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# THE BIBLE TEACHER

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## Are You Sick?

The world has a population now of over four and one half billion people, and that number is increasing every day: With that many inhabitants throughout the earth, then you can just imagine all of the sickness and death that is constantly plaguing men, women, and children. Just look around you and you can see for yourself all of the hurting and suffering that is going on. Perhaps you are sick yourself.

If you are sick, whatever you do, don't blame God for it. Many make this mistake. It may be that you are responsible for your own sickness. The Bible says that man reaps what he sows. (Galatians 6:7, 8). If one over-eats, then he may be over-weight with various side effects. If one smokes, drinks, or chews betelnut, he may develop cancer or experience some other health problem. If one commits fornication, then he may contact a venereal disease. And so on with many other sicknesses and diseases. But God isn't responsible for all of this. He doesn't want man to suffer in these ways. If one will follow his advice then he may be kept from many of these things.

There are many other sicknesses and diseases that one may contact from others. Bad colds and the flu may come as a result of a change in the weather or when one's resistance is low. One may have malaria because of mosquito bites. Then of course there is old age and finally death itself. All of these are the consequences of man's sin back in the garden of Eden. It simply means that just the very fact that one lives in this world, then he is going to experience many of these things. We read that it is appointed unto man to die. (Hebrews 9:27). The wise man said there is a time to be born and a time to die. (Ecclesiastes 3:2).

Someone might wonder why God allows all of this sickness to go on? If we are going that far, then why not ask, "Why does God allow death itself?" It should be explained that when God created all things, and then created man and woman, that he set the law of nature into motion. Therefore, God does not interfere with man's life. He doesn't step in to miraculously heal him or to prolong his life.

While Jesus was on earth, we are told that he went about healing all manner of sicknesses and diseases among the people. (Matthew 4:23). He even raised some from the dead. (Matthew 11:5; John 11:1-46). But he didn't heal all and didn't raise all from the grave. Then why did he heal any? Why did he raise any from the dead? To prove his power over sickness and death, to prove that he was the Son of God, to make believers out of the people. Again and again we read that many believed in him when they saw the miracles that he did. (John 2:23). John wrote that many of the signs that Jesus did were not written, but the things that were recorded was for the purpose of making believers. (John 20:30, 31).

Paul had a thorn in the flesh but even though he asked the Lord three times to remove it, He did not see fit to do so. (2 Corinthians 12:7-9). Timothy had some sickness and Paul suggested that he take some wine for his stomach's sake. (1 Timothy 5:3). Jesus said that they that are sick need a physician. (Mark 2:17).

There are those who teach that one may be miraculously cured of his physical illness. They leave the impression that all can be healed in this way, but all are not healed. Actually, none

are healed miraculously. Such people deceive themselves and others.

If you are sick, see a doctor, follow his instructions, and take the medicine that he has prescribed. God works through doctors, nurses, and medicines to heal you. Pray for God's help, and that you will follow the instructions given, that you will be a good patient, get your rest, etc.

Have a good attitude. Recognize that the scriptures say that all things work together for good. (Romans 8:28) On being sick, it will help you to realize your dependance on the Lord, that you need to be closer him, that you need to be prepared. It is a time that you come to appreciate your family and friends more. It allows you, as never before, to see life as it really is and to be thankful for good health, and to make the most of what life has to offer. In other words, sickness can prove to be a blessing instead of a curse.

While the physical body, our health, and life itself, is very important and precious to us, let us remember that the soul, our spiritual being, our salvation, and the hope of eternal life, is far more important. May God help us to glorify the Lord in illness or health, in body and soul, in life and death.



# How Can We All Understand The Bible Alike?

"The Bible is a most difficult book to understand and follow." Have you heard this statement? Yes, many people believe that the Bible is a most difficult book. But yet the truth is that the Bible

is as simple as a newspaper, easy to understand and follow. What is the Bible? It is the word of God. Through its pages God communicate with men. Through the Bible God has revealed His will. Now, if God wants that all men should follow His will. which He does because He wants all to be saved. (2 Peter 3:9). And He is not a respecter of persons (Acts 10:34), then surely He has given His will to man in such words which all can understand and follow. If He is unable to do this, then how can we say that He is the Almighty God? He knows man better than man himself, because He is the one who created man. He knows exactly what and how much man can understand. Just as we know how to communicate with our children so does God knows how to communicate with His creation. He is capable to so reveal His will to man that we can all understand it alike. The Bible declares: "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace." (1 Corinthians 14:33). The Bible is His word. What it reads to you reads to me also. What it reads to a man in China or America, the same it reads to me here also. It doesn't tell people to do different things in different places. Christ said the word contain in the Bible is the seed of the kingdom. Seed produces after its own kind. It produces the same thing whenever and wherever it is sown. There is no confusion about it. Sow carrot seed here and you will reap only carrot. The same if sown in another country would produce the same result. To get a different result we must sow a different seed. Right?

The question is often raised, why there are different doctrines; different ways of worship; different churches, etc.? Certainly this is not the will of God. They do not exist by the will of God. But they exist because men are sowing different seeds; teaching different things in the name of the Bible. God has revealed to all people in His Bible the one doctrine, the one way of worship, and the one church only. Man himself has invented for himself different doctrines, different ways of worship and different churches. If people today do not understand The Bible, God's will, alike then it is not God's fault, but it is the fault of man himself. God has spoken and it is our duty that we all hear Him and do what He says.

