

# THE BIBLE TEACHER

*Pleading for the restoration of Pure New Testament Christianity*

---

Vol. 23

November 1992

No. 7

---

## EDITORIAL

### ***"When We All Get To Heaven"***

Millions through the years have been singing the beautiful song written by E.E. Hewitt, "When we all get to heaven! What a day of rejoicing that will be!" But what Christ and the Holy Spirit revealed about heaven and who will go there makes us wonder if all who desire to go to heaven will actually be able to enter its pearly gates! When the rich young man about whom we read in Matthew 19 and Mark 10 came kneeling before Jesus and earnestly desired that the Lord tell him what he ought to do to inherit eternal life in heaven. The answer he received from Jesus didn't make him happy, Mark 10:22 states: "he was sad at this word, and went away grieved." And we read, "Then Jesus looked around and said to His disciples, how hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God. And the disciples were astonished at His words. But Jesus answered again and said to them, Children, how hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom. And they were astonished beyond measure, saying among themselves, "Who then can be saved?" But looking at them, Jesus said, with men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible." (Mark 10:23-27). What Jesus was teaching is that if the man had listened to Him and had followed His advice then it was possible even for him to be saved and enter the eternal life of heaven.

The truth of the matter is: not all who sing about going to heaven,

or feel like going to heaven, or desire to go to heaven, will really be able to go there. Because God has laid certain conditions that each individual must fulfill before hoping to go in His heaven. Just as many countries in the world have certain rules and regulations which must be followed by those who want to go and live there. What does God require from us that we must do to be sure that we will have the eternal life of heaven?

First, one must be born again, become a new person in Christ by obeying His command. "Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." These are the words of the Saviour, and He emphasised again by saying, "Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." (John 3:3,5). It is in Christ that one become a new person. "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation." (2 Corinthians 5:17). How does one get into Christ to become a new creation? Let the Bible speak: "For as many you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ." (Galatians 3:27). One is baptized in water and thus obeys the teaching of the Holy Spirit, to become a new creation in Christ. The newness of life begins after one is baptized into Christ, according to Romans 6:3,4.

Secondly, Peter, the Apostle, taught, "As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby." (1 Peter 2:2). As milk is necessary for the new born baby, so is the word of God, the things written in the Bible, necessary for the new creation in Christ. Many children are dying daily physically around the world because of malnutrition or lack of food. This is also true spiritually. Many have thought that after their baptism into Christ they are ready to possess the heavenly city. But this is not the teaching of God. Christ taught His disciples to: "Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many I say to you, will seek to enter but will not be able." (Luke 13:24). Merely seeking or desiring to go into heaven is not enough, but one must strive daily to prepare oneself fit for heaven. The author of the book of Hebrews exhorted his readers in these words: "Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith . . ." (Hebrews 12:1 & 2). Jesus also taught, "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it." (Matthew 7:13,14). The inference is that the gate of heaven is narrow and its way is difficult, therefore, one must strive, try hard, make all efforts to walk in the difficult way of God to reach the narrow gate of heaven. Again, we read from 2 Peter 1:5-11, where it says, "But also for

this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self control, to self control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. *For if these things are your and abound*, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these things is short sighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Therefore, brethren, by ye even more diligent to make your calling and election sure, *for if you do these things you will never stumble*; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." God has laid down certain principles, rules and regulations which each man and woman must follow, if one wants to enter God's everlasting heavenly kingdom.

Thirdly, and lastly, we need to understand and know that under no circumstances we will be allowed to enter God's heaven with any type of contraband. To his fellow Christians and Apostle Paul said, "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived." Said the Apostle, "Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves nor covetous, not drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God." (1 Corinthians 6:9 & 10). Again, he warned: "Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are adultery, fornication, uncleanness, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outburst of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God." (Galatians 5:19-21). Beware of contrabands!

Finally, we need to heed what Christ taught His disciples at Matthew 18:3, He said, "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven." We need to change. We need to become innocent and obedient to our Father in heaven, if we really want to get to heaven.

## ***The Language Of Ashdod***

**J.C. CHOATE**

God raised up a nation to be his own, a people who would honor him, worship him, and serve him. Through this nation, he would

eventually send Christ, his Son, into the world to be a sacrifice for the sins of the world.

God blessed his people, fought their battles for them, and asked them to remain pure and holy. He warned them not to intermarry with the nations around them. He knew that if they did they would be influenced by those pagan husbands and wives to leave him and his laws and to begin to worship other gods. As one reads through the Old Testament, following the history of Israel, it can be seen how this often happened. For example, in Nehemiah 13:23-27, the prophet tells of God's people taking wives of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab. The record says, "And their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews' language, but according to the language of each people. And I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair, and made them swear by God, saying, Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves." He used Solomon as an example of what happens when one gets involved in this type of thing. He asked, "Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? Yet among many nations was there no king like him, who was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel: nevertheless even him did outlandish women cause to sin. Shall we then hearken unto you to do all this great evil, to transgress against our God in marrying strange wives?"

In the foregoing passage you will notice that as a result of God's people intermarrying with the people of heathen nations, their children grew up speaking the language of Ashdod and the languages of other nations. They even reached the point where they could not speak their own language. This shows the little time it takes for a people to be influenced by those around them, as they became involved with them. And in a case like this, the influence was never for the better but always for the worse. In other words, the people did not come closer to God and have a greater desire to worship him, or to obey his commandments, because of seeing the false religions around them. Instead, they began to compromise between the law and to actually leave God. This should serve as a good example to people of any age, and even to us today, to show what happens when we go against God's will and become entangled with the people of the world, even with the religious people around us.

