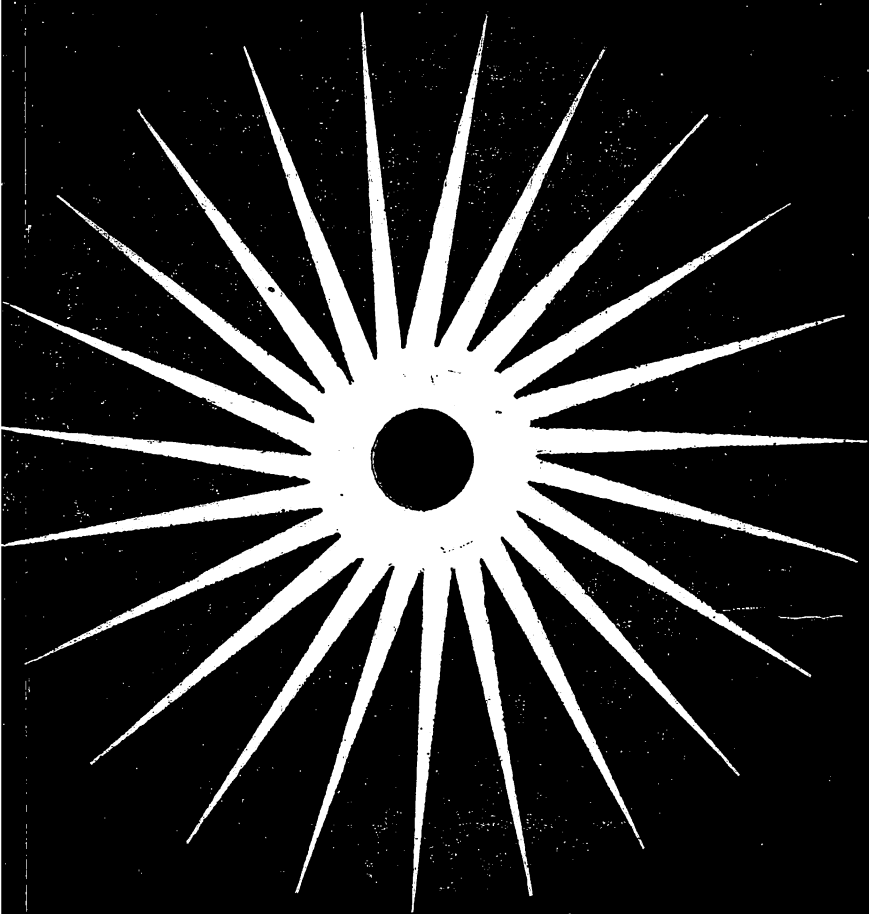


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हमें अपने श्रोताओं को यह बताते हुए बड़ी प्रसन्नता का अनुभव हो रहा है, कि रेडियो श्रीलंका से प्रसारित किए जा रहे “सत्य सुसमाचार” संदेशों को अब आप एक आकर्षक पुस्तक के रूप में मुफ्त प्राप्त कर सकते हैं। १७२ पृष्ठ की इस पुस्तक में १७ प्रभावशाली संदेश हैं। आज ही केवल २५ पैसे का डाक टिकट भेजकर अपनी प्रति प्राप्त करें।

विशेष सूचना !

प्रत्येक शुक्रवार को रात्री ८:४५ से ९:१५ तक सुनिये

हमारा विशेष कार्यक्रम

“सत्य सुसमाचार”

यह कार्यक्रम रेडियो श्रीलंका से २५ तथा

४१ मीटर बैंड पर सुना जा सकता है।

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The Power Of The Gospel

The apostle Paul wrote the Romans, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ : for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith : as it is written, The just shall live by faith." (Romans 1:16, 17). Much is said in these two verses of scripture and therefore we want to take the time to look into them and see what they should mean to us.

What is the gospel ? Whatever it is Paul is saying that he is not ashamed of it and the reason he is not ashamed of it is because it is the power of God unto salvation. That is, the gospel has the power to save. Not only so, but through it the righteousness of God is revealed from the beginning to the end. So if we can discover what the gospel is then we may determine wherein the power of God is located.

In 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 Paul says, "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand ; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you,

unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures ; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures." So Paul says that the gospel is simply the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. He told the Corinthians that he had received it, had preached it to them, and those who had received it had been saved by it.

But how can the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ save anyone ? In other word, how can we so apply these facts to our lives so we can be saved by them ? First of all, we must realize that these are facts indeed that must be believed. In the second place, the same writer, the apostle Paul, speaks of the Romans having obeyed a form of that doctrine. In the first part of Romans 6 he shows how they had died to their sins, had been buried in the waters of baptism, and then how they had come forth from that watery grave to walk in newness of life. That is, Christ had died, been buried, and then resurrected and through their obedience they had obeyed a form of it. He concluded, "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." (Romans 6:17,18). Notice carefully now : They were the servants of sin but now they are the servants of righteousness. What made the difference ? They had obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine that was delivered them. It was not the doctrine they had obeyed, but a form of it. The doctrine was the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ and those were facts that they were to believe. But they obeyed a form of that doctrine. Another way of putting it, they obeyed a form or something that would picture the doctrine in their obedience. Again, it would be a likeness but something they could obey. Going back to our previous remarks, in obeying the gospel they died to their sins, were buried in the water, and this was called baptism, and then they came up out of the water. On doing this, they symbolically pictured the Lord's death, burial, and resurrection in their obedience.

Paul tells us that the Lord is coming back to take vengeance

on them that know not God and obey not the gospel. (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9). Also Peter declares, "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God : and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God ?" (1 Peter 4:17). But again, how can one obey the gospel ? That is simple. The gospel not only contains facts but it also has commands. Christ himself said, "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). Peter and the apostles preached the gospel on the day of Pentecost. After the facts of the gospel had been proclaimed and faith had been produced in the hearts of the hearers, then they asked, "Men and brethren, what shall we do ? Then Peter said unto them, Repent. and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts 2:37,38). As a result of this around three thousand were obedient to the gospel and were added to the church. (Acts 2:41,47). Go on through the book of Acts and you will find conversion after conversion where this happened again and again.

