

# THE BIBLE TEACHER

*Pleading for the Restoration of Pure New Testament Christianity*

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## EDITORIAL

### ***What Does The Bible Teach?***

“... On this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hades shall not prevail against it.”

Christ, on earth, was an amazing Man. The way he lived, behaved, talked, worked and taught, made people confused about his personality. Christ himself was aware of this fact. So on a certain occasion, he asked his disciples, what do people say about him, what do they think who he was? Their reply was, some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets. But, then, Christ wanted to know from the disciples: “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter, one of the disciples, answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” How did Peter know that? Christ said, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.” In other words, human wisdom did not give that information to Peter, but he was instructed to say that by the divine initiative. And, then, Christ said to him, “And I also say to you that you are Peter and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hades shall not prevail against it.” Notice: Christ said, he would build His church “on this rock”. Of what rock was he speaking? Was Peter that

rock, on which Christ had promised to build his church? Some do wrongly believe that the Greek word Peter means "rock," and from this have concluded that Christ did actually build his church on Peter. Yet, even an ordinary person can, with the aid of a Greek lexicon or another such common device, see for himself that Christ did not build his church upon Peter. It is true that the word "*Petros*" (Greek for Peter) means "stone." But Peter and rock as used by Christ at Matthew 16:18 are two different words with different meaning. The Greek word "*Petros*" for Peter has six letters and is masculine gender and means "*pebble*". On the other hand, the Greek word "*Petra*" for rock has five letters and this word is feminine gender, and means "rock or ledge." The words, of course, may be similar, but are not the same in meaning. What, then, is the rock on which Christ had proposed to build the church? It is the supreme fact of faith that was revealed to Peter by the Father in heaven and the one Peter had just confessed, that is, that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God. The fact that Jesus Christ is the Son of God is the rock upon which Christ's church is built.

Not only the rock on which Christ's church is built is misunderstood by many, but the church itself is misunderstood by a majority of people. The Greek word "*ekkelesia*" for church does NOT mean a concrete building made of sand, cement and gravel, as is commonly understood by people today. But, "*ekkelesia*" or "church" that Christ had proposed to build, and which he did build, is the body of living people on earth, who became his followers, when they heard the good news of his death, burial and resurrection, and had believed in him, repented of their sins and were baptized for the forgiveness of sins. Such were added to the church by Christ himself, as he does even today. (Acts 2:37, 38, 41, 47). The church of Christ is the body of living people—not dead stones. The church is composed of Christians (Acts 11:26). They are called "sanctified in Christ Jesus; called to be saints." (1 Corinthians 1:2). All Christians in Christ's church are one body, Christ's body, in spiritual sense, and he himself is the head of the church. (Ephesians 1:22, 23; Colossians 1:18; 1 Corinthians 12:27).

Scripturally speaking, Christ's church, which Christ said he would build, is not a "Saint Peter's church" or a "Saint Paul's church." His church is not Catholic or a Protestant church. The

church which Christ built belongs to him and is called after his name, because it is his church (Romans 16:16), and is not a "Christian church" or a "Brethren church," etc. The church of Christ is also the church of God (Acts 20:28 & 2 Corinthians 1:1). But, no, his church is not Pentecostal or Seventh Day, or named after any day's or man's or doctrine's name. All such religious and sectarian bodies have come into existence several centuries after Christ had built his church. Therefore, to be scripturally right and to be safe and secure one should want to become a member of the church of Christ in the way and fashion as people became Christian and members of the Lord's church in the first century, as is also mentioned in the Bible. Too, it is of great importance to remember that the Bible teaches that Christ adds to his church each day those who are being saved; and he is the saviour of the body, which is his church. (Acts 2:47; Ephesians 5:23). And, remember, He has only one church!!

## ***Are Christians In All Churches?***

**J.C. CHOATE**

We are told by some that there are Christians, children of God, in all of the churches. That is strange language because no where in the scripture do we read of such. We do not read of many churches, but of one church, the Lord's church. (Matthew 16:18). Furthermore, what puts one into one church does not put him into another church. For example, the terms of entrance into the Lord's church does not mean that that will put one into a denominational church. Neither do the terms of entrance into a denominational church, if followed, will put one into Christ's church. The same thing is true with denominational churches. What makes one a member of a denominational church will not make one a member of another denominational church. Whoever heard of one joining a Baptist church and ending up in a Methodist church? Each church has its own conditions for membership.

The only way there would be members of the Lord's church in different denominational churches would be for members of

the church to become unfaithful and join those denominational churches. Even then there would be very few of these churches that would accept a member of the church into their fellowship without requiring that they meet the terms or conditions to be members of their churches.

