

# THE BIBLE TEACHER

*Pleading for the Restoration of Pure New Testament Christianity*

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## EDITORIAL

### *What Does The Bible Teach?*

"That you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgement"

Pleadingly, the above statement was written to the Christians, at 1 Corinthians 1:10. It is said, that if there is a smoke then there is a fire too! And, this was true about this statement of the apostle of Christ also. Because Paul wrote next: "For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you. Now I say this, that each of you say, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ." Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?"

How different does this teaching of the Bible sound than what we hear today! Today people are thanking, yes, glorying, and, indeed, boasting about so many denominational churches and sectarian groups and assemblies all over the world. Look around your city or where you live, and observe, how many different kind of churches exist right there. And, the question still remains to be answered: "Is Christ divided?" How many Christs are there? There is only one Christ. And, the church, his church, the one he himself built, according to Matthew 16:18, is his body,

whose head he is. (Ephesians 1:22,23 & Colossians 1:18). And, emphatically, the Bible says that there is only one body. (Ephesians 4:4). Dividing the body of Christ into various denominational bodies or sects is to divide Christ. But is it really possible? Can Christ really be divided? No, it is not possible. People can believe in different individuals and might see them as Christ, but they cannot be Christ. There is only one Christ, and there is none other besides him. And, the same is true about his church. He has only one church, to which he adds daily those who are being saved by believing in him and by obeying his commands. People can build various churches, give them different names—but man-made churches can never be the one church of Christ.

Christ was so concerned about the unity of his followers that just prior to his death on the cross, to his Father in heaven he prayed, saying, "I do not pray for these alone," (the disciples or the apostles who were with him at that time "but also for those" he said, "who will believe in me through their word; that they all may be one, as you, Father, are in me, and I in you; that they also may be one in US, that the world may believe that you sent me." (John 17:20,21).

It is possible today for all those who believe in Christ everywhere to be one in him, as his apostles were with him, to speak the same things, and that there be no divisions among them, but that they be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment? Yes, it is absolutely possible. And, if it was not so then Christ would not have prayed the prayer that he did. Also, Paul, the apostle, would not have pleaded the same with the Christians at Corinth. And, look, at the effect it would produce, Christ said that such a unity would cause the world to believe in Him. Just imagine all the diverse kinds of activities, and mission work, etc., being done by various organizations to project a certain type of "Christianity" or "church". People believing differently, teaching differently, yet all claiming to be followers of Christ! Instead of causing people to believe in Christ and to become his disciples; all such things confuse them, to the extent that they lose all interest in Christ.!

The greatest need of the hour is, readers, like the apostle Paul said, "that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together

in the same mind and in the same judgment." How is it possible? Well, we have a God given standard, the Bible. God is not the author of confusion (1 Corinthians 14:33). The Bible does not tell men different things. Men through the centuries have established denominational and sectarian churches; they are teaching different ways to be saved through Christ; they have established different norms of worship in their churches; different rules and regulations to become members of their denominations; they take a certain passage from the Bible, out of its context, and create a peculiar teaching out of it, and mislead people into believing it as God's truth. Let me quote the apostle Paul once again from Romans 16:17 & 18, he said: "Now I urge you brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the heart of the simple." Of what doctrine was he talking about? Certainly, the doctrine of Christ! (2 John 9,10).

What is the doctrine of Christ? Peter preached: "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12). Obviously, he was speaking of the name of Christ. Hence, in the beginning, his followers were called "Christians", after the name Christ. (Acts 11:26). They were not types or kinds of Christians, but Christians only. Therefore, they were united by one name only. They were all members of only one church, the church of Christ, whose congregations were everywhere, and put together they were known as "churches of Christ." (Romans 16:16). So they were united in one church. They were not using books of men, such as catechism, confession of faith, Lord's prayer, or a book of manual or discipline, etc., in their worship services, but the Bible was the only book used in their worship services. (John 4:24).

Thus they were united by the teaching of God's word alone. They had not made any rules or regulations or forms to accept people as members of the church. But, all were encouraged to believe in Christ, repent of sins, confess him as the Son of God, and be baptized for the remission of sins; and were told that by obeying these commands of the Lord they would be saved, and the Lord himself would add them to his church and they will

become Christians. (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 8:35-39; Acts 2:47). Thus, they were all united by one plan of salvation. They were encouraged to abide in the doctrine of Christ. (2 Jno.9-11; Revelation 22:18,19).

As long as the apostles of Christ lived on earth, they were able to maintain Christian unity in one church of Christ by the teaching of God's word. After the passing away of the apostles, however, things slowly began to change, and now, after nineteen hundred years later, we see a multiplicity of denominational churches, sects, and assemblies of different names; adhering to peculiar beliefs and doctrines, all over the world. Remember, this confusion exist because of man and not because of God, because God is not the author of confusion, but of peace and unity. (1 Corinthians 14:33).

