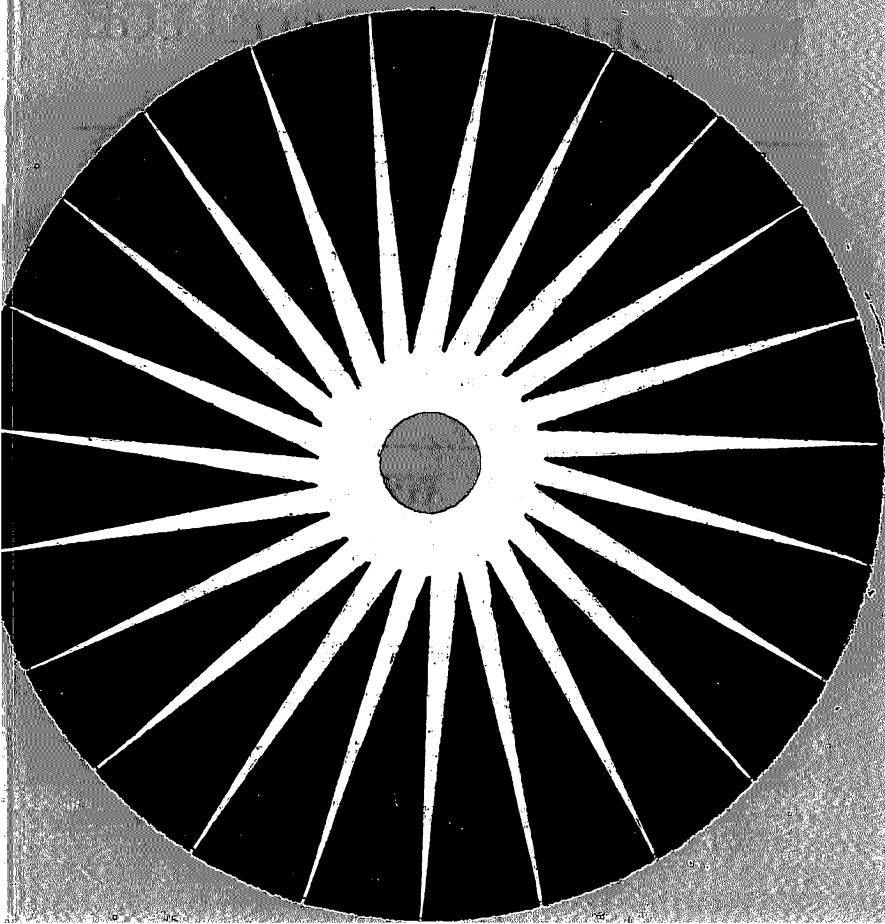


the bible teacher



YOUR INVITATION

Please attend our Services at :

E-10 Defence Colony (Ring Road)
New Delhi-110024

Schedule of Services :

Sunday :	Bible Study	9 : 30 A.M.
	Morning Worship	... 10 : 00 A.M.
	Evening Service	... 6 : 00 P.M.
Wednesday :	Midweek Bible Study	... 6 : 00 P.M.

FREE BIBLE CORRESPONDENCE COURSES

Study the Bible at home-numerous courses for all—Brief—Simple—Scriptural—in English and Hindi.

NEW DELHI BIBLE COLLEGE

Post Box No. 3815
NEW DELHI-110049.

“सत्य सुसमाचार”

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 मंगलवार तथा शुकवार
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।

THE BIBLE TEACHER

Editor :

J. C. CHOATE

Associate Editor :

SUNNY DAVID

**Published by Church of Christ, Box 3815
New Delhi-110049**

Pleading for the restoration of pure New Testament Christianity

Vol. 6

No. 9



Pictures, Statues, And Idolatry

In many homes there are pictures, statues, and other such things that supposedly tell the visitor that the people who live there are believers in Christ. This is especially true of Catholic homes in particular and is generally the practice, except perhaps for statues, of Protestants or denominational people. There is such a demand for these kind of decorations that most religious book stores carry a supply of them.

Those who are converted out of the religious world (Catholic and Protestant) continue to display especially their pictures that portray Christ. These pictures are usually tacked to the wall or placed in frames and hung or placed at different spots around over the room. In some cases there are religious calenders depicting different scenes of the Lord's life. Some of the pictures may be very gothic, showing an open and bleeding heart.

The reason for mentioning this is for the purpose of making some comments on the subject and at the same time to warn brethren against such a practice. To begin with, it should be pointed out that we do not have a picture

of Christ and therefore we do not know what he looks like. It is presumptuous on our part then to take an imaginary picture of our Lord and say that this is the picture of Christ. While many would say that they see no harm in it, yet the harm lies in the fact that we are building an image of Christ that is without scriptural support. To accept such pictures mean that we are placing the emphasis on the visible, that which can be seen and touched. This then becomes idolatry. (1 Cor. 10 : 14). In what way? In that we treasure it, respect it, and reverence it. We are careful to take good care of it and to keep it in a special place. We would be greatly offended if anyone sought to damage it or should they make critical remarks about it. Surely then you can begin to see what such pictures may do for a Christian.

Don't you suppose that if the Lord had wanted us to have pictures of him that he would have made it possible for us to have his true likeness so we wouldn't have to use imaginary pictures? Surely he would. But the fact that we have no such picture of him would indicate then that he had no desire for us to have one. Don't you know what the Lord knew that they would take it and worship it? Even without one, men have composed pictures of what they think the the Lord must have looked like and they have turned this into idolatry.

Not only do men idolize imaginary pictures of the Lord but they use those which portray him as having long hair. Now how in this world could anyone ever conclude that Christ had long hair when his word tells us that it is a shame for man to have long hair? (1 Corinthians 11 : 4). So most of the pictures used to Portray Christ give a false impression of him and one that is certainly contrary to the teaching of the scriptures. This is just one more reason why they should be rejected.

If you are a member of the Lord's church and you have pictures of Christ in your home, you then you should go and take them down. Likewise, you should take away calenders

that illustrate Christ. These, along with statues of Christ, or any other such religious symbols and trinkets, should be destroyed. (1 John 5 : 21). These do not and cannot represent Christ. They cannot help us to draw closer to the Lord. They cannot help us to be more spiritual. How can they, when the Lord has not asked us to use them and neither has he authorized that we use them?

The use of pictures, statues, and so on, only give us a false concept of Christ. In the end our minds are diverted from Christ to that which represent Christ. The result is that we begin to treasure that, touch it, kiss it, honor it, look to it for help and guidance, and therefore we have replaced the Lord with an idol. (Galatians 5 : 20).

You may be determined to have your pictures, images, statues, and other things representative of the Lord, but remember you have no scriptural support for such and that means you are doing so without the Lord's authority. If you are wise, you will do away with all such and no longer lean on it or depend on it in any way. (1 Thessalonians 1 : 9). Surely you can be a Christian, and you can let others know that you are a Christian, without having to have all of those things. Obey the Lord and practice Christianity daily and everyone will know that you are a Christian and that you have a Christian home. That will make a far greater impact on the Lord and on all of your friends than all of the pictures and symbols of Christ that you could ever gather together into one place. (1 Peter 4 : 1-6).

