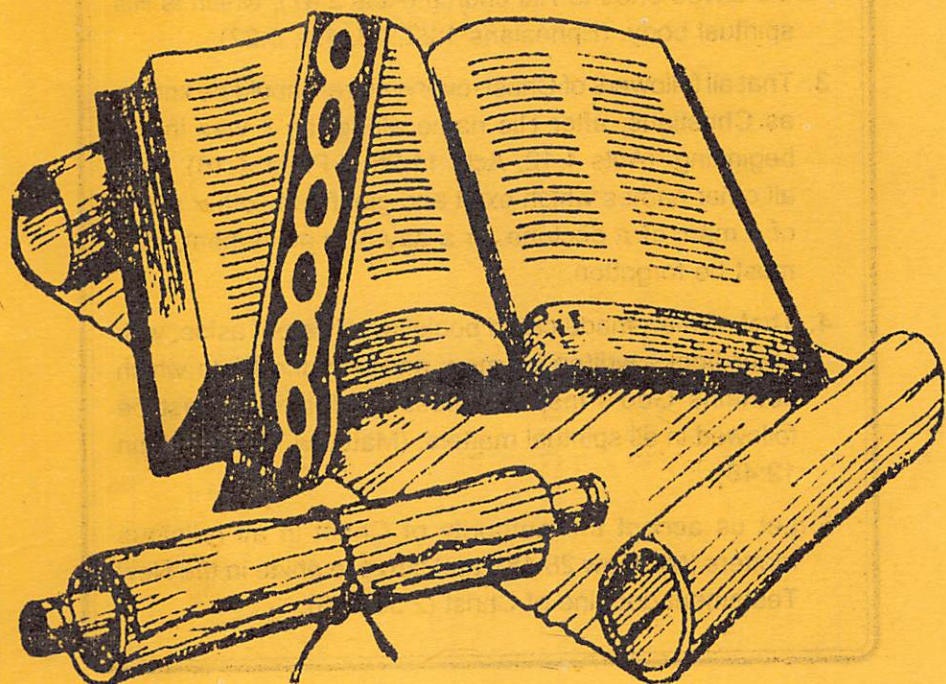


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THE BIBLE TEACHER



LET THE TRUTH PREVAIL

1. That there should be only one church today, as it was in the beginning—Church of Christ—Which Christ Himself built, and about which we all can read in the Bible (Matthew 16:18). That congregations of His one church everywhere may be known as churches of Christ, as we read at Romans 16:16. That there should be no denominations or sects in the name of the church. (1 Corinthians 1:10).
2. That there should be only one plan or guideline of salvation, as is revealed and taught in the Bible, followed everywhere. All must be told to believe in Christ, to repent of wrong, to confess Christ the Son of God, and to be baptized for the forgiveness of sins. (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:36-38). Those who obey these commands of salvation are saved by the Lord and He Himself adds the saved ones to His church (Acts 2:47); which is His spiritual body. (Ephesians 1:22, 23; 4:4; 5:22).
3. That all followers of Christ, everywhere, should be known as Christians, after His name alone, as it was in the beginning. (Acts 4:12; Acts 11:26; 1 Peter 4:16). That all other names which exalt and glorify any other name of a man, or a doctrine, or a day or a movement, etc., must be forgotten.
4. That all man-made creed books must be put aside, with other books written by men, and only the Bible which contains God's inspired message for man must be followed in all spiritual matters. (Matthew 7:21-23; John 12:48).
5. Let us accept the authority of Christ in all religious matters (Matthew 28:18), and strive to abide in the New Testament doctrine of Christ (2 John 9).

THE BIBLE TEACHER

Pleading for the Restoration of Pure New Testament Christianity

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EDITORIAL

What Does the Bible Teach?

"For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation"

This is the beauty of the New Testament Christianity that in Jesus Christ all people become one. From whatever background people come into Christ they all become one in Him. They all become a new creation in Him, and this is the only thing that matters. There is no discrimination in Christ. There are no different castes or sects or groups of people in Christ. There are no high or low castes. There is no clergy or laity. People of all nations, cultures, races and colours, in Christ, become one when they allow themselves to become a new creation in Jesus Christ. (Gal. 6:15). "Therefore," says 2 Corinthians 5:17, "if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."

By becoming a new creation in Christ one leaves behind everything wrong of the former life before embracing Christ. Christ then becomes first and foremost in the life of the new creation. One leaves behind every sin and evil. One leaves behind every bad habit, such as drinking liquor, gambling and smoking and any other such things. To His new creation the Bible says: "Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is Holy, which temple you are." (1 Cor.3:16,17). Also, before becoming a new creation in Christ one is required to leave behind all acts of ignorance and worldliness. This is very clearly pointed out in many passages of

the Bible and especially in Acts 2:38, where people, who wanted to know what they ought to do to become a new creation in Christ, were told to "Repent." To repent means to change. After repenting, they were told to be baptized for the forgiveness of sins. Which they gladly did, and the Lord forgave them all their sins and added them to the body of His saved people, to His one church. (Acts 2:41, 47).

