

# THE BIBLE TEACHER

*Pleading for the Restoration of Pure New Testament Christianity*

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## *Editorial*

### **What Does the Bible Teach?**

***“Do not marvel at this: for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth”***

All the dead, the Bible teaches, one day will be resurrected. Christ was teaching concerning one general resurrection of all the dead in John 5:28 & 29. Moreover, He said, that in that day of resurrection, when all the dead will be raised, there will be two categories of the resurrected dead. “Those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.” This simply means that those who have lived their lives on earth by following God’s will, will be raised to inherit the everlasting life in heaven; and those have rejected God’s will on earth, will be raised to face the eternal condemnation in hell. (Matthew 25:46). In eternity there will be only two places—heaven and hell. All who are born, will die one day. But in the day when Christ will return and appear up in the air, (1 Thess. 4:13-18), on the day of His judgment (Acts 17:30,31), all will be resurrected by the power of God to receive their reward.

In the Bible, 1 Corinthians 15 chapter has been rightly called “The Resurrection chapter.” There have been always some people, as there are now, who have doubted the resurrection. There were some such people even in the church at Corinth to



whom the apostle Paul wrote and said, "Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty, and your faith is also empty. Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise. For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile, you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable." (1 Cor. 15:12-19).

The apostle, in essence, was saying, that the resurrection of Christ was the greatest proof of our own resurrection. Christ, on earth, was born as man, and he lived and died as a man. But God raised Him from the dead. Now, if God raised Christ from the dead then this serves as the proof that likewise God will raise one day everyone who will die.

Secondly, in the same context, to prove that there will be a resurrection, the apostle in 1 Cor. 15:29, asked the Corinthians a very vital question pertaining to resurrection, he questioned: "Otherwise what will they do who are baptized for the dead, if the dead do not rise at all? Why then are they baptized for the dead?" The Corinthians were baptized (Acts 18:8), as all are to become followers of Christ. But, before going through the act of baptism one must repent or die to sin (Acts 2:38), and that is precisely what the Corinthians had done. Before their baptism—their burial in the water-grave of baptism, they had died to sin. Through baptism they were put in the grave of water as dead men and women. A living person is not buried. Their baptism was a "planting" in the likeness of the burial of Christ, and was a raising in the likeness of His resurrection from the dead. They were buried in the grave of water, through baptism, as dead men and dead women, and were raised from the tomb of water to walk in the newness of life (Romans 6:3-5). The inference is, their baptism was in the very likeness of the death and the burial and the resurrection of Christ. But, then, if Christ had not risen, and the dead rise not, then their emblematic burial in water and coming out of the watery grave of baptism had no meaning! Why were they baptized then? Asked the apostle! Because the very meaning



of baptism is death, burial and resurrection! Anytime a person is baptized according to the Bible's teaching, he/she portrays that there is a death and burial and resurrection. Therefore, the apostle's question to them was; Why were they baptized for the dead? In other words, how vain a thing had their baptism been if there will be no resurrection? Must they stand by it or renounce it? With the view of their own death to sin, through repentance, they were baptized or were buried in the grave of water and had come out of it, declaring their own death to sin and burial and resurrection to walk in the new Christian life.

Thirdly, and finally, in 1 Cor. 15:35-44 the apostle gives the example of a seed. The seed is dead and put into the ground, but God gives it a new body. From the very seed comes up out of the ground another new body. Who gives to the seed a new body? God does. And it will be the same in the case of the resurrected bodies. "It is sown a natural body," speaking of the physical body, the apostle said, "it is raised a spiritual body." The natural was created to live on earth, but it will be changed into spiritual, at the resurrection, to live in eternity in the spiritual realm. In this context it is noteworthy what Christ had said in Matthew 10:28: "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Like in heaven, both soul and body will be in hell.

Man is not like animals. Animals are born, live and die, and that is the end of their existence. Since man, in the beginning, was created by God in His own image and after His own likeness (Genesis 1:26 & 27), man, therefore, like God, will continue to live forever. Death is not the end of man's life. There is the resurrection. Christ's resurrection proves man's resurrection. Each time a believer in Christ is baptized it portrays the resurrection. And, every seed that is sown in the ground and then comes up out of the ground with a new body testifies that there is a resurrection.

## *Speaking In New Tongues*

**J.C. CHOATE**

We hear a lot of people today talking about speaking in "tongues". The sounds are unintelligible, and when challenged



about that, they respond that they are speaking a "heavenly" language, one that can be understood only by God. Of course if we know what the Bible teaches, we know that all of this is contrary to what He says in the Scriptures.

The Apostles — and only the Apostles — were promised the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Read John 14:26; Luke 24:49; and Acts 1:8. On the day of Pentecost, in the city of Jerusalem, they received that power, as the Lord had promised. The Spirit was not "poured out" on all who were gathered there, but only on the Apostles. They received this power that they might carry on the Lord's work since He would no longer be with them physically.