The true Christian is not burdened down with all the customs and traditions of men. He is free from all of those things that the religious world thinks it must have. That is why pure Christianity is so refreshing and is so different. Try and see if you don't find it to be superior to everything else.



**associate
editorial**

The Gospel Of Christ

In the book of Romans chapter 1 and verse 16, Apostle Paul said, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth". The greatest truth that the inspired writer revealed in this small passage is the fact that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the *power* of God, and it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. Man's greatest need is the salvation from sin, and God's greatest power to save man is the gospel of Christ.

However, what is the gospel? Our answer comes from the sacred pages of God's word, and again the inspired writer is the Apostle Paul. Now, listen what he says, in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, "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 you 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."

From this we understand that the Apostle was reminding Christians of the facts of the gospel. He said, he had already preached to them the gospel, and wanted to remind them the same gospel, which they had received when they had first heard it, and still stand in it. He also said, that they were *saved* by the gospel. And then he goes on to say, that the gospel which I first preached unto you, and which I declare now, is the fact that Christ *died* for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was *buried*, that he *rose* again the third

day according to the scriptures. Thus, the gospel simply is the fact : **THAT CHRIST DIED FOR OUR SINS, THAT HE WAS BURIED AND THAT HE ROSE AGAIN.** But remember, that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, and also what Apostle Paul said to Christians at Corinth, that they were saved by the gospel.

When then one is saved by the gospel ? To find our answer, let us turn to the book of Romans, chapter 6, verses 16,17 and 18. Here the inspired writer, in speaking to the Christians at Rome, said, "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness ? 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 become the servants of righteousness."

Hence, the Apostle reminds them that once they were in sin, but later when they obeyed the form of the doctrine that was delivered them, then they were saved from those sins as result to their obedience. Now, what was the doctrine or teaching that he delivered them? Of course, the same that he delivered the at Corinth, that is: That Christ died for our sins, and he was buried, and that he rose again according to the scriptures. Surely, there is only one true doctrine or gospel by which the people at Corinth and at Rome were saved. The same Apostle who wrote the epistles to the Corinthians and the Romans, said, in writing to the Galatians, in Chapter 1:8,9, "But though we or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."

But in Romans 6:16-18 he said, that they were made free from sin because they had obeyed *that form of doctrine* which was delivered them. In other words, to be saved from their sins, they had obeyed the form of the gospel. That is, they did not actually die at the cross as Christ died, and

consequently they were not buried and rose again as Christ did. But they did obey the *form* of the same gospel to be saved. Did you get it? Then what is then the form of the gospel?

As we turn to the sixth chapter of Romans, we find the Apostle talking to the same people, and in verses 1-4 he said, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in the newness of life." Thus, it is clearly seen that by being baptized scripturally they had obeyed *that form of doctrine* or the gospel. The Apostle tells them that first of all they become dead to sin, that is, when they repented or turned from their sins their old man of sin died, and it was the picture or the form of the death of Christ. And then he goes on to say, that after they died to their sin, they were baptized into Jesus Christ and his death, and therefore buried with him by baptism. The three facts of the gospel are the death, burial and the resurrection of Christ. So he said to picture Jesus' death they died to sin, and to picture the burial and the resurrection of Jesus they were baptized. In other words when they were baptized or immersed in water, they went down in water, and water covered them, and thus they were buried by baptism into death, it was the form of the burial of Jesus Christ, And when they came up out of the water, through this act they pictured the resurrection of Christ from the grave. Therefore, by their repentance and baptism they obeyed the form of the gospel.

Now, let us consider the things we have so far noticed.

1. The gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation.
2. The gospel of Christ is, the death and the burial and the resurrection of Jesus.
3. One is saved when one obeys the form of the gospel.
4. One obeys the form of the gospel by being baptized scripturally.

I encourage you to think upon these things, and let the power of God save you from sin.

The Four Deaths

Mark H. Nunley

Down through time there have been certain things that have been mysterious to man, things that we could not know much about if God had not have told us something about them. And one of these is death. But God has not left us in the dark on death. And that is why we must be concerned about death. God has told us some things that we need to know. None of us have a lease on life—the young die too ! We don't know how much time more we may have upon the earth to get right in the sight of the Almighty God. But we might add that the Bible is not morbid on the subject of death because the Bible offers hope for the resurrection and for heaven and tells us how we may come to enjoy that hope. We also need to define the word death on the outset: death means a separation, the absence of something. And there are four deaths that we read of in the Bible :

(1) **PHYSICAL DEATH**—Eccl. 12 : 7 tells us what physical death is, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was : and the spirit shall return unto God Who gave it." And in Gen. 35 : 18 we read, "And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing (for she died)....." So physical death is that point in which the soul or spirit leaves the body.

When the spirit leaves, the body of course returns to the dust from whence it came. But where does the spirit go when it returns to God who gave it ? The spirit goes into **HADES**. In Luke 16 : 19-31 we see both the rich man and Lazarus in Hades following death. Lazarus was in Abraham's bosom being comforted (paradise—see Luke 23 : 43), and the rich man was in a place of torment (tartarus—see II Pet. 2 : 4, Jude 1 : 6). Lazarus was where he was because he had lived righteously, and the rich man was where he was because he had lived wickedly, as they both awaited the Day of Judgment when Jesus comes again.

The reason for physical death in SIN. Rom, 6:23 "For the wages of sin is death," Rom, 5:12-14 "Therefore, as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned...death reigned from Adam until Moses even over them that had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression, who is a figure of Him that was to come." Because of sin, death entered into the world, and we shall keep that appointment if we are not living when Jesus again (I Thess. 4:13-18).

(2) SPIRITUAL DEATH—Spiritual death is the separation between God and man, it is the absence of spiritual life, it is the absence of the favor and blessing of God. Isa. 59:1-2 says "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither His ear heavy that it cannot hear but your INIQUITIES HAVE SEPERATED BETWEEN YOU AND YOU GOD, and your SINS have HID HIS FACE from you, that He will not hear., Rom. 3 : 23 For all have sinned, and fall short the glory of God." I Tim. 5:6 "But she that giveth herself to pleasure is dead while she liveth."

Whenever we reject the will of God and do as we please in life, we become guilty of sin, and thus we separate ourselves from God which is to die spiritually. Thus we walk in the absence of spiritual life, and we walk in the absence of God's favor.

(3) DEATH TO SIN— Rom. 6 : 2 says, "We who died to sin, how shall we live any longer therein?" And the writer continues to tell us how we die to sin in Rom. 6 : 3-4 "Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were buried with Him therefore through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." That doesn't mean that we will never sin again because we will (see I John 1 : 5 through I John 2 : 2), but it means that we have put away the continual practice and habit of sin that we once lived in. See also Col. 2 : 12-13, Eph. 2 : 3-6, Col. 3 : 1-11, Mark 16 : 16, Acts 10 : 48.

