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EDITORIAL

What does the Bible Teach?

"Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son."

Who does not have God with him? The one who does not abide in the doctrine of Christ, according to the passage cited above from 2 John 9. Where does one find the doctrine of Christ? Of course, in the New Testament of the Bible. According to Hebrews 1:1 & 2, "God, who at various times and in different ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom He also made the worlds." To mankind God has spoken, and presently He speaks to us all through His Son Jesus Christ. How does Christ speak to us today? Just before His death, burial, resurrection and ascension into heaven, Christ has promised to His disciples, the apostles, that, "These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, He will teach you all things, and will bring to your remembrance all things that I have said to you." Because, said He, "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own

authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you." (John 14:25 & 26; John 16:12-14). The apostles were therefore baptized with the Holy Spirit, as we read in Acts 1:4-8; Acts 2:1-4. Of course, Paul, who wrote much of the New Testament's books, was not with them at that time, but he was later chosen by the Lord Himself to be an apostle, as we read in Acts 9:10-19 Acts 13:1-12.

The doctrine of Christ, therefore, constitutes whatever Christ and His apostles taught through the New Testament of the Bible. Transgressing, or going beyond, the doctrine of Christ means believing, teaching and practicing such things which are not taught in the New Testament of Christ. It is that simple. The doctrine of Christ, amongst many things, includes, the Person of Christ, His deity, the Bible teaches that He is God. (John 1:1-3 & 14; Colossians 1:12-17). He was born of a virgin, according to Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38. He had a human mother, but God was His Father, by whose power He was born on earth, therefore, He was the Son of God. (John 3:16). The Bible teaches that "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). According to the doctrine of Christ, one must believe in Him and must repent of sins and must confess Him by mouth the Son of God and must be baptized for the forgiveness of sins, to be saved or to receive salvation from sins. (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 8:35-39). Baptism, according to the doctrine of Christ, is a burial in water, Romans 6:3-5 and Colossians 2:12; which signifies His death and His burial and His resurrection, which is the gospel itself. The plan of salvation of the doctrine of Christ is for the older, people, who are capable to sin, to feel the necessity of salvation, to understand the gospel truth, to believe in Christ, to repent of sins, to confess Christ the Son of God, and to willingly submit to be immersed in water to be baptized for the remission of sins. Thus, for example, baptizing little children or sprinkling water for baptizing, is transgressing the doctrine of Christ. The doctrine of Christ further teaches, that one becomes a follower of Christ or a Christian, and Christ Himself adds that person to His Church (Acts 2:47; Acts 11:26). Christ has a church, which He Himself established (Matthew 16:18; Romans 16:16). His church is His Kingdom (Matthew 16:18,19; Colossians 1:12,13). His

church is His body of His saved people, and He is the head of His church, the body. (Colossians 1:18,24; Ephesians 1:22,23; 4:4; 5:23). The doctrine of Christ condemns division or denominationalising of His church. (1 Corinthians 1:10-13). His church, the doctrine of Christ teaches, comes together on every first day of week, Sunday, to worship Him by praying, singing praises of Him, studying from His book, gathering a collection for his work, and by partaking of the Lord's supper, which reminds every Christian of the greatest sacrifice that God has made for the world. (Acts 2:42; 1 Corinthians 11:17-29; 16:1,2; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16 & 17). Christ's doctrine also teaches that it is appointed by God for every person to die once and then to face Christ on the day of His judgment, when He will appear. (Hebrews 9:27; 2 Corinthians 5:10). He has told us that He will come back to judge the world in righteousness (Acts 17:30, 31; Matthew 25: 31-46; John 5:28 & 29), but He has chosen not to tell us when He will come back (Matthew 24:36-42; 2 Peter 3:9-11; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 & 5:1-3). Therefore, to speculate and try to set time and date for His second coming is going beyond the doctrine of Christ.

In fact, to be sure that one has the Father and the Son; that one is walking and living by the will of God; that one will attain the heavenly eternal life, one must ascertain that he/she abides in the doctrine of Christ. And, it is simple and easy to find out this. First, if you do not believe in Christ, then believe in Him with all your heart that he is the Son of God and that He died for you on the cross. Then, to be saved from sins, obey His gospel commands, as listed at Mark 16:16 and Acts 2:38. Upon doing this the Lord Himself will add you to His church, wherein you will worship the Lord and will live the faithful life for Him as long as you are on earth, by abiding in the doctrine of Christ. On the other hand, if you already believe in Christ, then presumably, you are a member of some religious organization, and that you worship God and do various religious acts believing them to be the commandments of God and the doctrine of Christ. However, you need to examine all of these things in light of what the Bible teaches. Because your soul is at stake. Find out according to the New Testament doctrine of Christ, whether you have obeyed the commands of the gospel to be saved? Are you a member of the church that is mentioned in the Bible, the one Christ built, died for, shed His blood to purchase, of which He is the head and

which is called by His name alone? The act of worship that you engage in, are they supported by the doctrine of Christ? The various things that you do in the name of religion, are they authorised by the doctrine of Christ? The name that you are called by religiously, is it mentioned in the doctrine of Christ?