All the Bible is the word of God. But we are not living under:

the Old Testament law of God today, which is the first part of the Bible. However, we live today under the New Testament will of God, which God gave us or revealed to us through His Son Jesus Christ. We are told that we should not go beyond the doctrine or teaching of Christ. (2 John 9). When we add in its (New Testament) teaching or take away any thing from its teaching then by doing so we go beyond the doctrine of Christ. For example: when we celebrate religious days, such as Christmas, Good Friday, and Easter; when we call religious leaders by titles, such as, Reverend, Father, Pope, and Padri; when we baptize little babies, sprinkle water for baptism, and say that baptism has nothing to do with man's salvation; when we do not teach from God's Bible, but instead teach from a creed book, such as Catechism, Common Prayer Book, Manual, Discipline, etc., then we go beyond the doctrine of Christ. We leave behind the doctrine of Christ when we do so, because none of these things are taught in the New Testament of Christ. All such things are the doctrine and commandments of men. We will all understand the Bible alike, and we will not be divided doctrinally, when we will cease to add to God's word and cease to take away from His word. When we will do this we will be speaking as the oracles of God. (1 Peter 4:11).

Jesus taught: "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." (John 4:24). This is the only worship God requires today from his people. In spirit, with sincerity; and in truth, according to God's word. (John 17:17). God requires from his people, wherever they are, that they should assemble for worship on every first day of the week, Sunday, and partake of the Lord's Supper to remember the sacrifice of His Son Jesus Christ, and especially his blood and body. (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:23-29). Those who participate in the communion only once in a year or once in a month, instead of weekly, are not doing so by the authority of God's word, but are merely obeying a command which is written in a creed book of a church. Likewise the New Testament commands Christians to sing. sing is to obey the command of God (Ephesians 5:19), but to play instrumental music of any kind while singing praises in the wo ship of God is disobedience to God's will. Because He commands us to sing—He didn't say to sing and play, but to sing. Melody or

music, according to Eph. 5:19, is to be made in the heart, that is, our hearts or minds should be tuned with God in meditation while singing unto Him. There is not a single verse in the New Testament anywhere which authorises the use of instrumental music in worship. When God specifies something He required it must be done as He has commanded. The whole history of the nation of Israel is a commentary on this very subject. At Leviticus chapter 10 in the Old Testament we read about the untimely death of the two sons of Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, they died because they had offered another fire in the worship of God instead of the one which God had specified for worship. To Noah God had commanded to build an ark, but He also specified the kind of wood he was to use for building the ark, and the Bible tells us that Noah used the same particular wood. To Abraham God said that he should go up on Mt. Moriah and there offer him a particular sacrifice, and we read that Abraham went to the same place and did exactly what God had commanded him to do. All of this teaches us that God means what He says, and He says what He means. There is only one type of worship that God requires today and He has specified it in His New Testament. Lord's Supper, Singing, Prayer, Contribution, and studying from God's word are the Acts of Worship, according to the New Testament teaching. (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:1, 2; Acts 2:42). When we will learn to worship God as He has commanded then we will all worship Him alike and there will be no confusion about it.

Christ was the one who built the church. He said that he would (Matthew 16:18), and he did. (Acts 2:47). He is the head of the church, and the church is his spiritual body. (Ephesians 1:22, 23; Colossians 1:18). All the disciples in the congregations of Christians were called "the churches of Christ." (Romans 16:16). Christ built the church, but men built denominations, such as Catholic and Protestant. What Christ built it was also built by the Father, because Christ and his Father are one. (John 14:9-11). But Christ said, "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up." (Matthew 15:13). No matter how big, popular, or great that plant might be, but if the Heavenly Father has not planted it then one day it will be rooted up. How can people see the Bible alike when they are in different churches,

when they are in churches which were planted by men like Luther. Wesley, and others like them? What I am reading from Matthew 16:18 right now, you can also read the same in your Bible. Here Christ said, "I will build my church." Now what did he say in your Bible? The same. Did he build? He said he would, and we know he did, because at Acts 2:47 we read that the saved were added to the church daily by the Lord. Now, to what church did he add? to the same church, to his one church. Yes, we can all understand the Bible alike, if we all want to, because it teaches the same thing to one and all. It takes more than the Bible to misunderstand it. Teachings and commandments of men and creed books of denominational churches make the Bible difficult to understand. If all of us leave, them alone, quit believing and teaching from them, and turn to the Bible alone, and read it and do only what it says, then there will be no confusion. We will all understand and follow the Bible alike.

# Young People Need Models

#### Russ Crosswhite

The following statement was made by a very famous college basketball coach: "Young people need models, not critics." This is a very true statement. The Bible plainly teaches that one must be an example to others. Jesus tells us in Matthew 5:13-16 that we are the "salt of the earth and the light of the world." In I Timothy 4:12 we read, "but be thou an example."

Example is defined as "a model; pattern." What kind of model or pattern are we setting for our young people? Let's look at some ways that we must be an example or model to our young people.

Students of the Bible. Mothers and fathers must be an example to their children in their study of God's word. How can young people learn to appreciate the Bible, have a desire to learn its pages of truth and apply it to their lives if their parents and

Bible class teachers do not do likewise? The person who probably had the biggest influence on my life so far as wanting to learn the Bible was one of my Bible class teachers. He is not a preacher, but one who really studies and knows the Bible. This made an impression on me so great that I likewise want to know the scriptures. Yes, we must be a model of Bible study before our young people.