Even today—literally—when Christians, members of the Lord's church, marry the people of the world, those of other religions, and even denominational people, we are asking for trouble. Those who marry out

of the church are weak to begin with, or the parents who arranged such marriages are either weak or are not members of the Lord's family, or they would not have done it. But some are willing to sacrifice their very souls to be married, or to see their children married. When this kind of thing happens, it often results in the Christian being lost to the Lord, along with their children, and their children, and many future generations that will be lost because of such an unwise action. Remember that Paul said Christians should not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. (2 Corinthians 6:14-18).

But if there is no suitable Christian for marriage, what can a person do? If the one being considered for marriage is not a Christian a planned effort can be made to convert that person before any agreement is reached about marriage. This has been done many times with success, and you can do it too, if you are concerned enough about your soul and the soul of the one you are marrying.

In addition to marriage, there is another way we may allow our religious friends to influence us. Since we as members of the church of Christ may be fewer in number than denominational and other other religious groups, we may associate ourselves with them as neighbors, as students, and as fellow workers. Through these contacts, we may become good friends and should be in position to influence them for the Lord. But if we are not knowledgeable of God's word—if we are at all weak and want to be accepted—instead of influencing them they may influence us. Even if we don't go with them and join their churches, we may still be weakened by them and may demonstrate in various ways the influence they are having on us. In this case, it is something like "speaking the language of Ashdod."

For example, we hear more and more members of the church today talking about "going to church." Where are they getting this? From their denominational friends. The denominationalists speak of their meeting house itself as being the church and so they talk about "going to church." That is an unscriptural statement. We may talk about going to worship, but not to church. The *meeting house* is not the *church*, but it is simply a place where members of the church assemble to worship. Of course it might be argued that "going to church" is so widely used as meaning "going to worship" and that there is nothing wrong in using this expression. But can't we see that is the way Satan through the religious world breaks and wears us down to the point that we can see nothing wrong with whatever he teaches? In contrast, I remind you that the church is made up of saved people, Christians, we who have obeyed God. (Mark 16:15,16 Acts 2:38,47). As such, we are the body of Christ,

the spiritual body of Christ, the Lord's family. (Ephesians 5:23-27; 1 Timothy 3:15; Hebrews 3:1-6; Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:22,23). Therefore, we should not lower ourselves and reduce the Lord's family, the church, to a denominational level in our speech concerning worship. I must confess that I am amazed to hear even preachers talking about "going to church", and it has become very common for Christians in general to use this expression. We need to study our Bibles and get back to scriptural language. No, I am not talking about being fanatical or an extremists, but as the Lord's people it is important that we speak "as the oracles of God." (1 Peter 4:11). If we don't we will gradually get further and further away from the truth and will become more and more like our religious neighbours. We can see where they are, and surely we would not want to be like them in that respect.

Another example of using the "language of Ashdod" is in speaking of the church of "my church" "our church," and other similar expressions. I was always taught that the church didn't belong to me, and therefore I could not claim it as my church. I am honored to be a member of it, but it belongs to Christ (Matthew 16:18), the one who died for it (Ephesians 5:25), the head of it (Colossians 1:18), the foundation of it (1 Corinthians 3:11); it therefore wears the name of Christ. (Romans 16:16). Now how can *this* church by *my* church? I didn't build it or die for it, and neither can I save it. As members of it, we would be better-off to speak of the church as simply Christ's church or the Church of Christ, denoting that it belongs to Christ.

Sometimes we hear other expressions like "Church of Christ preachers" "Church of Christ members" and "Church of Christ Christians" in the way that denominational people speak of their churches and members. No, it doesn't mean that everything the denominational people do or every expression they use is wrong, but there are many practices that are unscriptural. We must be sure that we do not follow their practices if they are in conflict with the teaching of God's word. We should use the pure language of the scriptures, stating that we are Christians, gospel preachers, evangelists, elders, deacons, teachers, and our teaching is the doctrine of Christ, not "Church of Christ teaching" or "Church of Christ doctrine."

Using the "language of Ashdod" is only the beginning. Once we get started on such things we may want to be like the religious world around us and be just another denomination, fellowshiping and accepting members of all churches, calling them our brothers in Christ, etc. We may talk about "joining the church" which the scriptures tell us that when we obey the Lord that he adds us to His church. (Acts 2:47).

We may want to celebrate Christmas and have Easter services. We may want to add mechanical instruments of music to our singing in worship, have our "pastor" and teach and accept most any doctrine that comes along. Now wouldn't that be something? You think it couldn't happen? It can't if we know what God's word teaches and if we are determined to stay with it. But if we gradually give in to our religious friends and go along with them on various things, we will grow more like them and will stray further away from the truth. We will then lose our identity and finally cease to be the church we read about in the Bible.

We can see what happened to Israel again and again and the price they paid for their apostasy. We can read the words of Christ, of Paul, Peter, John, and others, warning about the danger of falling away from the Lord and his teachings. I would urge us to be alert and on guard against error and deceptive influences. It is not the big things that usually do the most harm, but the little seemingly insignificant things that begin to get to us and to work on us. These things can eventually lead us away from God.