To abide in the doctrine of Christ, do not accept anything in religion if it is not supported and authorized by the New Testament doctrine of Christ. There are some who are teaching that Christ is the one who matters and not the doctrine. But listen to Christ Himself, He said, at John 12:48, "He who rejects me, and does not receive my words, has that which judges Him—the word that I have spoken will judge Him in the last day." That's the doctrine of Christ!

What is the Church?

J.C. CHOATE

We know that there are many "churches" in the world. All claim to be of God, naturally, And yet there are some strange ideas concerning what the church actually is. Many define it as a building where the people come together for worship. Others think of it as being a denomination. Still others would say the church is made up of all the denominations as a spiritual body of people, ignoring the many differences in name and doctrine.

If we want to understand what the church really is, we need to go back to the New Testament for our answer. The word "church" comes from the Greek word "ekklesia", which means "the called out". The idea is that the Lord calls people out of the world, into one group or body, and that they become His people. They are called by the gospel, to believe that Jesus died for them, that He was buried, and that on the third day He was resurrected from the grave (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). Christ had said that the gospel should be taken into all the world, and that those who believe it and would be baptized would be saved from their sins (Mark 16:15,16). The Lord Himself adds those who are being saved to the church (Acts 2:47).

Before His death, Christ had promised to built His church (Matthew 16:18). It was first established in the city of Jerusalem

when the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the apostles and they preached the good news of Christ to the great crowd that had gathered. This was on the first Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection, approximately 33 A.D.

The apostles, having received the promised power of the Holy Spirit, were guided to tell the people about Christ, how He had lived among men doing good, but that they had taken Him and with wicked hands they had crucified the very Son of God! God, though, had not left Him in the grave but had raised Him up, and Jesus had returned to heaven to reign at the right hand of the Father. At the end of this sermon, many were convinced and cried out, asking what they should do. They were told that they should repent of their sins and be baptized for the forgiveness of their sins. They would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38,40), and the Lord would add to the church those who were being saved.

This is the first mention in the Scriptures of the church as being in existence, and of people being added to the church. As we continue to read through the book of Acts, we see that the gospel was preached again and again in that area, in the surrounding countries, and that it spread from there to reach the whole world.

Christ established only one church (Ephesians 4:4) and that church, being made up of the saved, exists throughout the world. It also exists locally in the form of congregations (Romans 16:16), but all of them together make up the one church, the church of Christ.

Christ is the authority, or head, over His church (Colossians 1:18).

Christ is the savior of His church (Ephesians 5:23), because the redemption price He paid for it was His life's blood.

Christ is the foundation on which His church is built (1 Corinthians 3:11).

Christ's name is worn by His church, because it is called His bride (Romans 16:16; Ephesians 5:25-32). Its members, individually are called by His name, "Christian", Christ-like (Acts 11:26; 1 Peter 4:16).

Christ has promised that He will come back one day to receive His church and to deliver it up to the Father (1 Corinthians 15:24).

While in this world, Christ prayed for the unity of His people, His church, as they would exist in the world through the coming ages. He prayed that they would worship together in spirit and truth, remembering Him in the communion supper each first day of the week (John 4:24; Acts 20:7).

To help humans understand more fully what the church is, in the Scriptures the Holy Spirit likened it to several things. It is called the "body" of Christ; that is, the *Spiritual* body of Christ. Thinking of our human bodies and heads, we can see the parallel and can understand how we are to work together with Christ, as He directs His body (Colossians 1:18, Ephesians 4:4).

The church is pictured as the "house of God" (1 Timothy 3:15), that is, the spiritual household or family that belongs to God. It is compared to sheep in a sheepfold, the place of safety, with Jesus being the Good Shepherd who laid down His life for His sheep (John 10).

Another likeness is given, with Jesus being called the vine and Christians identified as branches that are to bear fruit to God (John 15:1-11).

The church is not a denomination or a group of denominations. Neither is it the Catholic church or any other man-made institution. It is not a church building. Rather, it is the family of God that has been called out of the world. It is the saved, the spiritual body of Christ on earth, the one church that Jesus built and that he died for.

Are you a member of the Lord's church, the one true church of the Bible, the one and only church bought by Jesus' blood, the one that he will return for one day? If not, we pray that you will obey God and become a part of this glorious church.

Especially for Women

Search For Truth

What about that Early Church

BETTY BURTON CHOATE

After dinner Rachel sat with Timothy, holding him close and kissing his soft black hair. "I'm so thankful for you," she

whispered. "You've brought such good things to our lives. I pray that we can be wise parents, loving you and guiding you in only the right way. Why didn't I realize what a responsibility it would be to care for a baby before you came?"

Andrew came in from the garden, laughing as he saw Rachel's frequent kisses. "Don't rub off all his hair," he warned with a grin. "And leave a few kisses for me!"