At that time there was no New Testament in written form to support their preaching, and the people could not go to the New Testament to see if the Apostles were teaching the truth. During this interim period, the power of the Holy Spirit was given to the Apostles so that they might be able to speak in the languages of the local people and perform many varied miraculous signs, so they could move on with the Lord's work. As seen in Acts 2, the Apostles were able to speak in the languages of the local people, and they were understood. Those today who claim to be able to speak in "tongues" are not understood by their audiences for the simple reason that they do not actually have the baptism of the Holy Spirit. In fact, when they go to foreign countries, they hire local people to stand beside them and to translate their messages to the audiences! Do we read of any such thing being done by the Apostles? NO! Rather, the Apostles were able to speak fluently in the languages of the local people, proving that they were working through the power of the Holy Spirit. They were also enabled to remember all that Jesus had taught them. They were guided into all truth, were able to foretell the future, and they could heal the sick and raise the dead. Men, today, who claim to have the same power as the Apostles should have no need of the Bible, but their recollection of what it says should be 100%. Can they pass this test, to prove their authenticity?

In the infancy of the church, the Apostles needed help to minister properly to the physical needs of the growing church. They asked the brethren to choose seven men from among them who were *full of the Holy Spirit*, to be set apart for this special work. Notice that they had already received the Holy Spirit — *the gift of the Holy Spirit*, as recorded in Acts 2:38 - but they had not received *the miraculous power* of the Holy Spirit. This refutes the



current erroneous doctrine that **all** who come to Christ *receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit*. Obviously, from reading the text from Acts 2 through Acts 6, up to that point **only the Apostles had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit**. All others had simply been baptized in water and had received the non-miraculous indwelling of the Holy Spirit, i.e., *the gift of the Holy Spirit*. So the seven men were chosen, and the Apostles laid their hands on them that they might be able to perform miracles, speak in other languages, etc.

This incident shows us a fourth "measure" of the Spirit:

- (1) Christ was given the Spirit without measure, or without limitation (John 3:34).
- (2) The Apostles were baptized in the Spirit, enabling them to perform all types of miracles and to give the ability to do certain miracles to others (John 15:26,27; 16:7,8; Acts 1:5,8).
- (3) All Christians receive the Holy Spirit as the gift of life, when they are baptized into Christ (Acts 2:38).
- (4) The Apostles could lay their hands on select people and give them individual miraculous powers, i.e., one might be able to speak in a language he had not studied, another might be able to heal the sick, another could teach by prophecy through the guidance of the Spirit, another was given miraculous knowledge - and in a congregation, the Christians were aided by the combination of all of these gifts given to the various members (1 Corinthians 12,13,14).

After the Lord's death, burial, and resurrection, he appeared to the Apostles and commanded them to take the gospel into all the world. He also told them to preach that those who would believe and be baptized would be saved, but those who believed not would be condemned. He promised the Apostles, *"And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak in new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen"* (Mark 16:17-20).



Notice that all of these miraculous things were promised to the **Apostles, not to people in general, and not even to all Christians.** A part of the promise was that they would be able to speak in new tongues or languages. As we pointed out, all of this came to pass in Acts 2.

By the time the Apostles died, and those on whom they had laid their hands had died, the New Testament had been given in written form. No longer were miracles, signs, and wonders needed, and so they ceased. Even Paul declared, *"Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away"* (1 Corinthians 13:8-10).

"That which is perfect" was not a reference to the ultimate return of Christ, as some mistakenly teach today. "That" is used to speak of *things*, not of *people*. Absolutely the only **perfect thing** that exists is the **perfect law of liberty**, that is, the **New Testament**. We no longer have to rely on miraculous "childish things" - things that could be (and still can be) faked by magicians and false religious teachers. Instead, we can go to the word of the Lord to read and understand God's will, and to do the things He would have us to do.

## ***He Willingly Offered Himself***

**FRANCIS DAVID**

"In the book of 2 Chronicles 17<sup>th</sup> chapter and verse 16, we read about Amasiah the son of Zichri, who willingly offered himself to the Lord, and with him two hundred thousand mighty men of valor." We can learn many lessons from this man and his willingness to serve the Lord willingly and not by pressure or force. Some give their services to the Lord by pressure by someone or may be to impress someone or probably for selfish gains. But no doubt there are people that we know who have given their lives to God willingly and not for some selfish motives.

The first quality we see in Amasiah's life that he gave first place to the Lord. This what we learn from Scriptures that we must



give first place to the Lord in our lives. Jesus said, "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. (Matt. 6:33). There are many who give first place to pleasure, entertainments, job, and worldly lust. Our aim should be to love the Lord first and to serve Him. John says that we should not love the world and the things of the world. (2 Jn. 2:15-16). Paul says that there will be a time when people will be lovers of pleasure rather than lover of God. (2 Tim. 3:4). For some Money is first. They love money more than God. This what we read in 1 Timothy 6:10, where Paul says, "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." We must serve God with all our heart, soul and mind. (Matt. 22:37).