Whoever heard of one joining a denominational church and accidental ending up a member of Christ's church? Whoever heard of one thinking that he was joining one business for work and ending up working for another business. Whoever heard of one complying with the terms of entrance into one College and ending up being accepted by another College for his school work? Whoever heard of planting one seed and that seed producing yet another seed?

Christ said, "It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned the Father, cometh unto me." (John 6:45). How can one know what to do to be saved, and to be a member of the Lord's church, unless he is properly taught of God, taught those things he must do to become a child of God? If one can believe anything and end up saved, a Christian, and a member of the church, then why is it necessary to be taught of God's will?

Paul says that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. (Romans 10:17). Christ says that the truth makes free. (John 8:32). Again, the Lord says that when one believes and is baptized that he is saved (Mark 16:16) and when one is saved he will add him to his church (Acts 2:47), not some other church.

Christ said, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (John 3:5). This is the new birth that puts one into Christ and his church. The water here has reference to baptism, buried in water, and coming forth from the water, which makes the birth possible. The kingdom here is the church. If we go to Romans 6 and Galatians 3:26,27 and 2 Corinthians 5:17 we are again told that when one is buried in the waters of baptism that he has his sins washed away, that he enters Christ, becomes a child of God, and is a new creature in Christ. Again, Acts 2:47 tells us that when one is saved that the Lord adds him to his church. Now for all of this to happen, one must be taught, or study God's will, to know the Lord's will to enable him to comply with it and to be what the

Lord would have him to be. How can one be saved if he does not know what to do to be saved and how can one be a member of the church if he doesn't even know what it is? If he does know what to do to be saved, and if he understands what the Bible teaches about the church, and if he wants to be saved and to be a member of the Lord's church, then he is not going to become a member of a denominational church, but he is going to comply with the Lord's teaching to be saved and to be added by the Lord to his church. That is just common sense.

If you will read through the Book of Acts you will find the gospel being constantly taught and as a result you will find the hearers obeying the Lord and being added to the church. What else was there to be added to since there was but one church?

We read that the Lord added the saved to his church. It was his church and he knew whether or not one had complied with his will. If those that heard the truth complied with it, then the Lord saved them and added them to his church. Those who did not were not added.

It is a dangerous thing to tell one that he is saved when he is a member of a denominational church. How would one be in position to know that for certain? How would that person be able to conclude that the Lord saved him when he ended up in a denominational church? If one has finally learned the truth well enough to recognize the importance of the church, let him comply with the conditions of pardon, so he can be sure that he has obeyed the Lord to be saved and for the Lord to add him to his church. Why take a chance when you can be sure that you have obeyed the Lord and that you are a member of the church of Christ?

*Especially for Women*

## ***“We Don't Even Know How to Worship!”***

**BETTY BURTON CHOATE**

“Let's have a change of plans,” Andrew suggested. “Let's wait until next Sunday to visit your church—in fact, let's go to a

different church each Sunday morning so that we can learn what they are teaching—but let's keep Sunday evenings for our own time of worship here at home."

"Yes, I'd like that," agreed Rachel. "But we don't even know how to worship properly. We don't have a piano or a guitar, so how can we sing? And is it right to try to worship in an ordinary home, not in a place especially made for church meetings?"

"On every point, we do have a lot to learn!" laughed Andrew. "Not only do we not have a guitar, I don't know any of the hymns! Tomorrow I'll check at the Bible bookstore. Maybe they'll have song books. They might even have a cassette, to help us learn"

"Since we don't know much, should we check 'worship' in the concordance?" Rachel asked.

"In Matthew 4:10, Jesus said to Satan when He was tempted, '*Away with you, Satan! For it is written, "You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve."*' So that answers the question of worshipping Mary or "saints" or idols, or anything else, doesn't it?"

"When there are plain commands like that in the Scriptures, how can religious teachers ignore them?" asked Rachel.

"Listen to this, from Matthew 15:9: '*And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.*' Now that's exactly what people have done—made their own commandments—and Jesus knew they would do that, so He warned against it!" Andrew's voice carried his amazement at the audacity of humans, to place their thinking and commandments on par with the word of God. "Jesus said very clearly, '*In vain they worship Me . . .*' So, it really *does* matter how we worship. We want to check everything we do and be sure it's right, according to the Bible, Rachel."

"But I know I've heard people say it doesn't matter, as long as you're honest and sincere. They shouldn't contradict God like that, because *He* says it *does* matter!" Rachel objected. "I was thinking, just now, Andrew, about us as human beings who are sinners, and God—the awesome One who created all things and who gave Jesus to die for us—you know, we don't belong in His presence. For Him even to *allow* us to be there is a wonderful and precious thing. It ought to be with humility that we even dare to approach Him in worship, not with our pomp and ceremony,

and our own rules and rituals.”