"I was just telling Timothy how thankful I am for the good things he's brought into our lives, Andrew. Just think of how much spiritual growing we've done since he was born!" she said, giving Timothy to Andrew. After a few minutes of patting and humming, Andrew laid the baby down for the night.

"Let's see what else we can learn from the book of Acts about the kingdom — the church — and about the early Christians," he said as he came back to the dining table with the Bible and concordance.

Turning to Acts and beginning to read, Andrew said, "Chapter 3 is another sermon. Peter and John were telling the people again that the one they had crucified was really the Son of God. In verse 19, Peter said, *'Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.'* It's interesting to compare this verse with Acts 2:38, *'Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit':* 'repent' would equal 'repent'; 'be converted' equals 'be baptized'; 'your sins be blotted out' seems the same as 'for remission of sins'; and 'times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord' would be like 'the gift of the Holy Spirit'."

"And in chapter 4," Rachel said, "it says that many of those who heard the word believed - the number of the men was about 5000. But does that mean that they only believed, or were they baptized?"

"We'll have to study further, to see the pattern as it develops," Andrew answered, "but if baptism was part of the message of salvation, would they have truly believed if they had not obeyed that part too? They seem to go together, and then a person is saved."

"Here in verse 11, it says again that Jesus is the chief cornerstone, and that salvation is only in His name: *'Nor is there*

salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.' Is it because Jesus died for us that His name is the name in which we are saved?" asked Rachel.

"That makes sense," Andrew answered. "You would think, with Jesus' resurrection from the grave, and the miracles being done by the apostles, that everyone would have listened to them, but already in these first chapters of preaching about Jesus, the religious leaders were dead-set against the church, and they even arrested the apostles! I wonder if they had expected that kind of angry response?"

"Maybe they weren't really surprised," Rachel suggested. "It had been only a short time before that that the rulers had crucified Jesus, and the apostles were continuing with the same thing He'd begun."

"You're right. But somehow I always expect that religious people will love the truth. Maybe that's part of the problem today," Andrew said. "May be some of the religious people We'll talk to in our search for truth won't like what we're doing."

"I guess we have to be prepared for that, and decide now whether the opinions of people or the truth is more important to us."

"There's one thing for certain," Andrew said, "if we are going to include religion in our lives, it must be *right*, no matter how others feel about us. I don't want to go through all of these things and then get to the end of life and hear Him say, *'I never knew you,'* as we read in Matthew 7:21."

Rachel was continuing to read as Andrew talked. "That was the attitude of the apostles, too. Here in verse 19, they said they had to please God rather than men—even the religious leaders. 'For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.' And whatever we learn from the Scriptures, as we study, we'll have to stand by that, even if others don't like it."

To be Continued . . .

Who Should Be Baptised ?

FRANCIS DAVID

Jesus said: "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all

nations" (Matthew 28:19). This was a great commission from our Lord to his people. He wants that his message should go to all nations and not to just one nation. This gospel is universal. Our Lord came to be saviour of the world. He died for all.

As we read further, we see Christ told them they should baptise those people who have learned the truth. After their baptism they need to observe those things which Christ had commanded them. Now the question is who should be baptised?

In the Scriptures we read it says "Then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. When we teach a person and if he or she is convinced about the truth, that means he or she has believed the truth, and such person should take the immediate step of baptism. As soon as you have believed the truth, you must be baptised. One must believe that Christ is the Son of living God. If a person does not believe, Christ as God's son then he or she should not be baptised. In Acts chapter 8, we read about a man from Ethiopia, we see Philip preached to him about Jesus and this man believed the good news of Jesus and Philip Baptised him right there. (Acts. 8:35-38). One must believe and be obedient.

One must repent of his sins, if he or she wanted to be baptised. Jesus said in Luke 13:3 "Unless you repent you will all likewise perish". Repent means to change your way. Turn from wrong way to the right way. Peter told the crowd on the day of Pentecost that they need to repent. (Acts. 2:38). So we see, the repentance is very essential, before a person is baptised. Some do not want to repent. Sometime it is seen that if a person is living in adultery, he doesn't want to leave the sin of adultery and wanted to be baptised. Such person should not go for baptism. Through repentance you will be a new person, because you have repented and left those things which is not connected with the Christian character. All immorality, stealing, impurity, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, selfishness, drunkenness, must be removed and that will be a genuine repentance. When you repent, all your sins will be washed away. (Acts. 22:16).

Baptism is for those who are without Christ. If a person is not baptised, then he or she is outside of Christ. The Bible says: "For as many of you as were baptised into Christ have put on Christ." (Gal. 3:27). In order to put on Christ one must obey the command of baptism. Baptism will put you in the body of Christ

which is his church. (1 Cor. 12:13).