Christ's prayer of unity of all his followers in him can still be answered or become a reality, if people individually and collectively, wherever they may be, discard man-made names, denominational organizations, man-made creed books, and teachings and doctrines. And, instead, accept whatever the Bible teaches. We read, at Ephesians 4:2-6 "with all lowliness and gentleness, with long suffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, (*church, Eph. 1:22,23*), and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

What is your response?

## ***Who would Choose Error?***

**J.C. CHOATE**

We are amazed at the number of well-known brethren today who are going off into error. They have become the Judases of our time, traitors, apostates, surrendering to the enemy, and even willing to preach another gospel, becoming legalists in liberalism.

What a shame! How sad! People who do such things do not love the Lord and His truth, no matter how loudly they claim it.

How can one genuinely love the Lord when he is unwilling to follow His word, when he refuses to teach the truth? Just watch these people. As others who have gone before them, you will see that they will end up far out into error. Whatever you do, don't follow them. If you do, your end will be the same as theirs. Only repentance and a return to God would make it possible for them to be restored, but most of these will have gone too far and will have too much pride to return.

Surely God's will is clearly stated. It is plain and simple. One cannot read through the Bible without seeing a contrast between God's side and Satan's way.

For instance, in Genesis 2:16,17 God told Adam that he could eat of every tree of the garden except for the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and if he ate of that fruit he would surely die. In Genesis 3:1-6 the serpent tempted Eve to partake of the fruit, and then Eve gave it to Adam and he ate also. Now who was right and who was wrong? Would you take God's side or would you say that the serpent and Adam and Eve did the right thing? And if you took that position, how many would agree with you? The numbers in the garden were three against One, but God was right.

In Genesis 6 we have the story of Noah and the ark, and of how he and his family were saved from the flood which was sent to destroy the wicked. After reading that account, do you have any difficulty seeing who was right and who was wrong? Would you conclude that Noah and his family were right or would you take your stand with the majority? Who would argue that the wicked were unjustifiably destroyed? Again, the numbers pitted the whole world against God and the eight, but Noah was right.

In the New Testament, who was right and who was wrong in the case of the Lord and Judas? in the confrontation between Stephen and those who stoned him? the church of Saul who persecuted it? Would there be any real debate?

Which position would you take? the broad way or the narrow way (Matthew 7:13,14)? verbally expressing faith in God or actually doing His will (Matthew 7:21-23)? believing that Christ is the way or that there are many ways (John 14:6)? "*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved,*" or one can be saved by only believing that Christ is one's personal saviour (Mark 16:16)? that Christ built one church and that one must be a

member of His church to be saved, or that one may be a member of any church and go to heaven (Matthew 16:18,19; Acts 2:47)? that one must worship God in Spirit and in truth, or that one's worship is acceptable to God as long as he is sincerely striving to worship? Now who is it among us that cannot distinguish between these positions?

With all of the things that are being taught today which are contrary to the teaching of the Bible, are the ones who are preaching another gospel so naive, so ignorant of God's word, that they don't know any better? Do they find it so difficult to understand what the Bible actually teaches? And at the same time, are they unable to see that all of the false teachings out there in the religious world are contrary to the Lord's will? Do they really think that the rest of the church is so stupid, that we don't have the sense to read and study the Bible ourselves, to understand it, and to see the difference between truth and error?

May God help us to continue to love and reverence God's word, to believe it, obey it, and to be faithful throughout our lives. Only then can we be what the Lord would have us to be, so that we might be saved in this world and in the world to come, by the grace of God.

*Especially for Women*

## *Search For Truth*

*What did they do?*

**BETTY BURTON CHOATE**

"I'm enjoying our studies so much, Andrew," Rachel said as they settled down at the table with their Bibles.

"So am I" agreed Andrew. "I don't know why I had thought that the Bible and religion were dull, and that people studied only because it was a religious duty. We were missing the best things in life!"

"I was reading this afternoon from Acts, again! You know we were talking last night about the enmity that developed toward the apostles, because the religious leaders didn't want them preaching about Jesus. The first Christian who was killed was

Stephen, in chapter seven. But then a man named Saul — who was also a very strong Jewish leader—began to imprison Christians and try to destroy the church. His persecution had the opposite effect, though, because they scattered everywhere to avoid the persecution. The surprising thing was that it says *'they went everywhere preaching the word.'*

"I see," said Andrew. "That's in Acts 8:4; and then the story begins of Philip preaching in a city called Samaria. Verse 5 says he *'preached Christ'* to them. Then verse 12 tells what happened: *'... when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized.'* This verse tells us several important things: that Philip taught two specific points — the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ. So we know that it was important for them to understand about the kingdom — the church — and they had to realize, too that salvation is in the name of Christ. But teaching on those two subjects must have included much more; otherwise, why would anyone have been baptized? And since the verse specifies that 'men' and 'women' were baptized, we know that no babies were christened!

"Rachel, I have a great idea! As we study about these times of preaching and of people becoming Christians, let's make a table showing all the facts about each case. That will help us to see more clearly just what happened."

