

# THE BIBLE TEACHER

*Pleading for the Restoration of Pure New Testament Christianity*

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## EDITORIAL

### *What Does The Bible Teach?*

**“Whoever commits sin is a slave of sin”**

The story is told of an Arab merchant who was travelling through deserts with his camel and tents. It was a very cold night. The merchant was extremely tired; so he decided to pitch his tent on the sand. Before going in the tent to sleep, he tied the camel near the entrance of the tent. Around midnight the merchant was awoken, as he heard the camel requesting him, “Master, its too cold out here, please grant me to put my neck inside the tent.” The merchant didn't think anything wrong about it so he granted the camel's request, and went to sleep. After about an hour or so, the merchant again heard the camel, saying, “Good master, please allow me to put my front legs too in the tent, as its getting too cold out here.” The merchant who was getting too sleepy and feeling disturbed, told the camel to go ahead and do that too. So now the half of the camel was already inside the tent. But that was not all. To make the long story short; before the night was quite over, the whole camel was inside the tent!! Now the merchant began to feel very uncomfortable and stuffy as the bad-smelling and odour filled the tent. He got up

and angrily shouted at the camel to get out of the tent immediately as it was smelling foul. But the camel quietly told the merchant: "Sir, if you don't like in here, you can go out!"

This illustrates what Jesus meant, when He said, "Whoever commits sin is a slave of sin." (John 8:34). The beginning or the planning or desire for sin takes place in ones heart (Matthew 5:27,28). But slowly it grows in ones life, and then it takes full hold or control of the person. Before the person was the master of sin; he or she had control over it; to allow it or not to allow it. But now, after sin has entered in ones life, sin becomes the master. Sin does the leading and the making of the person. Sin changes the character of the individual. He or she whom sin has enslaved, no longer look or sound the same person as they once did. Sin changes the whole personality of the enslaved person. His name is changed. He is now called a gambler, or a thief, or a drunkard, or a cheat, or an adulterer, etc. Aren't there people who say, "I got this bad habit since long, and now I want to get rid of it but I am unable." You know, why? Sin has enslaved them. Its like the katju, the wild-vine which grows wildly in many states of America. It takes over the whole area where it grows and spread. It covers all grass, all plant, all other vegetations and even giant large trees. Nothing is seen, but only katju. Everything get under it. It smothered to death every plant and trees on which it creeps or climbs. James, in the Bible wrote: "But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full grown, brings forth death." (James 1:14,15). In sin, one may be living physically, but spiritually he is dead, because sin separates people from God, who is the source of eternal heavenly life. (Isaiah 59:1,2). The wages of sin, says the Bible at Romans 6:23, is death. Which means spiritual separation from God. God is Holy and without sin. He can't live with sin; or with the person who lives in sin.

Yet, the fact is, and the Bible declares at Romans 3:23: "All have sinned." There is not a person on earth living who has the capability to sin and has never sinned. Christ made the point worth observing, He said, "You have heard that it was said to those of old, you shall not commit adultery. But I say to you, said

Christ, "that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart." Heart is the seat of thinking. Every sin first takes place in the heart of a person. Therefore, says the Bible, at Proverbs 4:23: "Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it springs the issues of life." For our lives to be pure, our hearts must be pure first. Not only does the Bible say, "the wages of sin is death," but it also adds to that, that "the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 6:23). We also read, at 1 Corinthians 15:56 & 57 that, "The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But, thanks be to God who gives us victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

God sent His Word from heaven to earth. Allowed him to become a man; and then He allowed men to hate Him and to put Him to death on the cross. In the account of God Christ's death on the cross was "the propitiation for our sins." (1 John 4:10). The Bible teaches, that when one believes in Christ with whole heart that His death was for my sins; and repents from all sins; and confesses Christ to be the Son of God; and is immersed in water for the forgiveness of sins; Christ saves that individual from sins and adds him or her to His church; which is the body of His saved ones. (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38 & 47; 8:35-39). To those who are thus saved by obeying the will of God, the apostle Paul says: "Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection. Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin." (Romans 6:3-6).

Sin is taking people only to one place; and that one place is the lake of fire which burns eternally—hell. This is exactly what it means when we hear people say that all are going to the same place. Because all have sinned. Only Christ can change man's destiny, because of what He has done for us.

# ***Who Established The Church?***

**J.C. CHOATE**

If I buy a house, I will pay for it, and I will own it, and it will be in my name. If I buy a car, again I will pay for it, and it will be registered in my name. The same is true with you, and all others. Ownership makes all of the difference.