“You’re right, Rachel. So much that’s done as worship actually *offend God!* I hadn’t realized that. The concordance lists John 4:24: *‘God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.’* So what the Bible says is of *greatest importance*, because that’s where spiritual truth is found.”

“I was looking in our favourite chapter again,” laughed Rachel. “It says something there about worship, I think. In verse 42, after the 3000 had been baptized, it says, *‘And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.’* That verse tells quite a lot about the way they worshipped.”

“The ‘apostles’ doctrine’—that would be, for us, studying the Scriptures in a lesson or sermon. ‘Fellowship’—would mean our gathering together with other Christians for the worship. ‘Breaking of bread’—what would that be?”

“Maybe they ate together, or maybe it was like what the priest called the Eucharist, the supper like Christ had with his disciples before His death,” suggested Rachel. “Let’s see if we can find that place,” she said, turning pages in the Bible. “Here it is, in Matthew 26.” She began reading at verse 17 and read through verse 30.

“Look,” Andrew said, “in verse 26 it says that Jesus took some of the bread and blessed it and said, *‘Take, eat; this is My body.’* Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, *‘Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.’*—“And look at this!” Andrew exclaimed, *‘But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s kingdom.’*” There’s ‘the kingdom’ again!”

“So this kind of supper must have been what the Christians were doing when they were ‘breaking bread,’” concluded Rachel. “As we continue to read in the book of Acts, surely we’ll find more about it. Did you see, Philip that between the verse in Acts 2, and this 30th verse of Matthew 26, two other worshipful things are mentioned?”

“Yes, Acts says they continued in prayers, and at the close of Jesus’ supper with the disciples, it says they sang a hymn.”

“I wonder about that—it doesn’t say anything about a piano

or guitar or anyone playing something in that verse. Maybe they were only singing," suggested Rachel.

"How could we look up something about that in the concordance?" wondered Andrew. "We know they didn't have pianos or guitars or drums, so those wouldn't be there. What about 'harps'?"

"Yes," Rachel answered, "it's here. In I Corinthians 14:7—"

Andrew read the verse. "But I think that isn't having reference to worship. It's saying that unless a harp or flute is played correctly, no one will know what tune is being played. Is there anything else? Since they had musical instruments back then, they must be mentioned somewhere as part of worship. Don't all the churches use them?"

"I think so," answered Rachel. "But the only other mention of harps is in Revelation." After reading those verses she asked, "But this is not talking about worship in this world. This is in heaven, and that world will be so different to this one. I've always heard about 'streets of gold' being there, but will it be real gold or just something wonderful and beautiful, as we might compare it to gold?"

"I don't know," Andrew said. "But we want to find how people are to worship here, in *this world*. We want to do exactly like those first Christians did, so that we'll know our worship doesn't offend God."

"Since the verse in Matthew says Jesus and His disciples sang a hymn, let's see if 'sing' is listed," suggested Rachel. "Well, there's a long list about singing praises to God in the Old Testament, so singing has evidently always been a part of worship, but not much is in the New Testament. Romans 15:9 says, '*and sing to Your name.*' 1 Corinthians 14:15: '*I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the understanding also.*' Hebrews 2:12: '*In the midst of the congregation I will sing praise to You.*' James 5:13: '*... let him sing psalms.*' And in Colossians 3:16 there's another reference."

Andrew turned and read: "*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.*" There's also a center-column reference to



Ephesians 5:19: '*... speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*'

"Why do you think it doesn't mention any kind of instrument there?" wondered Rachel.

"Maybe Jesus was making it so that anyone, anywhere, anytime—like us, not having a musical instrument and not knowing how to play one—could still worship God. And both of these places talk about teaching one another through the messages of the hymns. You know it's not easy to hear words when there is a piano or a guitar or something else. There must be some significance that none of these verses talk of musical instruments, even though they certainly had them back then."

"We'll need to study more on this," Rachel said, "but in the meantime we know we will be right if we only sing with sincerity in our worship."

"Yes—and did you notice that in Ephesians and Colossians, the following verse talks of giving thanks—prayer—and that our prayers and all we do in worship to God is to be through the name of Jesus?" asked Andrew.

"That's right," agreed Rachel.

"Well, we've done pretty well, I think," Andrew observed. We began by saying that we didn't know how to worship, but now from these Scriptures we've learned that we are to study the Scriptures, to pray through Jesus, to sing and teach one another through hymns, and to 'break bread'. There may be more that God would expect, and we can watch for other things as we read the Scriptures; but one thing is sure—we know that these things were done by the first Christians, and we will be right if we follow that example."