"What a good way to study!" agreed Rachel. "We can make it here in this notebook, along with the questions we've written that we want to continue to study."

"Ok, we'll begin: First, [*the hearers*] to the people in **Jerusalem**, [*Scripture reference*] in **Acts 2**, the apostles taught [*what was preached*] that **Jesus was the Son of God**; [*response: what the people did*] the people were **cut to the heart** [*belief*], and they were told to **repent** and be **baptized** [*what God did in response*] for the **remission of their sins** [*saved*].

"Second, [*the hearers*] to the people in **Jerusalem at the temple**, [*Scripture reference*] in **Acts 3 & 4**, the apostles taught [*what was preached*] that **Jesus was the Son of God**; [*response: what the people did*] the people **believed** and they were told to **repent** and be **converted** [*what God did in response*] for the **refreshing from God** [*saved*]."

"This will be so helpful," Rachel remarked as she wrote.

"When we see it outlined on paper, all together, it will be easy to understand just what was preached and what those people did to be saved."

"Let's see . . ." Andrew said, skimming the pages as he turned the book of Acts, "after the persecution began, a man named Philip went to place called [*the hearers*] **Samaria**, [*Scripture reference*] in Acts 8. He taught [*what was preached*] **Christ, things concerning the kingdom and the name of Christ**; [*response: what the people did*] the people **believed** and they were baptized."

"One man was named specifically," Rachel said: "**Simon**, he also **believed** what Philip was teaching and was baptized."

"This is interesting," Andrew commented as he continued to read. "An angel told Philip to go and teach a man traveling on a desert road. Hm-mm—I wonder why the angel didn't go himself?"

"Why didn't Jesus send angels out to teach the world?" Rachel asked, continuing Andrew's thought. "Maybe He wanted people to teach people."

"Maybe so. Anyway, Philip left Samaria and went out there to teach [*the hearer*] the man from **Ethiopia**, [*Scripture reference*] in Acts 8:26. He [*what was preached*] **preached Jesus to him, explained things Isaiah prophesied about the death of Jesus**; [*response: what the man did*] **asked what prevented him from being baptized**; [*requirement stated*] '*If you believe . . .*' [*response: confession of faith in Christ*] '*I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God*'; Philip **baptized him**; the man went on his way **rejoicing**."

"This is similar to the part about Philip teaching the Samaritans. It says he '*preached Jesus*', but the eunuch's response was a question: '*What hinders me from being baptized?*' How did he know anything about baptism? Is it so connected to the story of Christ that one can't be really told without explaining the other?"

"Maybe so. We'll have to study that question more, too. I was wondering, though, since they were in a desert, do you think that man was sprinkled, like some people are today?" Rachel asked.

"No — because verse 38 says, *And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him.*"



"Andrew, do you wish we had a Philip here who could baptized us? Or explain to us what we need to do. I remember that I was baptized as a young girl — maybe nine or ten years old. Was that the same as these people did?"

"I don't know, but we'll learn the answer. Probably we would learn faster if someone was teaching us, but *we can read and think for ourselves*. We're *praying*, too, as we study, that God will help us to understand what He is saying in the Bible. And He knows that we want to do whatever He wants us to do. So surely our questions will be answered in time."

*To be continued . . .*

## ***Life Is Short And The Death Is Sure***

FRANCIS DAVID

The other day I went to the market, there on one of the doors of the shop a sticker was pasted with these words: "Life is short and the death is sure." For few minutes I was just meditating and soon I realised that how true this fact is. The book of God also tells us about the same fact. Infact it reminds us again and again that we do not have long to live here. The Psalmist in the Bible says: "The days of our lives are seventy years; and it by reason of strength they are eighty years; yet their boast is only labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off and we fly away" (Ps. 90:10). There is no doubt that man is trying his best to find for ways and means to increase his life span. There are many who do all kinds of exercises to keep themselves fit. Some take medication and vitamins so that they can live longer, but we should not forget the fact that one day we will leave this earth and go from here forever. The Psalmist is praying here to the Lord by saying "Lord, make me to know my end, and what is the measure of my days; That I may know how frail I am. Indeed, you have made my days as handbreadths, And my age is as nothing before you; Certainly every man at his best state is but vapour. Surely every one walks about like a shadow, Surely they busy themselves in vain; He heaps up riches, And does not know who will gather them." (Ps. 39:4-6). Man seriously think about the shortness of life. Our lives are very short on this earth

and this thing is emphasized again and again in the Bible. If you just look at your handbreadth and think about the life, soon you will realize that how short the life is.