Paul defined the gospel as being good news or glad tidings. (Romans 19:15). When you know what the gospel is and what it can do for one then it is understandable why it is called good news. And to be sure that all the world has this good news then the Lord commanded that it be taken to all the world. (Mark 16:15).

So the gospel is the power of God unto salvation unto everyone that believeth. God uses the gospel, and works through the gospel, to save the lost. There is nothing else to match it. One may turn to whatever he will but he will find no power except in the gospel of Christ. But even though the power is there, one must believe the the gospel and obey its commands to come in contact with it. Then there is salvation and the hope of eternal life. There is no greater power today in all the world.



associate editorial

The Truth About Christmas

Friends, Christianity is a Bible subject. It has its origin with Christ and the Bible, especially the New Testament. All Christians are commanded to abide in Christ and in his words, because each one of us will be judged one day according to the words that Christ hath spoken (John 12 : 48). Remember that. Therefore, as Christians, it is very important that whatsoever we believe or practice it must be supported by the New Testament, where the will of Christ is recorded for us today.

However, when we look around the religious world today, that is today's Christianity, we find that there are many things being believed and practiced which are absolutely foreign to the New Testament and as well as to the whole Bible. And honestly speaking, my friends, Christmas, the so-called birthday of Christ is one of them. Each year on December 25th millions of people around the world celebrate Christmas. They do so, NOT because they have read in their Bibles that Christ was born into this world upon this day, but because they have been told by their parents, forefathers, and religious leaders that Christ was born on this day, i.e., December 25th. But the question is : DOES THE BIBLE TEACH THIS ? And, if not, THEN HOW DID THIS PRACTICE COME INTO EXISTENCE ?

Actually speaking, as a matter of fact, even the word Christmas is not found in the pages of the sixty-six books of the Bible. Nowhere, yes, nowhere does the Bible say that Christ was born on December 25th. True, Christ was born,

but we do not know from the Bible on what date he was born. Secondly, nowhere in the New Testament do we have an example of the disciples of Christ ever celebrating Christmas, or that the Apostles ever taught them to do so. We read in Acts 2 : 42 that these early Christians "...continued steadfast in the apostels' doctrine". And in other places, in the New Testament, we find them assembling together on every first day of the week, Sunday, to observe Lord's Supper (Acts 20 : 7), to give offerings (1 Corinthians 16 : 1, 2), we find them praying, singing, teaching the gospel message. But nowhere, yes, nowhere in the New Testament we see them ever celebrating the so-called Christmas. Of course, it was not the doctrine or the teaching of the Apostles. Can't you see this, my friend ? And thirdly, logically speaking, it is not probable that Christ was born on December 25th, because the Bible, in Luke 2 : 8, says, that shepherds were out in the field watching their flocks by night when Christ was born. Now, there was not likely any reason for this in winter. As matter of fact, during December the climate in and around Bethlehem, where Christ was born, is very very cold. Therefore, the shepherds would not plan to sit out in the freezing cold.

Now what is commonly called "Christmas" is not the birthday of Christ. The word Christmas is from "Christes Masse" which means Mass of Christ, and it originated with the Catholic church. After the death of the Apostles the church of Christ suffered a great falling away as it was predicted by the Apostles in their life time. (Acts 26 : 28, 29, 30 ; 2Thessalonians 2 : 3 ; 1Timothy 4 : 1-3 and 2Timothy 4 : 1-4). Soon a new church was established in Rome, and it was called Roman Catholic church. This new church changed many plain teachings of the New Testament, and introduced several New practices. Among other things the Catholic church observed lots of masses of many different so-called saints, and since they had no mass for Christ, they therefore planned to have a Christ's Mass. So, after, sometime it was decided by the Catholic church to observe the Mass of Christ every year on December 25th., But later in the 11th century the

Catholic church divided in two different groups, i.e. the Roman Catholic, and the Greek Orthodox church. However, the Catholic church kept celebrating Christmas on every December 25th, but the Greek Orthodox church selected another date for it and they began to celebrate their Christmas on January 6th. Now, it is a fact, all of the modern day denominations have come out of the Roman Catholic church since the fifteenth century, and with them they brought many man-made teachings and practices, such as Calling men Reverened and Father, baptizing little babies, observing various days, and, of course, Christmas.

However, suppose if God had wanted his people to celebrate, in any special way, the birthday of Christ, I believe, he certainly would have authorized such a celebration. The scriptures contain all things which pertain to life and godliness. (2Peter 1 : 3 ; 2Timothy 3 : 15-17). Christmas, since it is not divinely authorized, is an addition to the word of God, and surely is a doctrine and commandment of men, and is vain worship. (Revelation 22 : 18, 19 ; Matthew 15 : 9).

Moreover, in many different churches and assemblies and as well as in homes, on the Christmas day people make a doll, and I should say an idol, and lay it in a manger as to show baby Christ. Please, just think ! Is it not a great insult to the Son of God ; Christ who is the Lord of lords and King of kings, they compare him with a doll ! Just think about this ! Each year they bring him down from heaven that he might be born annually, each year they crucify him, and each year they make him resurrected. How absurd, ridiculous !

Again, the majority of people get drunk, dance, and do many other un Christian things in the name of Christmas. On this day hudnreds of people die because they drink much liquor to celebrate Christmas, Let me ask you, Is this what Christ requires from his followers ?

Today, many fine, religious, and honest people celebrate Chrimas. They may condemn many things, such as drinking, dancing, gambling. They may even reason that they celebrate it not religiously but socially. But the fact is, that it is wrong because the Lord has not authorized its practice, in any way, in the New Testament.

May Women Lead Prayer In Worship ?

Pat McGee

When in the course of Christian conduct it becomes necessary to stand in defense of gospel truth, such defense must always be in the spirit of Christ. It is in this spirit that this study is sent forth. Our divinely given task is to "prove all things ; holding fast that which is good" (I Thes. 5:21). It must be understood that whatever the doctrine or practice, no man has the right to be wrong religiously. Paul charged men not to teach a different doctrine or anything which was contrary to the sound doctrine of the blessed gospel (I Tim. 1:3, 10-21), In all doctrine and teaching we are to show purity and uncorruptness using sound speech that cannot be condemned (Titus 1:7-8). Such speech will be the goal of this article as we seek a Bible answer to the above question.