Christ said that he would build his church (Matthew 16:18), and he did through the Apostles. (Acts 2). He not only did that but the scriptures tell us that he died for it (Ephesians 5:25) and he purchased it with his blood. Paul said to the elders of the church at Ephesus, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." (Acts 20:28). Now if Christ built the church, died for it, and paid for it with his blood, then that means that the church belongs to him, and that it is in his name, or that it wears his name to indicate ownership. That shows that it is not my church or your church or someone else's church. We did not die for it. We did not pay for it with our blood. It does not belong to us, and therefore is not ours, and does not wear our name. How dare we then to call it our church or recognize any man as being the owner of the church. What if someone claimed that my house was his house? How would I feel about that? what do you suppose the Lord thinks when we claim that his church is our church or for us to belong to a church that some man has established? That church wears a man-made name, has made rules for one to comply with to be a member of it, allows men to join it on their terms, has a man as its head, its organization involves offices not found in the Bible, and its worship includes things that are foreign to the scriptures. Now what kind of a church is that? It is certainly not the Lord's church. How then can we think for a second that we can be a part of such and be acceptable to the Lord? How do we think we can go to heaven in such a church?

Think again Christ said that he would build his church-not

churches, but one church, his church. How simple, but man comes along and completely ignores that. Never mind that there are hundreds of churches, even thousands, counting all of the so-called independent churches. Later, Paul says that there is one body (Ephesians 4:4) and then he says that that body is the church. (Ephesians 1:22,23; Colossians 1:18). But in the same passage that he says there is one body, he also says that there is one God, one Lord, one Spirit, one faith, one baptism, and one hope. If there is literally just one of these, then there is literally but one body or church, and of course there is but one of each. If one means one then surely we can understand that.

That one church that the Lord promised to build, and did build, is identified throughout the scriptures. All one needs to do is to be familiar with the scriptures, and the identification marks of the church, to know if it is in the world today. At the same time, having a knowledge of the scripture and knowing what the church is, and what it is not, then one can also know when a church is not the Lord's church. There are lots of people in the world but they are all different. There are many women, but a man is to have but one wife, and he knows which one that is. The same is true with a woman having one husband, and knowing which man is her husband. There are many churches in the world, but Christ has but one church, one bride, and that one church or bride stands out from all of the rest.

Listen, Christ has but one church, he is saviour of it (Ephesians 5:23), and therefore we must be members of that church to go to heaven. He will come back some day to receive it and to take it to heaven. (John 14: 1-6; 1 Corinthians 15:24). Are you a member of the church that the Lord built? If not, we pray that you'll want to become a member, and you can if you will obey the Lord to be saved (Mark 16:16), and then the Lord will add you to his church. (Acts 2:47). If you make no mistake in complying with his will, he will make no mistake in adding you to his church.

## ***What Must We Do?***

**BETTY BURTON CHOATE**

"Well, what do you think?" asked Andrew, looking bleakly at Rachel, and then at the chart in his hands.

"They don't match up very well, do they? — what we're seeing in real life, and what we've been reading in the Bible. It seems so clear and simple in the Bible, but when we talked to the priest he had different thinking, and the Baptist preacher had another line of reasoning — and he said there are more than 30 different kinds of Baptists, alone, not to mention all of the other denominations. It makes it very confusing, trying to understand all of these things together."

"That's the problem," Andrew said. "I think they *can't* be understood together, because they contradict each other. The Catholic doctrine of salvation can never be reconciled with the Baptist doctrine, because one 'baptizes' infants and the other doesn't; one sprinkles water for baptism and other says it's being put under the water. And both disagree with what we've read again and again in the book of Acts about the purpose of baptism, that it is for the forgiveness of sins."

"Your question today about the conflict between the verse the preacher was quoting and what we've read was a good one. *Shouldn't the Bible agree?* What's wrong if it doesn't?" Rachel asked.

"Well, in the secular world if I'm reading directions on how to do a thing — and if the directions are correctly written — then if one part *seems* to be contradicting another, I'd go back and study the whole thing again to see where *my understanding* was wrong. And I'd have to study until all the direction were fitting together."

"Shouldn't it work that way in spiritual things, too?" asked Rachel. "Let's see that place in Ephesians. '*For by grace you*

*have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.'* Let's just consider it, part by part. *'By grace you have been saved...'*

"Are we saved by grace? Can we be saved *without God's grace?*"

"Naturally everything we have *spiritually* is by the grace of God. No matter what we might do on our own, we can't forgive our own sins — and *nobody else* can do that — so it has to be by God's grace."

"So this part of the verse fits with what we've already studied. Now, what about the words *'saved through faith'*? Was faith necessary for the people to be saved, as we read in the book of Acts?"

"Yes, they were always told that they must believe that Christ was the Son of God."

