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EDITORIAL

What Does the Bible Teach?

God Has Spoken

Not only did God create man, but He has also never left man without His will. It is true that consciously man is aware of the fact that there is a God, and he wants to worship Him to honour and to please Him. Man is a worshipful being by nature. Because God has created him in such a way. Yet, there are thousands of ways on earth that man himself has invented to worship the same God. The Bible, on the other hand, teaches that God is not the author of confusion but of peace. (1 Corinthians 14:33). The fact of the matter is, that there is only one God and so is His will for every man everywhere.

According to Hebrews 1:1,2 : "God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son. ..." This means then that God has always communicated with man in every age. But not all people in every age have listened to God, some have, although. In the beginning God spoke to man personally, then He began to speak through prophets, and then God sent His Son, Jesus Christ to teach man God's will. Christ chose His disciples, who are also called the apostles, to whom He had promised that He would send to them the Holy Spirit, another Person in the Godhead, after His death, burial, resurrection and ascension back into heaven, who will teach them all things remaining and will bring to their remembrance that He has been teaching them while He was with them, and that He will guide them into all truth (John

14:25, 26; 16:13-15). Later, the apostle Paul wrote in the Bible and said: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16, 17). Also, the apostle Peter wrote: "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy 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). Whatsoever God want man to know today is written in the Bible. God has not held back any information from man that man ought to know. God is not speaking to any man or through any man whosoever that person may be, anything new that is not written already in the Bible, His book. One should not believe a person who says, "God has spoken to me in a dream, or "I had a vision from God." God does not speak today separate and apart from the Bible.

Sad to say though, there are people who are so gullible who would believe any man who claim to speak a message from God or in the name of the Bible, without ascertaining what does the Bible teach, and therefore we have so much confusion in the world today, religiously speaking. This is not a new problem, though, as even in the days of the apostles of Christ such false teachers and preachers existed. But the apostle Paul had this to say to them: "I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different Gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed." (Galatians 1:6-9). Therefore, it is a matter of utmost importance, what does the Bible teach. What God has spoken matters.

What Is The Church?

J.C. CHOATE

We know that there are many "churches" in the world. All

claim to be of God, naturally. And yet there are some strange ideas concerning what the church actually is. Many define it as a building where the people come together for worship. Others think of it as being a denomination. Still others would say the church is made up of all the denominations as a spiritual body of people, ignoring the many differences in names and doctrines.

If we want to understand what the church really is, we need to go back to the New Testament for our answer. The word "church" comes from the Greek word "ekklesia", which means "the called out". The idea is that the Lord calls people out of the world, into one group or body, and that they become His people. They are called by the Gospel, to believe that Jesus died for them, that He was buried, and that on the third day He was resurrected from the grave (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). Christ had said that the Gospel should be taken into all the world, and that those who believed it and would be baptized would be saved from their sins (Mark 16:15,16). The Lord Himself adds those who are being saved to the church (Acts 2:47).

Before His death, Christ promised to build His church (Matthew 16:18). It was first established in the city of Jerusalem when the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the apostles and they preached the good news of Christ to the great crowd that had gathered. This was on the first Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection, approximately 33 A.D.

The apostles, having received the promised power of the Holy Spirit, were guided to tell the people about Christ, how He had lived among men doing good, but that they had taken Him and with wicked hands they had crucified the very Son of God! God, though, had not left Him in the grave but raised Him up, and Jesus had returned to heaven to reign at the right hand of the Father. At the end of this sermon, many were convinced and cried out, asking what they should do. They were told that they should repent of their sins and be baptized for the forgiveness of their sins. They would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38,40), and the Lord would add to the church those who were being saved.

This is the first mention in the Scriptures of the church as being in existence, and of people being added to the church. As we continue to read through the book of Acts, we see that the Gospel was preached again and again in that area, in the

neighbouring countries, and that it spread from there to reach the world.

Christ established only one church (Ephesians 4:4) and that church, being made up of the saved, exists even now throughout the world. It also exists locally in the form of congregations (Romans 16:16), but all of them together make up the one church, the church of Christ.