Christianity is not designed for a particular people or nation, but it is for all the world, because it is not from man but is of God. The Bible contains the message of God for all people everywhere. Christ came into the world and died on the cross by the will of God for the sins of the whole world. To His disciples, after His resurrection from the dead, Christ said: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." (Mark 16:15). Christ said: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son," and, of course, He was speaking of Himself, and He said, "that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." (John 3:16). The apostle Paul wrote in Gal. 3:26-28: "For you are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

God is not the author of confusion but of peace. (1 Cor. 14:33). God has not divided man over religions. (Eccl. 14:12). He has not given man different ways to be saved from sin. (Mark 16:16). He has not authorised various different ways of worshipping Him. (John 4:24). There is only one God, Who speaks to all men everywhere the same thing through His inspired book, the Bible. (2 Timothy 3:16,17). Christ is God's way for man's salvation from sin. In Him God recreates every individual as His new creation, worthy to live with Him in heaven forever. This is Good News, indeed.

Why There Is But One Baptism Today?

J.C. CHOATE

I don't know if you are aware of it or not, but among those who claim to believe in Christ, there are those who teach that there are several baptisms. Some of these include baptism by

immersion in water, baptism by sprinkling some water on one's head, baptism by pouring water on one's head, baptism in the Spirit, and so on. There are different purposes for baptism according to those who teach on this subject. Most say that baptism is a sign of one's salvation. Others teach the baptism is for the remission of sins, to put one into Christ and his church, etc.

The Bible teaches, however, that there is but one baptism. Paul said, "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." (Ephesians 4: 4-6). Please note that the inspired man of God said that there was but one God, one Lord or Christ, one Spirit or Holy Spirit, one faith, one baptism, one body, and one hope. Among all of these, he declared that there was but one baptism. If one means one for God, Christ, and so on, then one baptism means one baptism.

But which baptism would this be? Besides the baptisms that man talks about today, even in the scripture we read of several different baptisms. For example, in Luke 7: 29 we read where the people were baptized with the baptism of John. Christ asked a group of people who were trying to tempt him, "The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men? answer me." (Mark 11: 30). Christ was baptized by John. (Matthew 3: 13-17). Although Christ was baptized to fulfill all righteousness, the people in general were baptized to prepare for the coming of the Lord's kingdom, the church. It was therefore referred to as the baptism of repentance. (Luke 3: 3). Paul found some people in Ephesus who had been baptized according to John's baptism but they had not heard of the Holy Ghost or Holy Spirit, and therefore, after he had taught them concerning the purpose of John's baptism, "saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." (Acts 19: 1-5). John's baptism then was not intended to go on indefinitely. It served a purpose and then ceased to exist.

In Matthew 3: 11, 12, John the Baptist or John the baptizer or immerser, in speaking of his baptism, went on to speak of two baptisms that Christ would administer. We read, "I indeed baptize you, with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is

mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." Here John illustrates how Christ would deal with the people as he pictured a reaper. The people of that day were familiar with the harvest of wheat. The wheat would be threshed and with the help of the wind or a fan the chaff and wheat would be separated. The wheat would be gathered up and saved for food but the chaff or that which was worthless would be burned up. In a similar fashion, John said that Christ would then baptize with the Holy Ghost, and with fire. Later, he promised the Apostles that he would send the Comforter or the Holy Ghost upon them. (John 15:26; John 16: 7, 13). In Acts 1: 8 he again promised to send the Holy Spirit upon them. Read also Luke 24: 49. In Acts 2 we read of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles, giving them the power to remember all that Christ had taught them, to speak in other languages, and to perform miracles. Through them, all would be blessed. But he said that Christ would also baptize with fire. What does this have reference to? If that which is saved, the wheat, represents the righteous then that which is burned up, the chaff, represents the wicked. Christ then would baptize the Apostles with the Holy Spirit, but he would baptize the wicked with fire. When we understand that baptism means an immersion, and therefore the Apostles were immersed or overwhelmed with the Holy Spirit, then we must understand that when it says that Christ will baptize with fire, then it means that the wicked will be immersed in fire. Where in the scriptures do we read of the wicked being so dealt with? In the first place, we are told that Christ one day will judge the world and that the wicked will be cast into hell (2 Peter 2: 4) or will go away unto everlasting destruction. (Matthew 25: 46). Again, hell is described as a lake of fire. (2 Peter 3: 7; Jude 7; Revelation 20: 10, 14; 21: 8). That means then that the wicked, the ungodly, those who are lost, will be immersed or baptized in the lake of fire, meaning eternal damnation. Surely no one in his right mind would want to be baptized with fire.

In 1 Corinthians 10: 1-4, Paul wrote, "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all

baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ." Although it wasn't necessarily thought of as being baptism in those days, but as Paul looked back on the children of Israel passing through the sea, with water on either side of them, and with a cloud overhead, then he described that as a baptism. In other words, they were buried or immersed in the cloud and in the sea.

When the mother of Zebedee's children requested Christ that he allow her sons to sit on either side of him in his kingdom, we read, "But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able. And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father." (Matthew 20: 22, 23). Again, Christ said, "But I have a baptism to be baptized with..." (Luke 12: 50). The baptism that Christ speaks of here has reference to his suffering upon the cross, that is, as he was immersed in suffering. Naturally he went through this only one time.

Finally, the scriptures speak of believer's baptism. This baptism was in water (Acts 8: 26-39), a burial (Colossians 2: 12; Romans 6: 3, 4), for the remission of sins (Acts 2: 38), to wash away sins (Acts 22: 16), to save (1 Peter 3: 21), to put one into Christ (Galatians 3: 26, 27), and to put one into the church. (1 Corinthians 12: 13). It was to be done in the name of Christ (Acts 2: 38), that is, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 28: 19, 20). Christ 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).