James reminds us once again by asking a very important question about life, he asks: "What is your life?" Have we ever thought about it? We hear, people make plans about tomorrow without realizing that what will happen tomorrow. Sometime we hear them saying: "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such city, spend a year there, buy and sell and make a profit; and James says: where as you don't know what will happen tomorrow. "Further he says: "Your life is like a vapour that appear for a while and then vanished away." (James 4:13-17). The book of Job also tells us that man is here on this earth for few days. We read: "Man who is born of woman is of few days and full of troubles. He comes forth like a flower and fades away; he flees like a shadow and does not continue" (Job 14:1-2). We will all face death one day. There is no one who has the power to stop his death. The book of Hebrews in the new testament of the Bible says: "For it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment." (Heb. 9:27). It is certain that we will all die and there will be no escape from this reality of life. We may prolong our lives but one day we have to fly away. We will leave this earth one day and face the judgment. Apostle Paul, writing to Christians at Corinth reminds them that one day we all have to stand before the judgment seat of Christ. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things, done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad." (II Cor. 5:10). Each one of us shall give account of himself to God." (Rom. 14:12). Yes, the reality of death and the judgment is unavoidable. Considering this fact we must see that how short life really is.

There are worlds of people who do not take this reality, seriously. Many think that this life has been given to us to enjoy the worldly pleasures. Some comment and even scoff and say "who has seen tomorrow? we don't care about tomorrow, we want to enjoy ourselves." The wise preacher Solomon says these words to such people. "For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether it is good or whether it is evil." (Eccl. 12:14). How sad it is that there are number of people those do not care about God and spiritual

matters. The world has gone crazy and the people like more pleasure than spiritual things. One day there will be God's wrath on the unrighteous people. Paul writing to Christians at Rome says: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness. Because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse. Because they knew God, they did not glorify HIM as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened." (Rom. 1:18-21).

We see there are people who are seeking to be rich. They want to get rich at any cost. No matter what they have to sacrifice. They sometime sacrifice their families, reputation, spiritual life and because of this selfish attitude they have gone far from God. They have forgotten the importance of their lives on this earth. They don't realise that how long they are going to live here. There is a classic example in the Bible about a man who was rich but at the same time was fool. This particular man forgot about the uncertainty of its possessions. This man thought that since he got lot of wealth and he can enjoy his life forever on this earth. He forgot that life is short and the death is sure. He never thought for a moment that his life can be taken away any time. (You can read about this man in Luke chapter 12:13-20). These foolish words came from the mouth of this Rich fool man: "And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; EAT, DRINK, and BE MERRY." And God told him; "YOU FOOL"! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?" No Matter how rich or wealthy we are but we can't stop our death. This particular rich man never thought about God. We don't realise that we are strangers on this earth. We are just passing through. Apostle Peter reminds the Christians by telling them, "Beloved, I beg you as so journeyers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul. (1. Pet. 2:11).

How much time we have been given on this earth, we don't know. But please remember how quickly the life passes by. Let us be serious about it. The time which has been given to us

should be spent wisely. In the book of Ephesians Paul writes to Christians by saying: "See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil (Eph. 5:15-16). Let me ask you, are you serious about your life? Do you think that you are ready to die? Have you made preparations? Do you realise that your life is uncertain? Please understand that you and I have not long to live here." Our life is here like a journey. One day our journey will be completed and then we will say good bye to this earth. We will go to eternity. We are not going to come back again here, because this world is not our home.

Jesus our Lord brought the salvation to all mankind. He shed his blood for all. All are welcome to come to him and accept him as their saviour. Jesus's sacrifice was unique. You know, he did not die for some particular community. He died for all the people of the world. He loves you and he says: "COME to me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matt. 11:28). If you come to Jesus and obey him then you don't need to worry because Jesus has promised you eternal life in heaven. It would be a blessing to die in the Lord. The Bible says: "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." (Rev. 14:13). We all die in Adam but will be made live in Jesus." (I Cor. 15:22). Yes, if we die in the Lord, the eternal life will be ours. It would be a great blessing to live with Jesus our lord in heaven. Have you given your life to him? Are you still waiting to surrender your life to him? I would urge you, please don't delay. Life is short and the death is sure. Today is the day of salvation. (II Cor. 6:2). Christ expects a complete obedience from you. May be some of you already believe in him. If you have believed in Jesus, you must also confess him as the Son of God (Matt. 10:32-33; Rom. 10:10). You must repent of your old sinful life. Repentance is essential for salvation. (Acts. 2:38; 3:19). You don't have to stop here, you need to be baptised. Baptism is a command of God and therefore cannot be avoided. The Bible says: "He who believes and is baptised will be saved . . ." (Mark 16:16). Three thousand people were converted on the day of Pentecost. What did these people do? They were baptised (Acts. 2:38; verse 41). These people on the day of Pentecost did not say, to Peter: "Sir we do believe in Jesus and accept him as our personal saviour, but we don't want to be baptised." When a

person is baptised he puts on Jesus Christ. (Gal. 3:27). Without baptism you just cannot put on Christ. Through baptism a person is baptised into Jesus's death. (Romans 6:3-4). After your complete obedience, you will be added to the church, that is the body of Christ. (Acts 2:47; I Cor. 12:13; Col. 2:12). After becoming Christian we need to abound in the work of the Lord. (I Cor. 15:58). Be faithful to Jesus everyday and all of your life. "Be faithful unto death and I will give you the crown of life," this what Jesus has promised to his faithful disciples. (Rev. 2:10). Now when you are in Jesus, you are not scared of death because you have an assurance from Jesus that he has a place for you in heaven to live with him. (John. 14:1-3). To be in Jesus means to make preparations for eternal life in heaven. Lastly I would like to mention the words which apostle Paul said in II Tim. 4:6-8. He says: "The time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that day, and not to me only but to all who have loved his appearing. Are you prepared to face the judgment? Are you waiting for death to come and remind you but please listen carefully, when death comes it will be too late, Act now.