Maybe some of us are Christians for many years, but have we given ourselves fully to the Lord? God has made you, redeemed you and saved you from your sins through sacrificing His only Son on the Cross. Sometime we do not fully surrender to the Lord because we are selfish. Amasiah had the spirit of unselfishness. He was not a selfish person, and that is why he offered himself willingly. He gave his service to the king willingly. What about us as Christians, the children of God? Are we satisfied with our Christianity? Are we willingly doing something for the Lord or to spread His cause? It is sad that sometimes, we have to beg people to come for worship, or to help with the work of the church.

Apostle Paul at the last stage of his life said these words and we need to learn from his life. He said, "For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." Paul was committed to a cause and he fulfilled that. We learn a great lesson from his dedicated life. Have we fully surrendered to the Lord? Whatever we do for the Lord, are we doing it willingly? Amasiah did it. We can do it too. If you have not accepted the gospel and not obeyed Jesus, we urge you to willingly come to Him, believe in Him, confess Him as the Son of God, repent of your sinful life and be baptised for the remission of your sins. Jesus invites you and He says, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let Him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me." (Luke 9:23).



# ***Importance of Individual Members in the Body of Christ***

**THOMAS DOHLING**

"We ... are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another" (Romans 12:5). "You are the body of Christ and individually members of it" (1 Corinthians 12:27).

The Holy Spirit through the apostle Paul (in Romans 12:4-8 and 1 Cor. 12:12-27) presents beautiful analogies between parts of the individual human body and the spiritual body of Christ, that is His Church.

Even as the human body is made up of different parts having differing functions, even so the body of Christ is made up of saved and sanctified human beings with differing abilities.

A vivid portrait is drawn in 1 Corinthians 12 of the importance of individual members in our Lord's body where we see God "giving greater honour to the part of the body that lacked it" (v.24) which the more presentable parts do not require! Since God has so honoured the seeming weaker members, we ought to do so likewise. Those members who are withdrawn, those who were "greater sinners" prior to placing their trust in the perfect Christ and being added to His body, should be the objects of our greater love and care. God demands it.

Since we are one body in Christ, we are individually members of one another (Romans 12:5) even though "the members do not all have the same function." Each member functions according to the ability or "gifts that differ according to the grace given to us." If one has a particular ability, we are exhorted to use them "in proportion to our faith" (Romans 12:6). It is dangerous to hide our talent (Matthew 25:15-28). We honour God by our presence in the corporate gathering of our Lord's body, whereby we testify to the fact that we are indeed the one body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

"God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as He chose" (1 Corinthians 12:18). This statement tells us that the spiritual body of Jesus is shaped by God Himself according to His good purpose "that the members may have the same care for one another" (v 25) as the Father cares for us. If one member suffers, all suffer together; and if one member is honoured, all



rejoice together. Think of that - if we have a toothache, our physical body suffers as a whole. So it is with the spiritual body of our Lord. We may be sure that the Head of the body, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, grieves when we suffer and rejoices when we are honoured!

All Christians as a whole make up the body of Christ and individually are members of it and also of one another for the glory of God!

All members serve one another, according to God's gifting, for the common good. This means that no member is all-important and no member is useless! All members are equal in God's sight and He is not partial to any one. He blesses individual members so long as they remain in the body of Christ Jesus and lovingly care for and serve one another gratefully thanking God for His love in their hearts.

## ***“But At Thy Word I Will”***

**CLEM THURMAN**

Commercial net-fisherman usually fished at night in the Sea of Galilee, for that was the time the fish were running. Peter and his partners had spent the night fishing, caught nothing, and were washing their nets when Jesus came to them. He said, *“Put out into the deep, and let down your nets for a catch”* (Lk. 5:4). If you were the “professional” and had fished all night, you know how Peter could have felt. But Peter knew that Jesus was not just a kibitzer, he knew that Jesus was different. So Peter replied, *“Master, we toiled all night, and took nothing: but at thy word I will let down the nets”* (v. 5). The resulting catch (v. 6) was almost more than the nets would hold! Can you now imagine how Peter and the others felt? *“He was amazed, and all that were with him, at the catch of the fishes which they had taken”* (v. 9).

There come times in our lives when we are called on to “launch out into the deep” as they did, times when “sensible” and “reasonable” actions are not enough. Then we must act on faith. Sometimes it will seem unreasonable, but faith will act: *“At thy word, I will.”* Moses was told to cast down his shepherd's rod, and when he did it became a serpent (Ex. 4:1-3). God then said, *“Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail”* (v. 4). That was not the



sensible nor reasonable thing to do, but the attitude of Moses was, *"At thy word I will,"* so he did; and it became a rod again (v. 4). How reasonable was it to assume that stretching that rod over the Red Sea would part the waters? But *"at thy word I will"* kind of faith brought God's response of parting the waters (Ex. 14:16,21-22). That is the kind of faith we need today.