*To be Continued . . .*

## *Holy And Reverend, Who ?*

FRANCIS DAVID

There is a God in heaven (Dan. 2:28) and this God is our

God for ever and ever. (Psa. 48:14). Our God is great God. "I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside me . . ." (Isaiah 45:5). "I am the first and I am the last; and beside me there is no God" (Isaiah 44:6). "Is there any God beside me? Yea, there is no God; I know not any" (Isaiah 44:8). In Gen. 17:1 we read God says "I am the almighty God." Knowing the greatness of God, we must honour him and praise him. His name should not be taken in vain.

If we look around and see, we will discover that a lot of people in the religious world are taking God's name in vain. Some are defaming his holy name. Turn to your Bible and read Psalm 111:9 (Old King James version), here we see the Psalmist says that "HOLY AND REVEREND is HIS name" The new king James version says: "Holy and Awesome". It is crystal clear that God's name is holy and reverend, yet so many leaders call themselves by the same title. The name Reverend belongs to the almighty. As humans, are we worthy to be called Reverend"? Holy and Reverend is only Our God not any human being. If I call myself Rev. then I am elevating myself. By calling ourselves Reverend we tell people that we are very high, and people should respect us. Our God who is holy and Rev., therefore, all honor must go to him. I am just a human being and I just cannot make myself equal to God almighty. When I wear this title, I am blaspheming God and defaming that worthy name.

There is so much religious confusion in the world. People are confused about so many things in the Bible. In this religious confusion they have started the practise of Clergy and Laity. The Rev. title came under the category of Clergy, and the laity came under the category of lower than Clergy. According to this doctrine or teaching the Reverends are special class of people and they are superior than laity. Do we find clergy and laity in the Bible? When the Church was built or established, there was no clergy or laity. This is the teaching of men.

God should be the only one who should be elevated, exalted and honored. Once our Lord had to rebuked the jews religious leaders who were exalting themselves. These religious leaders were calling themselves Rabbi and Father. Please read in your Bible Mathew chapter 23:6-10, here Jesus said: "DO NOT call anyone on earth your Father, for one is your father, He

who is in heaven." Our Lord Jesus, our master never elevated himself. He was humble and in 11 & 12 verses He said "But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant" "And whoever exalts himself will be abase and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

In the Bible nowhere we read that Apostle Paul or Apostle Peter ever referred themselves as Rev. Paul or Rev. Peter. The Bible is very much clear about it but still without any realisation the religious leaders wear the title Reverend. Just look at Jesus, and you will see him as a very humble person. Though he was a son, and being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, taking the form of a servant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled himself. Here we see the perfect example of humility. And became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. (Phil. 2:6-8). In Mark chapter ten we read about a rich man who came to Jesus and addressed Jesus as "Good Master" . . . And you know what Jesus told him, He said "Why callest thou me good? there is none good, but one, that is God. Here we see the perfect example of humility. Jesus never elevated himself. He served the people with all humility.

The Bible says, one day there will be a judgement day. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. (2 Cor. 5:10). Paul says: "So then everyone of us shall give an account of himself to God" (Romans 14:12). On judgment day how we will stand before Him? Would be stand before him as Reverend or as a simple faithful Christian? Just think about it.

Let is not blaspheme God's name. Holy and Reverend is HIS name and not your or my name. As a human being, I am before God as a worm. "O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth, who hast set thy glory above the heavens . . . What is man, that thou art mindful of him? (Psalm 8:1-4).

# *What's In A Name?*

GARY C. HAMPTON

There are hundreds of different religious groups denominated (designated or classified) by different names. One only has to pick up a telephone book to see the Church of God, Episcopal, Lutheran, Baptist, the Bible Church, the Church of Christ, Presbyterian, African Methodist Episcopal, the New Covenant Church, Seventh Day Adventist, Assemblies of God, Baha'i, the Christian Church, Eckankar, Jehovah's Witnesses, Methodist, Catholic, the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints, Full Gospel churches, Pentecostal churches, Unitarians and many more. Many of these names are of human origin, that is, they were not designated by God. Does it really matter what name we go by?

## **The Significance of Names In the Bible**

Names have been given a great deal of significance in the Bible. Abram means "high father." God changed his name to Abraham, which means "father of a multitude" (Genesis 17:1-8). Sarai means "my princess," but God changed it to "princess of nations", or Sarah (Genesis 17:15-16). The significance of the name change was realized in the birth of Isaac, the son of promise. Through Isaac and his descendants, the new names God gave them came to express the whole truth. Esau's brother was named "heel grabber", or "supplanter", which is our name Jacob. On the night he wrestled with the angel, he was renamed Israel, which means "having power with God" (Genesis 32:22-32). Jesus changed Simon's name, which means "hearing", to Peter, or "a piece of rock" (John 1:40-42).