Going back to Ephesians 4: 4-6, remember that Paul said that there was but one baptism. At the time he made that statement, it was approximately 64 A.D. But of all the baptisms that we read of in the scripture, which baptism would be the one baptism? A good rule to observe would be that any time a baptism was not water baptism or believer's baptism, then it was always

stated. In other words, the scriptures talk about the baptism of the Holy Spirit and of fire, John's baptism, the baptism of suffering, and the baptism in the cloud and in the sea. Therefore, when we read of the one baptism in Ephesians 4: 4-6 then we must conclude that this refers to believer's baptism.

Of course we hear people today talking about Holy Spirit baptism being for people of our time, but that baptism was promised by Christ to the Apostles and he was the one who administered it. That baptism therefore was for a specific purpose and there is no one today being baptized with the Holy Spirit. There are others who teach water baptism, but they claim that the believer is saved, and then he is to be baptized to show that he has been saved. That means, according to the scripture, if they are right, that one is saved outside of Christ and outside his church, since the word of God says that one must be baptized to enter Christ and his church. (Galatians 3: 26, 27; 1 Corinthians 12: 13). We know then that such people are in error on this point. One cannot be saved until he has obeyed the Lord and a part of that involves water baptism.

As to sprinkling and pouring for baptism, that is as far from the teaching of God's word as one can go. Sprinkling and pouring of water on the head in no way can be said to be baptism. Baptism is a burial, an immersion. Sprinkling is sprinkling and pouring is pouring, but not baptism. Such practices were invented by men.

Now the question is this; Have you accepted the one baptism of the Bible? If you have not, then you need to do so. If you will read through the book of Acts of the New Testament of the Bible, you will discover that all who obeyed the Lord heard the gospel or the good news of Christ, believed in God and Christ, repented of their sins, confessed Christ as the Son of God, and were baptized or immersed in water for the remission of their sins. Then the Lord saved them and added them to his church. (Acts 2:38, 41, 47). If you will do what they did then the Lord will save you and add you to his church too.

If you have been baptized, or if you think you have been baptized, but it was sprinkling or pouring or it was not for the right purpose, then you have not been baptized scripturally. You then need to be baptized as already explained. But you might say that that would make two baptisms. No, there is only one baptism and if you were not baptized according to the Lord's teaching then you

have never been baptized. Only when you have been baptized according to the scriptures can you say that you have been baptized with the one baptism of the Bible.

The Book Of Life

RUSTY JOHNSON

In the Chapel of St. George, in Westminster Abbey, is a memorial of World War II. It consists of four bound volumes that contain the names of the 60,000 civilians who were killed in the city of London by enemy action. One volume lies open upon a pedestal and a light shines down upon the names that appear on the open page. Each day a page in the book is turned. When the last page of one volume is reached, it is replaced by the next volume. In this book you will find the names of men, women, and children, some rich, some famous, but the majority are ordinary people. Some of the people in the book had healthy, sound bodies, while others were sick and crippled. However, in this book no distinctions between people are made. They stand together for all to see.

Another book exists that contains a list of people's names with a very diverse background. It is a very important book, that we all should dedicate our lives to getting our names in. This is a book kept by God, that contains the names of those who have been saved. It is the Book of Life (Philippians 4:3; Revelation 20:12-15).

Judgment Day is very real and will one day be here. When it does get here, no names will be added to the Book of Life. Don't let it sneak up on you. Get your name added to the Book of Life today.

The Deceitfulness Of Sin

VANCE HUTTON

Sin is such a small word with big consequences. It is a short word with long penalties associated therewith. Sin was at the heart

of man being expelled from Eden, at the heart of the devastation of the flood, at the heart of the ruin of Sodom and Gomorrah, at the heart of the fall of men and kingdoms, and will cause folks to be lost eternally. It has been and is truly a reproach to all people (Prov. 14:34).

Sin is defined as transgression of God's law (I Jn. 3:4), that which is not right (I Jn.5:17), a failure to do the good one knows to do (James 4:17), and violation of the conscience (Rom. 14:23). We would say it is a failure in pleasing our God. To understand sin, one must see the deceitful nature of it. Hebrews 3:13 refers to the deceitfulness of sin. It misleads, misguides, beguiles, and tricks. Our introduction to Satan in Genesis 3 has him beguiling and deceiving (I Tim. 2:14; II Cor. 11:3). Sin appears to be right when it is so wrong. Satan makes sin so attractive but it is so very ugly. It doesn't appear to be harmful but it is so destructive, dominating, deadly and divisive, separating us from God, each other, and heaven. Notice some of sin's deceitful ways.

I. DECEIVED BY SIN'S PRESENCE

Some feel as if they have never sinned or that sin is not to be a very large concern in their lives. All we like sheep have strayed (Isa. 53:3-6). All have sinned (I Kings 8:46). Not one accountable person stands apart from sin (Ecc.7:20). All have fallen short (Rom.3:23). We are deceived when we think otherwise (I Jn.1:8-10). Paul in Romans 1-3 points that all, both Jew and Gentile, stand condemned because of sin. All have to deal with the sin problem.