From different areas and at different times comes the question, "Do the scriptures permit women to lead prayers in public or semi-public periods of worship where men are present ?" It shall be the purpose of this study to provide a clear-cut Bible answer to this question. The writer has no bias against anyone or a special theological axe to grind. The only desire is to say what God has said in his word—the Bible. With that we shall have to be content.

It shall herein be maintained that the Bible teaches that no Christian woman can do anything in her Christian life, public or private, which places her in a position of non-subordination to her Christian brethren. It is further contended that taking a public, leading or special part in a worship situation is in violation of scripture. Specifically, the Christian woman is strictly forbidden to publicly teach before her Christian brethren in the worship assembly. Thus it is held that the word of God teaches and scriptural support for this position should subsequently follow in the ensuing study.

In order that the reader may correctly understand the issue which is involved may we look closely at the title of our study: "*May Women Lead Prayer in Worship?*" By "*women*" is intended the Christian woman. "*Lead*" means direct or guide the others present in public speaking to God. "*Worship*" means any and/or every situation which is a congregational act of devotion to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The number present or the place of assembly has absolutely nothing to do with the issue. It may be in large public assemblies or in small devotional circles where only a few are present. But "*worship*" is used to include all of these situations. If Christians are gathered and any acts of devotion are congregationally expressed to Deity then that is worship. This would include teaching, singing, praying or any other like act offered to God in worship, as worship, or during worship. It is now argued that no Christian woman can occupy a role of non-subordination to her Christian brethren in any worship gathering that worship in teaching, praying or other similar acts. To the Biblical proof of this contention we now turn our attention.

BIBLICAL PROOF :

Two particular passages are pertinent to the discussion at hand, Both are from the pen of Paul and both deal with Christian men and women in worship to God. Conclusive in these two passages are all spiritual acts found in worship gathering. It shall be clear from an honest investigation of these texts that with the regard to public worship assemblies, men are to take the lead.

"As in all the churches of the saints, let the women keep silence in the churches; for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but let them be in subjection, as also saith the law. And if they would learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home: for it is shameful for a woman to speak in the church." I Cor. 14:33b-35. "I desire therefore that the men pray in every place, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and disputing. In like manner, that women adorn themselves in modest

apparel, with shamefastness and sobriety; not with braided hair, and gold or pearls or costly raiment; but (which becometh women professing godliness) through good works. Let a woman learn in quietness with all subjection. But I permit not a woman to teach, nor to have dominion over a man, but to be in quietness." I Tim. 2:8-12.

We shall at this time turn to a systematic and close study of these above passages with the intention of presenting the scriptural evidence contained therein in support of our basic argument. Turning first to the Corinthian passage we see the following facts.

I Cor. 14:33b-35

1. Let it first be observed that Paul states that what he is writing here is the commandment of the Lord (I Cor. 14:37). Paul is not expressing his own personal opinion or prejudice in these verses. It is God's authoritative and absolute message that he is giving.
2. What Paul is writing here by inspiration is applicable to or in "all the churches of the saints". This would include every assembly to worship where men are present.
3. Next notice that the apostle plainly writes; "let the women keep silence in the assemblies". The word *silence* (*sigao*) is a present active imperative verb meaning, "to keep in silence, to stop talking". (UBS Lexicon p. 162). The meaning here is not that she can never say anything, for the Lord commands all Christians to sing together (Col. 3:16) and she must make the good confession (Rom. 10:9-10; I Tim. 6:12; Mat. 10:32). But in the mixed public assembly she is to remain silent continually as a sign of her submission to the men of the congregation, "even as the law says" (14:34).
4. Twice Paul writes that the women are "not permitted to speak" (14:34,35) for he says it is a shame for them to do so. Again we are reminded of the fact that Paul's

intention is to govern activity in the worship assembly (14:19,23,26,28). Women could pray and prophesy (I Cor. 11:5; Acts 21:9) but not in the congregation for such is not allowed by God. These prohibitions would apply to the discussion of I Cor. 11 or any other related passage of scripture.

5. The basic principle under discussion by Paul in this context is that of submission or subjection. The law states (Gen. 3:16) that the woman is to be in submission to the man (see Ipet. 3;1,5) in all things (Eph. 5:22-4, 33). No Christian woman is ever allowed in the worship assembly to be in a position of non-subordination to the Christian men of the assembly. Speaking out or refusing to remain silent in the assembly is Paul's example of such insubordination.

I Tim. 2:8-12

1. Paul here instructs first of all that "the men pray.....". The word used by him for *men* is a special word meaning man as opposed to women. In the greek language of the New Testament there are two words translated men. The one (*anthropos*) is generic and includes all member of the human race whereas the other (*aner*) always makes the distinction between the sexes. The generic word is used in I Tim. 2:1,4,5 but the word specifying men exclusively is used in verse 8. Thus, when Paul says, "I desire therefore that men pray in every place," he used a word that meant just exactly that, *men*, and not women.
2. Paul then emphasises that not only are the men to do the praying but that they are to do it in every public place where both sexes are present. "*Everyplace*" of necessity means every public place where the audience is mixed or else it would logically demand that no woman could pray at all—private or otherwise. All Christian women are to pray (I Cor. 11:5; I Thes. 5:17) but in public places inspiration desires that the men do