When God was dealing with rebellious Israel, he told Hosea to take a wife from among the idolaters in the land who were actively involved in harlotries. Her second child, a daughter, may well have been conceived in harlotry. God caused Hosea to name the child Lo-Ruhamah, which means, "No-Mercy," saying, "For I will no longer have mercy on the house of Israel." Another child was conceived when that one was weaned and God said the boy should be named Lo-Ammi, meaning "Not-My-People." God was tired of Israel's rebellion and said, "For you are not My

people, And I will not be your God" (Hosea 1:1-9).

Of course, the very greatest names were preserved for our Lord. The angel told Joseph, "And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). In verse 23, the angel quoted Isaiah 7:14, which said, "they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us." He is called Christ because he is God's anointed. We call him Lord because he bought us and should be supreme in authority in our lives (Romans 7:24-25; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20). Significantly, the American Standard Version translated Romans 10:9, in part, by saying, "confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord." Most people in the religious world would not be willing to call Jesus by some name other than one of those used for him in God's word.

### **A New Name For God's People**

In Isaiah 62:1-2, Isaiah looked forward to a day when Jerusalem would send forth the Lord's righteousness and salvation. At that time, the Gentiles, or nations, would also see the Lord's righteousness and God's people would be called by a new name. It appears, according to the New Testament record, that Antioch was the first church with Jews and Greeks in it. How significant that the name Christian should first be used to describe the disciples in that place (Acts 11:26).

Later, Paul would try to persuade Agrippa to be a Christian, as is seen in the king's response, "You almost persuade me to become a Christian." Peter encouraged the early disciples who suffered as Christians to glorify God in that name (Acts 26:28; 1 Peter 4:16 A.S.V.). All of us can agree that the name Christian is acceptable. Why not be Christians only and drop all man made names?

### **God Given Names For the Church**

Why should anyone accept a name other than a God-given one for Christ's church? Remember, the church is Christ's body (Ephesians 1:22-23). Also, Christ, like the rest of us, has only one body (Ephesians 4:4). Would any of us be happy to have our head identified with our correct name while our body assumed someone else's name? Likewise, we should recall that the church is Christ's bride (Ephesians 5:22-23; Romans 7:4; 2

Corinthians 11:2; John 3:25-26). Most husbands are not happy with a bride who wishes to wear another man's name.

The Father and Christ, through Holy Spirit inspired penmen, have left us some acceptable names for Christ's body to wear. It is simply call "the church" (Acts 2:48; Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18). It is also referred to as the "church of God" (Acts 20:28; 1 Corinthians 1:2). In Romans 16:16, Paul says, "The churches of Christ greet you," which is evidently a message, from several churches meeting in different places, to the church in Rome. In Colossians 1:13, Paul talks about Christians being people who the Father delivered from the kingdom of darkness and translated into the kingdom of his dear Son" (Compare Revelation 1:9). The church is likewise called the body of Christ (Romans 12:4-5; 1 Corinthians 12:13, 20, 27).

Could religious division be, in part, produced by the wearing of man-made names? Is there anyone opposed to dropping such names and going by names God has clearly endorsed by having inspired penmen use them?

## ***Not Two Separate Institutions***

DILLARD THURMAN

So often we meet the contention that the church of the Lord and the kingdom of Christ are two separate and distinct institutions. Some even contend that after one has become a member in Christ's kingdom, being saved from sin, that he then may "join the church of his choice." Along with this theory is the doctrine that one is saved by entering the kingdom and can never be lost. However, after this he may join a church and later be rejected from that church as unfit for membership-but that he then reverts to his previous membership in the kingdom where he still enjoys salvation. Notice that these churches who hold this doctrine place "their church" on a higher plane than God's kingdom!

But a careful perusal of God's Scriptures will disclose that "church" and "kingdom" actually refer to the same institution. In

fact, the Bible shows that the church is God's kingdom on earth. Thus, all who are called out of the world into Christ's kingdom compose His church, the body of saved people. That we may have a much clearer conception of the church as the kingdom of Christ, we note the identifying marks of each, and find them identical. If you will study carefully the chart, you will find this proves conclusively that the church is the kingdom.

### **Beginning Date and Place**

In the first place, we find that the beginning of the church and the kingdom had the same place and date. God spoke in Isa. 2:2-3, "*And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.*" Here the "*mountain of the Lord's house*" was to be established in the top of "*mountains*" and tower above the "*hills.*" Students of grammar have no trouble understanding that this referred to the government of the Lord's house ascending above man-made governments.

Just what was this "*house of the Lord?*" The apostle Paul answers, "*But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth*" (1 Tim. 3:15). Thus "*the house of the Lord*" is "*the church of the Lord.*" That "*house*" (the church) was to be established in Jerusalem in "*the last days,*" according to Isaiah's prophecy. Yet we find this fulfilled when the church was established (Acts 2:1-47). Peter referred to that time as being "*the last days,*" (v. 17) they were in Jerusalem and "*all nations*" were represented (v. 5).