"Without faith could they have actually been baptized?" asked Rachel.

"No, not really, because they had to understand what they were doing and the choice they were making, in order to follow Jesus and to be a part of His church. Those men that Paul met — they didn't have the right faith, because of a lack of knowledge when they were baptized, so it didn't count as baptism. When they properly understood the truth, it says that they were baptized in the name of Jesus. It didn't even say *'baptized again'* which shows that God hadn't recognized what they had done earlier."

"So it was actually *through their faith* that they were saved by God's grace, but not without the *obedience* that is a part of genuine faith," reasoned Rachel.

"Which means that this Scripture in Ephesians *doesn't* conflict with the directions in Acts," Andrew said. *"Grace and faith and obedience, all work together to result in salvation. And we don't have to leave off one verse in order to accept another. We can accept and follow all of them."*

"We must keep that rule always in our minds, Andrew," urged Rachel. **"Whatever the Scriptures say must agree with the other Scriptures on the same subject; if it seems not to,**

then we can know that *we are at fault in our understanding, and not that God's word is at fault, or that we can take one verse and ignore another.*"

"Very good thinking!" agreed Andrew. "Now, what's your thinking about the preacher's comments about the church not being important, and that salvation comes one way but church membership comes another?"

"Well, back to our favorite chapter," laughed Rachel. "If God added to the church those who were being baptized and were thus being saved, then I would conclude that the church — that is, the group of people making up His family — is the most important thing in the world to Him."

"And that anyone who follows the pattern of faith and obedience, as shown in the book of Acts — even there in Acts 2 — will certainly be added by God to that same church," Andrew finished. "But where is that church, in the world today?"

"I don't know," Rachel admitted. "Do you think there have been too many years since the beginning, and that it has gradually changed so that we don't recognize it?"

"But if it had changed that much, would it still be recognized by God as His church?" asked Andrew. "We have all of these groups today, but we haven't read about their names or so many of their practices in our study of the Scriptures, at least up to this point. We'll keep these questions in mind as we read. But, for instance — even though the Baptist preacher said that Baptists were the followers of John, we haven't read about 'Baptists' or 'Baptist churches' anywhere in our studies."

"So, we need to be looking in the world today for a church called after God or Christ," suggested Rachel.

"But, back to the earlier thought: there may not even be a church in the world like that one now!" Andrew pointed out. "Surely if there was one here in this city, we'd know about it. So what do we do? If we are baptized correctly, will God add us to that original church?"

"Since that's the promise in Acts 2, I believe He would," affirmed Rachel. "But how would we worship? With the Baptists, or the Catholics, or where? Even their worship doesn't fit what



we studied about the early church. Could we be true to the Scriptures if we worshipped with them?"

"I wouldn't feel right doing that, just as I wouldn't feel right going along with the Catholic sprinkling of babies or the Baptist teaching that we are saved by faith alone. If the doctrine contradicts the Bible, then I believe we can't fellowship them and support what they're doing," Andrew reasoned, with a thoughtful frown on his face. "I believe, until we find the church we've been reading about, we'll just have to obey God ourselves and do the best we can to worship and work for Him on our own."

"Won't that separate us from our family and friends?" asked Rachel.

"Do you remember that I asked you if you had considered that our studies might lead us to the same conclusion Saul reached, when he had to leave the Jewish faith which he had defended so strongly?" Andrew reminded.

"Yes," answered Rachel. "But if these things are true, what choice do we have? Our commitment at the start was that we wanted to understand and obey exactly what the Bible teaches."

"And, in doing that, we may feel some rejection persecution - like Saul experienced. Some may not understand what we're doing. But since we're convinced that this is the *right* thing, we'll want to be explaining to our family and friends. Maybe we can convince them, and they'll want to obey that pattern in the New Testament too. Who knows what may happen, *if we will sincerely and carefully follow just what God says in His word?*"

*To be Continued . . .*

## ***Have You Been Buried With Jesus?***

**FRANCIS DAVID**

In Mark 16:15, 16, Jesus gave a great commission to his

disciples by saying: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believes and is baptised shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned." Here we see, according to the command given by the Lord is that one has to believe in him and be baptised in order to obtain salvation from sins.