Faithful attendance of the scrvices of the church. In Hebrews 10:25 we read, "not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together." We must be a model of attendance to the worship services. I will always be grateful to my parents for taking me to church. We always went to church so far as I can remember. If parents do not attend the services faithfully, they should not expect their children to attend faithfully. Yes, we must set the pattern of being present at every service that we possibly can.

Dedicated lives to Jesus Christ. Parents must exemplify what Paul says in Galatians 2:20: "I am crucified with Christ: Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith of the Son of God; who loved me and gave himself for me." When children see their parents as dedicated Christians, then the chances are greater for them to do the same. When the young people of a congregation see others who are dedicated to Christ, then they will be influenced in a way that will make a lasting impression upon them. Yes, young people need models of dedicated lives to Jesus Christ.

We must let our light shine before others, especially to our young people. Let's be the proper model or pattern before our young people as Jesus expects us to be.

# How Does God Feel?

#### Ricky Phillips

Throughout the Scriptures we can find examples of God's feelings toward man. In the Old Testament, many times God became angry with the people of Israel because of their disobedience. In Genesis 22, he showed his approval toward Abraham

because of his willingness to offer his son Isaac. In the parable of the Prodigal Son, God, represented by the father; showed great joy at regaining the erring. He has feelings toward man and we should always keep this foremost in our minds. At times, however, we may be guilty of respecting the feelings of other human beings and totally ignoring the feelings of Almighty God. Remembering that God is our Father (Mt. 6:9), let's see how God feels when his children treat him with less respect than they should.

How does God feel when his children disobey him? Think of how it hurts a father for his child directly and defiantly to reject his wishes. I am sure you know of at least one father who has done all he could for a son or daughter, only to have that child rebel. Well, God has done far more for us than any earthly father could ever do. Yet there are many who would respect their parents and disobey what God says When a child is disobedient, the father has the responsibility before God to discipline that child (Prov. 22:6). The Heavenly Father disciplines his children through his Word, and eternally, "The wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience." (Col. 3:6).

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

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

How does God feel when his children mistreat one another? Many families are in constant turmoil because children don't get along. Think of the heartache this brings to well-meaning parents. Then imagine how God must feel when he looks down and sees his children bickering, backbiting and gossiping about one another. Brethren, this is not how it ought to be. The prayer of Jesus Christ is that his disciples be one: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." (John 17:20, 21).

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

# The Inspiration Of The Bible

#### W. Edwin Kearley

"Is the Bible inspired? Is it really the word of God?" These are questions often asked. The Bible itself is its best defender. The diggings must be analyzed before the assayer can determine what minerals the content holds. So the Bible must be allowed to testify concerning its inspiration.

What does the word inspire mean? Young's Analytical Concordance and W. E. Vine's An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words define the Greek word translated inspire to mean "God breathed." Webster's dictionary says inspire means, "to blow or breathe into or upon."

Some say the Bible was inspired as Shakespeare was inspired to write his tragedies and comedies. Shakespeare had a desire which prompted him to exercise his abilities in creating some wonderful works of art, but the Bible writers received messages

directly from God. What they wrote was breathed into them by the Spirit of God.

Let the Bible speak for itself about inspiration. The word "inspiration" is found first in Job 32:8. The record reads, "But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the almighty giveth understanding." This teaches God transmitted his wisdom to man.

THE WRITERS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT DECLARED THEY WERE INSPIRED OF GOD. Examples are as follows: "The spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue" (II Sam. 23:2). "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken" (Isa. 1:2). "The word of the Lord came to me" (Jer. 1:4). Amos wrote, "The words...which he saw concerning Israel" (Amos 1:1) Many other quotes could be given.

INSPIRATION IS ALSO AFFIRMED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. Paul said. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works" (II Tim. 3:16-17). A more pointed statement reads, "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (II Pet. 1:21). Peter said the Holy Spirit moved the prophets to write what they wrote. Peter said they prophesied of salvation through Christ but they did not fully understand (I Pet. 1:10).

IS THERE ANY INDICATION NEW TESTAMENT WRITERS WERE INSPIRED AS WERE THE PROPHETS? Yes is the answer. Paul spoke of inspiration. He said, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him...Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth but which the Holy Ghost teacheth" (I Cor. 2:9-13). Luke said the apostles spoke "as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:4).

Another question is, DID THE NEW TESTAMENT WRITERS KNOW THEIR WRITINGS WERE SCRIPTURE? The question is clearly answered. Peter, in commenting on Paul's writings, said, "And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also other scriptures, unto their own destruction" (II Pet. 3:15-16). Peter classified Paul's epistles with other scripture.

There may be objection to our proving the inspiration of the Bible by the Bible itself! Someone may say, "The Bible cannot bear witness to itself. Its inspiration must be proved by some external evidence." There is external evidence but it is not inclusive enough without the internal evidence of the Bible itself.

Let us illustrate. James D. Willeford gives this illustration. "Suppose you own a farm and one day as you are walking over the hillside you notice an outcropping of quartz. Believing that there is a precious metal on your land you rush down to the assayer and exclaim, 'Say, I believe there is gold on my farm.' To which the assayer simply requests that if you will bring a specimen of the rock he will analyze it and tell you if your assumption is correct. But you exclaim again, 'Why should I bring a specimen of the rock from my land? Just take a brick from the building next door and assay it and tell me if there is gold on my land.' You would be lucky if you did not get thrown out of the man's office." Why should we examine some outside material to prove the Bible is inspired?