### **Boundary of the Territory**

The scope of the territory for the kingdom of Christ and for His church is also identical. The prophet spoke of the time of the Roman kings, then said, "*In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but*

*it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever*" (Dan. 2:44). The writer of Hebrews speaks of this same institution with the words, "*The general assembly and church of the firstborn . . . Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken*" (Heb. 12:23, 28). Jesus spoke of the same endurance for His church when He stated, "*The gates of hades shall not prevail against it*" (Matt. 16:18). As Daniel portrayed the kingdom covering the whole world, so the marching orders for the church was: "*Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature*" (Mark 16:15). Surely the Lord would not have two religious institutions operating in the world simultaneously.

### **The Owner of the Institution**

In replying to a question from pilate, Jesus stated, "*My kingdom is not of this world*" (John 18:36). Paul states that God "*hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son*" (Col. 1:13), then adds: "*He is the head of the body, the church*" (v. 18). Yet Jesus said in Matt. 16:18, "*I will build my church.*" Thus, Jesus is the owner of the church, and He is the owner of the kingdom. They are the same institution.

### **Ruler Over the Subjects**

Paul refers to Jesus Christ as "*the blessed and only potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords*" (1 Tim. 6:15). Peter explains that God had raised Christ up from the dead to sit on David's throne (Acts 2:29-31). Therefore, Jesus Christ rules over the kingdom, and will rule until He gives the kingdom back to the Father at the end of time (1 Cor. 15:24-25). But Paul also stated that "*Christ is the head of the church*" (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18). Thus, we find that Jesus Christ is the head (king) over the kingdom, and He is also head over the church. They are the same institution.

### **Governing Law in the Realm**

We noticed that Isaiah prophesied that the law of God's kingdom would go forth from Jerusalem. This was accomplished (see earlier paragraph) when the kingdom was established in Jerusalem. Yet we find that Christ commissioned His disciples to preach the gospel of the kingdom, stating, "*That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name, beginning*



from Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47). Still, this was the law governing the church, for this was the gospel of the church as well as the kingdom. As "*repentance and remission of sins*" was preached (Acts 2:36-41), folk obeyed the terms and were added to the church (v. 47), and Christ then reigned over them as King (Acts 2:29-31).

### **Christ Gave the Keys**

Another solid proof that the kingdom of Christ was the church, and the church was the kingdom, is found in the words of Jesus: "*I will build my church . . . and I will give you the keys of the kingdom*" (Matt. 16:18-19). If the church and the kingdom did there refer to the same institution, then Jesus build one institution and gave the keys to a different one! But later, He showed that these "*keys*" related to the church (Matt. 18:17-18). These "*keys*" (power, authority) were used by Peter and the other apostles as they ushered folk into the church through the terms of the gospel.

### **The Terms of Entrance**

Jesus told Nicodemus, "*Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God*" (John 3:5). Paul later wrote, "*If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new*" (2 Cor. 5:17). Thus, one is born again in "*water and the Spirit*" into the kingdom of God, and becomes a "*new creature in Christ.*" But those on Pentecost were led by the Spirit through Peter's preaching, and were baptized "*into Christ*" (Rom. 6:3) for "*remission of sins*" (Acts 2:38). They then came into Christ, and were new creatures, having been "*born of water and the Spirit.*" They entered the kingdom in the same way they entered the church. They are the same institution.

### **Those Holding Membership**

When Paul wrote to the "*church*" at Colosse, he also stated that they had been translated into the "*kingdom*" (Col. 1:2, 13). Thus, those who were also the ones whom the Lord "*translated*" into the kingdom. Can't we see from these Scriptures that the church is, in governmental form, a kingdom? Christ is head of the church, king in the kingdom, with all members of the church being loyal subjects in the kingdom of Jesus. The same institution.

## **The Memorial Supper Set**

The Lord's Supper was related to the kingdom in this clear statement from our Lord: "*I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom*" (Matt. 26:29). But Paul, writing to the church at Corinth, showed that this observance was "*in the church*" (1 Cor. 11:20-27). Thus, the memorial supper was in the kingdom, and it was in the church. They are the same institution.

## **The Reward that is Promised**

Jesus showed the reward for those in the kingdom: "*Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you*" (Matt. 25:31-34). But the exact same reward awaits the faithful in the church (1 Cor. 15:58). Even the time of deliverance is parallel in the church and the kingdom. Paul wrote, "*Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father*" (1 Cor. 15:24). Compare that with 1 Thes. 4:16-17, as Paul shows the reward of those faithful members of the Lord's church. Our study could be extended with other such Scriptures, but we leave that for your own personal investigation.