Jesus wanted his gospel to be preached everywhere to all nations. Before we go further we need to know what the gospel is. According to Scriptures the gospel is good news about Jesus. The good news is that Our Lord died on the cross for all mankind to give them freedom from sins. Yes, he died for you and me and then we read that he was buried but he was not remain there in the tomb. God raised him from the grave the third day. (I Cor. 15:3-4). Our Lord is a living Lord. He is a victorious Lord. His gospel has power to save you from your sins (Rom. 1:16). Jesus said: "He that believes and is baptised will be saved" Is there any doubt about it? It is just simple as one plus one makes two. If a person wants to have the forgiveness of sins he must comply with Jesus command. You might say: "I just believe in him and accept him as my personal savior" Is it enough? Most people say: we want to obey Jesus but we do not want to be baptised because we think it is not essential." I have talked to many good sincere people they say the same thing. We must know that who has given the command of baptism? Of course Jesus our Lord then why we want to disobey?

Another important thing that we would like to see is, this that when Jesus talked about baptism, he meant immersion. The baptism of the Bible is not sprinkling or pouring but to be buried in watery grave. In John 3:23 we read that John was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim because there was much water there, and they came and were baptised. So we see that baptism is a burial in water. When Jesus was baptised, we read in Matthew three chapter that after his baptism he came out of the water.

There is another incident that we read in the Scriptures is about a man from Ethiopia. When Philip went to him and preached to him about Jesus he wanted to be baptised. In 38 verse of Acts 8, we read that both Philip and the Ethiopian man went down into the water, and he baptised him there. After the

baptism they came out of water. Here also we see that it is very much clear that baptism is a burial in water.

Regarding baptism, an excellent explanation has been given in the book of Romans. Talking to the Christians at Rome, Paul explains them the real meaning of their obedience when they were baptised. He says: "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptised into Jesus Christ were baptised into his death: Therefore we are BURIED with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." (Verses 3-5). Here we see when a person is immersed in the watery grave he is resurrected to a new life.

Lastly we see that we are buried in Jesus through our obedience to the gospel. In Colossians 2:12 we read and Paul says: "buried with him in BAPTISM, in which you also were raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised HIM from the dead." have you been buried with Jesus? In the first century, people didn't have any problem to understand this. They understood the meaning of burial in water. They knew the importance of baptism. They understood the meaning of Belief and baptism. Why are we confused today about it? The message of the gospel is very simple. The plan of salvation is so simple that you don't need a scholar to explain it. WHAT HINDERS YOU TO BE BAPTISED (IMMERSE)? Acts 8:36

## *The Perfect Example*

K.V. McALPIN

Christ came to earth for a purpose. This purpose was to fulfill prophecy and to redeem us from our sins (Matthew 1:21; I Timothy 1:15). While Christ was on the earth, he left "us an example, that ye should follow his steps" (I Peter 2:21). The word *leaving* in this verse is literally "leaving behind" (Psalm 85:13; Matthew 10:38; 16:24; John 13:15; I John 2:6). Man needs God.

Jeremiah emphasized this in chapter 10:23, which states: "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." The deepest desire of every Christian should be to walk in the steps of Jesus. Let us study the perfect example of Christ in the context of I Peter 2:21-25. In so doing we will see the necessity of following in the footsteps of Jesus.

**The example of the life of Christ.** "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps. Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously" (I Peter 2:21-23). The word *ye* in verse 21 is in reference to the servants in verse 18. Peter's use of the word *also* puts the sufferings of these slaves on a new level. They find comfort in knowing that someone else went through a comparable experience; that of suffering unjustly. Not only had someone suffered, but it was Christ who suffered like things (II Timothy 3:12; I Peter 3:18; 4:1; Matthew 5:10).

The word *example* means actually "writing under." Weust states, "It is used of words given children to copy, both as a writing exercise and as a means of impressing a moral. Sometimes it was used with reference to the act of tracing over written letters."

In verse 22 the word *did* in the Greek text speaks of the fact of sin (II Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15; I John 3:5). Alford translates, "Who never in a single instance committed sin." The Greek word for *guile* speaks of craftiness or trickery. The word *found* speaks of a failure to find something after careful scrutiny. No guile could be found in the words of our Lord, despite the fact that his enemies sought diligently and searched carefully (John 1:47; Revelation 14:5).

Commenting on verse 23, Calvin defines the Greek word translated *reviled*, as follows: "It is a harsher railing, which not only rebukes a man but also sharply bites him, and stamps him with open contumely. It is to wound a man with an accursed sting" (Psalms 38:12-14; Matthew 5:11; Luke 22:64, 65; 23:9; John 19:8, 9; Matthew 26:62, 63; Mark 15:29-32). The Greek

words *suffered* and *threatened* denote that it was a continuous suffering; however, this suffering did not elicit any retaliation from Christ (Hebrews 12:2,3). He "committed himself to him that judgeth righteously" (Psalms 37:5; II Timothy 1:12; Luke 23:46; Acts 17:31).