- the praying. The same point would apply to their teaching role (see Titus 2:3-4; I Tim. 2:24; Acts 2:17-18).
3. "In like manner, that women....." Here the contrast between the Christian man and the Christian woman is begun. This distinction of role and position must be maintained today.
 4. "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection." The prepositional phrase "in silence" governs the behaviour of the worshipping Christian woman in the presence of her Christian brethren. The word "Silence" here is a different word from that studied above in I Cor. 14:34, but the meaning is exactly the same. I Tim. 2:11 uses *hesuchia* "to be quiet" (UBS p.81). This is in harmony with Paul's previous statement that in the mixed worship assembly only the men are to pray (I Tim. 2:8). "Silence" does not exclude singing for that is a congregational activity and in no way would infringe upon her submission to her Christian brethren.
 5. Paul again appeals to the principle of subjection : i.e. "...with all subjection." (I Tim. 2:11). In I Tim. 2:13-14 Paul assigns two reasons why the woman was not to teach nor to usurp authority over the man : (1) "For Adam was first formed, then Eve". (2:13). In the order of creation man was made first, and then the woman was made to be the proper helpmeet of the man. (2) "And Adam was not beguiled, but the woman being beguiled hath fallen into transgression" (2:14). Eve, not the man, was deceived by the subtlety of the devil (II Cor. 11:3). Because of the woman's sin, God said, "Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." (Gen. 3:16).
 6. Paul now writes that the woman is forbidden "to teach or to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence" (2:12). To usurp authority over the man is to engage in an act of non-subordination and this is what Paul explicitly prohibits. The prepositional phrase "over the man" modifies the two infinitives "to teach" and

"to usurp authority". Therefore it is sinful for the Christian woman to teach over the Christian man or do anything over the man for which she has no authority. Since Paul explicitly says that the men are to pray in every place this would implicitly forbid any Christian woman to lead prayer before her Christian brethren. No Christian woman has the Biblical right to lead a prayer in the presence of the Christian man. Such an act would be unauthorized by scripture.

The above information provides clear and final confirmation of the contention of this study; that no Christian woman may with divine approval lead prayer or do anything else in a mixed assembly which would place her in a position of non-subordination to her Christian brethren. Since it is the nature of Biblical truth that it is always consistent any truth proven positively cannot subsequently be disproven negatively. Objections do not set aside established and absolute truths. It is then the case that no human objection can possibly set aside the conclusion and positive Biblical evidence of the above study.

Therefore in every position and act of leadership and authority *in worship* the Christian woman is to remain in absolute silence as a sign of her subordination to her Christian brethren. Paul says that this includes teaching and praying before any assembly in which a Christian man is present. "I desire therefore that the men pray in every place". "But I permit not a woman to teach, nor to have dominion over a man, but to be in quietness". Such is the evidence of scripture and to it all of God's faithful children must yield.

Elisha And The Shunamite Woman

Mark H. Nunley

Many times we assume that the only way to serve God is in big elaborate ways. We sometimes think that we cannot serve God unless we are a Moses leading the children of Israel out of Egypt. But the truth of the matter is that everyone of us have opportunities to serve God daily. These opportunities may not be impressive or showey. They May not have any glamour about them. But yet they are very important and very much needed. A woman in the Old Testament that bears this out for us is a woman mentioned in II Kings 4 : 8-37.

The woman's name is not even recorded for us. She was not a Sarah or an Esther. She was just a common person much like all of us. Her opportunities were not spectacular or impressive. But she simply did what she could, and thus she did service to God.

The Bible says about her that there was a great woman in Shunem. And as we think about what is said about her, we come to agree that indeed there was a great woman in Shunem. One thing that tells us that she was a great woman is that she was hospitable. The record there tells us that she constrained Elisha to eat with her and her husband. Her home was always open to Elisha ; he was always welcome at her table whenever he was in Shunem : Besides that, she and her husband built a room onto the house which Elisha could call his own, and he stayed in that room many times. Her attitude must have been : I'll do whatever I can. These deeds weren't spectacular or impressive, but they were important.

Now upon receiving all of these things, in return, Elisha promised this woman that she would have a son (since she and her husband were without any children). But upon offering to give her somethings in return, notice what she said, "I dwell among mine own people." In other words, I don't need anything. She didn't do what she did for some-

thing in return. She had a husband, a house, food to eat, and clothing to wear, and she was thus content. So the second thing which tells us that she was indeed a great woman was her attitude that she didn't need anything. She was content with what she had. She was not greedy nor jealous because others had things which she did not have.

But in the course of time, the boy became sick and he died. And upon this the Shunamite rode to see Elisha. And when Elisha saw her coming, he sent Gehazi his servant to ask her, "Is it well with thee? Is it well with thy husband? Is it well with the child? And the answer of this woman is almost unbelievable. She said, "It is well." "It is well." Can you imagine that? Here her only son was dead, and she could say, "It is well." you see, evidently, she recognized that God is in control of the universe, that all things are in the hands of God, and that He will do what's right. Her attitude must have been: Father, no matter what I face, no matter what happens, if it is Your will, if Your hand is in it, then it is alright, I know that You know best and that You make no mistakes. Does that mean that she did not grieve the loss of her son? NO, not at all. She grieved over the death of her son like any mother would. But even this was alright if it was God's will. So the third thing that tells us that there was indeed a great woman in Shunem is that her attitude was, "It is well."

This woman did simply what she could to serve God and her fellow man: she was content with her circumstances in life; and it was well with her soul no matter what happened if it was the will of the Almighty Father in heaven. May each of us live our lives in the same way. We must if we want the blessing of God upon our lives.

Me Sick...Why?

J. P. Williams

Here I am, sick, flat on my back, almost as helpless as a baby; WHY? I think I can take it. I've had many hard knocks in life; but look at me now, I can't even get out of bed. WHY?

My life hasn't been perfect, I realize this, but do you suppose it has been so bad that God is giving me what I deserve?

Illness, when it strikes suddenly, often catches one unprepared. With many it is a completely new experience. They have known many others to go through this experience, but somehow never expected it to happen to them. It's always someone else that is sick or hurt in an accident—never me. That is, until one day we wake up to find ourselves in a hospital surrounded by nurses, doctors and many strange machines. In between x-rays, medication, and possibly surgery, we find a lot of time to lie on our backs and THINK! For many this is a time to re-examine their lives — their resources for living — both spiritual and physical.

As we re-examine ourselves, some of us may find we are face to face with the question, Why am I here? Perhaps you have already asked yourself these questions. Perhaps you have been searching your past to find what you have done so bad to be deserving of this punishment.