(4) THE SECOND DEATH— Rev. 21 : 8 “But for the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sojerers, and idolaters, and all liars, their part shall be in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone which is the second death.” Rev. 20 : 15 “And if any was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire.”

The second death is eternal separation from God in Hell, the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. All of those who do not surrender their life to Jesus Christ, and all of those who have surrendered their life to Him but have not faithfully served Him as a Christian, will undergo the Second Death— see II Thess. 1 : 7-9.

All of us are guilty of sin, and because of Adam's sin death has entered into the world. So, we all die spiritually, unless we are alive when Jesus comes again. And if we do not get into Jesus Christ by being scripturally baptized into Him and thus die to sin, we shall undergo the second death when Jesus comes again. Are you ready to die ? Are you prepared to escape the second death ?

Three Desires of Satan

Mark H. Nunley

In I Peter 5 : 8-9 we read, “Be sober, be watchful, your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour : whom withstand stedfast in your faith, knowing that the same sufferings are accomplished in your brethren who are in the world.” And if we are to be able to withstand Satan, we are going to have to understand some of his desires and tactics that he is using against us. So at this time let us think about 3 of Satan's desires :

(1) SATAN DESIRES TO KEEP US FROM BECOMING A CHRISTIAN. He knows that salvation is found only in Jesus Christ. And he knows that we must be a Christian to be

in Jesus. He knows that to find salvation we must be in Christ's church, for to be in Christ and in His church (His body) is one and the same thing. And so if Satan can stop us from becoming a Christian, there is no possible way that we can escape the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. How then do we become a Christian? In Acts 2 : 36-38, 40-41, 47 we find the answer, "Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do? And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto (for) the remission (forgiveness) of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit...And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, Save yourselves from this crooked generation. They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls.....And the Lord added to them (the Lord added to the church) day by day those that were saved."

But Satan is telling men that they do not have to be baptized. Satan is telling men that they do not have to become a part of the church which Jesus died to establish. Satan is telling men and women to get down on their knees and to pray for forgiveness in an attempt to become a Christian. Outside of Jesus Christ there is no hope whatsoever. And Satan knows that we are not in Christ unless we are baptized into Him and His church (Gal, 3 : 26-27 and I Cor. 12 : 13 and Col. 1 : 18).

(2) SATAN DESIRES TO GET CHRISTIANS TO BACKSLIDE AND FALL AWAY FROM THE LORD. Christians are constantly bombarded with temptations to do those things that God has forbidden. We are presented with all kinds of things that battle for our presence when we should be at the services of the church. We are constantly tempted to relax and take it easy instead of carrying out the responsibilities that the Lord has placed upon our shoulders. And so

we must constantly resist Satan turning to the Lord for the help that He can and will give to us to resist and overcome the temptations (Heb. 2 : 14-18 and Heb. 3 : 14-16).

This we must do for the Bible tells us in Luke 9 : 62, "No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." And in James 1 : 14-16 we are admonished, "but each man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed. Then the lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin : when it is fullgrown, bringeth forth death. Be not deceived (do not err), my beloved brethren."

But when we give in and fall away from active service to the Lord, our condition is well described by II Pet. 2 : 20-22, "For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the last state is become worse with them than the first. For it were better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, then, after knowing it, to turn back from the holy commandment delivered unto them according to the true proverb, The dog turning to his own vomit again, and the sow that had washed to wallowing in the mire." This is the condition that Satan wants us to slip into.

(3) SATAN DESIRES TO MAKE CHRISTIANS LAZY, INDIFFERENT, COMPLACENT, SATISFIED, ETC. He knows that we are of no value whatsoever to the Lord and His church if we are unconcerned and lukewarm in the Lord's work. The Lord tells us what He thinks about the lazy, inactive, unconcerned Christian in Rev. 3 : 16, "So because thou art lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spew thee out of My mouth." Satan knows that the lazy Christian displeases the Lord more than the one that is no even professing to be God's child.

Far too many people are right where Satan wants them : in one of these 3 categories. May we then, realizing these things, get right with God today.

“Old Time Religion”

Basil Overton

Much is said about “old time religion”; people say they want “the old time religion,” and some think theirs is that kind when it may not be as old as they think, or it might be older than they realize. Religion can be too old, and it can fail to be old enough. Most people mean by “old time religion” the kind where people get excited, and have emotional upsurges and feel exceedingly happy. Getting excited, expressing emotions, and being happy are involved in the right kind of religion, but there are other things involved too ! The religion of many people is too old. They practice things that were authorized by God in the law of Moses, but which are not authorized by Christ in his blood sealed covenant. The law of Moses was abolished in the death of Christ. Much of the New Testament was written to show this fact. The Book of Hebrews, for an example, was written to show this truth ; so was the Book of Galatians. If Christians try to justify their practices by the law of Moses, they fall from grace. (Gal. 5:4.) If people practice in their religion that which was commanded in the law of Moses, but not in the law of Christ, then their religion is too old !

Others practice things in their religion that originated in the dark ages, at the time when the Bible was not the hands of the common people, but locked in the confines of a diabolical system with headquarters in Rome. Therefore, the people did not know what God wanted them to know ! When people do not have true light of the Bible there is no way of telling what they may do. The excitement and confusion that characterizes many religious services is without Bible backing. Much of that done in religion to day originated in the minds of men who lived in the dark ages, a time when the Bible was little known; a time when many hardly knew such a book existed. Such religion is not old enough. Denominationalism and the “mourner’s bench” system of “getting saved” came out of the dark ages. There is no Bible authority for either. Much of the religion of today is either too old, or not old enough.

Religion That Is Just Old Enough

Just because religion may be "old time religion" does not prove that it is right in God's sight. Religion can be too old, or not old enough. The religion that is just right, or that is just old enough, is the religion patterned after God's order in the New Testament. One does not "get religion" if he follows Christ but his religion is that which he **thinks and does** in obedience to Christ. (James 1:27.) The religion that pleases God, that is just old enough, that is pure and undefiled before God, is that which a man lives when he follows the gospel of Christ. The literal meaning of religion is : "to bind again." We bind ourselves to God, and keep ourselves bound to him, only as we do his will as revealed to us through Christ's gospel. (Heb. 1:1.)

For your religion to be just old enough you will have to hear the gospel of Christ ; you will accept the fact that he is God's Son, and that you are lost in sin without him. You will have to, upon this faith, repent of your sins (turn from them) and be baptized into Christ for the remission of your sins. (Acts. 2:38.) When you have done this you will be a Christian, a member of the church that Christ established ; a member of God's family ! (Acts 2:38-47.) You will then have to continue stedfastly as a servant of your Master. You will meet regularly with your brethern and worship God in Spirit and in truth . (John 4:24.) You will teach others and try to bring them to Christ and help them to understand the undenominational religion of the New Testament. As a member of God's family, when you sin you will confess that to your Father, and through Christ ask God to forgive you, and he will. (1 John 1:7-10.) You will contend earnestly for the one gospel and the one way of salvation that is revealed therein. (Jude 3.) You will not belong to a denomination, for Christ condemns religions division. If your religion is just old enough you will be a Christian, and the way for you to know how to be just that is outlined in the New Testament.