## ***The Lord's Supper***

**GARY C. HAMPTON**

### **VARIOUS VIEWS EXIST CONCERNING THE LORD'S SUPPER**

Some believe in transubstantiation, where the bread and fruit of the vine become the actual body of Christ during the partaking of the Lord's supper. "When the priest at Mass says over the bread and wine Christ's words, 'This is my body . . . This is the chalice of my blood . . .' the bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Christ, by the power of Christ working through the priest the bread and wine, though still appearing to be bread and wine, become Christ" (Anthony J. Wilhelm, *Christ Among Us: A Modern Presentation of the Catholic Faith*, page 244).

Others teach that it does not matter whether or not one partakes of the bread and fruit of the vine as our Lord did. "For, behold, I say unto you, that it mattereth not what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink when ye partake of the sacrament, if it so be that ye do it with an eye single to my glory—remembering unto the Father my body which was laid down for you, and my blood which was shed for the remission of your sins" (Joseph Smith, *Doctrine and Covenants*, Section 27:2).

Still others believe the Lord did not set forth the time to partake of the supper. "Jesus did not say when or how often believers should observe the Lord's Supper. He instituted it on Thursday night. New Testament Christians observed it on the Lord's Day" (Herschel H. Hobbs, *The Baptist Faith and Message*, page 90).

### **THE LORD'S SUPPER IS A MEMORIAL SERVICE**

Memorials, like statues, tombstones and plaques, are used all over the world in honor of men, especially the dead. The Lord's supper is a memorial service. "And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, 'This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.' Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant<sup>a</sup> in My blood, which is shed for you" (Luke 22:19-20). Paul tells us Christ also directed the disciples to partake of the cup while remembering him. He went on to write, "For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes" (1 Corinthians 11:23-34, esp. 26).

So, every time a Christian partakes of the Lord's supper, he is partaking of a memorial feast. Each should have a thoughtful attitude as he considers just what a great sacrifice Jesus made in his behalf. There should be a natural inward reflection as he thinks of his own inadequacy in overcoming sin and the Lord's selfless, sinless offering of himself on the cruel cross despite the fact that he was guilty of no wrong. To fail to reflect would be to sin. "Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup" (1 Corinthians 11:27-34).

### **THE PASSOVER FORESHADOWED THE LORD'S SUPPER**

The passover was a shadow of the Lord's supper. The passover feast was eaten by the Israelites once a year to remind

them of their release from Egyptian bondage (Exodus 11:1-8; 12:25-27,46). When Paul encouraged the Corinthians to withdraw from a sinner in the church, he wrote, "Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us" (1 Corinthians 5:7). Just as the Israelites were reminded of their release from bondage in Egypt each time they partook of the Passover, Christians should be reminded that Jesus' sacrifice is their means of release from the bondage of sin (Romans 6:16-18; Ephesians 1:7; Hebrews 9:22-28). Because he is our passover, not one of his bones was broken (John 19:31-36).

### **THE SUPPER'S TWO ELEMENTS**

As we gather around the Lord's table, we will find the feast has two elements, the bread and the fruit of the vine (Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 14:23-25). The bread would have been unleavened, since Jesus and the disciples had just finished the passover meal. God had told Moses to tell the people, "Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses. For whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel" (Exodus 12:15).

It is interesting to note that Matthew actually tells us it was "the first day of the feast of unleavened bread" (Matthew 26:17). Matthew notes Jesus words as he took the bread, saying, "this is My body." This has lead some to teach the doctrine of transubstantiation, which says the bread and fruit of the vine become the literal body and the blood of Jesus. Since Jesus was present in his physical body when this feast was instituted, it seems obvious that he was using a metaphor. Some of us say, "I'm so hungry, I could eat a horse." We do not mean we could literally eat a whole horse, but we are saying we have a large appetite. Similarly, Jesus was not saying we eat and drink the literal body and blood, but that the bread and fruit of the vine represent such to the Christian.

### **FREQUENCY OF PARTAKING**

The Lord's supper should be taken upon the first day of every week. Luke wrote, "Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until

midnight" (Acts 20:7). Paul was in Troas seven days (verse 6), yet the disciples came together to break bread on the Lord's day. The first day was also the day Jesus was raised and the day his church was established (Mark 16:9; Acts 2: Leviticus 23:15-16). Now, when God said, "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy" (Exodus 20:8), the Jews understood that he meant every Sabbath.