The questions that are coming to your mind cannot be answered in a brief leaflet, but this one thing you can know which will relieve you of some real concern—your illness IS NOT proof of God's wrath upon you for something you have done. 'The rain falls on the just and unjust' (Matthew 5: 45). Sickness is impartial. It falls upon all men, both the rich and poor, saint and sinner alike.

The answer to your present illness is not to be found in some mistake for which God is punishing you. Sin is not directly the reason for suffering except as our selfish and wilful way of the life leads us into that which is not healthy,

bringing about wear and tear of our body, under which some organs at last break down and illness becomes inescapable. In such cases God has not waited for us to make mistakes and then, catching us, brought punishment upon us.

The ancient Hebrews believed all evil was explained by sin, and that a person's misfortune, whether sickness or otherwise, was evidence of the wrath of God. Job was a "perfect and upright man," yet untold suffering fell his lot.

As you await your return to health, erase from your mind the idea that this is the punishment of God ; and let a positive and helpful thought take its place.

Think of God as a loving, compassionate, merciful Father toward all mankind (2 Peter 3 : 9). In every body there are healing resources which go to work for us immediately when we are injured or become ill. These marvelous forces of healing are placed in your body by God, and are working in you at this very moment. By this you can be assured that God is not punishing you for your failures, but rather is on your side working that you may return to health and happiness. As you lie in bed, let your mind dwell on this thought. God is helping by placing these forces in my body, and by working through nurses and doctors.

Relax, and let tension slip away, replacing it with trust in God, resolving to accept His will in full obedience (Hebrews 5 : 8-9).

Remember always, God has promised, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Hebrews 13 : 5),

May God restore your health and renew your spirit with a determination to live for Him as He guides you through His Holy Word each day.

Bible, Common Study and Sense

Gary Dennis Jones

"I will speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent." So spake restoration leader Alexander Campbell many years ago. This is certainly a laudable motto, but it can also be used for the perpetuation of prescribed questions with predigested, word-for-word answers if we are not very careful.

Diligence, of course, is the first requisite of Bible study. In order to really learn about the topic at hand, one must run all the references on that topic. And if one is in a Bible class, then he is little more than a detriment to it if he is not prepared to participate.

Then there is the dictionary. We all need to use it more to look up the meanings of words and phrases that are unfamiliar to us. Learning the meanings of these before class commences will help insure a better study session.

Often we are given class clues to the meanings of various terms by their context, the ways and places in which they are used. This, of course, is a very good study technique since any grouping of words can take on different meanings when taken out of its original context. Such has been the case with everything from books on communications and politics to the Bible itself—with disastrous or near disastrous effects.

It has been stated that we should always be ready to give to every man an answer for the hope that is in us "I believe" is a common expression among all of us, but too often, I fear, we are totally unable to give any firm, tangible, sensible reason why "I believe" as I do. And of a certainty this should not be so—we should either search out scriptural reasons for our beliefs or else abandon them altogether. Granted this is much, much easier said than done; we must nevertheless make the effort.

In attempting to live up to the goal of speaking only where the Bible speaks, Christians can easily get into the habit of having Bible classes that consist of no more than reading a

study booklet and then asking several basic questions which are to be answered in just such-and-such a way, the way they have always been answered and the way they always will be. Not that the truth ever changes. It does not. But we need to start asking more thoughtful questions than we now do. As it is, when someone asks a question that is "not in the book," few people know what to do with. Hence they do little more than restate the question, perhaps in a dozen ways, agree that it really is a good question, then let it slowly fade off into the atmosphere from whence it came.

To sum up, we should seek to be generally more diligent and thorough in our study of the Bible. Included here is not only the attaining of knowledge of the scriptural reference on the topic of study, but also the meanings of all words and expressions contained therein and the ability to think analytically about the problems in the light of scripture. When we can do this, then we will be on the road to learning the full meaning of the Word of God as it has been revealed unto us.

Who Decides ?

Mark H. Nunley

Who does decide what is morally right and wrong ? Does each person have the power and right to decide what is right and wrong for himself in any given situation ? Is there a standard of right and wrong that applies to everyone ? Ultimately, does man by his own reasoning, or does God in His wisdom, decide what is morally rightly and wrong ?

This is a very, very important question that needs the right answer. If God has the only right to decide what is right and wrong, then men and women must submit themselves to the will and decision of God on all matters. If man has the right to decide what is right and wrong for himself or herself in any given situation depending upon the circumstances, then

man does not have to answer to anyone for his decision. So let us consider these points that have a direct bearing on the matter at hand :

- (1) **Man Is Not Capable Of Directing His Own Life Properly By Himself.** In Jer, 10 : 23 we read, "O Jehovah, I know that the way of man is not in himself ; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." Mankind is not wise enough to be capable to handle the affairs of his own life. And so we must turn to the proper standard of guidance to direct the affairs of our lives. And we can see the messes that people get themselves into when they take it upon themselves to direct their lives without help from any other source.
- (2) **God's Ways Are Higher And More Perfect Than Man's Ways.** In Isa. 55 : 8-9 we find, "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith Jehovah. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." So if a man or woman is to direct his or her life properly, they must consult the Lord God to follow His ways and standards.
- (3) **Man Must Give Answer To God For What He Does.** In II Cor. 5 : 10 we find, "For we must all be made manifest before the judgement-seat of Christ ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad." Some day we shall all give answer to God for everything that we have done. So we must be sure that we are living our lives in accordance with the ways of God.
- (4) **The Bible Is The Only Reliable, God-Given, and God-Approved Standard For Determining Right and Wrong.** John 12 : 48 says, "He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My sayings, hath one that judgeth him : the word that I spake, the same shall judge him

in the last day." We shall be judged in accordance with whether or not we obeyed the Word of God (the Bible) to the very best of our ability in all that we did in life.

In light of these 4 points, we ask our question again : Who decides what is right and wrong ? Does man have the right to decide for himself what is right and wrong in a given situation depending upon the circumstances ? Or, Does God Almighty (through the Bible which is His message and revealed will to mankind) have the **ONLY** right to determine what is right and wrong morally and in all other matters too ?