**The example of the love of Christ.** "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed" (I Peter 2:24). The Greek word translated *tree* does not refer to a literal tree, but to the cross. This verse shows us the love Christ has for us. "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (I John 3:16). "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you" (John 15:13, 14). Notice the description of the love that Christ had: "Greater love hath no man... "The Lord not only died in our behalf; he also died in our stead (Matthew 20:28; Mark 10:45; I Timothy 2:6). "And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour" (Ephesians 5:2).

**The example of the leadership of Christ.** "For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls" (I Peter 2:25). Christ is a shepherd (pastor) in that he feeds, guides, and protects his sheep (Psalm 119:176; Matthew 9:36; John 10:1-16; Hebrews 13:20). Peter also refers to Christ as the *chief shepherd* (I Peter 5:4). He is a bishop (overseer) because he superintends, supervises, and directs their activity. He is the bishop of the souls of Christians in the sense that he is the overseer of their spiritual welfare (I Timothy 2:5,6).

In this study of First Peter 2:21-25, we have seen that Christ left us an example of his life, his love, and his leadership. Let us strive to follow the example of his life, as we endeavor to conform ourselves to Christ. Let us also strive to emulate his love exemplified throughout his life. Alas, as we labor to follow the impeccable example of Christ's life and love, let us never forget that Christ is our sole authority in all things. "And Jesus came to them and spoke unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and earth" (Matthew 28:18, ASV).

# Original Sin

JOHNNY RAMSEY

There have been those who teach that we are born in sin and thus cannot help the propensity toward evil-doing. We shall carefully examine this erroneous matter in just a moment but first let us document such false doctrine as to its source.

John Wesley, founder of Methodism went on record in *Original Sin*, page 340, as teaching: "We are condemned before we have done good or evil; under the curse are we know what it is." In *Wesley's Sermons*, Volume II, Page 266 we quote: "In Adam all died. The natural consequence of this is that every one descended from him comes into this world spiritually dead, dead to God, wholly dead in sin, entirely void of the image of God, and of all righteousness and holiness wherein Adam was created. Every man now bears the image of the devil in sensual appetites and desires."

In the book, *What Lutherans Believe* by W.E. Schramm, on page 65 we read: "Ever since the fall of Adam all men who are naturally begotten are conceived and born in sin." This naturally comports with the *Augsbury Confession of Faith*, Article Two: "All men are born with sin. This vice of origin brings eternal death upon those not born again through baptism and the Holy Ghost."

Dr. W.A. Jarrell, noted Baptist, in *Gospel in Water*, stated: "That man is totally depraved is evident from his being a child of the devil, fathered by the devil and of the same moral nature."

The Catholic position is made quite clear by B.L. Conway in *Question Box*, page 253: "Baptism is a sacrament which cleanses from original sin."

All of these quotations crumble in the light of Ecclesiastes 7:29 and 12:7. God made man upright and God gave the spirit of man. How could a perfect Creator be the author of sin?

The word *sin* comes from the Greek word "Hamartia," which means "to miss the mark." The Bible variously defines sin as:

- (1) A failure to do the things that are right (James 4:17).
- (2) A transgression of God's law (1 John 3:4).
- (3) All unrighteousness (1 John 5:17).

(4) A violation of one's personal relationship with God (Romans 14:23).

From this scriptural definition of sin we realize that the doctrine that teaches "infants are born in sin" is totally false.  
**"ADAMIC SIN" IS NOT TAUGHT IN BIBLE:**

At least six out of ten religions teach that a baby is born in sin. This doctrine is known variously as: original sin, total depravity or the Adamic sin. The Bible does not teach such a doctrine, but millions blindly believe it. This is why an unscriptural practice — infant baptism — exists. Men started with a false assumption and added a practice unknown to the Holy Word. If we can prove that infants are born pure, sinless and safe before God, then the rite of sprinkling babies will certainly be proved false. The two ideas go together. If a baby is ushered into life in sin, then something must be done to remit that sin or the infant is lost. John Calvin said: "There are some infants in hell not a span long." Why did he think so? Because he taught that babies enter this world as sinners and if they die prior to being sprinkled they will be lost! Here are some scriptures that forever prove we are not ushered into life as sinners:

(1) "Thou wast perfect in all thy ways, from the day thou wast created until iniquity was found in thy heart" (Ezekiel 28:15).

(2) "The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father" (Ezekiel 18:20).

(3) We are "the offspring of God" and He is "the Father of our spirits" (Hebrews 12:9 and Acts 17:29). How then could we be born in sin?

(4) "Except ye be converted and become as little children ye shall in no wise enter the kingdom of God." Little children evidently are not sinners or Jesus would not tell us to be like them (Matthew 18:3).