The word "*church*" doesn't have exactly the same meaning as "*kingdom*." The word "*church*" denotes a "called out" relationship. The word "*kingdom*" denotes the governmental aspect of those "called out," over which Christ is head as King. This one thought should be paramount with each reader: "I must know the will of the kingdom. Then I must always remain a loyal subject of the King, and meet the terms of entrance into His kingdom, His church, so that I may dwell in eternity in the Palace of the King."

# ***It Happened at Calvary***

**JOHNNY RAMSEY**

I am reminded every day of something that happened long ago and far away. And yet, its power and beauty remains fresh in my heart at all times. My Savior died for me on a lonely cross on

the brow of Calvary, and hope springs eternal because of that monumental occasion. Nothing before or since Calvary has so changed the lives and destiny of people as has the death of Jesus Christ on behalf of each of us. This is a personal matter, and it ought to claim our utmost gratitude and allegiance! A gospel song captures the solemnity of that scene.

*I was not at the trial  
When the crowd jeered His name,  
I did not make Him bear a cross  
Or walk a road of shame;  
I could not do a single thing  
To hurt God's only Son,  
But every time I sin on earth,  
I feel that I'm the one.  
I'm the one who shouted "Crucify!"  
I'm the one who made His cross so high,  
I'm the one who stood and watched Him die.  
What have I done? I'm the one.*

The love of God shone its brightest on this tragic day. No wonder Paul exclaimed in 2 Cor. 9:15, "*Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.*" Jesus gave Himself for our sins (Gal. 1:4). He became obedient "*even unto the death of the cross*" (Phil. 2:8) and shed His precious blood for our redemption (Rom. 5:9). When that fountain for cleansing opened wide at Calvary, vile sinners could see an escape from their defilement in sin, a blessed ray of hope on the radiant horizon (Rev. 1:5).

*Redeemed, how I love to proclaim it,  
Redeemed by His infinite mercy,  
His child and forever I am!*

On a "*hill far away*" the old rugged cross beckons lost mankind to a nobler pursuit of life. Out of the depths of despair and ruin untold comes a clarion call from heaven that provides salvation for wayfaring men estranged from God to come back home to the Father who runs to meet the prodigals once enveloped in the pig-pen of iniquity (Luke 15:11-31). The compelling love of the One who died for us all (2. Cor. 5:14) draws us to a richer, fuller and purpose-filled life that responds to the suffering Savior in obedience, gratitude and loyalty.

*Bring Christ your broken life,  
So marred by sin,  
He will create anew,  
Make whole again.  
Your empty wasted years,  
He will restore.  
And your iniquities  
Remember no more.*

Yes, it happened at Calvary—for the world's greatest story of love, compassion and drama. How could anyone overlook such boundless mercy and grace? Jesus left the beauty and bliss of heaven to come down here for lost mankind, in order that we might leave the depths of ruin and shame to inherit the riches of glory (2 Cor. 8:9). What happened at Calvary shall be consummated on a golden street in the land of fadeless day. We dare not miss the end of the story!

## *Water Salvation*

**BOB DUNCAN**

Down through the years, as faithful preachers of the gospel have pointed men to the Scriptures for the answer to the question, "What must I do to be saved?" those in the denominational world have accused us of believing in "water salvation." Because we insist in saying just what the Bible says about the matter, we have been accused of thinking baptism is an act that earns salvation. *Until recently*, I have never known a member of the church of Christ who thought such to be the case.

We have been careful to point out that God has attached conditions to certain promised blessings, and those conditions have to be met, or else the blessing would not be received. Naaman would be healed of his leprosy, if he would wash in Jordan seven times (II Kings 5:10). The first born among the Israelites would not be harmed when God smote the firstborn of the Egyptians, if the Israelites would sprinkle the blood of the lamb on the doorposts of their houses (Exodus 12:12-13). The

walls of Jericho would fall down before the army of Israel, if Israel would march around the city once a day for six days, and then seven times on the seventh day (Joshue 6:1-5). The blind man would receive his sight, if he would go and wash in the pool of Siloam (John 9:1-7). We would not say any of these earned the blessings they received by meeting the conditions set forth. But we do recognize they had to meet the conditions set forth in order to receive the promised blessings.

So it is with God's plan for saving sinners; he has set forth certain conditions which must be met in order for the sinner to be forgiven. Jesus stated certain conditions of pardon for the alien sinner when he gave what we refer to as the Great Commission:

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned (Mark 16:15-16).