### **THE MEASURE OF REAL FAITH**

Some people speak of "blind faith," but real faith is not blind; it is based on evidence (Heb. 11:1). Faith results from the evidence that a thing is true. For instance, I believe Australia exists, even though I have never been there, because of the evidence I've seen. Faith in Jesus is also based on clear and hard evidence. When Nicodemus came to Jesus, he said, *"Master, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him"* (Jno. 3:2). That was the purpose of His miracles, as John writes, *"These are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name"* (Jno. 20:30-31).

Because we believe in Jesus, we act and react differently than we would in unbelief. *"At thy word I will"* becomes our attitude. In other words, our faith responds to His will. *"I believed, and therefore did I speak"* (2 Cor. 4:13). The inspired apostle wrote, *"What doth it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, but have not works? can that faith save him?"* (Jas. 2:14). The conclusion is obvious, *"Ye see that by works a man is justified, and not only by faith"* (v. 24). Read of those great "heroes of faith" in Heb. 11. Each one of them believed God, and responded by doing what God said: *"By faith Abel offered unto God . . . By faith Noah prepared an ark . . . By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed"* (Heb. 11:4,7,8), and so through the rest of that chapter. Because they believed, their attitude was, *"At thy word I will."*

### **"TRUST IN THE BLOOD OF THE CROSS"**

To unbelievers and moralists, the blood of the cross and our trust in it to cleanse us, is foolishness (1 Cor. 1:18). But to believers in Jesus it is the bedrock on which a new life is built. *"All have sinned. . . the soul that sinneth, it shall die. . . the wages of sin is death"* (Rom. 3:23; Ezek. 18:20; Rom. 6:23). That depicts each of us, for we all have sinned. *"But we see him . . . even Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and*



*honor, that he by the grace of God should taste of death for every man"* (Heb. 2:9). That puts the cross in a different light! He died there for me, He paid my penalty (2 Cor. 5:14) so that I could live.

The apostle describes the importance of the cross: *"For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace. . . through faith, in his blood"* (Rom. 3:23-25). As many as have sinned need His blood to cleanse them, for *"Without the shedding of blood there is no remission"* (Heb. 9:22). But believers who are in Christ are *"redeemed, not with silver and gold . . . but with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ"* (1 Pet. 1:18-19). To others it may seem foolish, but to believers, the attitude is *"At thy word I will"* trust in the blood to cleanse from sin.

### **"BE BAPTIZED AND WASH AWAY THY SINS"**

One argues, "We are saved by faith. Baptism has nothing to do with it." But what does Jesus say? *"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved . . . Repent ye, and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, unto the remission of your sins. . . Baptism doth now also save you"* (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38; 1 Pet. 3:21). The real question is, does the Lord command it? The answer is obvious!

The Lord promised Saul that he would be told *"in the city"* what he should do (Acts 9:6). Saul spent three days and nights in Damascus praying, but was still lost. Then the Lord sent to him a man named Ananias, who told him, *"Why tarriest thou? arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord"* (Acts 22:16). Saul could have argued, as some do today. But he didn't. His attitude was, *"At thy word I will."* And he did. He later showed that baptism is *"into Christ"* and *"into his death"* (Rom. 6:3), and so taught that when we are baptized into the death of Christ, His blood cleanses us (Heb. 10:22). But when Ananias came to him, it was enough to understand that the Lord wanted him to be baptized: *"At thy word I will."*

A great story of faith is found in 2 Kgs. 5:1-14. Naaman, a Syrian officer, was a leper. His wife's servant persuaded him to go to Israel where a prophet could heal him. He went. But when Elisha told him to *"dip seven times in the Jordan,"* Naaman became angry and left. How could water cure leprosy? Besides the rivers back home were better than the Jordan. But a servant persuaded him by saying, *"If the prophet had bid thee do some*



*great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?"* At that, Naaman did what he was told, and he was cleansed from leprosy. Did the water do it? NO! But God did it when Naaman took Him at His word. The same is true with baptism today. Does the water cleanse? NO! But God does, through the blood of Jesus, when we are baptized (Acts 22:16; Rom. 5:8-10) into His death (Rom. 6:3). When people trust the Lord, baptism is not a problem: *"At thy word I will."*

### **"GIVE GOD GLORY IN THE CHURCH"**

Many claim that the church doesn't matter. But Jesus said, *"I will build my church"* (Matt. 16:18). The apostle stated that the Lord *"purchased"* the church with His own blood (Acts 20:28). In Jerusalem 1900 years ago, *"As many as received his word, were baptized, and there were added to them in that day about three thousand souls . . . The Lord added to the church daily such as were being saved"* (Acts 2:41,47). Note that: *"at thy word"* they were baptized and the Lord added them to His church. Doesn't He still do that?