Should We Keep The Sabbath ?

Robert H. Martin

Is the Saturday Sabbath the Christian day of worship ? Some churches say yes. What does God say ? To learn the answer, we must know ?

1. To whom was the sabbath given ?

To the Hebrews only ! Moses said.".....God made a covenant with us (Jews) in Horeb, not.....with our fathers, but with us.....who are.....here alive this day.....I am Jehovah.....who brought thee out of the land of Egypt.....therefore.....thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day." (Deut. 5:2-15) One cannot read of God imposing the sabbath day on any but the Jews.

2. When was the Sabbath given ?

In the wilderness of Sin after Israel's escape from Egyptian bondage. (Exodus 16:1) This was a new experience: It had to be known unto them. When a man broke the sabbath, they had to ask what to do unto him. (Num. 15:32-36) There was no sabbath day for man till about 1500 B.C.

3. Why was the sabbath given ?

".....It is a sign between me and you. (Hebrews)that you may know that I am Jehovah who sanctifieth you". (Ex. 31:13) Also the sabbath helped them remember their slave days in Egypt and how God delivered them. (Deut. 5:15) Are we to observe the seventh day ? No ! God told Israel to keep the sabbath for a perpetual covenant. (Ex. 31:16) And he also said, "I will also cause all her mirth to CEASE,.....and her SABBATHS". (Hosea 2:11) In setting up his Kingdom, Christ abolished the ENTIRE OLD CONVENT. (Eph. 2:14-15) This included the sabbath ! Paul says He took the old law out of the way nailing it to the cross. Therefore, we should let no man judge us in respect of a sabbath day (Col. 2:14-16) Jesus gave us a new covenant (Heb. 9:15). It does not bind the sabbath.

Early Christian worshipped on the first day of the week. (Acts 20:7; I Cor. 16:1, 2 on this day faithful Christians who follow the Bible worship God in the twentieth century. What day do you worship God? If its the sabbath will you not set down and take time to study the proof given in this article.

Baptism In Acts 2:38

Basil Overton

Pentecost was a Jewish religious festival day instituted by the Lord's direction to Moses and the people of Israel after their release from Egyptian bondage. Finally, this feast was observed by God's people in Jerusalem. On the Pentecost following the resurrection of Jesus Christ, God, in his infinite wisdom, filled the twelve apostles of Christ with the Holy Spirit; they were thus guided into all truth, and spoke as "the Spirit gave them utterance." (Acts 2:1-4; John 16:13.) The Sermon of one of these twelve, the apostle Peter, is recorded in Acts Chapter two. After reasoning from the Old Testament scriptures; Peter so convinced his Jewish audience that Jesus was raised from the dead and was made both Lord and Christ that they were convicted by the words which he spoke. "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, 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 you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts 2:37. 38.)

Tremendous efforts have been made for many years by religious people, including preachers, to get around the plain truth of Acts 2:38 that baptism is essential to salvation from sin.

Some have insisted that the baptism of Acts 2:38 is Holy Spirit baptism. However, Holy Spirit baptism was a "promise of the Father" to certain ones for special purposes. (Acts 1,4; 11:14, 15.) A promise of the Father cannot also be a command of the Father! The baptism of Acts 2:38 was a command of God; it is to be obeyed by lost convicted sinners.

Others have urged that "remission of sins" in Acts 2:38 means "because of remission of sins." They say it means one is to be baptized because his sins have already been remitted or forgiven. Even if this were true, baptism would be none the less essential, for if God commanded people, whose sins were already remitted, to be baptized because their sins were remitted, they would have to be baptized to obey God. One cannot hope to be saved who disobeys God! However, "for remission of sins" in Acts 2:38 could not mean "because of remission of sins", for that would mean that repentance would be "because of remission of sins." Peter said: "Repent and be baptized..." The coordinate conjunction "and" connects things of equal rank in sentence construction, therefore, whatever baptism is "for," repentance is also "for" in Acts 2:38. Furthermore, scholarship will not allow that the Greek preposition *eis* translated "for" in Acts 2:38 can mean "because of," but instead it means "in order to," "unto," etc., and is so rendered in some translations.

If we should remove from Acts 2:38 "and be baptized" (and some have been trying to for years) it would then say: "Repent every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins....." What would "for" mean in this kind of Acts 2:38? Whatever "for" means with "and be baptized" removed from the text, it also means with "and be baptized" in the text!

Even if "for the remission of sins" were not in Acts 2:38, baptism would be just as essential, because Peter was guided by the Spirit of God in what he said to those pierced hearts of convicted sinners who cried out and asked what they should do. If the Holy Spirit's answer to them had just been "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name Jesus Christ," both repentance and baptism would have been essential to their salvation. If God told us to do something and did not tell us what we would get out of doing it, we would still have to do it to obey God! Without obeying God we cannot hope to receive his mercy and grace by which to be saved. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall

enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 7:21.) "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life and may enter in through the gates into the city." (Rev. 22:14.) "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." (John 14:21)

Preachers, and others may as well quit trying to dispose of baptism in Acts 2:38; they are wasting their time, energy, money, ink and paper, and they are misleading souls. If Acts 2:38 were not in the Bible, baptism would still be just as essential because of what is said in many other passages of scripture. Some are : Mark 16:16; Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 10:47, 48; Acts 22:16; Rom. 6:3, 4 17, 18; Gal. 3:26-29; 1 Peter 3:21; etc. The only way one can dispose of God's command to be baptized into Christ so his sins can be washed away in the blood of Christ is by his being baptized.

The Biblical Basis of Religious Unity

Pat Mc Gee

INTRODUCTION : The world is divided along man lines, socially, racially, politically, economically, to mention only a few. But no division is as serious and sad as the present world-wide religious division. Religious division and disunity are sinful and but the fruit of Satan's work. Among the things that the Lord hates is discord among men (Proverbs 6:19). Those who are responsible for such discord are harshly judged by God (Proverbs 6:12-14). Satan creates conflict and division but not in his own house (Mat. 12: 25-26), The devil is responsible for all faction and religious strife (Gal. 5:20, James 3:15-16).

The Bible (God's word) is the source of true religious unity. Without a Biblical basis there can be no religious unity which

is acceptable to God. But what is the basis of this true Biblical unity? It is our purpose to briefly provide an answer to this question. Here is the basis of unity as revealed in the New Testament. Here is what the N.T. church based its fellowship upon in its extents and limits.

I. CONTINUE ..Acts 2:42 "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine..." The early church based fellowship on **continuing** in what the apostles taught. They had not only received what the apostles taught, they stayed in it. They did not turn from it to the right hand or to the left (Joshua 1:7). The apostles doctrine included everything in its totality which was taught by these inspired spokesmen. That authoritative teaching is contained within the pages of the New Testament. Men only have the right to continue faithfully and fully within that divine path. This is how the church maintained unity and fellowship.