No, the sinner does not earn forgiveness by being baptized, and it is not the water that saves him. Christ, by means of his death on the cross, pardons sinners who meet his conditions of pardon. All who are pardoned in this manner are said to be saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Recently, however, some of my own brethren are inadvertently teaching that baptism is a meritorious work. They say the Bible teaches baptism is a condition of pardon, and that the purpose of baptism is "for the remissions of sins" (Acts 2:38). They teach also, however, that one who denies baptism is a condition of pardon, but who was baptized thinking he had already been pardoned, is nonetheless saved. "After all," they say, "he was baptized to please God."

This idea, were it true, would mean baptism is an act of merit. It would truly be water salvation. It would mean a man obtains salvation by accident, that is, he wasn't really seeking salvation, but got it anyway by being baptized for a reason altogether different. Tell me, if you can, why would not that make baptism an act of merit? Remember, he was not trusting in the Lord to save him, for he thought he was already saved. But baptism saved him anyway. I must confess there are some of my brethren who now believe in water salvation.

The commands of God are divided into two categories, (1) moral and (2) arbitrary. The moral commands are those

commands which, because of the very nature of the case, commend themselves to our reasoning. Commands such as, "Thou shalt not kill," "Thou shalt not steal," and "Honor thy father and thy mother," are commands that fit into this category. We can see the value in them.

But arbitrary commands are those for which we can see no logical reason, that do not commend themselves to our own ingenuity, and which we obey simply because of our faith in and respect for him who gave the command. The Israelites sprinkled blood on the doorposts in obedience to an arbitrary command. Naaman washed in Jordan seven times in obedience to an arbitrary command. Joshua and the Israelites marched around Jericho thirteen times in obedience to an arbitrary command. The blind man washed in the pool of Siloam in obedience to an arbitrary command. In each case God provided the promised blessing to those whose trust in him was implicit, and which was demonstrated in their obedience to a command for which they could see no reason other than the fact that God commanded it.

Baptism is an arbitrary command. Because the world can see no logical reason for it, it rejects baptism as being essential, and insists sinners are saved without it. We are now being asked to believe by some of our own brethren that God will save those who exalt their own wisdom above the wisdom of God, refusing to believe what God said about baptism and salvation, and while following their own system of righteousness, happen to be baptized for some reason of their own. That's water salvation, pure and simple. If not, why not?

The psalmist wrote: "I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right" (Psalm 119:128). Amen!

## ***Refusing The Prejudices***

**GLENN COLLEY**

In John four, Jesus engaged in a conversation which was strained with prejudice. Perhaps the woman of Samaria grimaced as she asked, "How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest

drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? For the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans (John 4:9)."

The Samaritans were considered a mongrel race. Half Jew, half Assyrian. They had been planted in this place called Samaria by the Assyrians 700 years before (II Kings 17:6, 24, 26, 29; Ezra 5:1, 9, 10), and generally accepted the first five books of the Bible. Oddly, they were expecting the Messiah to make Samaria, not Jerusalem, His seat of government.

Jesus showed no signs of discomfort brought on by prejudice. He spoke kindly to the woman, and somewhat pointedly at times. He made it clear that He was her Messiah as well as the Messiah for the whole world. He didn't respect man's barriers. "Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him (Acts 10:34-35)."

Some people today proposed quotas to balance race inequities.. For example, employers couldn't simply hire those who they felt could best do the job. But quotas contain a logical hot potato for those who support them. In an effort to stop discrimination, they *practice* discrimination. Clearly there would be occasions when a more qualified individual would not be hired because a less qualified person was needed to fill the quota. Besides, even when the quotas are filled to the letter, the prejudices remain. To treat our actions without treating our hearts is a useless exercise.

The answer to sinful prejudices has always been the same: Jesus Christ. When people truly follow the Lord's lead, they shed the garments of hatred and treat people the way they themselves would like to be treated (Matt. 7:12). How can we be pleasing to the Lord today in reference to this question of prejudice? Here are four suggestions:

**1. Keep the law of kindness in your tongue.** Proverbs 31:26 says of the virtuous woman, ". . . in her tongue is the law of kindness." "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you (Ephesians 4:32)." 1 Corinthians 13:4 says, "Charity suffereth long, *and* is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up . . .

**2. Accept and adopt into your character what God's word commands in Galatians 6:10.** "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."

**3. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.** "Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. (Romans 12:17)."

**4. Remember that Jesus died for people of all races.** This is the greatest equality of the ages, and no prejudice of man will shake it. "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:26-28)." The golden text of the Bible will always read the same: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16)."

**5. Take the heart of God in dealing with people.** "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans so? Be so therefore perfect, even as your father which is in heaven is perfect (Matthew 5:44-48)."

**6. Be soul-conscious.** A man, regardless of nationality, has a soul. As Christians, we are bound and privileged to do what we can to help save that soul. "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost (Matthew 28:19)."

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