May He help us to believe the truth, to obey it, and to be faithful in living and proclaiming it. It is the truth which has made us free and will keep us free. If we have accepted the truth, we don't have to be constantly changing by adding to it and subtracting from it. Let's leave it like God has given it, enjoying the blessings and the hope it gives.

*Especially For Women*

## ***"Divorce Is Not the Answer"***

**BETTY BURTON CHOATE**

Western cinemas and television programs have glamorized "love marriages" throughout the world. They have also encouraged divorce as the answer to problems in marriage.

But divorce is not the answer God teaches. We read, "...He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female', and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall be one flesh.' So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate." (Matthew 19:4-6).

God's plan—which works the best of all—is for the man and his

wife to live separately from parents, so that the two of them can devote their thought and effort to each other. Their goal in married life is to become one flesh, that is, to be united physically and also in heart and mind, so that there is true devotion to each other.

With this kind of marriage, build on God, disagreements and problems can be talked out day by day so that they never become large enough to threaten the marriage. By practicing, "Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's well-being," (1 Corinthians 10:24), kindness and helpfulness will ensure a growing love.

But often people don't follow God's plan. Maybe they choose to live with the parents, or maybe they feel they cannot afford to live separately. Sometimes the family is amicable, and everyone can live together in harmony. Sometimes there are conflicts and terrible problems. Even at best, though, seldom do the young man and his wife mature as quickly in their marriage or in their development as young adults when they remain with the parents.

But what is the answer when problems do arise and when the marriage is a miserable prison for everyone involved? Is divorce the answer?

God knew that making two lives into one in the marriage relationship would not be easily or quickly done. He knew there would be temptation to simply throw up one's hands and quit trying, with, "I've had enough! This marriage is finished!"

But God also knew the terrible emotional trauma divorce would bring to the entire family. He knew the children would be damaged and maybe destroyed by divorce. He knew divorce would encourage sexual immorality with its resulting trauma, disease, and crime. He knew that re-marriage would open the door to even more problems between step-parents and step-children, bringing child brutality and molestation, incest, and emotional disturbances which lead to all kinds of crime and the eventual total breakdown of the home and society. All of these things are a part of daily life in nations where divorce is commonly practiced.

God knew that, as bad as problems might seem to be in a home, divorce only multiplies them. It is not the answer. So He said, "... whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery." (Matthew 19:9)

Though there are individual cases where God's rule may seem severe, He knew that it was necessary to be strict for the preservation of the home and society as a whole. Problems in marriage must be worked



out. Husbands and wives, with determination to stay together, must be willing to make sacrifices when that is necessary for the sake of the marriage. Divorce as a solution should not even be allowed into the thoughts.

The husband may be harsh, demanding, perhaps even physically abusive. What can the wife do? If she responds with anger, things will usually only get worse. But if she practices, ". . . love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you . . ." (Matthew 5:44), she may change a bad man into a kind and loving husband with the passing of time.

Sometimes a husband is so abusive, through meanness of character or because of drunkenness, that his wife and children are in real physical danger. The wife may fear for their very lives. The children may even be sexually abused. What should be done in such cases?

If the wife has tried every possible way of changing her husband, if she has practiced being loving and kind even in response to his abuse, if she tried to reason with him to help him see what he is doing to his family, if she has gotten others to talk to him, if she has prayerfully exhausted every possibility of changing him, then she may feel—for the mental and physical welfare of the children for whom she is responsible, as well as for her own safety—the she has no choice but to separate from her husband. Returning to her parents or managing as a single parent will be extremely difficult, but it is preferable to living in continual fear and abuse. Perhaps, in time, the separation will bring the husband to his senses and the family can be reunited. Certainly the wife should pray that he will see his wrong and change his life.

There are cases when a married man or woman may be unfaithful to the mate, falling to the temptation of living in sexual immorality. In such cases, Jesus said, ". . . whoever divorces his wife for any reason *sexual immorality* causes her to commit adultery . . ." (Matthew 5:32) This manner of life, alone, breaks the marriage bond. If the couple cannot be reconciled so that they can come back together and live as one, divorce is allowed because the sacredness of their physical union has been violated. In such cases, the innocent partner may remarry without committing adultery. However, the one who has caused the divorce may not remarry: ". . . and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery." (Matthew 19:9)

Knowing the seriousness of marriage, and understanding God's stipulation that it be "one man for one woman for life", mates should be carefully and prayerfully chosen.

We are commanded, "Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?" Christians must marry Christians if they want to please God. Obedience in this point alone will save many from life's worst heartaches and problems.

Those considering marriage should also investigate thoroughly the character, the habits, and the values of the person being proposed. It would be better to remain single than to be married to a person whose way of life is in continual violation of God's laws and of our personal principles.

So the time to consider "divorce" is *before* marriage! Simply refuse to marry unless the person has those qualities which will make marriage work. Then if the marriage does take place, build the day-to-day relationship on God's laws. His way works, and no others does!

## ***God's Judgment Day Draws Nearer!***

**DILLARD THURMAN**

What if you were awakened by the warrant officer demanding your immediate appearance before the judge for trial? What if no prior notice were given? what if no time were allowed for planning for your defence? what if every secret thing you had done were presented in the hearing? and what if you were on trial for your life? yea, even your eternal destiny? Well, my friend, that is just the way it will be when you are summoned before the judgment bar of God in that last day! It could be with the sudden return of our Lord, or by reason of death; but God's judgment day will come! "*And as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment.*" (Heb. 9:27). There will be no "grace period" extended for preparation! Death will be followed with the judgment! Man lives for a brief time; man dies; then man faces the judgment!