Many seem to think the church was some kind of afterthought with God, but that just isn't true. *"Might be made known through the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord"* (Eph. 3:10-11). When God purposed to send Christ to die for our sins, He purposed the church! That is His eternal purpose. But let us continue reading in that passage: *"Unto him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations for ever and ever"* (v. 20). Our purpose on earth is to glorify our Creator, to *"fear God and keep his commandments"* (Eccle. 12:13). But where? The Lord's answer is, *"in the church."* Unbelievers still cry, "Why?" or "I can glorify God without being in the church." But those who trust Jesus simply reply by their lives, *"At thy word I will."*

Jesus asked, and is asking, *"Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"* (Lk. 6:46). We hear lots of folk talking about being saved by faith, and that is right: *"Being justified by faith, we have peace with God. . . Through faith in his blood. .*

*The righteous shall live by faith"* (Rom. 5:1; 3:25; 1:17). But faith that saves is faith that molds the life, faith that obeys, faith that acts simply because Jesus says to do it. May our response to the Lord always be, about everything, *"At thy word I will."*



# **Are You Dependable?**

**JOHNNY RAMSEY**

It has been wisely stated that "the greatest ability is dependability." There is nothing so fretful as the person who just cannot be counted on to do what he was hired to do or promised to do. When we depend upon someone to perform a definite task and he fails to come through, it is really sad. Recently an important sporting event was delayed several hours because the appointed crew of officials never showed up.

Jesus told a parable concerning five foolish ones who missed an eternal appointment due to a lack of proper preparation that caused the door of opportunity to be forever shut against them (Matt. 25:10). In the church of the Lord we often have folk who not only fail to do their assigned tasks, they even compound the problem by letting no one know that the job still needs attention. I once asked some elders how many of the seventeen deacons they could really count on. Their answer startled me: "Only two of them can be called dependable." That is a spiritual tragedy.

When members of the Lord's church are not dependable, they join the ranks of men like: the sons of Eli (1 Sam. 3), the excuse makers (Lk. 14:18), the one-talent man (Matt. 25:14-30), the "faith only" bunch (Jas. 2:14-26), the church in Sardis (Rev. 3:1-6), the Pharisees (Matt. 23:3), the procrastinators (Jer. 8:20), the trembling Felix (Acts 24:25). To be steadfast and unmovable (1 Cor. 15:58) and zealous and ardent (Acts 2:42) spells success in the spiritual arena of life. To fail to meet the challenge of the gospel is deadly!

Searching the Bible for dependable people is not only a joyous excursion but an eye-opener in many ways. With equal opportunities, some folk evince much more loyalty than their associates who fall by the wayside due to selfishness and laziness. In the midst of a wicked and rebellious world, the following form a solid phalanx of devoted children of God.

*Joseph — who stood alone in a foreign land.*

*Joshua - who could not be swayed from the proper path.*

*Samuel — who was committed to purity and integrity.*

*Jeremiah - who would not let the dungeon defeat him.*

*John - who cried for truth in the wilderness.*



*Jesus - who resolutely went to the cross.*

*Paul — who refused to allow prison to dampen his joy.*

Humanity can either be strengthened or shattered by adversity. Job became a spiritual giant in his ability to see through pain and anguish to a Redeemer (Job 19:25). Daniel came out of the lion's den more dedicated to Jehovah than ever and Micaiah told the truth in spite of the promise of starvation when earthly rulers demanded compromise (1 Kgs. 22:14). If we are only honorable when things go smoothly, we are not the soldiers Christ needs in His army. When the battle lines are drawn and Satan's troops are fiercest, we must be worthy of the challenge our Commander sets before us (Heb. 2:10). A powerful hymn entreats us:

*Go buckle on the armor God has given you*

*And in His strength unto the end endure.*

*If God be for us, His banner o'er us,*

*We will sing the victor's song at last.*

Heaven was not prepared for cowards and quitters. That sublime realm beckons stalwart and dependable servants of the King. May we be in that wonderful company when the saints go marching in!

## *Why Do Men Not Understand The Bible Alike?*

**LEON COLE**

It is an old question, but still important. "Why do men not understand the Bible alike?" Probably, no one knows all the reasons. There is one certainty: God is not to blame if men do not understand the Bible alike. The apostle Paul wrote, "So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is." (Ephesians 5:17.) This is not an impossible command. It must be concluded that when men "understand" the Bible "differently" some, perhaps all, do not understand the Bible at all.

### **A LACK OF STUDY**

One reason for problems in "understanding" is a lack of study. Of all people, Christians should spend much time in Bible study.



Timothy was told, "give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine." (1 Timothy 4:13.) The blessed man of Psalm 1 has "his delight in the law of the Lord, and in his law he meditates day and night." (Psalm 1:2.)

Ignorance of the scriptures invariably leads to apostasy. Hosea lamented in Hosea 4:6, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee...seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children." As men depart from the truth and it is asked "Why?" they need to go no farther than this passage.

It is shocking to observe the lack of Bible knowledge in far too many of our Bible classes. That statement is not meant as an indictment of anyone. But I believe that I learned more Bible in the little card class conducted in a crowded cubicle than is being learned in many classes with all the colorful materials, and the latest gadgets.

### **TRADITIONS HINDER**

Traditions also hinder people in their understanding of the Bible. At Matthew 15:2, Jesus was asked, "Why do your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread." No law had been broken, merely a tradition. But traditions can sometimes blind us to what God's word says!