Gus Nichols wrote a good article on the frequency of our Lord's supper observance. In it, he quoted 1 Corinthians 11:20-22 and said, "If a school teacher should say to some naughty boys, 'You did not come here to learn,' she would be understood to mean that they should have come for that purpose. Hence the apostle's meaning is clear when in reproving the church he said they had not assembled to eat the Lord's supper." From this excellent analysis, we conclude that early Christians assembled to partake of the Lord's supper. Nichols also tells us "the Greek preposition 'Kata' is used in this passage, and means 'every,' with reference to week." (1 Corinthians 16:2) Thus, we have the early church assembling every first day of the week. We know they assembled to break bread and Paul tells them to give every first day of the week.

## ***Holding To The Faithful Word***

**CLEM THURMAN**

*"Holding to the faithful word, which is according to the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in the sound doctrine, and to convict the gainsayers"* (Titus 1:9). Men have always been prone to follow their own ways and turn away from the guidance of God. That has been a besetting sin with the human family from the time of Adam until the present. In the Garden of Eden, God never gave many rules; but Adam and Eve soon rebelled against God's guidance and determined to do what they wanted (Gen. 3). Cain and Abel brought sacrifices to God, but God would not accept Cain's because of his sin (Gen. 4:7). Because he persisted in his own willful way, Cain murdered Abel and departed from God (Gen. 4:8ff). Israel was chosen as a special people by God, and He gave them a law at Sinai. They



pledged themselves to keep that law (Ex. 24:3), but soon began to rebel against God and sought to follow human wisdom.

The departure of God's elect people marks the destruction and failure of the whole human race. It has been difficult to get people to remain faithful to the way and the wisdom of God. Failure, ruin and destruction have always been the result of man's turning from God and following his own way. *"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death"* (Prov. 14:12). The apostle Paul wrote, *"The word of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us who are saved, it is the power of God. . . Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For seeing that in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom knew not God, it was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe"* (1 Cor. 1:18-21). The wisdom of man in the fields of science, philosophy, psychology and other branches of human learning has been emphasized and exalted until man has become puffed up with his own wisdom and ignores the wisdom of God and the way of righteousness. The tendency of man to follow his own wisdom invariably extends fatally into the realm of religion.

The church of the Lord has imbibed of the spirit of worldly wisdom and fallen heavily under the spell of worldly ideals. There is much "enthusiasm" and "pep rally" in many churches, but a lack of real spirituality and righteousness. Denominations have long used subtly secular ways to appeal to the world without preaching the uncompromising gospel. Now, many in the Lord's church seem to be falling into the same error. To prevent further departure from God and His way, I firmly believe that there are some things we must do.

### **PREACH THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL**

I am afraid that many churches have lost sight of the Christ and His gospel. We hear much today about "preaching to the needs of people." Man is a social being, interacting with others in the community, in business, in family, etc. This leads many to preach to the social needs of folk. But the truth is that, although man certainly has social needs, our greatest need is spiritual. Our greatest problem is sin. And the preaching of the gospel is the only means we have to solve that problem: *"I am not*

*ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation . . . For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 1:16: 3:23-24).*

Too many folk today ware like those of whom God speaks, *"The time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine; but, having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside unto fables"*(2 Tim. 4:3-4). It seems that conditions are such that people just cannot see the departures, and trends toward departures, that are prevalent among us. Men are never very skillful in diagnosing their own spiritual illness. People have nearly always failed to realize they were drifting away from God until the departure was complete.

The Bible is not just "a good book." As Paul said it, *"It is the word of God"* (1 Thes. 2:13). Because it is inspired of God (2 Tim. 3:16-17), it is actually God speaking to us. To understand the Bible, we don't need "a new hermeneutic," we need to read, study and believe it! *"Whereby when ye read ye may understand"* (Eph. 3:4). It amazes me that so many think we cannot understand the Bible. Who dare accuse the God of heaven of giving us a message that is incomprehensible? Let's get back to being the Bible-preaching, Bible-believing, Bible-quoting and Bible-living people we once were!

### **PREACH THE "ONENESS" OF THE CHURCH**

Jesus said, *"I will build my church"* (Matt. 16:18). He prayed, *"That they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee"* (John 17:21). He commanded, *"All speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you . . . Is Christ divided?"* (1 Cor. 1:10-13). That teaching is clear. Jesus never built a denomination, nor has he ever authorized anyone to join one. Yet, we have some in the church today contending that we should fellowship those in denominations and join with them in their "good works." Some openly declare that they feel more comfortable with their "denominational brethren" than with those in the church which Jesus built. This departure will become worse, if we don't return to the Bible teaching on the undenominational nature of the church.