### **SOME MEN DISCOUNT THE JUDGMENT DAY!**

Rather than living in righteousness to be accepted in that day, some men deny there will be a day of judgment! They are unwilling to face the consequences of their sins, and wilfully reject God's teaching! "*Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they*

were from the beginning of creation." (2 Pet. 3:3-4). Only such scoffers, willingly ignorant of God's word, show skepticism regarding the coming of the day of judgment! Even as the "Humanists" of our day, who deny any Being superior to man, they misjudge the signs of the times! Rejecting God and His creation of the world, yet seeing the order of His natural laws, they see no evidence of this world's deterioration, and presume that it will last forever. They see the sunrise and sunset, changing of the seasons, seed time and harvest, exactness in orbits of heavenly bodies, and all creatures bringing forth after their kind, and conclude the world will last forever! But God who created the world will also bring it to an end—in His own good time!

### **THE DAY OF JUDGMENT IS INEVITABLE!**

Jesus taught often regarding the day of judgment, and its consequences! He rebuked those who had not listened to Him, saying: "*But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.*" (Mt. 11:24). Then again pointing to that final judgment, He said, "*But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account in the day of judgment.*" (Mt. 12:36). Regarding that day, Peter wrote, "*The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.*" (2 Pet 2:9). In that day, God will summon all those who have lived on His earth before Him to be judged!

The day of judgment is often referred to as the day of the Lord, for His triumph is complete when He ascends to the throne of judgment. Paul says this in telling saints to withdraw from the incestuous man, "*that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.*" (1 Cor 5:5). He further said, "*For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord cometh as a thief in the night.*" (1 Thes. 5:2). And John was speaking of this same event in saying "*that we may have boldness in the day of judgment.*" (1 Jno. 4:17). It was in prospect of that day of the Lord (the judgment) that Jesus said: "*Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done, good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.*" (Jno. 5:28-29). Both the good and the bad will gather on that day, and shall hear the sentence of eternity!

### **THE DAY WILL COME UNEXPECTEDLY!**

Paul stated that saints knew '*perfectly that the day of the Lord*

*cometh as a thief in the night.*" (1 Thes. 5:2). Jesus Christ had warned disciples to *"Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth return."* *"Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."* (Mt. 24:42, 44). A thief does not set up an appointment, and neither does the Lord give prior notice of the time of His return!

The religious world has a scourge of "date setters" who claim to have certain knowledge as to just what day the Lord will come! These have been shown to be false prophets, one by one! Listen to these words from the Lord: *"But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father."* (Mk. 13:32). This passage alone should quieten these fakirs and charlatans! Do they have greater knowledge than the Son of God, and angels? They know they are lying, or else are spiritually blind! When the disciples asked the Lord of this event, He replied, *"It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power"* (Acts 1:7). His coming will be swift and sudden! Jesus aptly described it: *"For as the lightening, that lighteneth out of one part of the heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in that day."* (Lk. 17:24). No TV comic will have time to exclaim: "Here come the Judge!" The Lord will appear unexpectedly and suddenly!

### **GOD WILL JUDGE THROUGH CHRIST!**

Concerning the judgment, we are told, *"And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised him from the dead."* (Acts 17:30-31). Jesus Christ has been ordained of God to sit on the judgment throne! Paul said, *"I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom."* (2 Tim. 4:1) Peter also referred to saints *"who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead."* (1 Pet. 4:5). When Christ ascends to His judgment throne, there *"Before him shall be gathered all nations"* (Mt. 25:32).

Peter presented a grave question: *"The time is come for judgment to begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall be the end of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?"* (1 Pet. 4:17-18). The answer is clearly emphasized by Paul: *"And to you*

*who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." (2 Thes. 1:7-9). Yes, all nations must face God, and this must include the saints! "For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ so then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." (Rom. 14:10, 12). Each will be judged on the life he has lived on earth. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (2 Cor. 5:10).*

### **WHAT THE JUDGMENT WILL REVEAL!**

All the secret deeds of men will be revealed at the judgment! God is indeed "a revealer of secrets" (Dan. 2:47); but this is especially true of the judgment. *"Hell and destruction are before the Lord: how much more the hearts of the children of men?" (Prov. 15:11). There all men must give an account "for deeds done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." There will be no secret, hidden deeds undetected! "For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known." (Lk. 12:2). There is no way that we can deceive the Judge on that day! Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." (Heb. 4:12). The books will be opened, and God's record will be shown!*

### **THE SENTENCE FROM THAT JUDGMENT**

Two sentences will be given to the sons of men: *"Come, ye blessed of my Father" and "Depart from me, ye, cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." (Mt. 25:34,41). "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." (v. 46). There is no middle ground! There will be the saved and the doomed!*

The saved will face a glorious prospect, for *"we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body." (Phil 3:20-21). This glorious victory is described in 1 Thes. 4:13-18; and should gladden the heart of each Christian! "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall*

*appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."* (1 Jno. 3:2). What a difference this prospect makes for us: *"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."* (Col. 3:1-2), Jesus promised to come again, and take us to those mansions of God! (Jno. 14:1-3).