Have you been baptised as the Bible says? The Bible says there is one baptism (Eph. 4:4). Maybe you are already baptised. But when you were baptised, you were ignorant about the true church of our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus has only one church. (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 4:4; Eph. 1:22). I would urge you to learn about the truth, search for the Lord's way. If you want to become the part of the body of Christ (His church), I will encourage you to contact the nearest Church of Christ, and be baptised for the remission of your sins. You will be immersed in the watery grave (Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:12). Remember, after your baptism you will be added to the church by the Lord himself. You will be a Christian only (Acts 11:26; 26:28). Are you ready?

The Organization Of The Church

GARY C. HAMPTON

A MULTITUDE OF ORGANIZATIONS

One distinctive feature which sets one religious group apart from another is their organization. Various approaches are used both at the local and national levels. For instance, "The Church of the Nazarene has a representative form of government." Their manual goes on to say, "We are agreed on the necessity of a superintendency, which shall foster and care for churches already established, and whose duty it shall be to organize and encourage the organizing of churches everywhere."

In *Christ Among Us: A Modern Presentation of the Catholic Faith*, Anthony Wilhelm wrote, "The college of bishops under the leadership of the pope has the authority of governing Christ's Church. The pope has supreme power, but when he uses it he acts on behalf of the whole college of bishops." In the book *Doctrine and Covenants*, the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints finds that Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery were ordained to be apostles (27:12-14). Other types of government could be listed, but suffice it to say that there are a variety of

governments among the churches.

CHRIST IS THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH

Christ promised to establish the Church (Matthew 16:18-19). After Christ's resurrection and ascension to the right hand of God, the Father made Christ the head of the church. "And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all" (Ephesians 1:20-23; Colossians 1:18; 1 Peter 3:22). Jesus has been given all authority in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:18). We must submit to that authority since there is but one Lord (Ephesians 4:5).

Our Lord adds the saved to the church (Acts 2:47). Membership is not voted on by men. Membership is open to all people throughout the world (Mark 16:15-16; Romans 1:16). In fact, Christ's followers are commanded to go into all the world to teach others so that Jesus might have more disciples. It should be noted that the word church is used in two different senses in scripture. Frequently, the word church is used to describe the entire body of the saved under Christ's authority. On other occasions, the word is used to describe a group of saved people meeting in a particular location (Romans 16:5; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 1 Thessalonians 1:1). It may also be used to designate the saved in a particular region (Galatians 1:2).

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

Outside of pronouncing Christ as the head, the New Testament does not give us an organization for the church universal. However, it does describe an organization for the local church. It appears that the apostles, under Christ, were over the church at Jerusalem and in Judea (Acts 6:1-4). However, shortly thereafter elders are mentioned (Acts 11:27-30). Toward the end of their first missionary journey, Paul and Barnabas ordained elders "in every church" (Acts 14:23). Paul directed the young preacher, Titus, to "ordain elders in every city" in Crete (Titus 1:5). He went on to give a list of qualifications a man should possess before being appointed to such an office (verses 6-9). Evidently, Paul expected Timothy, another young preacher, to also have occasion to ordain elders, since he provided him with a list of qualifications (1 Timothy 3:1-7).

It is the job of the elders to oversee (or be bishops) the flock with which they work (Acts 20:28). This verse ought to remind elders of the headship of Christ, as it refers to the fact that Jesus purchased the church with His blood. Peter speaks of the elders' job of overseeing the flock and reminds them that Jesus is the Chief Shepherd (1 Peter 5:1-4). They cannot force the flock to follow them but should appeal for them to willingly follow. Their example before the flock should cause each sheep, or member, to want to follow. Also the members should note that elders are to watch out for the safety of their souls "as those who must give account," which would encourage careful consideration of their leadership (Hebrews 13:17).

THE ROLE OF DEACONS IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

The New Testament does not say as much about deacons, but we can piece together some important facts. Thayer says the word deacon means "one who executes the commands of another, esp. of a master; a servant; attendant; minister." Paul likewise lists some qualifications for the men who would hold this office (1 Timothy 3:8-13). The first seven men who appear to have held this office were those appointed at the direction of the apostles (Acts 6:1-8), though they certainly had some qualifications not listed in 1 Timothy 3. Notice that they were assigned a specific task and when it was carried out, the word of God increased and the church grew. This is not an honorary title! Deacons need to strive to "minister well" (1 Timothy 3:13).

The Debt We Owe

JOHNNY RAMSEY

Imagine being kidnapped and held captive against your will. Not a very pleasant picture, is it? But that is precisely the spiritual state which the Bible pictures for us! We have been kidnapped by Satan and captivated by sin (Rom. 7:13-14). But Jesus came and died on the cross, paying the price of our release, "*Who gave himself a ransom for all*" (1 Tim. 2:6). "Up from the grave He arose," by the power of God: *Declared to be the Son of God with power . . . by the resurrection from the*

dead" (Rom. 1:4). Jesus, by His death and resurrection, *Led captivity captive*" (Eph. 4:8) and destroyed Satan's power over death (Heb. 2:14).