We need to preach Christ and His church — not one or the other, but both — deploring every "church" which man built and

which competes with His church for the souls of men. Jesus died for the church, purchased it with His own blood (Eph. 5:25; Acts 20:28). When the Lord saves people, He adds them to His church (Acts 2:47). The church for which Jesus died is not a denomination, nor is it the sum of denominations. That church is not "one among many." It is unique, "one of a kind," because it is built by the Lord. That preaching may not be popular among the denominations, but it is the gospel! And unless we get back to preaching it, we will never please the Lord. Paul wrote, "*Christ loved the church, and gave himself up for it*" (Eph. 5:25). We need to develop enough love for that same church to preach it and defend it against all spurious churches.

### **PREACH THE PLAN OF SALVATION**

If we "*hold to the faithful word*," we will clearly show sinners what to do to be saved. Jesus said, "*Preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved*" (Mark 16:15-16). On the day the church began, Peter told those who believed his preaching, "*Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins*" (Acts 2:38). The result? "*They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added to them in that day about three thousand souls . . . The Lord added to the church daily such as were being saved*" (Acts 2:41,47). The "*faithful word*" demands that we teach that all those who thus obey the Lord are saved and added to His church. but the "*faithful word*" demands that we NOT recognize as a "*brother*" any who have not done that! Jesus still asks, "*Why call ye me. Lord. Lord, and do not the things that I say?*" (Luke 6:46).

We hear much preaching from some quarters today on the grace of God. This is good, and long overdue. But some seem to believe that we are saved by grace only. But look at Eph. 2:8 "*By grace have ye been saved through faith.*" Everything that God does is a matter of grace, because we don't deserve any blessing from Him. "*While we were yet sinners. Christ died for us . . . That he by the grace of God should taste of death for every man*" (Rom. 5:8; Heb. 2:9). The cross, the blood the gospel, remission of sins, "*all spiritual blessings*" (Eph. 1:3); etc. are all the result of God's grace. But, while grace is God's part, man has a part, also: "*through faith.*" Just as God's grace includes all that God does for us, so does saving faith include all that man does

in response to His grace. Thus, "by faith" (Heb. 11), we repent, we confess, we are baptized, we serve faithfully in His church to which He adds us. When people asked the apostles what to DO (Acts 2:37), God directed the apostles to tell them (v. 38). There is something for man to DO in order to be saved from sin, and to "be faithful unto death" (Rev. 2:10) so that he can be saved eternally (2 Tim. 2:10). And, just as everything God does for us is a matter of grace, so everything we do in order to be saved is a matter of faith.

It is time, probably past time, for all of us to call a halt and ask ourselves, as members of the church of the Lord: "What direction are we headed?" Are we separating ourselves further from the world, or are we moving toward it? We need to understand that worldly tendency always is in the direction of taking man away from God. And we need to understand that "friendship with the world is enmity with God" (James 4:4), and when we become more like the world we become less like Christ.

Brethren let's turn it around! Let's get back to preaching the Bible. Let's preach the unique nature of the church which Jesus built. Let's get back to preaching the Lord's plan of salvation, and how to develop "the mind of Christ" (Phil. 2:5) so that we can "follow his steps" (1 Pet. 2:21). Let's get back to being the people of God, whether the world likes it or not. Let's do it, whether the denominational world likes it or not. Let's do it, whether the weak or departing brethren like it or not. For the Lord will approve!

## ***The Value of Truth***

**JOHNNY RAMSEY**

Jesus clearly taught the value of truth when He stated, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). When men receive not "the love of the truth," they invite all kinds of problems into their lives (2 Thes. 2:10-12).

### **TRUTH NEVER DIES**

*It answers not. It does not take offense.  
But with a mighty silence bides its time.*

*As some great cliff that braves the elements,  
And lifts through all the storms its head sublime,  
It ever stands, uplifted by the wise.*

*Truth never dies.*

The Bible gives many examples of those who had a disdain for the truth, as well as some willing to die to preserve it. Johoiakim, a wicked ruler (Jer.36), is an example of one who hated the word of God and tried to destroy it. Conversely, Jeremiah, the stalwart prophet, was willing to defend the way of godliness, even if it meant the dungeon! "Truth, crushed to earth, will rise again" Evil men crucified the Savior because they could not overwhelm the will of God and they were filled with envy (Mark 15:10) at its success.

Satan's propaganda is deceptive, clever and appealing to people who do not think of the consequences of fighting against God (2 Chron. 13:12). Truth is demanding, so weak people make "lies their refuge" (Isa. 28:15). This poem fits our point well:

*Though all the world be shattered,  
His truth remains the same,  
His righteous laws still potent  
And 'Father' still His name.  
Though we face wars and struggles,  
And feel their good and rod,  
We know above confusion,  
There always will be God.*

A gigantic battle for the minds and souls of men is always raging. Will we take the broad way that leads to hell (Matt. 7:13-14), or have the courage and stamina to fight for truth and right (Amos 5:15)? If we have misplaced values and lack real conversion, it will be difficult to overcome the world. But, if truth is dearer to us than the praise of men, we shall be victorious — both now and in the day of Judgment! If we never get deeply involved in the work of the Lord because we listen to soft preaching, we will never value truth enough to be rewarded by the Lord Jesus, who is the essence of Truth (John 14:6).