- Christ is the authority, or head, over His church. *"And He is the head of the body, the church ... that in all things He may have the preeminence"* (Colossians 1:18).
- Christ is the Savior of His church, because the redemption price He paid for it was His life's blood. *"For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body"* (Ephesians 5:23).
- Christ is the foundation on which His church is built. *"... no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ"* (1 Corinthians 2:11).
- Christ's name is worn by His church, because it is called His bride. *"The churches of Christ greet you"* (Romans 16:16; Ephesians 5:25-32). Its members, individually are called by His name, "Christian", Christ-like. *"... the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch"* (Acts 11:26; 1 Peter 4:16).
- Christ has promised that He will come back one day to receive His church and to deliver it up to the Father: *"... That He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish"* (Ephesians 5:27). *"Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father..."* (1 Corinthians 15:24).

While in this world, Christ prayed for the unity of His people, His church, as they would exist in the world through the coming ages. He prayed that they would worship together in spirit and truth, remembering Him in the communion supper each first day of the week (John 4:24; Acts 20:7).

To help humans understand more fully what the church is, in the Scriptures the Holy Spirit likened it to several things.

- It is called the "body" of Christ; that is, the **spiritual body** of Christ. Thinking of our human bodies and heads, we can see the parallel and can understand how we are to

work together with Christ, as He (the Head) directs His body (Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 4:4).

- The church is pictured as the "house" of God (1 Timothy 3:15), that is, the **spiritual household** or **family** that belongs to God.
- The church is compared to the **sheepfold** for sheep, the place of safety, with Jesus being the Good Shepherd who died to save His sheep (John 10:1-18).
- Another likeness is given, with Jesus being called the vine and Christians identified as branches that are to bear fruit to God (John 15:1-11).

The church is not a denomination or a group of denominations. Neither is it the Catholic Church or any other man-made institution. It is not a church building. Rather, it is the family of God that has been called out of the world. It is the saved, the spiritual body of Christ on earth, the church for which He died.

Are you a member of the church of Christ, the one true church of the Bible, the one and only church bought by Jesus' blood, the one that He will return for one day? If not, we pray that you will obey God and become a part of this glorious church.

Message To The Church At Thyatira Rev. 2:18-29

THOMAS R. DOHLING

The message to the church at Thyatira is found in Revelation 2:18-29. To them, Jesus presents himself as "the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass" (2:18), signifying His omniscience and consuming fire of the wicked and also His stability and permanence.

At the outset Jesus says: "I know." He always knows what each church and individual Christians are thinking, saying, feeling, and doing. He lets the Christians at Thyatira know (2:19) that He is aware of—

- Their Works, "the last are more than the first";
- Their Love;
- Service;

- Faith;
- Patience.

Jesus knows all about the church at Thyatira. He notes their good points here. However, things are seriously wrong in this church. Jesus has severe things to say against them: *"Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent. Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works"* (2:20-23).

This implies that the church has a self-proclaimed prophetess who is sexually immoral (2:21). She is seriously undermining the doctrine of Christ through false doctrine and thereby causing the members ("My servants") to sin through fornication ("sexual immorality") and eating things sacrificed to idols (2:20). She was given time to repent of her sin but she did not. [Her deeds may be symbolic of spiritual immorality.] The Lord then pronounces judgment on her "I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. I will kill her children with death" so that all the churches shall know that He is the One who searches the minds and hearts. [Hence He is figured as "who has eyes like a flame of fire" (2:18).] He *"will give each one of you according to your works"* (2:22-23).

Jesus calls upon the church to repent with the grim warning that if it didn't do His bidding, He would come quickly and "fight against them with the sword of My mouth" (2:16) [cf. Heb 4:12 "For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."]

Jesus concludes His message to the church at Thyatira with a promise to those who are faithful: *"Now to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I will put on you no*

other burden. But hold fast what you have till I come. And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations 'He shall rule them with a rod of iron: they shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels' as I also have received from My Father; and I will give him the morning star" (2:24-28). "Morning Star" is a reference to Jesus himself (cf. 2 Peter 1:19, Rev. 22:16). Our Lord promises to give them fellowship with Himself; they shall share His dominion.

Lesson: The Lord *"searches the minds and hearts ... and will give to each one of you according to your works"* (2:23). The church should not tolerate false and unauthorized leaders who lead the Lord's servants to sin. We should hold fast the doctrine of Christ, overcome falsehood and sin, and keep Jesus' works until the end and then we will have fellowship with our Lord and shall share His dominion forever.

"You Had Better Listen!"