II. WALK...I John 1:5-7 "And this is the message which we have heard from him and announce unto you, that God is light and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in the darkness, we lie and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin". God's people have enjoined upon them the serious obligation of **walking** in the light as God is in the light. Christians are not just to walk **anywhere** or in **any religious pursuit**. They are limited as to where they may walk—only in the light, i.e. God's word (Ps. 119:105, II Cor. 4:4,6). We are to "walk in the truth" (II Jn. 4, III Jn. 3-4, John 17:17), walk after God's commandments (II Jn. 6) and walk by faith (II Cor. 5:7) which is taking God at his word. All children of God must walk by the same rule (Phil. 3:16; Gal. 6:16) and in matters of doctrine speak the same thing (I Cor. 1:10). New Testament fellowship is built upon a faithful walk in the light of God's will. No one is allowed to walk disorderly (II Thes. 3:6) and none has the right to be wrong in their religious walk. "Walk in all his ways"! (Joshua 22 : 5).

III. ABIDE...II John 9 "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God : he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son." Here we are told that the basis of all fellowship and unity is to **abide** in the doctrine of Jesus Christ. The "doctrine of Christ" has to do with the teachings of which Jesus is the author and source. Jesus refers to these very teachings when he said "If ye abide in my word then ye are truly my disciples." (John 8:31). Those teachings are contained in the pages of the New Testament. The plain fact is that if anyone fails to abide in the teachings of Christ's word then he no longer remains his disciple. He "hath not God" !

The "doctrine of Christ" (II Jn. 9) does not refer to the teaching about Christ but rather to that teaching or doctrine of which Christ is the author. "Of" shows the source of that doctrine and emphasises that this teaching is derived from Jesus Christ. Christ is the giver of that doctrine and only if men abide in it may they have fellowship with the Father and the Son. Those who would maintain that "the doctrine of Christ" refers only to the deity of Christ have no basis for their claim. "Doctrine of Christ" means his word which is the standard for all religious teaching. It sets the limits and bounds over which no man may pass without forfeiting his relationship with God. God has drawn the lines of acceptable fellowship and that line is the doctrine of Christ, Unity is based on that doctrine.

IV. FOLLOW...I Tim. 4:6 "...nourished in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine which thou hast followed..." II Tim. 3:10 "...but thou didst follow my doctrine..." It is the desire of Almighty God that men **follow** only the sound doctrine of Jesus Christ and nothing which is contrary to it (I Tim. 1:10). Only as men **follow** that good doctrine can it be said that they are following Christ. False teachers who bring in "damnable heresies" and those who follow their "pernicious ways" (II Pet. 2:1-2) God will not spare (II Pet. 2:3-9, Gal. 1:8-9). Gospel preachers and teachers in the first century church did not follow "cunningly devised fables" (II Pet. 1:16) but they taught the truth of the Gospel as it is

in Jesus Christ. No man today has the right to follow just any religious message or belief. Those who follow blind men will end up in the ditch (Mat 15:14). Religious error condemns, and gospel truth if followed will save (see Ja. 1:21; Rom. 1:16; I Cor. 15:1-2; II Thes. 2:10). All men have the solemn obligation to make sure that they are following only that which is founded upon the close following of the New Testament writings. Then "thou shalt be blessed in thy doing" (Ja. 1:25).

V. KEEP...I Tim. 6:14 "...keep the commandment without spot, without reproach..." I Jn. 2:3-5 "And hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar and the truth is not in him; but whoso keepeth his word, in him verily hath the love of God been perfected." "I Jn. 5:3 "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments". The Bible teachers that **keeping** God's commandments is the sign of true spirituality and genuine love for the Lord. Doing God's will is absolutely for God's acceptance but the Christian does not depend upon his performance for salvation. We are what we are by the grace of God (I Cor. 15:10). But the saving power of God's grace is still confined only to those who are obedient to his will and by faith keep his commandments. Scripture states that his commandment is to be kept without spot or possible reproach from anyone. This means that there must be full and complete gospel obedience. No man has the right to attempt to justify religious error or excuse doctrinal divergency. God's word **must** be kept and **will be kept** if true love for God is the motive, The Lord pronounces his blessing upon the one who keeps his word (Rev. 1:3, 22:7) and when we keep his word he has promised to keep us (Rev. 3:10). Every doctrine which God has not planted he shall root up in the judgment (Mat. 15:13).

VI. HOLD FAST...II Tim. 1:13 "Hold fast the pattern of sound words which thou hast heard from me..." Titus 1:9 "Holding fast to faithful word which is according to the teaching..." I Thes. 5:21 "Prove all things, hold fast that

which is good." I Cor. 15:2 "...by which (i.e. gospel) also ye are saved, if ye hold fast the word which I preached unto you..." Men have held to various religious ideas, traditions and opinions down through the ages. What is called "Christianity" or "Christendom" is the result of this divided condition and it is a wicked and sinful situation. Religious division is the consequence of a failure to hold fast to the pattern of the sound words of the gospel of Jesus Christ. When the pattern is not followed chaos follows. This religious confusion is a cause of disbelief and religious skepticism. Jesus prayed for his disciples to be one even as he and the Father were one "in order that the world may believe that thou didst send me" (John 17:21). Denominationalism and protestant division are a major obstacle to man's acceptance of the true gospel of Christ. Men must learn to prove all religious doctrines and see if they are according to God's pattern in gospel truth (I Tim. 1:11 ; 6:3) The Holy Spirit warns not to believe every religious message or teacher but to try them "for many false prophets have gone out into the world" (I John 4:1). Herein is the key to the kind of religious unity that was enjoyed in the early church. This is the only way that men can be one. Remember that Jesus said, "And that in the good ground these are such as in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, hold it fast, and bring forth fruit with patience" (Lk. 8:15). Without holding fast the word of God there is no fruit in the sight of God. Those whose hearts are good and honest will unite with all of God's people upon a "thus saith the Lord" (Ezekiel 2:4 ; 3:27: 11, 21; 8; 22:28; Ssa. 7:7). There is no other way to a true and lasting unity.