II. DECEIVED BY SIN'S PLEASURE

Moses made a choice that many fail to make. He said no to sin and its enticement to pleasure (Heb. 11:24-25). II Thessalonians 2:10-12 speaks of the pleasures of unrighteousness. I Timothy 5:6 refers to being doomed for living for the pleasures of sin. The thorny ground in the parable of the sower shows the deceitfulness of sin's pleasures. Don't fall for this old trick.

III. DECEIVED BY SIN'S POTENTIAL

How many have fallen into sin because "everybody's doing it". Do not follow a multitude to do wrong (Ex.23:2). The majority was wrong in Noah's day (Gen. 6). Most are traveling the wrong

road (Matt. 7:13-14). Be not deceived with this facet of sin (I Cor. 15:33).

IV. DECEIVED BY SIN'S PROGRESSION

Some want to play with the fire of sin. Many see sin as a little thing. It could never get a grip on them! They see themselves as never being dominated by it. They fail to see the path of sin's dominion and destruction. We had best know the trail of temptation to lust to enticement to sin to death (James 1:13-15). Many never would give in all at once but sin has gotten them to the same bitter end just piece by piece.

V. DECEIVED BY SIN'S PROMISES

Sin has a way of making us think we can sow to the flesh and reap of the Spirit. That, just 100% of the time fails to work! (Gal. 6:7-8). Paul told the Corinthians to not be deceived into believing that one can live for Satan and be rewarded by the Lord (I Cor.6:9-11). Sin promises freedom and brings slavery. It promises happiness and brings sorrow. It even promises heaven but will surely bring hell.

VI. DECEIVED BY SIN'S POWER

Sin has a way of searing the conscience (I Tim.4:2). It has the power to bring one into slavery to sin (II Pet. 2:19). We can each win victory over sin but only through the Lord, the Word, prayer, and a dedicated life (Rev. 12:11).

Don't be deceived by sin. You will live in eternity to regret it!

"ALL's" Of The Great Commission

CLEM THURMAN

"And Jesus came to them and spake unto them saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them, to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world"

(Matt. 28:18-20). The apostles had been through two months of great difficulty. Jesus had told them He was going to be killed by the Jews at Jerusalem (Matt. 20:18). They didn't understand, and it was hard to accept it. But they saw it happened. He had also told them He would be raised the third day (Matt. 20:19), and they didn't understand that, either. But it happened, and they were witnesses. Now, Jesus has gathered them together for one last time, and explains that He is going to leave them and return to heaven (John 14:1-6). Can you imagine the impact this "Great Commission" must have had on those apostles?

When Jesus departed, He insured that the apostles would still be under His guidance. He promised them, *"But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you"* (John 14:26). Again He told them, *"But when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth"* (John 16:13). Because of such guidance, Jesus told them plainly, *"He that heareth you heareth me; and he that rejecteth you rejecteth me; and he that rejecteth me rejecteth him that sent me"* (Luke 10:16). When the Holy Spirit came on the apostles, they were speaking (and later, writing) the word of God (Acts 2:1-4; 1 Thes. 2:13).

ALL AUTHORITY IS GIVEN TO JESUS

The first "ALL" of the great commission is the authority given to the Son of God. Jesus said, *"All authority hath been given unto me."* Before Jesus came to this earth, God spoke to mankind in a variety of ways through a variety of people (Heb. 1:1). But a change is now made: God *"hath in these last days spoken unto us in his Son"* (Heb. 1:2). A remarkable incident, recorded in Matt. 17:1-5, illustrates this truth. Jesus took Peter, James and John with Him up a mountain. Those apostles saw Jesus *"transfigured . . . and his face did shine as the sun."* They also saw Moses and Elijah talking with Jesus. They must have been overwhelmed by this event, for Peter suggested they build three tabernacles: *"One for thee, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."* But God spoke to them about Jesus, *"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."* They had long "heard" Moses and the prophets, but now a change is made. God speaks through His Son, Jesus the Christ.

Jesus told the Jews, *"I am come down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me"* (John 6:38). Prior to this, Jesus had told them, *"For neither doth the Father judge any man, but he hath given all judgment unto the Son; that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father"* (John 5:22-23). Jesus demonstrated His power by healing the sick and casting out evil spirits (Mark 1:32-34). He restored sight to the blind (John 9:1-7), made the deaf to hear (Mark 7:32,37), healed lepers (Luke 17:11-14) and even raised the dead (Luke 7:11-17; 8:49-56; John 11:17-46). John declared, *"Many other signs did Jesus in the presence of the disciples which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God"* (John 20:30-31). That is the reason Jesus said, *"He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my sayings, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day"* (John 12:48). Yes, Jesus has ALL authority.

ALL PEOPLE ARE TO HEAR THE GOSPEL

Notice that Jesus told the apostles, *"Make disciples of all nations."* No longer were they to go only to the *"lost sheep of the house of Israel"* (Matt. 10:5-6). Now their commission was extended to *"all nations."* Another inspired writer records it this way, *"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 condemned"* (Mark 16:15-16). All nations, every creature—that was the mission. It still is. Jesus told the apostles the reason for His death, *"That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem"* (Luke 24:47).