It is not unusual to hear brethren quote David Lipscomb, Foy Wallace, Guy N. Woods, Leo Boles or some other great man as if the matter is settled. "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." (1 Peter 4:11.) "... Learn not to exceed what is written." (1 Corinthians 4:6.) We appreciate the scholarly efforts of devout faithful men, but they must not be exalted above the scriptures or hinder our understanding of the Bible.

### **PREJUDICE IS ANOTHER HINDRANCE**

Prejudice, is another villain responsible for blinding our minds to the truth. Let us strive not to read the Bible through colored glasses. We should take the time to "search the scriptures" and determine what is true and what is false. Remember, "Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path." (Psalm 119:105.)



# ***The Judgment***

**GEORGE L. ROGERS**

When the question came to Daniel Webster, "What is the most serious thought you ever entertained?" The great statesman replied, "That I am a responsible being and must at last give an account to my Maker." Indeed a very thought provoking question as well as a solemn and serious answer.

Many questions have been raised about the judgment. Everybody who ever lived, or ever shall live, must appear before "the judgment seat of Christ." Paul the apostle says, "For we must all appear...." (2 Corinthians 5:10.) It is astounding that brilliant men have limited the judgment of Christ to only "All Christians," and not to "All Men." The New Testament of our Bible mentions one judgment. (See Matthew 12:36-42; Luke 10:14, etc.) Therefore, Paul, here (2 Corinthians 5:10) does not limit the judgment scene to Christians only. The notion of a succession of judgment days is nowhere found in the Scriptures. Every man shall be judged according to his deeds, whether good or bad. (2 Peter 2:9; Revelation 20:11-13.)

## **THE IMPERATIVENESS OF IT**

Our text (2 Corinthians 5:10) says, "For we must." That is each one of us. Some things in life are optional; however, others cannot be evaded. All must die (Hebrews 9:27), and it is imperative that all will be judged. All must be raised from the dead (John 5:28,29.), and all must meet the Lord in the judgment. Again, Paul, to the Roman Christians speaks of "the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his deeds." (Romans 2:5,6.).

## **UNIVERSAL IN SCOPE**

"For all men must appear," says Paul. Each one of us. "As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." (Romans 14:11-12.) The apostle further taught that God will "judge the world." (Acts 17:31.) So then all nations shall be gathered before the Judge. (Matthew 25:31-32.)

One may ask, for what purpose do all gather from every nation? Paul says, "the righteous judgment of God." (Romans 2:5.)



We are not to appear with disguise, but shall stand at the bar of Christ with true character according to our works. (Revelation 22:12.) For God shall bring every work into judgment. (Ecclesiastes 12:12.)

We hasten to add that "the blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7-9), but this promise is for the Christian that "walks in the light." Even ugly sins can be forgiven to those who continue "in Christ," striving to do the Lord's will day by day. Therefore, God will forgive Christians all unrighteousness when repented of and confessed according to the Word of the Lord.

Jesus will be the judge. He said, "the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." (John 5:22.) In Paul's final charge to Timothy he said that Christ, "shall judge the living and the dead at his appearing." (2 Timothy 4:1-2.)

### **THE FINALITY OF IT**

The stern finality of the whole matter is this: (a) The Judge is supreme, (b) The decisions righteous and eternal, (c) All will hear the sentence. Thus it behooves us to be prepared. The prophet warned Israel. (Amos 4:12.) Jesus has warned all men. (Matthew 7:13,14; Titus 2:11-14.) Jesus is our Saviour. (Matthew 11:28-30.) We must respond in obedience to his invitation. The sinner must believe, repent and obey the Gospel. (John 8:24; Acts 3:19; Mark 16:16.) Our faith and obedience to His commands put us into the body of Christ. (Galatians 3:27; Romans 6:3,4.) In like manner, the Christian must continue "walking in the light of God's Word." (1 John 1:7-9.) "Be thou faithful unto death." (Revelation 2:10.) Remember, after that cometh the judgment.

## ***The Design of Bible Baptism***

**PERRY B. COTHAM**

The Scriptures teach that Baptism precedes forgiveness of sins, that its purpose is for, or unto the remission of sins. (Acts 2:38.)

After his resurrection and prior to his ascension Christ gave to the apostles the Great Commission, in which he 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.)

Note carefully what Jesus said in stating the terms of salvation: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." He did not say, "He that believeth is saved and may be baptized later, if he desires;" nor, "He that believeth not and is baptized shall be saved;" nor, "He that is saved ought to believe and be baptized." Some try to make the language read, "He that is baptized shall be saved - without faith;" while others say, "He that believeth shall be saved - without baptism." Both arrangements are false.

Since Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," would anyone dare change his language to read, "He that believeth and will not be baptized shall be saved"? Jesus did not say, "He that is baptized shall be saved;" but, He said, "He that believeth (step 1) and is baptized (step 2) shall be saved (result)." Here the Bible teaches that baptism is a condition of pardon. The sinner, to obtain salvation, must believe and be baptized.