## Be An "Exhorter"

#### Jimmy Edwards

Paul's charge to young Timothy was to: "Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction." (II Timothy 4:2 NASV).

Timothy was to be faithful in proclaiming the Word of God. He was to be "ready" (stand by or to be at hand) 'in season and out of season" (whether it is convenient or inconvenient, opportune or inopportune, favorable or unfavorable).

He was charged to "reprove" (make the person in sin aware of his sin), "rebuke (fearlessly censure, warn with the idea of convicting a man of the error of his way and directing him to the right path), and "exhort" (kindly encourage to greater fidelity those who are weak, disheartened, and ready to give up).

Paul concludes the verse by encouraging him to reprove, rebuke, and exhort with "patience" (have the spirit which never grows irritated, never despairs), and "instruction" (teach, command, impart knowledge of the word of God).

Focus your attention on "exhort." Webster defines exhort: "to incite by argument or advice; urge strongly; to give warnings or advice; make urgent appeals." The words "reprove" and "rebuke" are not more important than "exhort." All three words are of equal importance. In preaching the gospel there must be a balance of the three.

The gospel preacher needs to be engaged in untiring exhortation. He must use language in sermons intended to incite and encourage. The preacher must move brethren to action. Stir them up, spur them on, and urge them with the gospel! The preacher must encourage brethren to discharge their Christian duties at every opportunity.

What is the gospel preacher to exhort the brethren to do? Some excellent examples are found in Paul's letters to the church at Thessalonica. In the first epistle Paul exhorts those in the church to: "walk in a manner worthy of God" (2:11, 12), "walk and please God" (4:1), "admonish the unruly" (5:14), "encourage the fainthearted" (5:14), "help the weak" (5:14), and "be patient with all men" (5:14). In the second epistle Paul exhorts the Christians to "work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread" (3:12).

Paul's "charge" to Timothy is the same to all faithful gospel preachers today. Those who proclaim the word today are to "reprove, rebuke, and exhort." This is the preacher's responsibility: to plead with brethren, and appeal to them to do what they should do. May God help all who publish the good news be "exhorters!"

# The Value Of Memorising God's Word

#### John Waddey

In addition to possessing the book of God in our homes, we need to deposit it in our hearts. American prisoners of war in Vietnam kept their faith, their sanity and their hope alive by sharing the Scriptures, prayers, and sacred songs they had long ago stored up in their hearts. And thus even though they were deprived of the printed word, the word was yet able to sustain them. Memorization takes effort and time, but the rewards are worth it all.

There was a time when it was common for youngsters to memorize vast amounts of Scripture, at school, in home devotions and in Bible school. Preachers quoted most of their verses. Some memorized whole chapters, even entire books of Holy Writ. Some with special talents of memory could recite vast portions, if not all of the New Testament. We need to continue to emphasize this important method of learning God's Word for numerous reasons. some of those reasons we now share.

God taught Israel to memorize his message. "These words, which I command thee this day, shall be upon thy heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up" (Deut. 6:6-7). How blest is that family where this admonition is followed. How many sins will be driven away before they can take root. How much spiritual strength will be generated! How better could we make certain our heavenly calling?

Spiritual growth depends upon our knowing God's Word. "As newborn babes, long for the spiritual milk which is without guile, that ye may grow thereby unto salvation" (I Pet. 2:2). Food must be taken into the system and digested before it benefits the body; so must the scriptures to strengthen the soul.

Memorization makes possible the uninterrupted communication of the soul with God. David wrote: "I will bless Jehovah who hath given me counsel; yea my heart instructeth me in the night seasons. I have set Jehovah always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved" (Ps. 16:7-8). Whether at work or travelling, in school or at some social event, the memorized word is there to keep us pure and to guide us aright. No night is so dark as to rob the mind of truth thus committed.

Scripture in the heart contributes to an effectual prayer life. Jesus tells us: "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will and it shall be done unto you" (John 15:7). Perhaps this explains why so many modern disciples have barren prayer lives, for the absence of his Word in our hearts will have the oppossite effect. Since prayers must be according to the Divine will one can easily see how a heart filled with Scripture would be more able to pray acceptably. (Matt. 26:39).

The Word of God stored in the mind provides powerful assistance in soul-winning. From infancy Timothy had "known the sacred scriptures which [were] able to make [him] wise unto salvation" (II Tim. 3:15). When memorized, the gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation, is instantly available for every need (Rom. 1:16). Whether you meet the prospect on a plane, in the coffeeshop, or at work, you can teach him.

The example of Jesus encourages us to memorize Scripture. When tempted by Satan in the wilderness, the Master successfully defended himself by the word of divine truth stored up in his heart (Matt. 4:1-11). The same will strengthen us as we "resist the Devil" (Jas. 4:7). Can any of us afford to neglect this powerful preventive to sin? To be a Christian means to follow his example. (I Pet. 2:21).

Memorization makes possible continued meditation upon the word of God at all times. The psalmist wrote, "Oh how I love thy law! It is my meditation all the day" (Ps. 119:97). Again we read, "Blessed is the man...[whose] delight is in the law of Jehovah and on his law doth he meditate day and night" (Ps. 1:1-2).