CHRIST IS THE PROPITIATION FOR OUR SINS

"My little children, these things write I unto you that ye may not sin. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world . . . He that doeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. To this end was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 2:1-2; 3:8).

Entering *"the strong man's house"* and spoiling his goods (Matt. 12:29), our Savior triumphed over Satan. Since the power of God in us is greater than the world (1 John 4:4), we can now be at peace with our Maker and the past has been demolished. We now can walk hand in hand with our Lord (Col. 1:10). Paul had been at enmity with Jesus, but when he obeyed the good news, his sins were washed away (Acts 22:16). The burden of guilt and the vast chasm of rebellion vanished away. The glorious and awesome power of the blood of Jesus Christ was now a bridge which Saul of Tarsus spanned to come back home to God (1 Tim. 1:12-15).

Without Christ, the picture which God paints of man is not pretty: *"We also once were foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another"* (Titus 3:3). But all that can be erased, with all of the sorrow and error of the past, when we find the redemption which is in Christ. The grace and mercy of our benevolent heavenly Father can make all things well: *"Not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy he saved us"* (Titus 3:5). We are saved by His grace, His mercy. Someone has well stated, "God's grace is when He gives us what we do not deserve and His mercy is when he does not give us what we do deserve."

WE ARE BOUGHT WITH THE BLOOD OF JESUS

These words from God, penned by the apostle Paul, challenge our attention: *"Know ye not that your body is a temple*

of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God? and ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body" (1 Cor. 6:19-20). We no longer belong to ourselves, because Christ has bought us with a very high price. It is as though we were on the auction block to be sold to the highest bidder. The devil wants us badly, and is willing to raise his offer, whatever the cost. It looks like he has purchased us and the gavel is going down for the last time. Just as all seems lost, a sweet but distinct voice of compassion and concern breaks the silence. It is the voice of the Creator who saves us at the precise moment when all seems lost. He made us, and He does not want us to be lost to the enemy of our souls (1 Pet. 5:8). The apostle Paul assures us, "*God. . . would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth*" (1 Tim.2-4).

Strangely, then, we rejoice to realize that we were redeemed to be set free! We were not to be slaves to a tyrant, but bought to become children of the King! Only the efficacy of the blood of Jesus could cause us to enjoy the liberty of the sons of God (Gal. 5:1-7). We are free to live the life of purpose and happiness for which God created us. Should we not gladly obey and serve the Savior Who released us from the bondage of iniquity? The events at Calvary form the most important moment in the history of the world. There is, indeed, power in the blood of the Lamb. L.O. Sanderson has blessed us with the words of this great song:

*I am free,
I am rich,
I am happy,
For the Lord has been mindful of me.*

THE POWER IN THE BLOOD OF CHRIST

His blood is **ESSENTIAL**. Acts 8:32-33 contains a marvelous reference to Isa. 53, and the One Who was willing to do that which was necessary to release us from the clutches of Satan. God "*laid on him the iniquity of us all*" (Isa. 53:6), allowing Christ to bear our errors and blunders and have them cleansed by His stripes: "*By his stripes we are healed*" (1 Pet. 2:24). The

necessity of that sacrifice is clearly stated: *"Apart from the shedding of blood there is no remission . . . It is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins"* (Heb. 9:22).

His blood is **EFFICACIOUS**. A beautiful and impressive verse of Scripture promises cleansing, *"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool"* (Isa. 1:18). The high cost of low living demands a price so high that only the death of the Lord could atone for mankind's enormous blunders.

His blood is **ENDURING**. In Rev. 15:3 we rejoice to read that the redeemed host was standing on the sea singing *"the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb."* The anthem which Israel sang after crossing the Red Sea (Ex.15) declared that Jehovah would fight for them. Add to that the victory in the Savior's blood (Col. 1:20) and we are truly *"more than conquerors through him that loved us"* (Rom. 8:35-37).

His blood is **ENABLING**. Rom. 12 begins by telling us that it is by our spiritual service, based on the unfathomed mercy and love of God, that we are empowered to fight ardently and actively, and win the *good fight of faith*" (1 Tim. 6:12).

His blood is **ENRICHING**. In Jude's brilliant benediction, we find the fruition and culmination of our life in Christ and His cleansing blood, *"Now unto him that is able to guard you from stumbling and to set you before the presence of his glory without blemish in exceeding joy, to the only God our Savior"* (Jude 24-25). Due to our relationship with the Redeemer, the Father above is able to:

1. Keep us from falling
2. Present us faultless before Him
3. Grant us glory and joy
4. Now and forever.

THE WAY OF THE CROSS

In Acts 2:36 and 13:38-39 we find the crux of the matter in God's plan of salvation and way of redemption. The crucified One has been *"made both Lord and Christ."* Those words mean "Master" and "Anointed of God." It is through Him that sins could be erased and mankind can be brought back to the Creator.

What a wonderful and gracious opportunity! To walk with the Lord in purity, integrity and hope is the way of the cross.