VII. SPEAK THE SAME THING...I Cor. 1:10 "Now I beseech you, brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment". II Tim. 2:2 "And the things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." Col. 3:17 "And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord

Jesus..." I Tim. 1:3 "...thou shalt charge certain men not to teach a different doctrine'. And there is God's absolute and perfect plan for the Biblical basis of religious unity. Men may lose faith in it or mock it but it is still God's only remedy to a religiously divided world. This Biblical plan will put the denominations, sects and man-made churches out of business. The plan is as simple as the gospel itself (II Cor. 11:3). It is the will of God that all men teach and practice only what is authorized by his New Testament revelation. Paul said by the inspiration of the Spirit that if men would all speak the *same thing* that there would be no divisions among men. Paul also forbade men to teach or pass on any other thing except the very same thing that men had heard him teach by divine authority. He congratulated men when they recognized that authority and accepted the message "not as the words of men but as it is in truth, the word of God" (I Thes. 2:13). The Spirit warned, "...he that rejecteth, rejecteth not man, but God" (I Thes. 4:8 see also Gal, 1:8-9). This is because "the things that are written are the commandments of the Lord" (I Cor. 14:37 see also II Tim. 3:16-17, II Pet. 1:19-21). The Bible teaches that man can only do those things for which he has Biblical authority. Everything is to be done "in the name of (i.e. by the authority of) the Lord Jesus Christ," (Col. 3:17) We must have Biblical authority and without it we are transgressing (II John 9). God charges men not to teach anything which is different from sound gospel teaching or beyond the written word (see I Tim. 1:3; 10-11; I Cor. 4:6). When men learn this truth and open their hearts to it in meekness then will exist the kind of unity that our Lord desires (John 17:20-21; Eph. 4:3-6). "...receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls" (James 1:21).

Christ is the way (John 14:6) and the gospel is the plan (Romans 6:17-18). Jesus commissioned his disciples by saying, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, he that disbelieveth shall be condemned". (Mark 16:15-16). The early church was faithful in carrying out this task (Acts

2:36-41 ; Col. 1:6,23). What about you ? What will you do with the way that is right and cannot be wrong ? The Bible way is always God's way.

धर्म या उद्धार

एफ० डेविड

आज संसार में अनेकों धर्म हैं। सब धर्म अपनी शिक्षाओं को अधिक-से अधिक आगे बढ़ाना या उनका प्रचार करना चाहते हैं। अनेक सोचते हैं कि हमारा धर्म ही केवल सच्चा है। तथा यदि दूसरे धर्मों के लोग हमारे धर्म में आ जायें तो वे अवश्य उद्धार पा सकते हैं। परन्तु धर्म क्या है। यदि धर्म की परिभाषा दी जाये तो हम कह सकते हैं कि धर्म वह है जिसमें लोग धार्मिकता में होकर अनेकों प्रकार से परमेश्वर को प्रसन्न करना चाहते हैं। कई लोग बहुत से ऐसे कार्य करते हैं जिससे वे अपने धर्म को प्रकट कर सकें। अर्थात् अन्य-अन्य तरीकों से उपासना करके परमेश्वर को प्रसन्न करना अथवा अनेक ऐसी बातें करना जो अनेकों बार देखने में बड़ी विचित्र लगती हैं।

शायद आप अभी तक सोच रहे होंगे कि मैं भी आप से किसी धर्म के विषय में बात करूंगा अथवा अपने धर्म का प्रचार इस लेख के द्वारा करूंगा। लेकिन मैं आपको बता देना चाहता हूँ कि मैं आपसे किसी धर्म के विषय में बात नहीं करने जा रहा। मैं प्रभु यीशु के विषय में और उस उद्धार के मार्ग के विषय में बात करूंगा जो कि नये-नियम में दर्शाया गया है। आज इस धार्मिक संसार में मनुष्य नये-नये धर्मों की खोज में है, तथा अनेक नये धर्मों की स्थापना हो रही है। मनुष्य परमेश्वर के पास पहुंचने तथा उद्धार पाने के नये नये तरीके उपयोग में ला रहा है। आप किस वस्तु की खोज में हैं? धर्म या उद्धार? जैसे कि हमने पहले देखा कि धर्म वह है जिसमें मनुष्य परमेश्वर को प्रसन्न करने के लिए कुछ-कुछ करता है। परन्तु उद्धार के विषय में जब हम देखते हैं तो बाइबल के द्वारा हमें पता चलता है कि उद्धार वह है

जो सर्वशक्तिमान परमेश्वर ने मनुष्य के लिए सम्भव कर दिया है। अनेक लोगों का विचार है कि वे बड़ भक्त हैं, अच्छे-अच्छे कार्य करते हैं और यही उनका धर्म है। बेशक यह आपका धर्म हो परन्तु उद्धार नहीं।

आज से लगभग उन्नीस सौ वर्ष पूर्व दयालु परमेश्वर ने मनुष्य की पाप की दशा पर दृष्टि की तथा उसके इधर-उधर भटकने की दशा को देखकर उसने अपने पुत्र यीशु मसीह को इस पापी संसार के लोगों को उनके पापों से बचाने के लिए इस संसार में भेजने की योजना बनाई। यीशु के इस संसार में आने से पहले उसके विषय में कई भविष्यद्वाणियां हो चुकी थीं। यशायाह नामक भविष्यद्वक्ता ने भविष्यद्वाणी की थी कि “इस कारण प्रभु आप ही तुम को एक चिन्ह देगा। सुनो एक कुमारी गर्भवती होगी और पुत्र जनेगी, और उसका नाम इम्मानुएल रखेगी।” समयानुसार यह भविष्यद्वाणी पूर्ण हुई तथा परमेश्वर का एक दूत गलील के नासरत नगर में एक भक्त कन्या के पास आया “जिसका मंगनी यूसुफ़ नाम दाऊद के घराने के एक पुरुष से हुई थी। उस कुंवारी का नाम मरियम था। और स्वर्गदूत ने उसके पास भीतर आकर कहा; आनन्द और जय तेरी हो, जिस पर ईश्वर का अनुग्रह हुआ है, प्रभु तेरे साथ है। वह उस वचन से बहुत घबरा गई और सोचने लगी, कि यह कैसे हो सकता है? स्वर्गदूत ने उससे कहा, हे मरियम; भयभीत न हो, क्योंकि परमेश्वर का अनुग्रह तुझ पर हुआ है। और देख, तू गर्भवती होगी, और तेरे एक पुत्र उत्पन्न होगा; तू उसका नाम यीशु रखना। वह महान होगा; और परम प्रधान का पुत्र कहलाएगा; और प्रभु परमेश्वर उसके पिता दाऊद का सिंहासन उसको देगा.....और उसके राज्य का अन्त न होगा। मरियम ने स्वर्गदूत से कहा, यह क्योंकर होगा? मैं तो पुरुष को जानती ही नहीं। स्वर्गदूत ने उसको उत्तर दिया, कि पवित्र आत्मा तुझ पर उतरेगा, और परम प्रधान की सामर्थ्य तुझ पर छाया करेगी इसलिए वह पवित्र जो उत्पन्न होनेवाला है, परमेश्वर का पुत्र कहलाएगा”। इस घटना के पश्चात् संसार के उद्धारकर्ता यीशु मसीह का जन्म इस प्रकार में हुआ “कि जब उसकी माता मरियम की मंगनी यूसुफ़ के साथ हो गई तो उसके इकट्ठे होने से पहिले वह पवित्र आत्मा की ओर से गर्भवती पाई गई। सो उनके पति यूसुफ़ ने, जो धर्मी था और उसे बदनाम करना नहीं चाहता था, उसे चुपके से त्याग देने की मनसा की। जब वह इन बातों के सोच ही में था तो प्रभु का स्वर्गदूत उसे स्वप्न में दिखाई देकर कहने लगा हे यूसुफ़ दाऊद की सन्तान तू अपनी पत्नी मरियम को अपने यहां ले आने से मत डर; क्योंकि जो उसके