Scripture laid up in the heart provides comfort and strength in times of trouble. "Unless thy law had been my delight, I should then have perished in mine affliction. I will never forget thy precepts; for with them thou hast quickened me" (Ps. 119: 92-93).

The word in the memory will satisfy our spiritual appetite. Jeremiah said, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy words were unto me a joy and the rejoicing of my heart." The soul that hungers and thirsts for God's righteousness will cherish the words of truth securely stored in the depths of his being. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4). Hear the patriarch Job: "I have treasured up the words of his mouth more than my necessary food" (Job 23:12).

Victory over sin is achieved through the memorized word. "Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking hold thereto accord to thy word...Thy word have I laid up in my heart that I might not sin against thee" (Ps. 119:9, 11).

It is a vital part of the "whole armor of God" that prepares us for spiritual combat (Eph. 6:11-17). Notice that none of these items of spiritual armor can be separated from God's word. Since so much of the Christian's life is spent in combat, fighting the "good fight of faith" (I Tim. 6:12) we cannot afford to be without ready access to the truth.

Quietness and contentment accompany the word of God when preserved in the heart. Listen to the Spirit's word: "Great peace have they that love thy law; and they shall have no occasion of stumbling" (Ps. 119:165).

A bountiful harvaet always follows when the seed of God's word is diligently planted in the human heart. God's word shall not return unto him void, but it will accomplish that which he pleases and prosper in the thing whereto he sends it (Is. 55:11). One will never be disappointed at the results when he takes the time to memorize the precious words of life. The reward will be manifold, the consequences will be realized even beyond the grave.

Let all of God's children daily feed upon God's word and store it in the memory banks of our minds that it might guide us in all earthly pursuits and protect our travei unto eternity.

# Miracles Today? - Part 2

#### Steve Perry

In our last article we noted that the baptism of the Holy Spirit was promised only to the Apostles and the spiritual gifts (I Cor. 12:8-10) were done away with, when "that which is perfect" came (I Cor. 13:8-10). Obviously then, miracles as performed by Jesus and the Apostles, are no longer in existence. Let us now note some of the proof texts used by people who claim to be able to perform such miracles today.

(1) Hebrews 13:8. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yea and forever." They claim from this passage that since Jesus and the Apostles performed miracles during their time that they still manifest themselves the same way today. The truth is, Christ is the same today in character, but his methods have changed. The law changed (Heb. 7:12) but Christ did not. God does not form man from dust of the earth any longer nor does Christ walk around this earth in the flesh. The character of God (Malachi 3:6) and Christ have not changed nor will they ever, but this does not prove that one could perform a miracle today. If it does, then we will be performing miracles in heaven ("forever"). Will there be sick people in heaven?

(2) Mark 16:17-18. "And these signs shall accompany them that believe: In my name shall they cast out demons; they shall speak with new tongues: they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall in no wise hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover." In the first place Jesus said, these signs shall follow "them". The antecedent of "them" is the "eleven" in verse 14, the Apostles. In verse 20 we learn that "they" (the Apostles) "went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them" (the Apostles) "and confirming the Word with signs following". The Apostles were the ones that these signs would follow as they did. (Acts 28:3-5.) The Word would be confirmed. (Heb. 2:3.) Once a thing is confirmed, it needs no further confirmation! We today have these signs recorded in the Word of God: the miracles of Jesus in Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and the acts of the Apostles in the book of Acts.

Although this passage is a "favorite" of the so called faith healers, how many do you see or read about drinking deadly poison or picking up deadly snakes, etc. The tongues and the snakes and the poison go together. If one can speak in an unknown tongue or language he must be able to play with snakes and drink deadly poison! Occasionally through the news media today we hear of those that try these miracles and die. Sometimes they publicly do these things without harming themselves. In the latter case, I wonder who picked the poison or the snakes? No doubt, they did themselves.

(3) John 14:12. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto the Father." This was a statement of Jesus to the Apostles shortly before his crucifixion. We know that the Apostles duplicated some of the miracles of Jesus in healing the sick, (Acts 19:11-12.) raising the dead, (Acts 9:40), etc. These were of the same caliber as the miracles of Jesus but not greater. This in itself would prove the "faith healer" or "miracle worker" wrong in that they only claim to do miracles of the same caliber, not greater.

The "greater works than these" must be works that Jesus could not perform while on earth, such as teaching and preaching about the death, burial, and resurrection of himself and the glory and saving power thereof. Jesus promised the Holy Spirit to the Apostles (John 16:13) and when they recieved this (Acts 2) they could preach the complete Gospel of Christ to the world for the salvation of lost souls. (Romans 1:16.) This is the "greater work", work that we have to this very day; Preaching the gospel to a lost, dying, and deceived world!