Since Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," to say one is saved before baptism, is to say he is saved before the Lord promised to save him.

Baptism is also connected with repentance as a condition of remission of sins. "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 2:38; cf. Luke 24:27; Matthew 26:28.)

Since the inspired apostle said, "Repent and be baptized . . . for the remission of sins," to say one is saved prior to his being baptized, is to say he is saved prior to the remission of his sins as promised.

When Ananias came to Saul and found him a believing penitent, he said to him: "And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22:16.)

So baptism stands between the sinner and the washing away of his sins by the blood of Christ. (Compare Revelation 1:5; Romans 6:3-5; John 19:34; Colossians 2:12, 13.)

The apostle Peter, writing about the salvation of Noah and his family in the ark, said: "Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but an appeal to God for a clear conscience through the resurrection of Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 3:21, R.S.V.)



This verse states what baptism does - it saves us. Paul said: "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." If one is saved before baptism, he is saved before he gets into Christ. Salvation is in Christ. (2 Timothy 2:10; Ephesians 1:3.)

Hence, baptism is connected with faith as a condition of salvation and as a means of entrance into Christ. It is never referred to as a "Christian duty," but rather it is a command to be obeyed to become a Christian! Jesus said, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (John 3:5.) The water part of the new birth is baptism.

Furthermore, the Bible teaches that in order to be saved one must obey the gospel (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9); and baptism is one of the commands of the gospel. Baptism is a condition of salvation, but not a meritorious cause. Christ is the Saviour, but he saves only those who obey him. (Hebrews 5:9; Revelation 22:14; Ephesians 1:7; cf. 2 Kings 5:1-14; John 9:1-7.)

## ***What The Jailer Was Really Told***

**GARNET H. BAKER**

Acts 16:16-34 records an incident during the second journey of Paul where he and Silas were unjustly imprisoned in the Macedonian city of Philippi. In the "inner prison" at midnight, they were praying and singing praises to God when, "suddenly, there was a great earthquake so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's hands were loosed" Fearing that the prisoners had escaped, the jailer was about to take his own life when Paul assured him that all of them were safe within. (Roman jailers paid with their lives if their prisoners escaped!) The jailer called for a light and, falling before Paul and Silas, he asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Our purpose for this article is to see what God's preachers really told this man.



## **"THE KEEPER OF THE PRISON" (VERSE 27)**

Who was this jailer? He was a resident of Philippi, a pagan city of the Roman Empire, in a region where the gospel had not been preached. This man would have known but little, if anything, about Jesus Christ.

His question was, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Apparently, he had not even heard Paul's and Silas' songs and prayers in the prison, since, when the quake took place, the commotion aroused him from sleep. (Acts 16:27.) He might have felt that the pagan "gods" were angry at something and had shaken the earth. Now, there he was with a severely damaged prison, and with the prisoners likely to escape! His question could have been intended to inquire how he could be saved from the consequences of this calamity, but if so, Paul ignored that and answered him regarding the salvation of his soul!

### **THE ANSWER THEY GAVE**

Paul and Silas answered the jailor by saying, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household." (Acts 16:31.) Isn't it logical that they gave an unbelieving man this answer? Anyone who is an unbeliever in Jesus must believe before he can be saved because, "...without faith it is impossible to please Him..." (Hebrews 11:6.) Was that ALL that they told him? No! Look what happened next. The text says that they "... spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house." (Verse 32.) Why? Because faith comes from hearing the word of God. (Romans 10:17.) Before the man could believe, he had to be given evidence and information on which to base his belief. In other words, he had to hear God's Word!

### **WHAT IS INVOLVED?**

What is involved in speaking to someone the word of the Lord? How would you handle the matter if you were called upon to teach an unbeliever how to be saved? With some, it may be necessary to begin with the Creation and show that the universe had an exceedingly powerful and intelligent Being that brought it all into existence, and how that it could not have happened by mere chance. One would also need to use the Old Testament scriptures to show that Jesus' birth had been predicted centuries before it occurred. Philip began with Isaiah 53:7-8 when he



preached about Jesus to the treasurer from Ethiopia (Acts 8:26-40.) Finally, it would be necessary to use the New Testament to show that Jesus is the fulfillment of the many Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah. Details of Jesus' life and teaching would likewise have to be covered. (Paul and Silas did this orally, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, since the New Testament scriptures had not been completed when they were teaching the jailer.)

When God's preachers taught the jailer, they had to include what Jesus taught on the subject of how to be saved which was the very thing the man wanted to know! Years earlier, when Jesus had sent the apostles out to preach the gospel to the whole world, He told them, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned." (Mark 16:16.) God also requires repentance. (Acts 2:38.)

### **THE PRISON KEEPER'S RESPONSE**

What the jailer did is proof of what he was taught to do. He showed his repentance as he compassionately washed the stripes that had been inflicted upon the bodies of Paul and Silas with the beating they received before they were cast into the prison cell. This shows his change of attitude toward these men and what they were teaching. If he had not thus changed, he most certainly would never have humbled himself by washing their wounds that he, himself might have inflicted, or at least, had someone else to inflict.