As the Scriptures describe it, the way of the cross is a way of:

1. Humility — John 6:38
2. Sacrifice — Phil. 2:8
3. Surrender — Matt. 26:42
4. Service — Mark 10:45
5. Loneliness — Heb. 5:7
6. Obedience — John 17:4
7. Victory — Rom. 1:4
8. Compassion — Luke 23:34
9. Concern — mark 16:15-16.

When Jesus, our Savior and God's perfect Son, shed vicarious blood at Golgotha, our hope for redemption was made accessible. Praise the Lord for such a Redeemer! We are, without a doubt, recipients of the deepest love.

KEY WORDS ABOUT OUR CLEANSING

Reconciliation: "Might reconcile them both in one body unto God through the cross, having slain the enmity thereby" (Eph. 2:16). Through the events of Calvary, we can, as sinners, be brought back into fellowship with our Creator from whom we had been estranged due to sin and death (Rom. 5:12).

Remission: "Whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, in his blood" (Rom. 3:25). When lost sinners asked what to do, the Lord answered: "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins" (Acts 2:38). To have the guilt of the past washed away and to stand on level ground at the foot of the cross is a sublime blessing.

Redemption: "In whom we have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace" (Eph. 1:7). We can be redeemed through the precious blood of the Son of God and walk in a new life (Eph. 4:22-24). From darkness to light, our journey takes us toward the land of fadeless day (Acts 26:18).

The only life that counts is life in and through the shed blood of Jesus Christ proclaims.

“All’s” of the Great Commission

CLEM THURMAN

“And Jesus came to them and spake unto them saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore. and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the World” (Matt. 28: 18-20). The apostles had been through two months of great difficulty. Jesus had told them He was going to be killed by the Jews at Jerusalem (Matt. 20:18). They didn’t understand, and it was hard to accept it. But they saw it happen. He had also told them He would be raised the third day (Matt. 20:19); and they didn’t understand that, either. But it happened, and they were witnesses. Now, Jesus has gathered them together for one last time, and explains that He is going to leave them and return to heaven (John 14: 1-6). Can you imagine the impact this “Great Commission” must have had on those apostles?

When Jesus departed, He insured that the apostles would still be under His guidance. He promised them. *“But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you”* (John 14:26). Again He told them, *“But when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth”* (John 16:13). Because of such guidance, Jesus told them plainly, *“He that heareth you heareth me; and he that rejecteth you rejecteth me; and he that rejecteth me rejecteth him that sent me”* (Luke 10:16). When the Holy Spirit came on the apostles, they were speaking (and later, writing) the word of God (Acts 2:1-4; 1 Thes. 2:13).

ALL AUTHORITY IS GIVEN TO JESUS

The first “All” of the great commission is the authority given to the Son of God. Jesus said, *“All authority hath been given*

unto me." Before Jesus came to this earth, God spoke to mankind in a variety of ways through a variety of people (Heb. 1:1). But a change is now made: God *"hath in these last days spoken unto us in his Son"* (Heb. 1:2). A remarkable incident, recorded in Matt. 17:1-5, illustrates this truth. Jesus took Peter, James and John with Him up a mountain. Those apostles saw Jesus *"transfigured . . . and his face did shine as the sun."* They also saw Moses and Elijah talking with Jesus. They must have been overwhelmed by this event, for Peter suggested they built three tabernacles: *"One for thee, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."* But God spoke to them about Jesus, *"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."* They had long *"heard"* Moses and the prophets, but now a change is made. God speaks through His Son, Jesus the Christ.

Jesus told the Jews, *"I am come down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me"* (John 6:38). Prior to this, Jesus had told them. *"For neither doth the Father judge any man, but he hath given all judgment unto the Son; that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father"* (John 5:22-23). Jesus demonstrated His power by healing the sick and casting out evil spirits (Mark 1:32-34). He restored sight to the blind (John 9:1-7), made the deaf to hear (Mark 7:32,37), healed lepers (Luke 17:11-14) and even raised the dead (Luke 7:11-17; 8:49-56; John 11:17-46). John declared, *"Many other signs did Jesus in the presence of the disciples which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God"* (John 20:30-31). That is the reason Jesus said, *"He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my sayings, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day"* (John 12:48). Yes, Jesus has ALL authority.

ALL PEOPLE ARE TO HEAR THE GOSPEL

Notice that Jesus told the apostles, *"Make disciples of all nations."* No longer were they to go only to the *"lost sheep of the house of Israel"* (Matt. 10: 5-6). Now their commission was extended to *"all nations."* Another inspired writer records it this way, *"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he*

that believeth not shall be condemned" (Mark 16:15-16). All nations, every creature — that was the mission. It still is. Jesus told the apostles the reason for His death, *"That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem"* (Luke 24:47).