## ***"Sound Doctrine"***

**GUS NICHOLS**

Webster says doctrine is, "Teaching" and "Instruction," and "That which is taught," or a "principle, or body of principle...tenet,

dogma; principle of faith." Are not these things important? if so, doctrine is important. To say, we do not need any doctrinal sermons, is to say we do not need any religious "teaching" or "instruction," or "principles of faith."

## **DOCTRINE AND DESTINY**

God has chosen no other way to convert and save man, than through teaching and doctrine. "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (I Corinthians 1:21). While this divine plan may not suit modern sophisticated man, and may appear to him "foolishness," it has pleased God to save by this means. The same passage says "The world by wisdom knew not God." Man has always vainly thought he knew more than God. Satan argued this to Adam and Eve, and converted them away from God and his word (Genesis 2:16-17; 3:1-19). To pervert the gospel of Christ is to be accursed (Galatians 1:6-10).

The parting message of Jesus was, "TEACHING them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:18-20). To teach people to observe the commandments of Jesus is doctrine, and it is important, Paul said, "Speak thou the things which have become, (or befit) SOUND DOCTRINE" (Titus 2:1).

Jesus preached doctrine in his first sermon, and the record says the people "were astonished at his doctrine" (Matthew 7:28). To kindly and plainly preach the same "doctrine" now will astonish many! It is new and as fresh as a morning rose. It fits into man's needs, as the air fits his lungs, water his thirst, and food his hunger. There is a little room in our hearts that can never be fully satisfied with anything less than God, and Christ, true religion and the doctrine which is according to godliness. Just as the bird longs for its mate, and man and woman long for each other, so man needs God.

## **CONTINUED IN DOCTRINE**

The Jerusalem Christians "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine" (Acts 2:42). How shocking would it be if one of the apostles had tried to get rid of doctrine from their service — if one had said, "Don't teach us first principles, but study all the week to make entertaining speeches."



Instead of spurning doctrine, the Jerusalem church emphasized doctrine. The rulers said, "Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? And, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with YOUR DOCTRINE" (Acts 5:28). These priests did not like doctrinal preaching.

### **ABIDE IN DOCTRINE**

The religious world in the main has departed from the doctrine of Christ. The doctrine, or gospel of Christ, produced the "Churches of Christ" that you read about in the New Testament (Romans 16:16). Perverted doctrine produces denominations. Not one of them could survive one week if they were to return unto the doctrine of Christ in all matters of faith and revelation. Christ said people should know his doctrine (John 7:17). He wants all men to abide in his doctrine, and never grow weary in hearing, teaching and practicing it.

John says "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed. For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deed" (II John 9:11). No man on earth can honestly read these verses and then say doctrine is not important. Paul told Timothy to charge some to "Teach no other doctrine" (I Timothy 1:3).

### **DOCTRINE AND UNITY**

The doctrine of Christ promotes unity and peace, whereas, false doctrine causes divisions and sin. Paul said, "Now I beseech you, brethren, Mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of simple" (Romans 16:17-19). Please note that the doctrine delivered unto these people by the apostles could be clearly understood. One could be positively certain that he knew this doctrine. Otherwise, if it could not be, learned and understood, how would the church know to "Mark" and "Avoid" these false teachers? If the doctrine had been so mysterious and

indefinite, so uncertain and complex, that ordinary men could not understand it, how would these Christians know but that they themselves should **BE MARKED AND AVOIDED?**

One man said, we should not be certain and positive about what we believe and teach, for after all we do not know we are right. He reproved us for being so "Cocksure" and "conceited" as to think we are right and everybody else wrong. He argued that we should fellowship the denominational people and join them in their worship and teaching services. He said we are the most sectarian sect in the nation, and all because I argued that the Bible can be understood, and that we can know the truth, and know that we know it! Please read Romans 16:17-18 again, and see if we can, (or cannot), understand "The doctrine" which they had "learned" and if we can so understand it as to be sure of its truth, that we can "Mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine learned, and avoid them." Could they know who "Causes divisions and offences among them?" Could they be so sure they were right, that they could safely "Mark" and "Avoid" the false teachers? Could they know who was "Contrary to the doctrine" which they had learned?

And, if the doctrine is so foggy that it is "Neither white nor black," and that we can't know we "are saved" until the judgment how can we examine ourselves and prove our ourselves as to whether or not we "Are in the faith?" (II Corinthians 13:5).

Luke wrote that we might "Know the certainty" of those things, wherein they were instructed (Luke 1:3-4). How could the elders be on guard against false teachers, if they couldn't know who they were, and that they themselves were not the false teachers? (Acts 20:17, 28:32). And if we can't know whether or not we are right, why did John write, "That ye may know that ye have eternal life" (I John 5:13). And how can we know that we have God and Christ unless we can know the doctrine and that we are abiding in it? (II John 9:11).