Obviously, God is the only One that is capable of and has the right to make the decisions of what is right and wrong. Society, government, parents, personal opinion, etc. **does not** have the ability or right to determine what is right or wrong. Only God can make those decisions. But God has already made those decisions, and He has presented them to us in the pages of the Bible. Let us then stop doing the things that we prefer and start doing what God requires **IN ALL MATTERS**.

From Death To Life

Dick Cupp

She was dying of cancer. The doctor gave her just a few weeks to live. There was no hope—only the grave to look forward to.

Then, through the efforts of the church in Geneva, Switzerland, Germaine Droz heard the gospel of Jesus Christ. She believed, and she obeyed. She was buried with her new found Lord in baptism, and she was raised to walk in newness of life (Romans 6:3-4).

Mrs. Droz died a month later, but the promise of Jesus had become so meaningful to her : "Let not your heart be troubled : ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions : if it were not so, I would

have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." (John 14:1-3)

In her short time as a Christian, Mrs. Droz came to look at death as the doorway to Christ and eternal life. Nothing could have impressed her family more. "Her faith and assurance," according to Max Danner, missionary in Geneva, "had a profound effect on the church and on her family." Her last month of life on earth was one of the greatest sermons ever preached!

But what about you? Can you say along with her and with the apostle Paul, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (I Corinthians 15:55)

The Bible says you must believe in God as your Heavenly Father (Hebrews 11:6) and in Jesus Christ as His divine Son (John 8:24); that you confess your belief in Him to the world (Matthew 10:32), and that you repent of past sins and be buried with Him in water baptism (Acts 2:38-47; Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3-4)

Then, as you're raised from that burial to walk in newness of life, you have the same precious promise that Mrs. Droz had—and you no longer need fear death.

"I Am Most Afraid Of Fear"

John Gipson

"After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, 'Fear not, Abram, I am your shield'; your reward shall be very great" (Genesis 15:1).

Bruce Shelley tells of the little four-year-old girl who asked, "Daddy, are you afraid of cows?"

"No!"

"Are you afraid of long wooly worms?"

"No, of course not!"

"Well, Daddy, you aren't afraid of anything but Mommy, are you?"

It may be only the little woman, but most of us are afraid of something. We fear : the energy crisis, cold showers, unemployment, inflation, our own inadequacy, illness, old age, loneliness, death and the unknown. And it is not sufficient to wink and shut our apprehensions up.

Our fears remind us that we are not much different from our forefathers. It has been the common lot of man to fear and tremble. Thus from Genesis to Revelation, from Abraham to John on Patmos, the Lord has come with the command, the appeal, the exhortation, "Fear not." He speaks the same word to : Abraham, Israel, Moses, David, Daniel, the disciples, the women at the sepulchre, Mary, Simon, Jarius, Paul, John, and to me, "Fear not."

The very frequency with which fear is mentioned in the Bible should tell me that it is a great spoiler and enemy of abundant living. Someone has said : "Fear betrays man's spirit, breaks down his defense, disarms him in the battle, unfits him for the work of life, and adds terror to the dying bed."

But let no child of God be stalked by this terror. In those hours when "your seated heart knocks at your ribs", remember Abraham.

"The word of the Lord came to Abram." In the hour of need God spoke. What a blessing ! But if God had a word for Abram, He also has one for us.

"Fear not, Abram." Did you notice ? God called Abram by name. And He knows your name, too. Our God is a personal God. He knows your fears and mine.

"I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." Abram would be kept as safely as God Himself could keep him. No harm will fall with God as a shield. But more than that, "your reward shall be very great."

Do you have a favorite Bible verse? D.L. Moody's had to do with fear. "I will trust, and will not be afraid" (Isaiah 12:2). Mr. Moody believed you could choose to travel either first class or second class to heaven. Second class is, "What time I am afraid, I will trust." First class is, "I will not be afraid."

John 3:16 Or Acts 2:38 ?

By James Joyner

We have before us two wonderful passages of scripture. These two passages should be of special interest to you because both of them deal with God's great plan for redeeming mankind. Both of these passages deal with the same subject but say entirely different things about that subject. John 3:16 tells us that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son and that if we believe in him we should be saved. Acts 2:38 tells us that Repentance and Baptism give us forgiveness of sins. Your first impulse is probably to ask the question. "Which of these two passages is correct? Are we saved by Faith in Jesus Christ, or are we saved by Repentance and Baptism?" Before you decide which of these two passages is correct, examine each one and see what it is teaching.

JOHN 3:16

The event surrounding this passage is that of Nicodemus coming to Jesus by night. Jesus immediately tells him that he must be born again. As Jesus tells Nicodemus about this new way of life He uses an example from the Old Testament to illustrate His teaching. The children of Israel spoke against God and Moses; because of their rebellious attitude God sent fiery serpents among the people and many of the people died. The children of Israel repented of their sins and asked Moses to ask God to deliver them from the fiery serpents. God directed Moses to set a serpent of brass upon a pole. All of those who would look upon the serpent of brass would be saved from the snake bite (Num. 21:1-9). Jesus taught Nico-

demus and teaches you that no longer is a person to turn to a brazen serpent, the law of Moses, his own goodness, his works, or anything else for deliverance, but now a person must turn to him. John. 3:16 teaches you that if you will turn to Jesus Christ as your source of salvation and if you will place your complete trust in Him, then you will be saved.

ACTS 2:38

Peter had just finished preaching the first Gospel sermon. During his message Peter told the Jews present that they had killed the very one who had come to save them. The people listened to what Peter told them and realized that they were guilty of a terrible sin, for the scriptures tell us that they were "pricked in their hearts". Wanting to be forgiven of this sin they asked "What shall we do?" Peter did not tell these Jews to believe in Jesus, because they already believed in him. Peter told these believers to "Repent and be Baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for (unto) the remission of your sins". Acts 2:38 teaches that when a person places his Faith in Jesus Christ as his source of salvation then he must meet the terms of Repentance and Baptism before his sins are forgiven.