The reason for all people to hear the gospel is simple. *"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"* (Rom. 3:23), and, *"The wages of sin is death"* (Rom. 6:23). The *"gospel"* the apostles were to preach was the *"good news"* of salvation, offered through the blood of the cross (Col. 1:18-21). The apostle Paul wrote later, *"I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth"* (Rom. 1:16). James wrote on the same subject, *"Receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls"* (James 1:21). That is why all people are to hear the gospel. All people are lost (1 John 1:8,10), Christ is the only Saviour (John 14:6), and His gospel makes known the way of salvation.

ALL ARE TO BELIEVE AND BE BAPTIZED

To *"disciple"* people involves baptizing them into Jesus Christ (Matt. 28:19). That is why the gospel was to be preached, that people could believe (Rom. 10:17), and, through faith, be baptized. As Jesus promised, *"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved"* (Mark 16:16). The apostles went forth and preached it just as Jesus told them to do. When people were *"pricked in their heart, and said . . . what shall we do? Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins"* (Acts 2:37-38). That was what Jesus had told them to preach (Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:15), and they did it. Philip preached in Samaria, and *"when they believed Philip preaching. . . they were baptized, both men and women"* (Acts 8:12). The Lord told Saul to wait in Damascus for His instructions (Acts 9:6), and then He sent Ananias to him: *"Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name"* (Acts 22:16). When people 1900 years ago preached the gospel, they baptized every believer! Why? The Lord told them to do so.

Many folk still fail to understand the significance with which the Lord purposed baptism. Yes, it is predicated on faith (Mark 16:16). Yes, it must be based on genuine repentance (Acts 2:38). But the purpose is clearly stated by the Lord: *"Shall be saved."* Peter wrote that baptism saves us (1 Pet. 3:21), and the apostle Paul shows why and how. *"Are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life"* (Rom. 6:3-4). Is the death of Christ necessary to your salvation? Then be baptized into His death. In fact, in baptism, we obey the *"form of teaching"* which is the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. And notice, too, that we are baptized *"into Christ."* We read the same thing later, *"For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ"* (Gal. 3:26-27). Is it important for you to be a child of God? Then be *"in Christ"* by being *"baptized into Christ."* There is no other way revealed in Scripture to enter into Jesus Christ.

ALL THINGS ARE TO BE OBSERVED

After people hear, believe and are baptized, Jesus told the apostles: *"Teach them to observe all things I have commanded you."* Jesus taught the apostles, and us, about worship: *"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth"* (John 4:24). From the time of Adam, God has purposed that man should worship Him: *"He made of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth . . . that they should seek God"* (Acts 17:26-27). This is part of every person's basic purpose: Seek God, worship God. At their last Passover together, Jesus took bread and blessed it and said to the apostles, *"This is my body, which is for you: this do in remembrance of me. In like manner also the cup, after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood: this do, as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of me"* (Matt. 26:26; 1 Cor. 11:23-25). The apostles taught the disciples they made to pray (James 5:16; Phil. 4:6), sing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16), teach (Acts 20:7; 1 Tim. 4:12-16), give (1 Cor. 16:1-2).

After the three thousand were baptized on Pentecost (Acts 2:41), *"They continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers"* (Acts 2:42). Their lives were to be different: *"As children of obedience, not fashioning yourselves according to your former lusts in the time of your ignorance: but like as he who called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living"* (1 Pet. 1:14-15). The apostle Paul wrote, *"The grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us, to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world"* (Titus 2:11-12). To *"observe all things"* Jesus had taught involves a complete change in the way we live. It means that, as *"new creatures in Christ,"* we *"crucify the old man"* and *"put on the new man that is being renewed unto knowledge after the image of him that created him"* (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 2:20; Col. 3:9-10).

JESUS IS WITH US ALWAYS

Yes, Jesus said it: *"Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."* When Paul was in trouble, desperately needing encouragement, Jesus told him, *"Be not afraid: but speak and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to harm thee: for I have much people in this city"* (Acts 18:9-10). After

being arrested and taken to Rome in chains, Paul wrote to Timothy: *"At my first defence no one took my part, but all forsook me . . . But the Lord stood by me, and strengthened me"* (2 Tim. 4:16-17). That assurance enabled Paul to have confidence in whatever mission the Lord gave him. He even wrote, *"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me"* (Phil. 4:13).

Jesus will be with us in times of trial and triumph, in joy and sadness, in pain and health, in good times and bad. He will always see us through. As the Bible says, nothing *"shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord"* (Rom. 8:39). Even when I come to the end of my way on earth, *"I won't have to cross Jordan alone!"* As Paul wrote, *"For to me to live is Christ, to die is gain."* (Phil. 1:21). What assurance: *"Lo, I am with you always."*

Reaching Forth

, ALLAN E. FLAXMAN

When Adolph Hitler's mighty armies drove all before them to the beaches of Dunkirk, England, the British Empire faced what they probably still regard as their "darkest hour". The land forces were stranded on the beaches, with the ocean in front of them and the German hoards bearing down on them from behind.

It is true that those British soldiers were rescued by a flotilla of little, privately-owned boats, but the nation was now threatened with a German invasion, and ill equipped to repel it. Winston Churchill was then Prime Minister of England, and had he come "on air" with a doleful, pessimistic message, all might have truly been lost. Fortunately for all of us, he did not do that. Rather, he said, with a firm and courageous voice, "We will fight them on the beaches, we will fight them in the streets, we will never surrender." His stirring, inspiring, motivating message gave encouragement and hope to a nation on its knees, and brought them forward to final victory.