After a first and second admonition, how can we reject a man who is an heretic, if we can't understand the doctrine (Tirtus 3:10-11).

But these compromisers tell us that we are not to judge. Well, we are to judge in the light of truth. **JUDGE NOT ACCORDING TO THE APPEARANCE, BUT JUDGE RIGHTEOUS**

JUDGMENT" (John 7:24). We are commanded to judge those within, and put away the wicked from our fellowship (I Corinthians 5:9-13). We are commanded to withdraw from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the word of God (II Thessalonians 3:6). According to the compromisers, we might turn out to be the ones to be withdrawn from. What good is the Bible if we cannot know until the judgment what it really teaches? (Pslam 119:105); (Ephesians 6:10-20). Yes, doctrine is so important that we must believe and follow the right doctrine. Jesus said, "But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:9; Mark 7:7-13). Brethren, let us not slow up, let down, lag, nor fag in the preaching and practice of the full and complete doctrine of Christ (II John 9:11). This will purify the church, convert the honest of heart, and promote that oneness for which Jesus prayed. This oneness is to be had upon the basis of the doctrine of Christ. I am glad to know that we have thousands who will preach the truth regardless of the consequences, and we need thousands more.

The Bible is just as interesting as life and death, happiness and success, character and destiny. The scriptures are as fresh as an early morning, or a new born baby. True, it is an old Book, but the most important things in life are old things. We do not need a new Sun, moon and stars. The Sun of Adam's day is good enough for intelligent people. We do not need some kind of new air to breathe. The kind Adam breathed is good enough for me! The same earth Adam lived upon is a great challenge to me! Plain food, sleep and hard work are nothing new, but thousands of years ahead of date. We do not need a new kind of rain and water for our streams and to slake our thirst! Neither do we need the Bible and its doctrine replaced with pretty little speeches and lectures of human wisdom. "Preach the Word" (II Timothy 4:1-3).

## ***Sin Is Still Sin!***

**M. FLOYD BAILEY, JR.**

Isn't it strange that in the eyes of society, what was a sin ten

years ago is now acceptable behavior? Isn't it sad that our nation has so easily turned from the principles and standards that made it great to accept things that, for decades, have been abhorred?

What has caused this change in the hearts and consciences of mankind? The fact is that if we call sin by name it often has the same effect — it still turns your stomach. So, society has changed its name. What used to be called "drunkenness" is now called a "sickness." What used to be called "modesty" is now called "prudishness." What used to be called "sexual perversion" is now called an "alternate lifestyle." What used to be called a "sweet little baby" in the mother's womb is now called a "fetus." What we must realize is that, no matter what we call it, *sin is still sin*.

Shakespeare said, "A rose by any other name smells as sweet." I say, "Sin by any other name stinks as rotten" (Romans 6:23; James 1:12-15; Psalm 51:1-2). Because sin is still a threat to our spiritual and physical lives, we must warn people about its effects. Let us notice three:

**I. Sin disintegrates.** Sin will destroy our life. It can and does cause us to lose all that we have. Jesus said, "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark 8:36). Sin is a spiritual illness that eats away all that is good. Christ is the "Great Physician" who came to "heal" and to "save." We are told by the Master of the rich farmer who stored up his wealth and lost it all, including his soul, because of sin (Luke 12:13-21). Satan is a destroyer (1 Corinthians 10:10), and all that he promotes disintegrates that which is good.

**II. Sin captivates.** Sin is slavery; thus the sinner is enslaved. Jesus said, "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin" (John 8:34). Paul wrote, "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey" (Romans 6:16). Once sin has begun destroying our life, it will enslave to it. We lie to cover up our sin, and thus have sinned again. We shift blame for our own failures and thus continue in sin. We resent others for exposing our sins, and thus we are slaves to sin. Sin captivates.

**III. Sin separates.** "But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from

you that he will not hear" (Isaiah 59:2). The fact that Christ came seeking the lost proves that man was and is away from God without Him. He is alienated by his sins, separated from the Father. The three parables of Luke 15, the lost sheep, lost coin and lost boy, express in part that man is away from God. After sin has begun to disintegrate the good in our lives, it will captivate and hold us enslaved to it, the final result being eternal separation from God.

No matter how we refer to sin, it is still there. Satan is still seeking those whom he may devour (1 Peter 5:8). Sin by any other name is still sin.