CONCLUSION

There is no contradiction between John 3:16 and Acts 2:38. They are both inspired of God and are true. If you believe John 3:16 can you refuse to believe Acts 2:38? If your faith in Jesus does not lead you to obedience then you do not have the same faith that the people on Pentecost had and yours is not a Saving Faith. You may wonder why God placed Repentance and Baptism as terms of Pardon. I can tell you why God told the people on Pentecost to Repent and be Baptised before He would forgive their sins if you can tell me why God required Naman to dip seven times in the Jordn River before He would cleanse him of his leprosy (II Kings 5:1-14). The important thing in both of these events (II Pentecost and Naaman) is that when God has spoken it is (not to ask why, it is only ours to OBEY. If you Believe in the son of God then you will Obey Him. BELIEVE in

Jesus Christ as your only hope of Salvation (John 3: 16), REPENT of your sins (Acts 2: 38), CONFESS Christ before men (Rom. 10: 9-10), be BAPTIZED for the remission of your sins (Acts 2: 38), and then you will be a CHRISTIAN. After you become a Christian, search the Scriptures and be obedient in all that God requires of you.

How to start a Church of Christ in your home

Robert H. Martin

If there is already a CHURCH OF CHRIST in your place present yourself to them in Christian love and essemble, worship, and fellowship with them. (Heb, 10:24-25)

If there are only denominations available but No CHURCH of CHRIST do not attend "any" denomination, but start a CHURCH OF CHRIST yourself! (Romans 16:5; I Cor. 16:19; Matt. 16:18)

Here is God's way to do it and it is very simple :

1. First, obey the gospel of Christ as you have learned in the Bible. (Acts 2:38; Acts 8:26-39)
2. Next, gather together others who have obeyed the gospel like the Bible teaches. (Acts 2:42)
3. Then, find a place to meet. Any place will do. In a house, or even under a tree. (Acts 20:8)
4. Assemble together upon every first day of the week (the Lord's Day) just as the early Christians did. (Acts 20:7)

Then God desires that you worship Him in this simple New Testament way:-

1. PRAY in worship just as the early Christians did. (Acts 2:42; Col. 3:17).
2. SING hymns in worship, without instrument, just as early Christians did. (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16)
3. Observe the LORD'S SUPPER together in worship just as the early Christians did. (Acts 20:7; I Cor. 11:23-29)
4. STUDY the scriptures so as to be approved of God just as the early Christians did, (If preaching is available that is wonderful, if not study your Bible with thankful hearts. (2 Tim. 2:15; 2 Tim, 3:16)
5. GIVE cheerfully of your means to carry on the Lord's work just as the early Christians did, (I Cor, 16:1-2)

All this must be done from the HEART even as the early Christians were taught by the Lord's apostles to do, (John 4:23—24)

As soon as there are qualified men choose from among yourselves scriptural elders and deacons. God lists the qualifications in Titus chapter I and I Timothy 3.

Do these things "in faith" and you will have a congregation of THE church that our Savior lived and DIED FOR. (Romans 16:16)

After you establish the Lord's church in your place :

1. Grow in Spirit and Truth, (I Pet, 2:2 2, Pet, 3:18)
2. Remain faithful unto DEATH. (Rev, 2:10)
3. Always remember God has promised eternal life only to the faithfull. (Matt. 21:46; John 10:27-30; I John 2:25)

दीवार

लेखक एफ० डेविड

पवित्रशास्त्र अर्थात् बाइबल की उत्पत्ति की पुस्तक में हम सृष्टि के बानाये जाने के विषय में पढ़ते हैं। हम पढ़ते हैं कि परमेश्वर ने सबसे महत्त्वपूर्ण वस्तु को बनाया जिसका इस पृथ्वी पर होना बहुत आवश्यक था। अर्थात् मनुष्य की रचना। परमेश्वर ने मनुष्य को अपनी समानता में बनाया हम देखते हैं कि परमेश्वर ने मनुष्य की एक विशेष प्रकार से रचना की अर्थात् उसे अपनी समानता में बनाया। बाइबल बताती है "और यहोवा परमेश्वर ने आदम अर्थात् प्रथम मनुष्य को भूमि का मिट्टी से रचा और उसके नथनों में जीवन का श्वास फूंक दिया; और आदम जीवता प्राणी बन गया।" (उत्पत्ती २ : ७) क्योंकि परमेश्वर ने आदम में जीवन का श्वास फूंक दिया अतः वह एक आत्मिक प्राणी बना; क्योंकि परमेश्वर का स्वरूप आत्मा है अर्थात् आदम को आत्मा प्रदान की। इसका अर्थ यह हुआ कि हम सब आत्मिक प्राणी हैं।

फिर बाइबल में हम आगे पढ़ते हैं कि परमेश्वर ने आदम को बनाकर उसे अदन की बाटिका में रखा। अदन की बाटिका एक बहुत ही सुन्दर बाटिका थी जिसमें अनेक प्रकार के फूल, फल व वृक्ष थे। इसके पश्चात् तब यहोवा परमेश्वर ने आदम को यह आज्ञा दी, कि तू बाटिका के सब वृक्षों का फल बिना खटके खा सकता है : पर भले या बुरे के ज्ञान का जो वृक्ष है उसका फल तू कभी न खाना; क्योंकि जिस दिन तू उसका फल खाए उसी दिन

अवश्य मर जाएगा। फिर यहोवा परमेश्वर ने कहा, आदम का अकेला रहना अच्छा नहीं मैं उसके लिए एक ऐसा सहायक बनाऊंगा जो उस से मेल खाए।” (उत्पत्ति २:१६-१८)। और परमेश्वर ने आदम के लिए एक सहायक बनाया जिसका नाम हुवा रखा गया। दोनों प्राणी अदन की बाटिका में बहुत खुश थे तथा बिलकुल निष्पाप थे। परमेश्वर उन दोनों से बहुत खुश था।