In the days of the church's infancy, despite remarkable growth, there was much reason to expect despondency and even pessimism. Think of it. On numerous occasions the apostles were imprisoned (Acts 5:18), Stephen was stoned to death (Acts 7),

James was beheaded (Acts 12:2), the Jerusalem church was scattered abroad, leaving only the apostles there to begin all over again (Acts 8:1).

But pessimism and despondency did **not** prevail. Though Christians were scattered far and wide, they, with amazing courage, *"went everywhere preaching the gospel"* (Acts 8:4). Amongst all this persecution, Paul and Barnabas set off on their missionary journey (Acts 13). What a positive, optimistic, courageous attitude in the face of enormous opposition! Later, the apostle Paul wrote with great conviction, *"This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth to those things which are before, I press toward the mark..."* (Philippians 3:13,14).

What should our attitude be in this 21st century? There is much to discourage us. The Lord's church is showing serious signs of weakening. Far too often there appears to be an all-too-frail defense of the truth. How often, these days, do we hear the cry of "We speak where the Bible speaks and are silent where the Bible is silent," and/or "For us, the Bible alone is final and binding," and/or "No book but the Bible, no creed but Christ," and other such words of determination to stand firmly on the Will of God? Not nearly enough!

Let's take the courageous attitude of the infant church. We rub shoulders with the lost every day. May God give us the courage we need to mount a real effort to reach these lost with the gospel message which alone can snatch them from the flames of hell before it is forever too late.

Now Is The Hour

DALE GRISSOM

We are filled with joy and enthusiasm when we obey the Gospel of Christ, ready and determined to give our all to Him. As time passes, however, that zeal dwindles. We may find ourselves drifting along and becoming lukewarm. Jesus told the church at Laodicea in Revelation 3:15,16: *"I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot. I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew*

thee out of my mouth." We must never lose sight of our responsibility to give of our time and talents to the Lord.

It is so easy to get caught up in the activities of day-to-day living. We intend to give more time to the Lord, but days pass and we fail to put the Lord first. We allow the cares of this world to come before the Lord. The excuse is often made, "Just as soon as I can regain control of my life, I will give more time to serving the Lord." When will we learn that we must *give the Lord control* in order to know the inner peace for which we all long?

God paid the greatest price, made the supreme sacrifice, in order to save mankind—He gave the life of His precious Son. The home He has prepared for all His faithful children after judgment (Hebrews 9:27) is a prize we cannot earn, but will be given to those who are faithful in doing His will. The apostle Paul spoke concerning this in the second recorded letter to Timothy, his "*son in the faith*": "*I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at the last day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing*" (2 Timothy 4:7,8).

God requires us to be totally committed to Him: "*And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might*" (Deuteronomy 6:5). Nothing short of putting the Lord first in our lives will satisfy Him.

May we strive to use ourselves up in service to the Lord. There is hard work to be done if we are to convert the lost in our community and reach out to the rest of the world. Every soul is precious; each one we win to Christ will have the opportunity of living in eternity in heaven. Now is the hour!

Robbers Of Joy

JERRY L. DAVIDSON

In the book of Philippians Paul uses the word "joy", or some form of it, 19 times. In fact, "The Joyful Christian Mind" would be a good title for the book.

Paul would not be robbed of the joy he had in Christ. Neither should we be robbed of our joy in Him.

Paul would not allow **circumstances** to deprive him of his joy. He was in prison, but he rejoiced that the Gospel could be preached *"to the whole palace guard"* (1:13). Also, he would not allow insincere brethren to keep him from rejoicing in Christ. He said, *"whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice"* {verse 18}.

Paul would not allow **people problems** to rob him of his joy. He urged the brethren to *"fulfill (his) joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind."* As Christians, we must not allow *"selfish ambition or conceit"* to rob us of our joy, *"but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself"* (2:3).

Paul would not allow his **past and present position** to rob him of his joy. He wrote: *"We are the circumcision, who worship God in spirit, rejoice in Jesus Christ, and have no confidence in the flesh"* (3:3). He could have boasted of his past life and accomplishments, but he said, *"What things were gain to me, these have I counted loss for Christ"* (3:7).

Paul would not allow **worry** to rob him of his joy. He admonishes us by saying, *"Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I say rejoice! Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God"* (4:4-6). We must not allow worry or anxiety to rob us of our valuable time, energy, and joy.

If anyone has reason to rejoice; it is the Christian, who is saved by the blood of Christ and lives in hope of heaven.

Agents In Scriptural Conversion

W.D. HAM'S

Conversion is "a change from one state to another, a spiritual or moral change which accompanies the turning of a sinner from his sins to God" (Webster). This is a very controversial subject. One theory says that conversion is wholly an act of God (Calvinism); another says it is entirely the work of man. As is generally the case, the truth lies in between these two extremes.

As our topic suggests, there are five agents involved in every

scriptural conversion, which we will discuss later. First, though, we will note some other scriptural facts about conversion.

NECESSITY OF CONVERSION

Jesus replied to a question asked by His disciples, "*Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven*" (Matthew 18:3). How could the necessity of conversion be made clearer? No one should deceive himself into thinking that God will take him home to glory without his being converted. Other passages verify the same truth (see Acts 3:19; James 5:19,20). Man's departure from God by his own transgression (Isaiah 59:1,2) makes repentance and the return to God necessary. If man had not gone away from his Creator, there would be no need of talking about his being brought back to God.