His further response was that he and all of his family were baptized immediately. As to the reason for the urgency of his baptism, we must look at other passages on the subject. Forgiveness of sins is promised to those who repent and are baptized. (Acts 2:37-38.) In Paul's own earlier experience, he had been told by Ananias, whom God sent to him, "And now, why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22:16.)

Another passage that emphasizes the urgency of baptism is 1 Peter 3:21 in which baptism is placed as an antitype of the flood of Noah's day. Peter states that as Noah and his family were saved through water, "There is also an antitype which now saves us - baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the



resurrection of Jesus Christ."

It is important to understand that one's sins are not forgiven until the repentant believer has been immersed into Jesus Christ. The reason for this is that the one who is dead in sin (Romans 6:1-2) must be buried into the death of Christ (where His blood was shed), in order to reach that blood, which washes sins away. (Verses 3-4.) Christ's blood is the cleansing agent, but one reaches His blood in baptism.

### **CONCLUSION**

So, what was the jailer really told? Was he told "just to believe?" Fairness with the Lord's Word demands the conclusion that he was first told to believe in the Lord, but after that, he was taught the gospel that included the requirements of repentance and immersion into Jesus Christ (Romans 6:3-4) that he might obtain the forgiveness of sins. This is in harmony with what Peter, through the Holy Spirit, commanded the people to do on the day of Pentecost, the birthday of the church. (Acts 2:37-38.) It is also what God's Word, even today, commands to those who wish to be forgiven of the sins of their past. Have you done these things?

## ***A Doctrine That Continues To Mislead Millions***

**BASIL OVERTON**

On TV, radio, and the printed page there is a constant barrage of religious doctrines which are not taught in the Bible. Perhaps the one I hear most frequently is by preachers who say to unsaved people this, or something similar, "Repeat after me: 'Lord I am a sinner and I repent of my sins, Please come into my heart and save me.'" Then the preacher says, "If you prayed that prayer, you are now saved and a Christian."

There is nothing in the New Testament that even resembles the foregoing as the way to become a Christian. Those who are made to believe they became Christians this way are deceived. I say this with a lot of love for such people, and I hope and pray they will learn the truth about how to become Christians.



## **THE PUBLICAN'S PRAYER**

"And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." (Luke 18:13,14.)

Some use this scripture as an example of how to become a Christian. This is a gross misunderstanding, because the publican was a Jewish tax collector and a child of God under the law of Moses which had not been abolished at that time and it was not abolished until Jesus died on the cross. (Ephesians 2:12-16.)

That publican had sinned and asked God for forgiveness and the Lord forgave him. After the law of Moses was abolished and people became children of God under the new covenant, which is the gospel of Jesus Christ (Romans 1:16) they were taught to repent and ask God for forgiveness. (Acts 8:20-24.)

## **JOHN'S INSTRUCTIONS TO ERRING CHRISTIANS**

The inspired apostle of Jesus Christ named John wrote the following to those who were children of God (Christians) under the new covenant which is the gospel. "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." (1 John 1:7-10.)

These verses are not about how to become a Christian. Instead they tell Christians how they can have God their Father's forgiveness after they have sinned. God by his infinite grace forgives his erring children when they meet his conditions. Can any child of God think of a greater blessing than the blessing of their Father's forgiveness? I cannot! What a wonderful manifestation of God's grace!

## **HOW THOSE NOT CHRISTIANS CAN BE SAVED OR BECOME CHRISTIANS**

After Christ was raised from the dead and just before he ascended to heaven, he told his apostles, "Go into all the world



and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned." (Mark 16:15,16.)

This command explains why that soon after Jesus gave it, the Holy Spirit guided the apostle Peter to say on the day of Pentecost, to those who believed what he said about Jesus, "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 2:38.)

Why did not Peter tell them to repeat after him and say, "Lord, we are sinners and we repent. Please come into our hearts and save us"? The reason he did not say that is because he was speaking as the Holy Spirit gave him utterance. (Acts 2:4.)

In response to what Peter said in Acts 2:38, the Bible says, "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." (Verse 41.) They were added to the Lord's church. (Verse 47.)

Read through the Book of Acts and read about all the cases of people believing the gospel and being baptized. Read in eight of the New Testament Epistles about the necessity of being baptized to get into Christ and his church to be saved! **No one not a Christian was told to pray the sinner's prayer!**

### **FEELINGS CAN DECEIVE**

Some who think they have become Christians because they have prayed the sinner's prayer instead of repenting and being baptized, say they feel like they are saved.

One's feelings come as a result of what he believes. What he believes comes as a result of what he hears, or learns. **If he hears what is not so, but believes it is so, he will feel just as good as if it were so!** So, one must not depend on his feelings. To be saved we must depend on what God's word says. If we do that we certainly will feel good, but our feeling good will not be the proof we are right. The only proof we are right is what God's word says!