CLEM THURMAN

When I was a child, there was never a doubt about who was in charge in our family. How many times I heard Papa say, "You had better listen!" Not only did he lay down the rules for all of us children to follow, but he demanded that those rules be followed. And if Mama told us to do something, and we failed to do it, Papa would remind us, "You had better listen to your mother!" And all of us learned that it was much better to "listen" than to suffer the consequences!

No one has truly faced the realities of life who has not pondered the reason for his existence in this world. Surely God had a far more noble purpose in our creation than for us merely to occupy a little space for a short period of time, then drop into oblivion. It isn't reasonable that His desire was to school and protect man for *"three score years and ten,"* then just to allow him to cease to exist again.

We need to recognize that we didn't create ourselves, we were not designed and planned of our own volition. But, since we were not the designers and givers of our own lives, we must look to the Giver of life for its meaning. As the Bible declares, *"Know*

ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture" (Psa. 100:3). God put you here. It is impossible for us to escape Him, or thrust Him out of the picture. Therefore, it is imperative that we submit to His will. When God speaks of our purpose and our destiny, we must listen to Him.

God Spoke in the Beginning

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen. 1:1). God spoke when the heavens and earth sprang into existence, materializing from nothing: *"By the word of Jehovah were the heavens made, And all the host of them by the breath of his mouth . . . For he spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast"* (Psa. 33:6-9). It was God who spoke when light appeared to roll back the darkness. It was God who spoke when the sun, moon and stars dotted the heavens above us. It was God who spoke when the plants sprang from the earth, when the waters were filled with fish and the air with birds, and creeping things began to fill the earth.

It was God who spoke of man: *"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness . . . And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them"* (Gen. 1:26-27). Because we are made in the image of God, because He gave us life, we have certain responsibilities to Him. In other words, when He speaks, "We had better listen!"

God speaks with authority. All creation must listen to His voice, for the voice of God is right. And without God, nothing is right in this world. We must recognize the creative power of God's word: *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him"* (John 1:1-3). But we must also recognize the sustaining power of the voice of God: God is still *"upholding all things by the word of his power"* (Heb. 1:3). It is by the power of the word of God that the sun rises and sets, that all of "nature" exists. When He speaks, we had better listen.

God Speaks of Sin and Its Result

After creating Adam and Eve and placing them in the Garden of Eden, God warned them not to eat of the *"tree of knowledge of good and evil"* and told them, *"In the day that thou eatest thereof*

thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:17). Ever since that time, the penalty has been the same: *"The soul that sinneth, it shall die"* (Ezek. 18:20), and, *"The wages of sin is death"* (Rom. 6:23). Man has often made light of sin, and its consequences. But when God speaks, we had better listen.

As the Scriptures says, *"Every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward"* (Heb. 2:2). Penalties were imposed upon man for sin from the time of Adam till now. The progression of sin in our lives is clearly shown: *"Each man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed. Then the lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin: and the sin, when it is full grown, bringeth forth death"* (James 1:14-15).

God Speaks of the Savior

But God doesn't just speak of sin and its penalty. He also speaks of salvation from sin, and the savior who would bring it to man. Through the prophets of old, God spoke about the plan of salvation, promising the Messiah who would *"save his people from their sins"* (Matt. 1:21). And as sin multiplied in the lives of men and women, God's plan was at work: *"When the fulness of the time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that he might redeem, them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons"* (Gal. 4:4-5).

The voice of God had decreed that Christ should come into the world, bringing salvation to all men (Titus 2:12). But the voice of God also spoke specifically as to what man must do to lay hold on this salvation. And here, again, the voice of God is irrevocable. We must listen to the voice of God. Man cannot array himself against this voice and obtain the promises through means of his own devising. In setting forth the terms of salvation, *"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved"* (Mark 16:16), Jesus was simply speaking the words of God.

As Jesus told the apostles, *"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 we listen of Christ, we listen to God. We read in Heb. 1:2 that *"in these last days"* God speaks to us *"through His Son."* And this is echoed by the Lord Jesus when He said, *"All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth"* (Matt. 28:18). And, as Jesus said in Luke

10:16, when we listen to the voice of the apostles, we hear Jesus. Don't defy the voice of God. "We had better listen!"

God Speaks of the Church

In the long ago, God had His prophets speak of the church, or kingdom, that was to come. *"It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established on the top of the mountains . . . and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem"* (Isa. 2:2-3). This "house of God" is later described as, *"the church of the living God"* (1 Tim. 3:15). It is *"a kingdom which cannot be shaken"* (Heb. 12:28), as was repeatedly voiced by God through the prophets of old (Psa. 89:3-4; Jer. 23:5-6; Matt. 16:18-19).