The reason for all people to hear the gospel is simple. *"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"* (Rom. 3:23), and, *"The wages of sin is death"* (Rom. 6:23). The *"gospel"* the apostles were to preach was the *"good news"* of salvation, offered through the blood of the cross (Col. 1:18-21). The apostle Paul wrote later, *"I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth"* (Rom. 1:16). James wrote on the same subject, *"Receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls"* (James 1:21). That is why all people are to hear the gospel. All people are lost (1 John 1:8,10), Christ is the only Savior (John 14:6), and His gospel makes known the way of Salvation.

ALL ARE TO BELIEVE AND BE BAPTIZED

To *"disciple"* people involves baptizing them into Jesus Christ (Matt. 28:19). That is why the gospel was to be preached, that people could believe (Rom. 10:17), and, through faith, be baptized. As Jesus promised, *"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved"* (Mark 16:16). The apostles went forth and preached it just as Jesus told them to do. When people were *"pricked in their heart, and said . . . what shall we do? Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins"* (Acts 2:37-38). That was what Jesus told them to preach (Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:16), and they did it. Philip preached in Samaria, and *"when they believed Philip preaching . . . they were baptized, both men and women"* (Acts 8:12). The Lord told Saul to wait in Damascus for His instructions (Acts 9:6), and then He sent Ananias to him: *"Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name"* (Acts 22:16). When people 1900 years ago preached the gospel, they baptized every believer! Why? The Lord told them to do so.

Many folk still fail to understand the significance with which the Lord purposed baptism. Yes, it is predicated on faith (Mark

16:16). Yes, it must be based on genuine repentance (Acts 2:38). But the purpose is clearly stated by the Lord: *"Shall be saved."* Peter wrote that baptism saves us (1 Pet. 3:21), and the apostle Paul shows why and how. *"Are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life"* (Rom. 6:3-4). Is the death of Christ necessary to your salvation? Then be baptized into His death. In fact, in baptism, we obey the *"form of teaching"* which is the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. And notice, too, that we are baptized *"into Christ."* We read the same thing later, *"For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ"* (Gal. 3:26-27). Is it important for you to be a child of God? Then be *"in Christ"* by being *"baptized into Christ."* There is no other way revealed in Scripture to enter into Jesus Christ.

ALL THINGS ARE TO BE OBSERVED

After people hear, believe and are baptized, Jesus told the apostles: *"Teach them to observe all things I have commanded you."* Jesus taught the apostles, and us, about worship: *"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth"* (John 4:24). From the time of Adam, God has purposed that man should worship Him: *"He made of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth . . . that they should seek God"* (Acts 17:26-27). This is part of every person's basic purpose: Seek God, worship God. At their last Passover together, Jesus took bread and blessed it and said to the apostles, *"This is my body, which is for you: this do in remembrance of me. In like manner also the cup, after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood: this do, as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of me"* (Matt. 26:26; 1 Cor. 11:23-25). The apostles taught the disciples they made to pray (James 5:16; Phil. 4:6), sing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16), teach (Acts 20:7; 1 Tim. 4:12-16), give (1 Cor. 16:1-2).

After the three thousand were baptized on Pentecost (Acts 2:41), *"They continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching and*

fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers" (Acts 2:42). Their lives were to be different: "As children of obedience, not fashioning yourselves according to your former lusts in the time of your ignorance: but like as he who called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living" (1 Pet. 1:14-15). The apostle Paul wrote, "The grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us, to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world" (Titus 2:11-12). To "observe all things" Jesus had taught involves a complete change in the way we live. It means that, as "new creatures in Christ," we "crucify the old man" and "put on the new man that is being renewed unto knowledge after the image of him that created him" (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 2:20; Col. 3:9-10).

JESUS IS WITH US ALWAYS

Yes, Jesus said it: "*Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.*" When Paul was in trouble, desperately needing encouragement, Jesus told him, "*Be not afraid: but speak and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to harm thee: for I have much people in this city*" (Acts 18:9-10). After being arrested and taken to Rome in chains, Paul wrote to Timothy: "*At my first defence no one took my part, but all forsook me . . . But the Lord stood by me, and strengthened me*" (2 Tim. 4:16-17). That assurance enabled Paul to have confidence in whatever mission the Lord gave him. He even wrote, "*I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me*" (Phil. 4:13).

Jesus will be with us in times of trial and triumph, in joy and sadness, in pain and health, in good times and bad. He will always see us through. As the Bible says, nothing "*shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord*" (Rom. 8:39). Even when I come to the end of my way on earth, "I won't have to cross Jordan alone!" As Paul wrote, "*For to me to live is Christ, to die is gain.*" (Phil. 1:21). What assurance: "*Lo, I am with you always.*"

The Prophet Elijah

W.A. HOLLEY

"And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I am taken from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me. And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing; nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so. And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, which parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof" (II Kings 2:9-12, ASV).