## *Joshua Was a Leader*

**BOBBY KEY**

The destiny of a nation is bound up in its leaders. This is no less true of the church. Very seldom can a congregation rise above its leadership. Men by nature follow the examples of those about them. Relatively few think for themselves or decide, rationally, on their course of conduct. For the most part we all like to play "follow the leader." This should be a sobering thought for those who stand in the place of divine leadership.

Joshua, who in earlier years was the servant and minister of Moses, led the people across the Jordan into the promised land. It was Joshua, supreme head and leader of the people, who read God's law from Mount Ebal. There was never any doubt as to where this Godly man stood. He called on the people to make a choice that would determine their destiny and destiny of their children's children. They had but two alternatives: Serve Jehovah God or serve the idolatrous gods. Joshua's example inspires us all: "But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15).

"And it came to pass after these things, that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, being an hundred and ten years old." At this point his life was ended but not his influence. We are not surprised to read from Judges two: "And the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the

elders that outlived Joshua..." No greater tribute could be paid to Joshua than this. His faithful life of devotion and service to God led an entire nation in the right direction. Not only did he influence the people for good during his life but during the days of the elders that outlived him. He was dead, but his works continued to live on (Revelation 14:13).

It would be impossible to overstress the importance of Godly leaders. If those who speak for God fail to be steadfast in doctrine and moral purity, what may God expect of the people in general? Joshua, God's servant, lived the way he preached.

## ***"Repentance Before Faith?"***

**MIKE BENSON**

**"Does repentance come before faith?"**

1. The Bible teaches that there is joy in heaven over a sinner who repents,"... There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents" (Luke 15:10), but it also says that without faith it is impossible to please God, "But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6).

*Consider:* If repentance comes before faith, then the angels in heaven (Luke 15:7) rejoice over someone with whom God is yet displeased.

2. The men of Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonah. "The men of Nineveh will rise in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah..." (Matthew 12:41).

*Consider:* How could the men of Nineveh repent at Jonah's preaching before they believed what he preached?

3. The demons believed in God. "You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe — and tremble" (James 2:19)!

*Consider:* If repentance comes before faith, it follows that the demons had repented.

The Bible order is 1) belief, then 2) repentance. After Peter

preached the gospel (i.e., the death burial, and resurrection of Christ) on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), he told those who "were cut to the heart" (i.e. "believers") to "repent...and be baptized...for the remission of sins..." (Acts 2:38).

## ***A Contribution Or A Commitment!***

**DON WILLIAMS**

The story is told of a pig and a chicken that were busy after a long day's work. The chicken said, "I have never worked so hard in all my life. That family must have used a dozen eggs all in one day. I am so tired." "Tired, nothing," said the pig, "With you, all you have to provide is a contribution. For them to have sausage or Pork, I have to make a *real* commitment."

The story re-enacts what some do in the church when the contribution plate comes around. HOW MANY OF US STOP AND REALLY THINK ABOUT OUR GIVING VERSUS WHAT OUR LORD DID FOR US?

Have we really counted His cost on our behalf? Paul tells us that we need to give to God as we have prospered. In I Corinthians 16:2, Paul writes, "Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by in store, as God hath prospered him, and there be NO gatherings when I come." Is there any way that we can ascertain the value of our Lord's death on our behalf? Surely no money in all the world would equal what He did for us on that hill of Calvary. The greatest of gifts demand that we return in the same way. How dare we give only a *token* contribution, when GOD GAVE TO US THE VERY BEST?

If one decides to give his life to Christ, he must make a total commitment to God. Jesus says that we must die to self and take up his way of life. In Matthew 16:24, He says, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." A token following of Jesus is not enough. Later, He will make the comment, "No man having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62).

When we make that commitment to be baptized into Christ, we die to self. Our lives, yes, even our *money*, become His. (It is His already). How sad if we decide not to make a *real*

commitment unto God in terms of what we give unto Him! I like the story of the man who was about to be baptized. The preacher suggested that he empty his pockets as they were to get into the water. He noticed the man's billfold in the back pocket and reminded him of it. He was about to pull it out when he said, "no, go ahead and baptize it as well." He understood something about the commitment he was about to get into. WE REALLY GIVE OURSELVES WHEN WE GIVE UNTO GOD. WE ARE SAYING "GOD, I TRUST YOU WITH ALL THAT I HAVE; HERE IS WHAT I LOVINGLY GIVE YOU, KNOWING YOU WILL PROVIDE FOR ME EVERY NEED AND THEN SOME." That is what the Macedonian brethren did. Out of their poverty, they were willing to give for the needs of the saints in Judea. Their attitude in giving is seen in the following statement. "And this they did, not as we hoped but first gave their own selves to the Lord and unto us by the will of God" (II Corinthians 8:5).

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(See Rule 8)

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