गर्भ में है, वह पवित्र आत्मा की ओर से है। वह पुत्र जनेगी तू उसका नाम यीशु रखना ; क्योंकि वह अपने लोगों का उद्धार करेगा। इसके पश्चात् यीशु मसीह बड़ा हुआ और सारे लोगों में प्रचार करता फिरा। लेकिन फिर उसका मृत्यु का समय भी निकट आ गया। उसकी मृत्यु के विषय में भी भविष्य-द्वाणीयां की गई थीं कि वह मारा जायेगा तथा अपने लोगों का उद्धार करेगा। यशायाह ने प्रभु यीशु के ऊपर भविष्य में आने वाले दुखों का वर्णन किया, वे दुख जो उसको अपनी मृत्यु से पहले भेलने थे। तथा उसने लिखा था कि वह किस प्रकार से मारा जायेगा। इस प्रकार से यीशु की मृत्यु हुई, कि “जब भोर हुई, तो सब महायाजकों और लोगों के पुरनियों ने यीशु के मार डालने की सम्मति की। और उन्होंने उसे बान्धा और ले जाकर पीलातुस हाकिम के हाथ में सौंप दिया। हाकिम ने कहा ; क्यों उसने क्या बुराई की है ? परन्तु वे और भी चिल्ला-चिल्लाकर कहने लगे “वह क्रूस पर चढ़ाया जाए” इस पर उसने यीशु को कोड़े लगवाकर उनके हाथ सौंप दिया, कि वह क्रूस पर चढ़ाया जाए। तब उन्होंने उसे क्रूस पर चढ़ाया।” यह सब क्योंकिर हुआ ? इसका विशेष तथा महत्वपूर्ण कारण है पापी मनुष्य का उद्धार। दयालु परमेश्वर का यह महान प्रेम था पापी मनुष्य के लिए “क्योंकि परमेश्वर ने जगत से ऐसा प्रेम रखा कि उस ने अपना एकलौता पुत्र दे दिया, ताकि जो कोई उस पर विश्वास करे, वह नाश न हो, परन्तु अनन्त जीवन पाए। परमेश्वर ने अपने पुत्र को जगत में इसलिए नहीं भेजा, कि जगत पर दण्ड की आज्ञा दे परन्तु इसलिए कि जगत उसके द्वारा उद्धार पाए। (यूहन्ना ३:१६-१७)। पौलुस रोमियों कि पुस्तक में लिखते हुये कहता है “परन्तु परमेश्वर हम पर अपने प्रेम की भलाई इस रीति से प्रकट करता है, कि जब हम पापी ही थे तभी मसीह हमारे लिये मरा। पवित्र शास्त्र के और भी अन्य पद हमें यही बताते हैं कि यीशु मसीह पापियों के लिए क्रूस पर मरा जिसके मारे जाने से पापी मनुष्य अपने पापों से छुटकारा पा सके। किन्तु यीशु केवल मरा ही नहीं परन्तु तीसरे दिन अपने वायदे के अनुसार उसने मृत्यु पर विजय प्राप्त की तथा वह जी उठा। और लिखा है “सब्त के दिन के बाद सप्ताह के पहिले दिन पोह फटते ही मरियम मगदलीनी और दूसरी मरियम कन्न को देखने आईं। और देखो एक बड़ा भुईंड़ोल हुआ क्योंकि प्रभु का एक दूत स्वर्ग से उतरा, और पास आकर उसने पत्थर को लुढ़का दिया, और उस पर बैठ गया। उसका रूप बिजली का सा और उसका वस्त्र पाले की नाई उज्ज्वल था। उसके भय से पहरेण कांप उठें, और मृतक समान हो गए। स्वर्गदूत ने स्त्रियों से कहा, कि तुम मत डरो मैं जानता हूं कि तुम यीशु को जो क्रूस पर चढ़ाया गया था ढूंढती

हो। वह यहां नहीं है, परन्तु अपने वचन के अनुसार जी उठा है ; आओ यह स्थान देखो, जहां प्रभु पड़ा था। (मत्ती २८:१-६)।

वास्तव में प्रभु यीशु इस संसार के लोगों के पापों के लिए मारा गया। क्योंकि वह परमेश्वर का पुत्र था इसलिए उसने अपने पिता अर्थात् परमेश्वर की इच्छा पूरी की। शायद आप सोचें कि यीशु मसीह केवल एक शिक्षक अथवा एक धार्मिक गुरु था। अथवा वह एक अवतार के रूप में अपने धर्म का प्रचार करने इस संसार में आया। चाहे लोग कुछ भी सोचें वास्तव में प्रभु यीशु जीवते परमेश्वर का पुत्र है। (मत्ती १६ : १३-१६)

अब मनुष्य को धर्म की लालसा नहीं करनी चाहिए क्योंकि यीशु ने अपनी मृत्यु के द्वारा मनुष्य के उद्धार का मार्ग बना दिया है। आज मनुष्य को आवश्यकता है कि वह प्रभु यीशु को स्वीकार करे। धर्म में मनुष्य परमेश्वर को प्रसन्न करने के लिए अनेक वस्तुएं उसको चढ़ाने के लिए लाता है परन्तु उद्धार पाने के लिए मनुष्य को परमेश्वर के सम्मुख बिलकुल खाली हाथ आना चाहिए। यह कहते हुये कि प्रभु यीशु :

“जैसा मैं हूं, बगैर एक बात,

पर तेरे लहु से हयात,

अब तेरे नाम से है उद्धार,

मसीह, मसीह मैं आता हूं।

यहूदी लोग बड़े धार्मिक लोग थे। वे परमेश्वर के सम्मुख जानवरों की भेंटें चढ़ाया करते थे। वह सब परमेश्वर को प्रसन्न करने के लिए किया जाता था। परन्तु इस युग के लोगों के लिए एक बार यीशु के लहु की कुर्बानी हो गई। अब जानवरों की कुर्बानी की कोई आवश्यकता नहीं है।” और बकरों और बछड़े के लोहू के द्वारा नहीं, पर अपने ही लोहू के द्वारा एक ही बार पवित्र स्थान में प्रवेश किया, और अनन्त छुटकारा प्राप्त किया। क्योंकि जब बकरों और बैलों का लोहू और कलोर की राख अपवित्र लोगों पर छिड़के जाने से शरीर की शुद्धता के लिए पवित्र करती है। तो मसीह का लोहू जिस ने अपने आपको सनातन आत्मा के द्वारा परमेश्वर के साम्हने निर्दोष चढ़ाया, तुम्हारे विवेक को मरे हुए कामों से क्यों न शुद्ध करेगा, ताकि तुम जीवते परमेश्वर की सेवा करो। (इब्रानियों ९ : १२-१४)।