- (4) Isaiah 53:5. "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." The claim here is that this prophesy of the Lord's work proves that miraculous healing is included in the atonement of Jesus Christ. "With his stripes we are healed," in no way denotes miraculous healing today. The parallel of this passage in the New Testament is I Peter 2:24; "who his own self bore our sins in his body upon the tree, that we having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness, by whose stripes we are healed." We see here that healing means the forgiveness of sins. The Greek word for healed here is "iaomai" which does sometimes mean physical healing, but as we read ve se 25 we know that Peter is here speaking of our forgiven sins, "For ye were as sheep going astray, but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls." We know then that healing here is referring to how Christ died on the cross to save us from our sins (I Cor. 15:3-4,) and not the curing of our physical There is not a passage in the Bible to prove that Christ died for our physical ailments.
- (5) James 5:14-15. "Is any among you sick? let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith shall save him that is sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he has committed sins, it shall be forgiven him." The claim here is that miraculous healing has not ceased. The truth is that this passage is referring to healing during the early stage of the church. James the fifth chapter was written in A.D. 65 and this passage is speaking of the same thing mentioned in I Corinthians 12. Although "modern healers" claim this passage proves we still can

perform miraculous healing it actually proves them as false teachers, James said call for the elders, no one else, just elders. Elders must be men with a family (I Timothy 3:1-7). How many of the "faith healers" are women and bachelors?

James said anoint the sick with oil. How many do this? Very few, if any. James also said that the prayer of faith by the elders would save him. Many faith healers claim that when a person is not healed it is his fault for not having enough faith. Nothing is said here about the person being healed having to have faith. We are also told here that "the Lord shall raise him up." This leaves no room for mistakes on the part of the "faith healer." Everyone that the elders went unto to heal—they healed: The failures of the faith healer proves him wrong.

(6) Joel 2:28, Acts 2:17. "I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams." Here we have the prophecy by Joel, and Luke recording it in Acts as stated by Peter on the Day of pentecost. Some claim from this passage that the Holy Spirit is given to many today. They say that "all flesh" includes us today as well as the Apostles and others during the early stages of the church. If one is to take "all flesh" literally then it must include animals, etc... Or if just all humans, then the good and bad, righteous and unrighteous. We know that this is certainly not so. All flesh actually means both Jew and Gentile since all the human race falls under one of these two categories.

God's spirit was poured out upon the Jews in Acts 2 and upon the Gentiles in Acts 10 (Cornelius and his household). As for the prophesying of daughters, etc...; that happened in the early Christian era as we note in Acts 21-9, I Cor. 13:9, 14:1, and passed away in the supernatural sense as previously noted.

Surely we can see that to claim to perform miracles today as Jesus and the Apostles did, is contrary to the will and Word of God: Let us "Study to show ourselves approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth"; Jesus said "ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

# Let's Look At Paul, The Preacher

#### W. A. Holley

"Whereunto I was appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher" (II Timothy 1:11).

Aside from Jesus Christ, Paul is easily the most unusual preacher the world has ever known. As far as sacred history goes, no other preacher, even including Peter or any of the other apostles, ever exercised greater influence for Christ and apostolic Christianity than Paul. He claims not to have been behind the chiefest apostles, and to have "laboured more abundantly than they all" (H Gorinthians 11:5, 23; I Corinthians 15:10). Thus his indefatigable labours carried him from Damascus to Jerusalem, from Jerusalem to the cities of Asia Minor, and from Caesarea to Rome, bringing with him the glorious gospel of Christ which was and is able to transform the sinful lives of men. (Mark 16:15-16; Romans 1:16-17).

We shall consider the early life of Paul. He was born in the ancient city of Tarsus, the Capital of Cilicia (Acts 9:11; 21:39). He was of the tribe of Benjamin, and a free born cirizen of the Roman Empire (Acts 22:24-28). Because Tarsus was known for its philosophers and schools, its pagan immoralities, and its relationship to the mighty Roman Empire, Paul used a litotes, a weaker for a stronger expression, to indicate the importance of his native city.

Paul traced his lineage back through more than 1600 years of proud Jewish history. In Philippians 3:4-6, Paul writes of himself: "If any other man thinketh to have confidence in the flesh, I yet more: circumcized the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless." Even with these marks of distinction, as set forth in the foregoing quotation, Paul fully realized that such distinguished achievements were powerless to assure his salvation. He adds, "Howbeit, what things were gain to me, these have I counted loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I suffered the loss of all

things, and do count them but refuse, that I might gain Christ, and be found in him, not having a righteousness of mine own, even that which is of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith." (Ibid. 7-9).

Apparently, while but a boy, perhaps at the age of twelve, he was brought to Jerusalem, where he was educated. His teacher was Gamaliel, a teacher of great renoun (Acts 22:3; 5:34). Paul's mind soon became saturated with the law of Moses, as is evidenced by the many quotations from Moses and the prophets which fill his epistles. It is not long before he is seen as a zealous persecutor of the fledgling church of Christ. The first time we meet Paul is at the tragic stoning of Stephen, and there the Scripture says: "And Saul was consenting unto his death" (Acts 7:58-59; 8:1). Later, after his conversion to Jesus Christ, Paul became the persecuted rather than the persecutor. (II Corinthians 6:3-10; 11: 23-33).

What about Paul's Character? From his youth, he must have been deeply religious. He was never an immoral reprobate, as is sometimes asserted. Speaking of his life prior to his conversion to Christ, he said: "I have lived before God in all good conscience until this day." (Acts 23:1; Cf. 26:9-11; I Timothy 1:13). Quite frequently we hear some denominational preacher saying: I was just like Paul before I was saved. I was a drunkard, a thief, a liar, an adulterer, but, thank God, I have been saved at an old fashioned mourners' bench." The foregoing quotation misrepresents both Paul and the Holy Scriptures!! There was never a time in Paul's life when he was an immoral derelict! On the contrary, his zeal, moral excellence, and his character were so blameless and irreproachable, the high priest entrusted him with high positions of influence, giving him authority to punish those who had embraced the new faith. Hence, Paul was honest, sincere, and conscientious in his frenzied opposition to Christ and his way; but he was honestly, sincerely, and conscientiously wrong! ! But when he learned that he was in error, he turned away from his former ways, and embraced, wholehearted, the way of the Lord Jesus. For many years thereafter, he distinguished himself as a brave, courageous, and steadfast soldier of Christ, despite the most desperate opposition which assailed him. Paul found a way to use

temporary set-backs as stepping-stones to success (Philippians 1:12-19; 4:9-13; I Timothy 1:12-15).