But what a tragic, horrible end for all who refuse to obey God (2 Thes. 1:1-9). The day of judgment holds no glimmer of hope; not in time, nor eternity! The morbid scene is shown: *"And these shall go away into everlasting punishment."* How excruciating will be the torment there! *"And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: they have no rest day nor night."* (Rev. 14:11). Yes, my friends, multitude will be lost! It could be you!

Friend, you have a choice now! You can obey and serve God, and be welcomed into His mansions! Or you can reject all that is high and holy, rebuff those who love you, crash over the praying forms of those who plead for you—but who can you blame through ceaseless ages but yourself? Why not accept the salvation God has offered in His Word?

## ***"Ichabod"***

**BOBBY DUNCAN**

Eli was the high priest. Israel took the ark of God into battle. The ark was captured by the enemy, the Philistines. Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were killed. When Eli received news of the capture of the ark, he fell over and died. The wife of Phinehas was "with child." When she received news of the battle, she went into labor, and gave birth to a son. When she was told she had born a son, "she answered not, neither did she regard it" (1 Sam. 4:20). She named the child Ichabod, which means, "Where is the glory?" Certainly this was a fitting name for the child under the circumstances. She said, "The glory is departed from Israel" (1 Sam. 4:21).

With the exception in chapter 14 of this book of one's being identified as "Ichabod's brother," this is the only mention of him in scripture. But the idea expressed in the name—"Where is the glory?"—May be found throughout the Old and New Testaments alike. On numerous occasions men have so departed from the way of the Lord as to warrant the meaning of their children Ichabod.

When Saul, the first king of Israel, disobeyed the voice of God, and

refused to destroy the Amalekites, he had rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord rejected him (I Sam. 15:1-26). The same Saul who had been so humble and submissive when he was chosen king at Mizpeh, concerning whom the people have shouted, "God save the king," has now lost his lustre and his glory by forsaking God. One in the kingdom of Israel at this time might well have named her son Ichabod.

Or some woman in the church at Corinth might well have named her son Ichabod during the time when the church at Corinth was tolerating—yea, even glorying in—a case of fornication such as was not even named among the Gentiles. A man in the church had taken his father's wife (I Cor. 5). The glorious church of Lord loses its glory when it chooses to ignore sin among its members. In order for the church to maintain its glory it must keep itself pure and unspotted (Eph. 5:27). Where is the glory either to God or to man in a congregation or a brotherhood that tolerates all kinds of sin?

It would not have been out of order for some woman in the church at Laodicea to name her son Ichabod. The lukewarm condition of that congregation made the Lord want to vomit them up (Rev. 3:16,17). They thought that they are a glorious congregation. They said: "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing" (v. 17). The Lord, however, nailed a sign over their meetinghouse door which read: "ICHABOD".

No doubt, there are churches in this generation over whose door the Lord has already tacked a sign, reading: "ICHABOD." No doubt, there are churches in which it would be in order for all the mothers to name their sons Ichabod. There are brotherhood projects in connection with which mothers would do well to name their sons Ichabod.

Churches that tolerate sin among their members, or that are lukewarm, or churches that have forsaken the way of the Lord, or that neglect the preaching of the simple word of God are churches that have lost their glory in the sight of God. It matters not how large crowds they may have attending their services, if they are not faithful and loyal to the truth, they have lost their glory.

## ***What Is Sin Unto Death?***

**GUY N. WOODS**

"If any man see his brother sinning a sin not unto death, he shall ask, and God will give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is

a sin unto death: not concerning this do I say that he shall make request" (I John 5:16). Persons primarily involved in this passage are (a) "any man," and (b) "his brother." Inasmuch as the relationship of the first to the second is that of a brother, it follows that the words "any man," must be understood of those who are members of the body of Christ, and approved of God; and that the brother contemplated here is sinning in an erring child of God.

Earlier, in the context, the inspired writer had penned these words. "These things have I written unto you, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, even unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God. And this is the boldness which we have toward him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us: and if we know that he heareth us whatsoever we ask we know that we have the petitions which we have asked of him" (I John 5:13-15).

The connection between the latter statement (I John 5:13-15), and the former one (I John 5:16), is very close. Faithful children of God have great "boldness" (confidence) toward the Father. This confidence leads us to make our wants known with the assurance that if we ask according to his will, he hears us. Though we are unable to "see" the answer to our prayers, the confidence which we enjoy in him enables us to know that "we have the petitions which we have asked of him." As an example of this, if we see "a brother sin a sin not unto death," we are encouraged to ask in his behalf, assured that God will give us life for "them that sin not unto death." We must not from this assume, so the writer warns, that God will give us life for "them that sin unto death." There is much a sin: and, though we are not prohibited to pray in behalf of all men, we are not commanded to do so in this instance, there being no promise that God will hear and answer a petition in behalf of such a person.

An analysis of I John 5:16, shows that (1) a child of God can sin; (2) there is a sin not "unto death"; (3) we are admonished to pray for those thus sinning, assured that God will hear and answer our prayers; (4) there is a sin "unto death"; (5) for those thus guilty it is useless to pray.

What is the sin designated as "unto death" contemplated here?