मित्रो। यदि हम वास्तव में उद्धार पाने के इच्छुक हैं, तो हमें धर्म शब्द

को अपने मनों से निकालना होगा। क्योंकि यदि हमारा मन धर्मों की ओर लगा रहेगा तो हम धर्मों की ही खोज में लगे रहेंगे। आप शायद सोचें इससे अच्छा तो यह धर्म है या वह धर्म है, मुझे इस धर्म को स्वीकार कर लेना चाहिए। अर्थात् अनेक लोगों का जीवन केवल धर्मों की खोज में ही बीत जाता है। विशेष बात यह है कि चाहे हम कितने भी धार्मिक हों यदि हमने प्रभु यीशु तथा उसके मार्ग को नहीं अपनाया है तो हम खोये हुये हैं। पवित्र बाइबल के दूसरे भाग में अर्थात् नये नियम में ऐसे अनेकों व्यक्तियों के विषय में पढ़ते हैं जो धार्मिक तो थे परन्तु फिर भी खोये हुये थे, क्योंकि उन्होंने प्रभु यीशु तथा उसके मार्ग को नहीं अपनाया था। सबसे पहले हम देखते हैं उन ३,००० यहूदी लोगों के विषय में जिनके विषय में हम प्रेरितों २ अध्याय में पढ़ते हैं। यह लोग काफी धार्मिक थे, तेब ही तो अपने उस बड़े पर्व अर्थात् पित्नेकुस्त को मनाने के लिए एकत्रित हुये थे। धार्मिक होते हुए भी वे लोग प्रभु यीशु के उद्धार से वंचित थे। सो उन लोगों ने जब प्रभु यीशु के विषय में सुना तो उन्होंने उस पर विश्वास किया तथा उसकी आज्ञाओं को मानकर बपतिस्मा लिया। तथा वे लोग उसी दिन प्रभु के द्वारा प्रभु की कलीसिया में मिलाये गये। (प्रेरितों २:३८-४७)

शाऊल के विषय में हम पढ़ते हैं कि वह कितना धार्मिक मनुष्य था। यहूदी धर्म की पुस्तकों का अच्छा ज्ञान रखता था। लेकिन फिर भी वह खोया हुआ था। फिर हम पढ़ते हैं कि किस प्रकार प्रभु की आज्ञा उसे दमिश्क के मार्ग पर सुनाई दी और वह किस प्रकार से अन्धा हो गया। फिर उसे हनन्याह नामक मनुष्य के पास भेजा गया तथा उसके द्वारा उसने बपतिस्मा लिया और अपने पापों से वह बचाया गया। (प्रेरितों ९)। एक अन्य मनुष्य के विषय में हम पढ़ते हैं उसका नाम था कुरनेलियुस। इसके विषय में लिखा है कि "वह भक्त था और अपने घराने समेत परमेश्वर से डरता था और यहूदी लोगों को बहुत दान देता था, और बराबर परमेश्वर से प्रार्थना करता था (प्रेरितों १० : २,३)। परन्तु फिर वही बात आती है कि उसने अभी तक प्रभु यीशु को स्वीकार नहीं किया था। कुरनेलियुस तथा उसके घराने ने प्रभु यीशु की आज्ञा मानकर उसके नाम में बपतिस्मा लिया। (प्रेरितों १०:४६-४८)। ऐसे ही हम लुदिया तथा उसके घराने के विषय में पढ़ते हैं कि वह भक्त स्त्री थी। परन्तु अभी तक उसने सुसमाचार अथवा प्रभु की आज्ञा को नहीं माना था। किन्तु जब पौलूस ने उससे बातें कीं तब उसने तथा उसके घराने ने प्रभु की आज्ञा को माना और बपतिस्मा लिया। (प्रेरितों १६:१४-

१५) । कुरिन्थी लोगों के विषय में भी हम यह पढ़ते हैं कि वे धार्मिक थे । लेकिन जब उन्होंने पौलूस के द्वारा सुसमाचार सुना तो उन्होंने विश्वास किया और बपतिस्मा लिया (प्रेरितों १८:८) ।

अभी जितने भी लोगों के विषय में हमने देखा यद्यपि वे सब धार्मिक थे किन्तु प्रभु यीशु तथा उसके उद्धार से वंचित थे । यदि वे लोग यही सोचते रहते कि हम तो बड़े भक्त हैं, धार्मिक हैं, परमेश्वर से डरते हैं और दान भी देते हैं, हमें प्रभु यीशु की कोई आवश्यकता नहीं है । परन्तु उन्होंने ऐसा नहीं किया । उन्होंने प्रभु यीशु को ठुकराया नहीं, पर उसको स्वीकार किया ।

मेरे मित्रो । अब आपके सम्मुख एक बहुत आवश्यक प्रश्न है “आप किसी धर्म को चाहते हैं अथवा प्रभु यीशु के उद्धार को ?” यदि आप चाहते हैं कि आप उद्धार प्राप्त करें तो प्रभु यीशु को स्वीकार करें, लेकिन स्मरण रखिये जब आप प्रभु यीशु को ग्रहण कर लें तो यह न सोचें कि आपने किसी धर्म को ग्रहण किया है । क्या सोचा आपने ? यदि आप वास्तव में उद्धार पाने के इच्छुक हैं तो तैयार हो जाइये निम्न आज्ञाओं को पूरा करने के लिए । प्रभु यीशु पर विश्वास करें, अपने पापों से पश्चात्ताप करें, प्रभु यीशु का अंगीकार करें तथा उसके नाम में बपतिस्मा लें तब आपके पास उद्धार की आशा होगी तथा आप प्रभु यीशु की कलीसिया के सदस्य होंगे । (यूहन्ना ८:२४, इब्रानियों ११:६, प्रेरितों १७:३०; २:३८; रोमियो १०:६-१०; मत्ती १०:३२; १ पतरस ३:२१; मरकुस १६:१६; प्रेरितों २:३८-४७) । इन आज्ञाओं को मानने के पश्चात् आप केवल एक मसीही होंगे । (प्रेरितों ११:२६, २६:२८ तथा १ पतरस ४:१६) ।

यदि इन बातों के विषय में कोई अन्य जानकारी प्राप्त करना चाहते हैं तो हमें अवश्य लिखिये ।

EXCITING OFFER!!

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED AND SAID,

“ If only I could do something for Jesus ? ”

Here is your opportunity :

We make the following offer, that will allow you to tell over 1000 people about Jesus. Just imagine over 1000 people get to know something about Jesus. We will send you over 1000 assorted Bible Tracts if you send us just Rupees Five by money order. We want to tell you that the Tracts are absolutely free of cost. Your Five Rupees will cover only the cost of postage and handling. Send your orders to :

NEW DELHI BIBLE COLLEGE

C-22, South Extension-2,

NEW DELHI-110049.

Offer Expires on Feb. 15, 1976

OR

when the Stock is Finished.

Printed at Pioneer Fine Art Press, Delhi-6. India

Postal Regn. No. D (S) - 188

To:

From :

The Bible Teacher

Post Box No. 3815

New Delhi-110049

Regd. No. 26921/71