What about Paul's conversion? It is asserted that he was converted on the Damascus road. But, if this contention were true; Paul, himself, did not know about it, for he asked, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" thus indicating that he did not know that he had been saved (Acts 9.6; 22:10). Moreover, Jesus did not know that Paul had been saved on the Damascus road, for, when Paul asked: "Who art thou, Lord?" Jesus answered: "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: but arise, and enter into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." (Acts 9:5-6). Furthermore, Ananias did not know that Paul had been saved on the Damascus road, for, when he came to him, having been sent there by the Lord, he (Ananias) addressed Paul on this wise: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). We ask: Is it possible for one to be saved before one's sins are washed away??

With regard to Paul's conversion, we may be certain of the following points: (1) He was not saved by observing the doctrines and commandments of men (Matthew 15:9); he was not converted by the delusive promises of "philosophy and vain deceit" (Colossians 2:8); he was not saved at an altar of prayer (Acts 22:16, Cf. Acts 9:8.9), nor was he saved by doing nothing (Matthew 7:21). (2) But Paul was saved by faith which includes repentance, confession of Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and baptism in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. (Romans 5:1-2; Acts 17:30-31; Romans 10:9-10; 0:1-4; I Peter 3:21). (3) Moreover, Paul taught that the child of God must fight the good fight of faith, finish the course, and keep the faith, if he expects to inherit life eternal (Mark 10:30; I Timothy 6:12; II Timothy 4:6-8; I Corinthians 9:27; I John 2:25).

What about Paul's activities as a Christian worker? Almost immediately following his conversion, Paul began to preach Jesus, "that he is the Son of God" (Acts 9:20). Paul learned a bitter lesson before he could be accepted as a trusted and effective Christian leader. He discovered that people do not forget easily; a man's mistakes can haunt him for a long time, even after he has forsaken them. (Acts 9:23; Galatians 1:18).

We do not know how many years Paul lived, but from his writings, we know that he spent them busily engaged in the work of the Lord. He wrote fourteen books of the New Testament, a tremendous and marvelous achievement by any measurement. Paul was missionary minded, making three great missionary journeys, meeting both success and failure, and covering an estimated fourteen thousand miles, in an era when any kind of transportation was difficult and time-consuming. Indefatigable, tireless, weariless, unflagging are synonyms which seem to describe Paul's restless energy in behalf of Jesus Christ.

We pose a question: Why was Paul's work so influential? so powerful? (1) Because he had been genuinely converted to Christ. He had persecuted Christ relentlessly, but after his conversion "straightway he preached Christ...that he is the Son of God," thus becoming ever after the persecuted. (Acts 9:20; II Corinthians 11: 22-33). (2) He lived what he preached (I Corinthians 11:1). (He was dedicated to doctrinal purity (John 8:30-32; Galatians 1:6-9). (4) He was enthusiastic as an evangelist (Acts 20:17-38). (5) He made a total investment in the Cause of Christ...body, soul and spirit. (II Timothy 4:1-8). Hence, Paul did not preach one thing but practice another. (I Corinthians 9:27).

Although Paul was a preacher of great ability, there are some things which he did not preach. For example, he never preached that the gospel of Christ is but a fairy tale; that God is a figment of the imagination; that Jesus was just another Jew; that miracles never occurred; that the resurrection of Christ was a hoax; that one church is as good as another, and that one should join the church of one's choice; that baptism is a non-essential, and that one should be baptized because one is already saved; that the Holy Spirit operates directly upon the heart, separate and apart from the word of God or the gospel of Christ, in conviction and conversion.

Well, then, what did Paul preach? He preached the gospel of Christ without addition or subtraction or substitution (Galatians 1:6-9); he preached the gospel of Christ as God's power to save sinners (Romans 1:16); he preached the truth regarding the fact that the kingdom of God exists now (Acts 20:25; 28:31; Colossians 1:13-14); he preached the word of God, obedience to which procures remission of sins (Acts 13:5, 38; 14:25); he preached "Jesus and the resurrection" (Acts 17:18; I Corinthians 15:1-4).

Realizing the supreme importance of complete submission to Christ's will, Paul constantly urged all mankind to build their hopes upon things eternal, to practice modesty and sobriety, to be law-abiding citizens, to live pure and holy lives, to love one another, and to encourage one another in righteousness. He preached peace and unity among brethren (Philippians 1:27; I Corinthians 1:10-13; Romans 12:18; 14:19). Paul also urged brethren to provide funds for the less fortunate (I Corinthians 16: 1-3; II Corinthians 8:1ff; 9:1-7, 13; Romans 15:25-31). Moreover, He warned all people of the judgment to come, urging them to obey the Gospel before it was/is too late (Hebrews 9:27; II Corinthians 5:10-11; II Thessalonians 1:7-9).