It seems obvious that no specific transgression, no overt act of disobedience meets the demands of the case here. True, the sin was such that the brethren could "see" it, but the word is metaphorically used, signifying an awareness on the part of the brethren that sin is committed and is thus not limited to acts witnessed by the brethren. Few indeed are the sins which brethren commit in the presence of *Christian* witnesses! The sin is said to be "unto death." The "death"



referred to was not bodily death, the loss of life; but, spiritual death, separation from God and all that is good. It was such a sin as only *children of God* may be guilty of. It is specifically declared to be the sin of a "brother." Any correct interpretation must take into account these considerations and embrace them. The sin contemplated was not such as is usually designated as capital, i. e., such gross sins as idolatry, murder, adultery, blasphemy, etc. The effects thereof are visible and obvious. It is possible for one who prays to distinguish between the sin "unto death," and the sin "not unto death."

To what kind of sin does the apostle refer?

John wrote much about sin and forgiveness in the first of his Epistles. Sin, alas, is in the lives of us all (I John 1:8-10); it originates with the devil (3:8); Jesus died in order that forgiveness might be possible (3:16); when, through weakness, ignorance and inadvertence we sin, he is our "advocate" (heavenly lawyer), who intercedes in our behalf (I John 2:1); and his blood cleanses us, as we walk in the light, from all sin (I John 1:7). He has promised that "if we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:8).

The teaching on these matters, by the beloved disciple, is abundant and its significance clear. It is possible to reduce it to the following logical form:

- (1) The Lord will forgive every sin, of whatever nature, from which a brother turns in penitence and confesses (I John 1:8).
- (2) There is a sin, however, which the Lord will not forgive (I John 5:16).
- (3) Therefore, the sin which the Lord will not forgive is a sin, any sin, every sin, all sin, that a brother will not confess.

If the proposition is valid, and the premises are true, the conclusion is irresistible. The proposition meets the requirements of validity; and the premises are obvious, being stated virtually in the words of the inspired text. Inasmuch then as the proposition is a valid one and the premises are true; and, since the Lord will forgive every sin which a brother confesses, and there is a sin which the Lord will not forgive, the sin which the Lord will not forgive *is a sin which a brother will not confess*.

The context supports and corroborates the foregoing conclusion. If my brother in Christ sins, and manifests penitence, I not only may, it is my duty to pray in his behalf under the divine injunction: "Confess

therefore your sins one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed" (James 5:16). However, if my brother exhibits stubborn impenitence and persistent rebellion, following the commission of sin, it is useless and vain to petition the Father in his behalf. The Lord, under no circumstance, forgives the sin of impenitent people.

*The "sin unto death" is therefore, a disposition of heart, a perverseness of attitude, and an unwillingness of mind to acknowledge one's sin, and from it turn away. This attitude effectively closes heaven's door in one's face!*

## ***"Since The Bible Says We Are Saved By Faith, Why Do You People Say We are Saved By Baptism"***

**FLAVIL H. NICHOLS**

A reader of Words of Truth asks the above question, and we are happy to answer. The apostle Peter wrote: "Be ready always to give answer, to every man, that asketh you . . ." (1 Pet. 3:15). This we shall try to do "with meekness and fear" as the rest of the verse requires.

The Bible does clearly state that we are saved "by faith," (Read Eph. 2:8-9; Rom. 5:1; et al). However, not one of these texts say that our salvation is "by faith only," as so many religions today teach. In fact, Jas. 2:24 says salvation is "NOT by faith only." My brethren and I teach exactly what the Bible teaches: "For by grace are ye saved through faith" (Eph. 2:8). But the next question should be: WHEN does faith save us? Is it before and without any act of obedience on man's part? Or, is it after we have obeyed? Read Rom. 6:17-18: " . . . but ye have obeyed from the Heart . . . being then made free from sin . . ."

It surprises many to learn that Eph. 2:8-9 was written to people who had been baptized! In fact, some of them had to be re-baptized! When Paul came to Ephesus he found some had been baptized "unto John's baptism" (Acts 19:1-6) evidently after it was made void and was superceded by gospel baptism in the name of Christ (Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 2:38). About twelve men were re-baptized - this time, in the name of the Lord, and they were among the 'charter members' at Ephesus. Later, to that very Church Paul wrote: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created

in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:8-10).

Instead of teaching that the Ephesians were saved without baptism, this verse says they were made new creatures (or, were "created") "in Christ Jesus." You see, they had been "baptized INTO Jesus Christ" (Rom. 6:3-5); and upon entering "into Christ" they were "created" OR MADE NEW CREATURES (II Cor. 5:17) by God the Father.

This is exactly in harmony with Gal. 3:26-27: "For ye are all . . ." (what?) " . . . Children of God. . ." (how?) " . . . by faith . . ." (where?) " . . . in Christ Jesus." (when?) " . . . For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ." The converse of that statement must also be true: You are not children of God without faith, or out of Christ Jesus; for as many of you as have not been baptized into Jesus Christ have not put on Christ.

Let us ask Jesus how much faith we must have to be saved? Hear him answer: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mk. 16:15-16).

We must take all that the Bible says on a subject. We in the church of Christ believe and teach the Bible passages which stipulate that faith is necessary to salvation. If faith "alone" saves, we are saved! But if faith must motivate one to obey Christ to be saved (Heb. 5:8-9), we still are saved! We are safe if our religious neighbours are; and we are safe if they are not! We are doubly safe!