*Jesus, Jesus, Jesus,  
Sweetest name I know,  
Fills my every longing,  
Keeps me singing as I go.*

# Why Was Jesus Baptized?

*Matt. 3:13-15; 21:23-27*

JASON ROBERTS

Our sacred text affirms. "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John. to be baptized of him. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him."

Why was Jesus baptized? Was it because he had sins that needed remission? After all the Bible does teach us that baptism is for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; cf. 22:16). In fact Jesus himself said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). Peter recognized the truth of this statement when he penned, "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us" (1 Pet. 3:21)

The Bible teaches us that Jesus was one "who knew no sin" (2 Cor. 5:21), "who did no sin, neither was any guile found in his mouth:" (1 Pet. 2:22), who "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15). If our Lord was baptized because he had sins that needed remission, then that implies that He had transgressed the very law of God (1 John 3:4), but he said, ". . . for I do **always** those things that **please** him. (John 8:29b, emp. added JRR). If our Lord would have committed sin, he would be in need a savior, and he who needs a savior cannot be one.

Jesus gave us the reason as to why he allowed John to baptize him. He said to him, "suffer (allow) it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to **fulfill all righteousness**? the word fulfill (pleroo) means to fill up, to complete. The same word is used when Jesus referred to the Law of Moses in which he came to fulfill (Matt. 5:17).

The word righteousness is also found in 1 John 3:7 in the context of obedience, "he that **doeth righteousness** is righteous." It means attaining that inward character or quality of being just, or right with God. Did Jesus fulfill this quality of righteousness? The prophet Isaiah testified in the affirmative. He

wrote in view of the death of our Lord, "He (God) shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall **my righteous servant** justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities" (Isa. 53:11). The apostle Paul, and his testimony in view of his own death, clearly reveals this, "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, **the righteous judge**, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Tim. 4:6-8). When Paul was in Athens he said that Jesus would "judge the world in **righteousness**" (Acts 17:31). If the idea of course is quite clear, it is inconceivable for a righteous person to receive a crown of righteousness from someone who wasn't righteous. John, in writing about Christ being the propitiation for our sins, identified him as ". . . Jesus Christ **the righteous**." Therefore he met the qualifications of being the satisfactory sin offering for the sins of humanity. Indeed, our Lord's character exemplified a life of righteousness.

In Matt. 21:23-27 another reason is given as to why Jesus was baptized. In this text we have the account of Christ teaching in the temple. The chief priests and elders question the *authority of His teaching* (v.23). Jesus responds by asking them a question, "The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or men? (v. 24). Jesus, in effect, had them on the horns of a dilemma. They were unable to answer His question, but by implication they knew that the baptism of John was divine in its given nature.

But if Jesus had not been baptized they would have had "Him" on the horns of a dilemma. They would have looked him straight in the eyes and said, "well if the baptism of John is by the authority of heaven (God) then why haven't you submitted to 'it'?" Consequently the credibility of Christ would have been diminished beyond measure.

The chief priests and elders knew that "all of God's commandments are righteousness (Psalm 119:172), and that's why Jesus said that his baptism was to 'fulfill all righteousness.'" (Matt.3:15). Doing the commands of God makes one righteous. Jesus said, ". . . for I do always those things that please him" (John 8:29b).

# Purposes Of The Old Testament

ROYCE FREDERICK

The Law of Moses, in the "Old Testament" portion of the Bible, was given only to the Jews, the nation of Israel. It was removed when Jesus died on the cross: ". . . *And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross*" (Col. 2:14; see Gal. 3:24-25; Rom. 7:4,6). Jesus replaced it with His New Testament (or "covenant"; Heb. 8:6-9; 9:15-17). This covenant is for all people of all nations (Matt. 28:19).

Since the Law of Moses has been removed, why does the New Testament contain many quotations from the Old Testament scriptures? Although it is not God's law for His people today, the Old Testament still serves many purposes:

The Old Testament tells us about God.

It reveals that He is our Maker (Matt. 19:4-5).

It reveals that He is the Author of both the Old and New Covenants (Heb. 8:6-9).

It teaches us about His character (I Pet. 3:10-12).

The Old Testament tells us about ourselves.

It tells us of sin's origin and destructive power (Rom. 5:12; I Jn. 3:11-12).

It shows us how sinful we are (Rom. 3:10-23; 7:13).

It shows us that we cannot earn righteousness by trying to perfectly obey laws (Rom. 7:22; 8:4).

The Old Testament tells us about Christ.

It tells us the historical and religious background of the nation through which Christ came (Lk. 2:23-24).

It foretold His life and work, verifying His identity as the Son of God (Is. 7:14; Matt. 1:23; Mic. 5:2; Matt. 2:6).

It ruled the Jews to lead them to Christ (Gal. 3:23-25).

It leads us to Christ as we "walk" through its pages with those people (II Tim. 3:15; I Cor. 10:7, 11).

*"For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope"* (Rom. 15:4).

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