Even today, Paul's challenging words come ringing down through almost twenty centuries, to us, saying, "Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ." (I Corinthians 11:1, ASV).

# Light Speaks

#### **Barry Fike**

Light has spoken to all men that have lived on this earth in all ages. It continues to do so today, each day. We wake up with the light of the sun, we work under the light of the office, we go to stores which are lighted, we drive at night by our headlights, and to go to sleep we turn off the bedroom light.

Our whole life revolves around light because without it we would simply grope around in darkness. The Bible, too, realizes the importance of light in our spiritual lives: God, being the just, omnipotent being of the universe, looked down on man and, seeing, his wickedness, saw his need for salvation. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

What was the light that God sent us to save us from an eternity of groping around in the darkness of sin? "The Lord is my light..." David stated (Psalm 27:1). Jesus himself said, "I am the light of the world. Whosoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (John 8:12). So for one to walk out of the darkness of sin he needs to find the true, pure teaching of Christ in the New Testament. Once walking in this light there is no way for a person to get lost, unless he so chooses.

This is the only way for a person to get lost because "there is no darkness at all" (I John 1:5) in God.

Of course a light does not do anyone any good if it is not used. How can a candle light a room if it is not lit? How could man be saved from Satan until he is enlightened about God's only Son? Isaiah pleaded with the Israelites to, "walk in the light of the Lord" (Isaiah 2:5). The Bible pleads with us today also to leave denominational ideas and creeds and walk in the light of the Lord. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105). What other light is needed except the one God has given us?

One learns from the Bible what is necessary to walk the narrow path to eternal glory. But even Christ said although light had come into the world "men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God" (John 3:19-21). All that are lost have been so because they wanted to be. The Bible plainly states that, "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7). Thus so to walk makes up children of light (Ephesians 5:8; I Thessalonians 5:5) enabling us to take the armour of light. (Romans 13:12) and walk in the path Christ has shown us.

We can be assured that as agents of light we don't walk alone but shine forth as examples to countless others that see us every day (Matthew 5:14-16). When Benjamin Franklin wished tointerest the people of Philadelphia in street lighting, he didn't try to persuade them by just talking about it. He hung a beautiful lantern on a long bracket in front of his home. He kept the glass brightly polished, and he carefully lit the wick every evening at the approach of dusk. People saw the light from a distance and when they walked in its light, found that it helped them to avoid sharp stones on the pavement. Others placed lights at their homes, and soon Philadelphia recognized the need for street lighting.

We can make the world aware of their need for spiritual lighting in their eternal souls. As an agent of light do you realize this need? If so what are you doing about it?

## Ancient Humanism

#### Winfred Clark

In a humanistic society we would do well to look at at least one illustration of this Godless approach. This is found in Genesis 11:1-9. One can surely see the principles of man trying to fashion his own life according to his own will. There can be no question about man's attempt to lift himself by his own boot straps. It is an attempt for men to try to get rid of God. Many of the modern elements of humanism were present in principle. There is atheism that denies God. This leads to the evolution of matter. Then would follow "situation ethics" that would say nothing is absolute. Next, there is the defying of man. Turn back now and read Genesis 11:1-9 and see if these would not be at home with the Humanist of our day. As surely as you live they would.

#### Take a close look and you can see the:

(1) MOTIVE BEHIND IT. In building the tower of Babel they were not seeking to honor and glorify God. This project would be an accomplishment of man without God. They didn't consult God about the project at all. This is practical atheism. As far as these are concerned there need not be a God. They think they can get along without him.

Isn't this what humanism says today? Isn't every project proposed by them one that does not need God, per their way of thinking? It surely is. The same motive that law behind this project is in Humanism of our own day.

(2) MENTALITY THAT CONTROLLED THEM. They didn't get any higher than themselves. You will note that "they said one to another." Not one time do you find where they ever consulted God about the matter. These have no faith in nor request for God's plan and purpose.

Is this not true of the Humanists? Who do they consult when answers are needed? God? No, they consult man and his inventions. They have their own philosophy and you can be sure it does not include God.

(3) MATERIALISTIC NATURE OF IT. One has but to read Genesis 11:3 to find that this is a materialistic project. Note that they had bricks for stone and slime for mortar. These are substitutes for the real thing. But, isn't that the way materialism always works? It has to offer a cheap substitute of its own creation for the real thing.

These people thought that with material things they could solve their problems. But, these were no more successful than the materialist you find in Luke 12:13-21. This fellow would be right at home with the Humanists of our day.

(4) MORAL DEGENERATION CONNECTED TO IT. The danger also involved in this project would be that man would degenerate more so morally. This is surely one of the things expressed in Genesis 11:6. There God said, "and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do." One thing is certain: they are not going to get any better. If they could succeed without God they would reach the point to where they would see no need of him. Once this occurs they would do as they pleased because they would see nobody but themselves that they are answerable to.

Need one ask if this concept fits Humanism of the 20th century? The morning newspaper will answer that question.

(5) MISERABLE DOOM OF IT. This movement was an effort to dethrone God and deify man. This is man's effort to solve man's problems apart from God. It was doomed from the start. God didn't overlook it; he out lawed it. His decree was that it stop, and stop it did. The name of their project was Bable or confussion. This is the way any project undertaken without God is bound to end; Humanism is no exception. Men make a mistake, a grave mistake, when they get caught up in anything that leaves God out.

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