Since the Bible says, "baptism doth also now save us" (I Pet. 3:21), how dare any man say, Baptism does NOT save us?

This no more means that baptism is our savior, than does those passages which teach that faith saves us, teach that faith is our savior. Christ saves who obey him!

## ***Easter***

**BASIL OVERTONE**

"Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread). And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him

forth to the people." (Acts 12:1-4). Study carefully the following observations on this text.

1. If the Easter of this text had been a Christian holiday, no doubt Herod would have killed Peter on that day just to express his contempt for the church or the Christians. For some reason he respected Easter.

2. The days of unleavened bread were the days of the Jewish feast of the Passover. "Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover." (Luke 22:1).

3. The word in the Greek text translated Easter is **pascha**. This word means **Passover**.

**Pascha** is in the Greek New Testament 29 times. It is translated **Passover** every time except in Acts 12:4. It is doubtful the word **Easter** is in Acts 12:4 in any version except the King James Version. The King James Version is a good version. I have studied it over 50 years, and have preached from it all of my forty years of preaching. However, I have for a long time realized there are some flaws in it. **Easter** being in Acts 12:4 is one of them.

4. Obviously, Herod the King was being respectful of his Jewish subjects by respecting their holy day called Passover by not killing the apostle Peter on that day.

5. Easter was not observed by those who called themselves Christians until hundreds of years after the time referred to in Acts 12. There is no Bible authority for observing Easter as a religious holiday. Faithful Christians celebrate the resurrection of Jesus every first day of the week, or every Sunday.

6. If Christians observe Easter they should do so only as a social day. I can see no wrong in wearing new clothes on a certain day of the year. Surely there is no harm in children enjoying hunting eggs on a certain day as long as they are taught it is not a religious observance but merely a social activity and civil custom.

Someone might say, "But, Easter is based on certain celebrations of heathen people of hundreds, perhaps thousands of years ago." This is true, but all the names of the days of the week are based on mythology that involved mythological gods and goddesses. But we do not observe these days as the heathen did. For an example, Sunday was derived from the heathen practice of the observation of the "day of the sun." But, we do not so observe Sunday.

Another example is **Wednesday** which was derived from Woden's Day. Woden was the chief god of the Anglo-Saxon people in the middle ages. Even though we all observe or recognize Wednesday as a day, I know of no one who observes it as the ancestors of some of us did! ♡

# ***Holding A Grudge Will Poison One's Life***

**EDSEL BURLESON**

Doug Parsons told the story of a woman who was bitten by a dog suspected of having rabies. She was immediately rushed to the hospital, treated and left in a room to wait for an autopsy on the dog. Only then would she know whether or not she had been infected. An intern on duty thought he should explain the seriousness of the situation to her. She asked him a lot of questions, and by the end of the interview, he realized he had told her more than he had intended. She was visibly shaken.

Later he came by to look in on her. She was sitting on the side of the treatment table, writing. She would pause occasionally and stare into space, then resume writing. The doctor was sure he had upset her so much she was writing her will, or funeral instructions. He went to comfort her.

He asked if she were writing her will. "Oh, no," she said, "Just in case I have been infected I'm making a list of the people I want to bite before I die."

One of the most damaging things one can allow to happen is to harbor a grudge against another. Rather than hurting the other person, one's life, in a manner of speaking, becomes controlled by him. One becomes suspicious of the motives and actions of the one the grudge is against.

Dr. S.I. McMillen says that a disordered emotional life is a frequent cause of ulcerative colitis, toxic goiters, high blood pressure and scores of other diseases. If the truth were revealed, thousands of death certificates would record that the victims died of "grudgitis."

The apostle Paul taught that problems between individuals should be solved "before the sun goes down." (Ephesians 4:26.) Jesus instructed. "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." (Matthew 5:23,24).

Someone once told of two women who had allowed little things to become big things until both were victims of grudgitis. As a result, their spite for each other increased daily as their work brought them face to face. One day, in the heat of an argument, one said, "If you were to die, I wouldn't even go to your funeral."

The other replied, "I'd surely go to yours. I would want to be there to see them throw dirt into your face."

Brooding over injuries and injustice received at the hands of others will poison one's life. James said, "Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned." (5:9).

Do not cheat yourself of fellowship with God, the beauty of a Christlike character, and the best joys of life by holding a grudge. A Christian cannot afford to pay price!

## ***How Does God Feel?***

**RICKY PHILLIPS**

Throughout the scriptures we can find examples of God's feelings toward man. In the Old Testament, many times God became angry with the people of Israel because of their disobedience. And in Genesis 22, he showed his approval toward Abraham because of his willingness to offer his son Isaac.

In the parable of the Prodigal Son, God, represented by the father, showed great joy at regaining the erring. God has feelings toward man, and we should never forget it. At times, however, we may be guilty of respecting the feelings of other human beings and totally ignoring the feelings of Almighty God.

Remembering that God is our Father (Matthew 6:9), let's see how God feels when his children treat him with less respect than they should.

### **WHEN IGNORE HIS TEACHINGS**

How does God feel when his children ignore His teachings? Earthly fathers spend many hours instructing their children as to the importance of hard work, honesty and fair treatment of others. Every father hurts to see his child disregard these teachings and do whatever he wishes. Think how much more God is pained to see us forsake the assembly, fail to give liberally, use his name in vain or fail to abide by his word. We are to first learn his teachings, and then put them into practice. "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." (James 4:17).