Elijah was one of the greatest of the prophets. He wore a garment of coarse camel-hair, which was fastened with a leather girdle. He was known for his sudden appearances prompted by great crises. He won a great victory over Jezebel, the chief supporter of Baal (See I Kings 18). Elijah proclaimed a three-year drought which came to pass (James 5:17; I Kings 18:1 ff) Elijah actually raised the dead (I Kings 17:17-24).

Centuries later John's boldness and effectiveness would be compared to "the spirit and power of Elijah" (Luke 1:17). John the Baptist was not Elijah reincarnated (Matthew 11: 14; 17:10-13; Mark 9:11-13; Malachi 4:5). John the Baptist showed "the spirit and power of Elijah," in his ascetic dress and life, and in his message of repentance.

What were some of Elijah's character traits? We shall note . . .

(1) He was a man of remarkable courage. He would not permit formidable opposition of Jezebel the Queen, to terrorize him. He challenged the prophets of Baal to a public contest (I Kings 18: 17-40). Jezebel had slain some of God's prophets (I Kings 18:13; II Kings 9:7).

Elijah was not afraid to put the truth of God on the line. (I Kings 18:21-40). Elijah was one man against 450 prophets of Baal. Truth must be defended against all opposition (Philippians 1:7,17). Today, we have some weak-kneed elders and preachers who have surrendered the truth of God to denominationalism.

Believe it or not, some have joined them.

Ahab had the audacity to charge Elijah with being the source of all his trouble. He asked, "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" Elijah's reply was, "I have not troubled Israel, but thou, and thy father's house."

It is those changers who trouble the church now. They wish to build on the sands of permissiveness, popularity, compromise, liberalism, and anything that tends to please the majority of people. Jesus charges some of His day, saying, "Ye blind guides, that strain out the gnat, and swallow the camel." (Matthew 23:24). What does this statement mean? It refers to those who care for little things, but have an unconcern for major problems. We are charged to "MARK" those who compromise the truth of God (Romans 16:17-18). How can this be done if everything is to be swallowed?

(2) Elijah was a man of prayer. He prayed for it not to rain and he prayed for it to rain. His prayers were answered (James 5:16-17). Hence, prayer of a righteous person avails. All prayers are not answered (James 4:3). Only children of God can address Him as their Father (John 8:44). God has children and Satan has children (1 John 3:10).

Note the setting: Elijah is on Mt. Carmel. He sends his servant to the top of Mt. Carmel, ordering him to look toward the Sea. He makes seven trips there; the last time he reported to Elijah, "Behold, there ariseth a small cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand." God uses natural phenomenon to answer prayer. We must pray according to God's will (1 John 5:14; 3:22).

We must try to answer our own prayers. For example, if you pray for food, work for it if you pray for sinners, teach them the gospel, if you pray for the sick, see that they have doctors and medical care (Luke 5:31-32). A well person does not need a physician.

Prayer is wonderful, prayer is powerful, prayer can change some things. Prayer can also be misused as, for example, at the mourner's bench. Where is the Scripture that authorizes it? James 5:13-15 has been abused. If the sick prayed to be healed, and if he kept on praying, he would never die. Yet all must die (Hebrews 9:27).

(3) Elijah was one who would not compromise the truth. He uttered these words, "... How long halt ye between two

opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him" (I Kings 18:21). There is no middle ground. Jesus taught that no man can serve two masters (Matthew 6:24). Even Jesus could not please everybody. Joshua asked the people to make a choice: serve God Almighty or serve idols (Joshua 24:15).

(4) Elijah was a man of moral indignation. He stood for what was morally right regardless of high political office or the wealth involved. Naboth possessed a plot of land that Ahab the King wanted. Jezebel the Queen was unscrupulous: she took what she wanted at whatever cost (I Kings 21: 1ff; II Kings 9:30-36). A Christian does the right thing no matter the cost. Thus, whatever is right or just in itself, whatever conforms to the revealed will of God. Right includes all that has been appointed by God to be acknowledged and obeyed by man. Included are the terms of salvation, worship as ordered in the Bible and all Christian living (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:36-38; Titus 2:11-12).

Elijah pronounced an awful curse upon Ahab's house. He said, "Hast thou killed, and also taken possession?" He continued, "In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine." Just as dogs licked Naboth's blood, even so shall they lick Jezebel's blood. See II Kings 9:30-36.

Ahab had the temerity to question Elijah; he said, "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy? The reply was, "I have found thee because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the Lord." Verse 20 shows that Ahab's family was to be destroyed. Are we incensed when a brother, or the elders, or the preacher is maligned?

(5) Elijah was human. He sometimes became depressed and discouraged. He even prayed to the Lord to let him die (I Kings 19:1 ff) He thought he was the only righteous person living. He was instructed that there were 7000 faithful servants still living in the land. The Bible is a strange book; it tells the good and the bad about its characters.

Courage can be present in adversity. Moral and physical courage can be summoned your will. Paul knew what it was to be beaten, shipwrecked, imprisoned, stoned, and in perils of many kinds, but he exclaimed: "I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me." (Philippians 4:13, ASV).

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