OBJECT OF CONVERSION: SPIRITUAL TRUTH

Numerous passages affirm that that to which we must be converted is the **truth** of God's Word. Jesus said, "*Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free*" (John 8:32). For further proof of this see John 14:6; James 1:18; 1 Corinthians 4:15; and John 17:17. (Note: Hopefully the reader will check all these passages to determine if we have made the right application.)

The truth of God's Word is the instrument used by the Holy Spirit in conversion (Ephesians 6:17). Everything that is said to be done by the Holy Spirit in the conviction and conversion of alien sinners and the sanctification of Christians is also said to be done by the Word. What is the harmony? Answer: Ephesians 6:17. God's revealed Word is the instrument or tool that the Holy Spirit uses in conversion, and He does not operate independently of it.

AGENTS IN SCRIPTURAL CONVERSION

The Holy Spirit, who revealed the truth to inspired men (John 14:26; 16:13; 1 Corinthians 2:9-13), has given us the Scriptures, which the sinner can read and understand (Ephesians 3:1-7). The Spirit does not bypass His Word to bring about conversion in some mysterious way.

The Apostles of Christ confirmed the Word by miraculous signs done through the power of the Holy Spirit (Hebrews 2:1-4; Mark 16:17-20; 2 Corinthians 12:12). This Word was fully proved to be of God by those miraculous signs in the first century and it needs no further confirmation. Thus, there is no further need for miracles.

The preacher proclaims the truth (Word) revealed by the Holy Spirit and confirmed by the apostles (Romans 10:14-17). Human agency in the proclamation of saving truth cannot be bypassed in scriptural conversion. In every example of conversion recorded in the book of Acts (the book of conversions), human agency was involved in proclaiming the saving Word. There is not an exception. Can one read the Bible and learn the truth? Of course, but the apostles and other inspired men would still be involved, through the power of their written message in the Bible.

The church (another agent) supports the preaching of the truth (1 Timothy 3:14,15; 2 Corinthians 4:7; Acts 11:22). A plurality of congregations can do this by working together, without destroying the autonomy of any congregation. If one congregation can send a preacher to assist another congregation in evangelism (Acts 11:22), what is the difference in principle than that of sending money?

Alien sinners obey the truth revealed by the Holy Spirit, confirmed by the apostles, **proclaimed** by human agency, and **supported** by the church (1 Peter 4:17; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9; Romans 6:16,17). This involves more than mental assent and saying, "Lord Jesus, come into my heart."

Unless all of these agents are involved in conversion, there has been no scriptural conversion. God has provided this checklist by which we can verify the genuineness of our conversion.

A THREEFOLD CHANGE INVOLVED

Confusion is caused by a failure to analyze the process by which we are saved. Conversion involves a three-fold change—the heart, the life, and the state.

Faith changes the heart from loving sin to loving God (Acts 15:7-9); **repentance changes the life** (2 Corinthians 7:10). Many mistake repentance for conversion, but repentance is only an attitude that leads one to *complete* the ultimate re-making of his life. The final step—**baptism**, upon the proper prerequisites—**changes the state or relationship** (Matthew 28:19 ASV; Acts 2:38). All of this is accomplished by the five agents discussed in the earlier portion of this article. There is nothing that is miraculous or mysterious about scriptural conversion.

There Is One Faith

CHARLES E. COBB

"There is ... one faith" (Ephesians 4:5).

The world is terribly confused in its religious views and ideas. One does not have to be very wise to know that this is true. Some appear to like it this way and will contend that it is a good thing, because it gives one the right of multiple choice. He then can choose, they argue, whatever may satisfy his conscience or please him most.

The question, however, is not that of pleasing *man*—it is rather a matter of pleasing *God*. We must keep in mind that *God has made His choice*. We are to be interested in God's choice. The Scripture now before us teaches *"one faith"*. It is singular. It does not allow a multiple choice that is acceptable to God. The *"one faith"* is the same thing as *"the faith"*. *"The faith"*, as it is used in the New Testament, encompasses the entire Christian system. In writing of this to the church, Jude says, *"Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once (or once for all) delivered unto the saints"* (Jude 3).

Please examine with care the statement, *"contend for the faith"*. It is not suggested that one should contend for *many faiths*. To do so would be confusing, contradictory, and absurd. Yet, this is the very thing that is done by multitudes today when they insist that *"one is just as good as another"*. Timothy is urged to *"Fight the good fight of faith"* (1 Timothy 6:12), not the good fight of *many faiths*. Paul wrote that he had *"kept the faith"* (2 Timothy 4:7). With dedication, devotion, and zeal, the apostle to the Gentiles renounced the old law and embraced the New Covenant, and thus was completely loyal to *"the faith"* for which he eventually gave his life (2 Timothy 4:7,8).

It is surely beyond debate that God intends that there should be only one faith—one great system, plan, program of redemption and salvation. It is not of man's creation or of man's design. It did not come from the councils of men or the minds of men. The faith, the one faith, had its origin in the mind of God, and it is designed by Him for man's good and God's glory.

The Bible is its own best interpreter. We take note that Paul had said, "*There is one Spirit.*" This is true and arouses little, if any argument from any quarter. From the same text, "*There is one faith.*" This is also true! There is just one! Proper interpretation demands that we understand there is "*one faith*" just as we understand there is "*one Spirit*".