### **WHEN ASHAMED OF HIM**

How does God feel when his children are ashamed of him? Some

children are ashamed of their parents because of their age, physical appearance, or lack of education. Some parents would be deeply hurt if they knew how their children really felt about them. You cannot hide your feelings about God. He knows how you feel about him, and so do others. Paul instructed Timothy, "Be not thou, therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord." (2 Timothy 1:8.) Are you grieving the heart of God by being ashamed of him before others?

### **WHEN MISTREAT EACH OTHER**

How does God feel when his children mistreat one another? Many families are in constant turmoil because children do not get along. Think of the heartache this brings to well-meaning parents. Then imagine how God must feel when he looks down and sees his children bickering, backbiting and gossiping about one another.

The prayer of Jesus Christ is that his disciples be one: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." (John 17:20,21).

### **CONCLUSION**

God has feelings toward his children as human fathers do. How we treat those feelings? Are we guilty of treating man better than God? God has blessed us far more than man ever could (Matthew 7:9-11), and there is an eternal blessing waiting for his faithful children.

How does God feel about you?

## ***Should Christians Observe The Sabbath Day?***

**RODNEY V. RUTHERFORD**

Some religious people today insist that the Jewish sabbath which is Saturday, the seventh day of the week, should be observed by Christians. Is this true? What does the Bible say? Has the sabbath been bound upon Christians by the word of God? Has it been kept through

the ages by all true believers as some confidently affirm? Or, is the sabbath observance a command of God for a particular age of Bible history and for a particular people? Let us see what the word of God has to say.

### **WHEN FIRST MENTIONED**

The sabbath is first mentioned as an ordinance to be observed by men in Exodus 16:23-26 where a cessation of labor was commanded. In Genesis 2:1,2 we read of God resting on the seventh day after creating the heavens and the earth in six days. However, God gave no commandment to mankind to observe the sabbath at that time.

The commandment to observe the sabbath was given to the nation of Israel at Mount Sinai as recorded in Exodus 20. As Moses looked back upon that event at a later time, he emphasized that the covenant made at Horeb (Sinai) was made with the children of Israel who were then present. It had not been made with their ancestors. "Hear, O Israel, the statutes and ordinances which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and observe to do them. Jehovah our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. Jehovah made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day." (Deuteronomy 5:1-3). Then Moses states the covenant that God made. In verse twelve he repeats the sabbath commandment as part of the covenant given to Israel.

### **TWO REASONS**

The Bible gives at least two specific reasons why God gave the sabbath to the nation of Israel (1) It was given to them as a sign: "And Jehovah spake unto Moses saying, Speak thou unto the children of Israel saying, Verily ye shall keep my sabbaths: for it is a sign between you and me throughout your generations; for that ye may know that I am Jehovah who sanctifieth you." (Exodus 31:12,13) (2) God told the Israelites that they were to observe the sabbath day so that "thou remember that thou was a servant in the land of Egypt, and Jehovah thy God brought thee out thence by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm: therefore Jehovah thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day." (Deuteronomy 5:15).

### **PART OF GOD'S LAW**

The sabbath was a part of God's law which he gave to Israel through Moses. Jesus fulfilled this law. (Matthew 5:17, 18; Luke 24:44.)



He "hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross" (Colossians 2:14). Christians have a better covenant enacted upon better promises than that given by God to Israel (2 Corinthians 3; Hebrews 8:6-13).

Since the establishment of the Lord's church on the first Pentecost day following our Lord's death, burial, resurrection, and ascension (Acts 2), we find Christians meeting upon the first day of the week to remember the Lord's death, to hear the preaching of the gospel, and to give as the Lord has prospered them for the work of the Lord. (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2).

## **CONCLUSION**

Sunday, the first day of the week, the Lord's day (Revelation 1:10) is the day that God wants his people to keep today, not the sabbath day which is Saturday, the seventh day of the week. Sabbath observance passed away with the Law of Moses with all its rites, ceremonies, ordinances, and sacrifices.

## ***Is It Late?***

**ALLEN W. BURRIS**

Have you ever looked down at your watch or up at a clock on the wall and been surprised at the time? "It's later than I thought!" is often exclaimed. Time seems to get away from us and before we know it an opportunity is lost. Time is limited for us because we will die. "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgement." (Hebrews 9:27.)

We intend to do things, some plan to become Christians, others plan to stop that sin that is committed repeatedly. It is similar to the diet that is always going to begin "tomorrow."

Remember these words: ". . . whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." (James 4:14). Your days are indeed numbered; you have a limited amount of time. Please plan to take action TODAY because it may be later than you think!

Licence to Post without Prepayment of Postage

No. U/SE—25/85

Posted at New Delhi PSO on 10/11 November, 1992

Delhi Postal Regn. No. DL-11262/92

Regd. No. 25921/71

# **You are Cordially Invited**

To Attend

Worship Services of the church of Christ

*Every Sunday :*

Paite

8.00 A.M.

English/Hindi

10.00 A.M.

**CHURCH OF CHRIST**

**E-10/B Defence Colony, Ring Road**

**(Near Andrews Ganj Bus Stop)**

**New Delhi.**

## **ALL ARE WELCOME**

**To:**

**From:**

**The Bible Teacher**

**Post Box No. 3815**

**New Delhi-110049.**