परन्तु इसके पश्चात् एक बहुत ही भयंकर घटना घटी। अर्थात् इन दोनों प्राणियों ने शैतान की बहकाई में आकर अपने सृजनहार सर्वशक्तिमान परमेश्वर की आज्ञा को तोड़ दिया। और उन्होंने पाप किया। क्योंकि “परमेश्वर की आज्ञा तोड़ना ही पाप है। (१ यूहन्ना ३ : ४)। परिणामस्वरूप परमेश्वर तथा मनुष्य के बीच एक दीवार खड़ी हो गई अर्थात् पाप की दीवार। और जब तक परमेश्वर तथा मनुष्य के बीच यह दीवार है वे एक दूसरे से कोई सम्बन्ध नहीं रख सकते। पाप की सबसे बड़ी विशेषता है कि यह मनुष्य को परमेश्वर से अलग करता है। परमेश्वर पवित्र है, वह निष्पाप है अतः उसका पापी मनुष्य से कोई सम्बन्ध नहीं। (यशायाह ५९ : २)

इस प्रकार पहले पुरुष तथा स्त्री ने परमेश्वर की आज्ञा को तोड़कर पाप को इस जगत में प्रवेश दिया परमेश्वर ने इन दोनों प्राणियों को अदन की बाटिका से निकाल दिया तथा अपनी नज़दीकी से उन्हें दूर कर दिया। यह दोनों प्राणी अब वास्तव में मर चुके थे। आत्मिक रूप में मर चुके थे। क्योंकि बाइबल बताती है कि “पाप की मजदूरी मृत्यु है। (रोमियों ६ : २३)। अर्थात् उनकी आत्मा अब परमेश्वर से अलग हो गई थी।

आज भी अनेकों लोगों तथा परमेश्वर के बीच यह दीवार खड़ी हुई है। जब तक यह दीवार रहेगी। तब तक उनका तथा परमेश्वर का कोई सम्बन्ध नहीं है।

परन्तु प्रश्न यह उठता है कि क्या इस पाप रूपी दीवार को गिराया नहीं जा सकता? हां। इसे अवश्य गिराया जा सकता है। हमने देखा था कि मनुष्य के आज्ञा तोड़ने से परमेश्वर तथा मनुष्य के बीच एक पाप रूपी दीवार खड़ी हो गई है इस दीवार के गिराने की समस्या का समाधान हम पवित्रशास्त्र (बाइबल) के द्वारा कर सकते हैं। क्योंकि इस दीवार का गिराना तो आवश्यक है। अगर यह दीवार नहीं गिरेगी तो मनुष्य अपने पापों में मरेगा। क्योंकि बाइबल कहती है “क्योंकि पाप की मजदूरी तो मृत्यु है।” (रोमियों ३ : २३) तथा जो प्राणी पाप करे वही मरेगा, न तो पुत्र पिता के अधर्म का

भार उठाएगा और न पिता पुत्र का; धर्मी को अपने ही धर्म का फल और दुष्ट को अपनी ही दुष्टता का फल मिलेगा (यहेजकेल १८ : २०) । क्या आप अपने पापों में मरना चाहते हैं ? अथवा इस पाप रूपी दीवार के खड़े रहने में ही खुश हैं ? तनिक सोचिये, विचार कीजिये । यदि नहीं तो आज ही इस दीवार को गिरा दें । इस दीवार को गिराने में आप प्रभु यीशु की सहायता लें । प्रभु यीशु ने अपनी मृत्यु से यह सम्भव कर दिया है कि आप इस दीवार को गिरा सकें । प्रभु यीशु से आप अपने पापों की क्षमा प्राप्त कर सकते हैं । परमेश्वर ने अपने तथा मनुष्य के बीच इस दीवार को गिराने में अपने पहिलौठे पुत्र प्रभु यीशु को क्रूस पर मरने के लिए दे दिया । क्योंकि परमेश्वर ने जगत से ऐसा प्रेम रखा कि उस ने अपना एकलौता पुत्र दे दिया; ताकि जो कोई उस पर विश्वास करे, वह नष्ट न हो, परन्तु अमर जीवन पाए । (यूहन्ना ३ : १६) । पौलुस, रोमियों की पुस्तक में लिखते हुये कहता है “परन्तु परमेश्वर हम पर अपने प्रेम की मलाई इस रीति से प्रकट करता है, कि जब हम पापी ही थे तभी मसीह हमारे लिये मरा ।” (रोमियों ५ : ८) । वास्तव में इस दीवार को गिराने के लिए परमेश्वर ने बहुत बड़ा बलिदान किया । वह प्रभु यीशु जिसमें कोई पाप नहीं था, “वह आप ही हमारे पापों को अपनी देह पर लिये हुए क्रूस पर चढ़ गया, जिससे हम पापों के लिए मर कर धार्मिकता के लिए जीवन बिताएं ।” (१ पतरस २ : २४) । फिर पौलुस कहता है” कि पवित्र शास्त्र के वचन के अनुसार यीशु मसीह हमारे पापों के लिये मर गया । और गाड़ा गया; और पवित्रशास्त्र के अनुसार तीसरे दिन जी भी उठा ।” बाइबल इस बात को बड़ी स्पष्टता से बतलाती है कि प्रभु यीशु ने अपनी मृत्यु के द्वारा इस दीवार का गिराना सम्भव कर दिया ।

प्रिय मित्रों मैं आज आप से पूछना चाहूंगा कि क्या आपके और परमेश्वर के मध्य यह दीवार खड़ी है ? यदि हां तो शीघ्र ही इस दीवार को गिरा दें । प्रभु यीशु की सहायता लें तथा सर्वशक्तिमान परमेश्वर से अपना सम्बन्ध बना लें । क्योंकि एक दिन आयेगा । कि परमेश्वर हमारा न्याय करेगा । न्याय का एक दिन निश्चित है । (इब्रानियों ९ : २७) । यदि यह दीवार खड़ी रही तो न्याय के दिन हम पछताएंगे । शायद हम कहेंगे कि काश मैं भी इस दीवार को गिरा देता । परन्तु उस दिन समय समाप्त हो चुका होगा । जब तक हम इस पृथ्वी पर हैं हम इस दीवार को गिरा सकते हैं । प्रभु यीशु पर विश्वास करें तथा उसकी आज्ञाओं को मानिये ।



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