Our Savior said, as He met with His disturbed and uncertain disciples shortly before His death, "*Ye believe in God, believe also in Me...I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me*" (John 14:1,6).

If indeed Christ is the way, the truth, and the life, how could there possibly be more than one faith acceptable in the eyes of the Lord? Why *should* there be more than one faith? The world has often been shocked and moved to disbelief because of the divisiveness of many faiths. Families have been divided, communities have been "at war", and even nations have been rocked to their very roots by such division. All of the world has been injured spiritually by man's disregard of the plain teaching of God's Word.

As there is one body, one hope, one Spirit, one Lord, one baptism, and one God, so there is one faith.

Insect Life: Evidence Of A Creator

HUGO MCCORD

A tiny, frail, land-bound maggot, able only to wiggle, somehow transforms itself into a skillful flying machine, complete with antennae, gyroscopes, and wings. The pilot in that remarkable airship, flying faster than the eye can follow, executes a half-roll and lands upside down on the ceiling on six legs. From there, without the use of a runway, he can take off instantly. Helpless scientists can no more explain the change from larva to pupa to adult than they can explain the fly's aeronautical ability. When they speak of inborn "blueprints" or of "instructions from the DNA", or "the DNA code script" they are saying they have gone as far as they can, and have no answer without using the name "God".

Another example among thousands is the cicada, often called "the seventeen-year locust". Cicadas have various cycles, with the longest being seventeen years. Almost exactly on May 24 each seventeenth year these insects climb out of a seventeen-year period spent some 18 inches, below the frost line, underground. When they emerge they are still encased in a protective subterranean suit resembling plastic. After shedding the transparent suit, wings, never before used, but now ready for a new life, are dried in the breeze.

After mating, the female, equipped with a sharp blade, cuts under the bark of a twig, deposits her eggs, and then cuts the twig three-fourths through. As a result, the twig dies, falls to the ground, and carries the eggs to the soil. Then the eggs hatch, and the larvae dig into the ground.

The adults live only about three weeks, and never see their offspring. What makes them operate so? Their defense from being eaten by birds is an unbearable noise, equivalent to that of "a pneumatic hammer or a subway train screeching to a halt in an underground station." The intense noise damages eardrums, driving away birds and all other animal life. But some source gave the cicada a tiny muscle which automatically collapses his eardrum just before he "sounds off." Scientists know how the muscle operates, but they do not know how it could have "evolved" in one springtime to allow one generation of cicadas to mate and to preserve the species, nor can they explain the inborn seventeen-year almanac which the cicada carries with him underground.

Evolution: Where Is the Hope?

STEVEN MARIAS

While reading a magazine, I came across a "true or false" quiz. Question number 4 was this statement: "Human beings developed from earlier species."

The answer to that question being on page 20, I quickly flipped through the magazine, curious of finding a proven answer this time, but the answer read as follows: "True. It is broadly

assumed by scientists that the human line of evolution split from apes around five million years ago and the modern human emerged around 100,000 years ago."

Alas. Here I am, ending up with an assumption which is not only too abstract for a common mind to conceive, but it is also one which is lacking finality, offering no hope after the material existence. You could see in it much of the tenets of Epicurianism, a philosophy which had its roots back between the fourth and the third centuries B.C. The cosmology of Epicureanism is similar to that of modern materialistic evolution. The latter's "Big Bang" theory brings to mind the teaching of the former that the world began in a shower of atoms, some of which by pure chance, moved a trifle obliquely and collided with others, whereby these collisions produced other collisions, until finally the ensuing movement brought into being the present universe. It is evident that in such a world of chance there could be neither purpose nor design. There could not be, therefore, any final or absolute good. The highest possible good, they taught, was pleasure.

And just as Epicureanism was quite popular then, so is evolution today. It appeals to emotional considerations, for it supplies a philosophic justification for doing what most people do anyway—make pleasure the chief goal of life. It brushes aside all thought of sin or accountability at a final judgment, because it predicts neither purpose nor terminus for the present world process. Evolution is essentially anti-religious. If the world originated with matter and chance, no creative power was necessary. If chance dominates the outcome of cosmic affairs, there is no room for directive, purposeful mind.

It is evident that evolutionism has drifted to a point of no return, in that it has created for itself a powerful economic enterprise for its adherents. But, strictly speaking, where is their ultimate hope in eternity? They have none.

On the other hand, the hope of the Christian is unique! *"The Word became flesh and dwelt among us..."* (John 1:14); *"...nor is there salvation in any other..."* (Acts 4:12). *"These things have been written to us that we may know we have eternal life..."* (1 John 5:13), and *"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me, though he may die, he shall live"* (John 11:25).

The amazing thing is that the door to salvation is open to everyone at all times: to believe, to repent, to confess Christ, and

to be baptized—and it is so, even to evolutionists!

So we need to soak our minds with the fact that evolution is a philosophy, only a theory, and, in any case, philosophy never depended upon a revelation from God. It has always assumed the potential adequacy of man to understand his own world and to decide his own fate.

But what about Christianity? *"Knowing this first, that no prophesy of scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophesy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit"* (2 Peter 1:20,21).

"Truly, this only I have found: that God made man upright, but they have sought many schemes" (Ecclesiastes 7:29; see also Genesis 1:27; 3:6,7).



Form IV
(See Rule 3)

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