—"Upon this rock I will build my church." Jesus knew they were going to crucify him. He explained that in verse 20. He knew he was going to be crucified, but said he would "be raised again the third day" (Matthew 16:21; Mark 8:31; Luke 9:22). So he said, "I will build my church, and the gates of hell" (Hades) "shall not prevail against" this promise. The very existence of the church proves that Jesus is the Christ, that he is the Son of God! He built his church, despite the fact that he was killed before he got the job

done. He did not intend to build it while he was here on earth, during his earthly life. This was his plan all the time, and he made it known to his apostles, foretelling it at least three times before he was crucified. He foresaw that he would be rejected by the Jews, be crucified, but the third day would rise again. So he confidently announced, "I will build my church." Keep in mind that he did not build the church during his lifetime. However, it is here! He built it after he was raised from the dead.

Christ established his church on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2. He told the apostles to stay in Jerusalem till they should be endued with power from on high (Luke 24:46-47). They waited, as recorded in Acts 1. On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came upon them. Jesus said, "Ye shall receive power after the Holy Ghost is come upon you" (Acts 1:8)—and they did. Acts 2 fulfilled his predictions, his promises. On that day the gospel in full began to be preached, in the second chapter of Acts.

What began in Jerusalem Jesus said is for us today. Listen to him: "Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations" (that includes us!) "beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:46-47). What began there is for us.

On that day the gospel began to be preached, this truth began to be preached, that Jesus is the Christ! "Let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye crucified both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36). That same day about three thousand people in Jerusalem believed in his resurrection, and believed that he is the Son of God, that he is "both Lord and Christ," and they began to obey him.

Don't you believe in him? Is there not enough evidence to make you want to obey him like they obeyed him by faith? Your faith should be rooted in Jesus. My faith is not in a congregation, or in any preacher, or in any group of men; my faith is in Jesus! You need to anchor your faith in Jesus. Do you believe him? Listen to this warning, "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:21). Now, it is either believe in Jesus, or else you will die in sin. I want you to think of one more verse. "He that believeth not shall be damned." Salvation is conditional on your faith in Christ. Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon defines the Greek word *pistis* (which is translated faith) as "the conviction full

of joyful trust that Jesus is the Messiah ... conjoined with obedience." Won't you obey him now, by faith?

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I Sunny David, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

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