That church/kingdom is described as a rule of peace, headed by *"the Prince of Peace"* (Isa. 9:6). Thus, it is not a military kingdom, but a spiritual one. As Jesus told Pilate, *"My kingdom is not of this world"* (John 18:36). That church is also the *"body of Christ"* (Col. 1:18), *"kingdom of God"* (Col. 1:13-14), *"the house of God"* (1 Tim. 3:15), the family of God (Eph. 3:15) and the bride of Christ (Eph. 5:22-33). And, as the apostle explained, it was designed *"according to the eternal purpose of God"* (Eph. 3:11).

God Speaks About the Return of Christ

God's voice is also heard concerning the return of His Son, therefore the matter is firmly fixed. Jesus is coming again, in God's appointed time and to fulfill His eternal purposes. As the whole scheme of redemption was blue-printed in heaven before the sun, moon and stars appeared, so Jesus will come from heaven to accomplish those things which the voice of God has decreed. Jesus told the apostles, *"In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also"* (John 14:2-3). Yes, the voice of God says that Jesus is coming again.

Jesus said, *"But when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all the nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats"* (Matt. 25:31-32). The return of the Lord

is foretold by many writers of Scripture (1 Cor. 15:23; 2 Thes. 2:1,7-8; James 5:7-8; 1 Pet. 1:16; etc.). When He comes back, it will not be to save, but to judge, the world: *"Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment"* (John 5:28-29; see also Heb. 9:27-28).

When Jesus returns, we will all face Him in judgment, which will determine where we will live in eternity: *"For we must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad"* (2 Cor. 5:10). Those who have listened to the voice of God, and heeded what He says, will hear Him say, *"Well done, good and faithful servant"* (Matt. 25:21) and the joys of heaven will be opened to him. But for those who refuse to listen to the voice of God, they will hear Him say, *"Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire, prepared for the devil and his angels"* (Matt. 25:41).

Friend, it was God's purpose in your creation that you hear His voice and glorify God in your complete obedience to His will. Your happiness now, and forever, depends upon submitting to the terms of the word of God. Today is the acceptable time (2 Cor. 6:2). Through the Bible, God is still speaking to mankind. Yield yourself to Him, and the judgment will hold no terror.

But always remember, when God speaks, "You had better listen."

Evil People

JOHNNY RAMSEY

Because of unwise and even foolish decisions, we often "shoot ourselves in the foot" and later have to pay sad dividends in the journey of life. The choices we make along the way come back to haunt us. Conversely, those moments wherein we used thoughtful wisdom become blessings in the twilight of our days. So many people regret putting so much emphasis upon carnal matters and giving so little to the spiritual and eternal concepts that endure and enrich. *"Blessed is the man that walketh not in*

the counsel of the wicked, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: but his delight is in the law of Jehovah; and on his law doth he meditate day and night" (Psa. 1:1-2).

One of the most touching gospel songs, used by my brother at the deaths of his wife and daughter, expresses our hope for the future:

*Be Thou near to keep me,
Take me as Thine own,
For I cannot live without Thee,
Lead me gently home.*

We are challenged by the message of Ex. 23:2, "*Do not follow a multitude to do evil.*"

Myriads of decisions have been made by people incapable of choosing holiness and piety. It seems easier for worldly folk to walk the pathway of compromise than the road of conviction and purity. As one put it, "Life is like a cafeteria: One goes through choosing as he goes, but what he chooses must be paid for at the end of the line." So, choose wisely, carefully, prayerfully - no refunds!

Jeroboam, "*who made Israel to sin*" (1 Kings 12), ardently worked for that old serpent, the devil, as he divided the people of God. King David, by selfishness and in the pursuit of his sensual pleasures, caused the enemies of God to blaspheme (2 Sam. 12). Elymas, the sorcerer (Acts 13:8), contributed to the plans of hell by withstanding the oracles of God. He has lots of kinfolk around today! We are on earth to glorify God by our submission to His divine mandates, and never to encourage evil.

Jonah was an active friend of the devil, though he was supposed to be serving the Almighty. It is a tragic truth that many today have defected into the tempter's camp. Abraham's seed, the sons of Jacob, in selfish arrogance, sold their own brother Joseph as though he were cattle or a toy. Thankfully, however, Jehovah caused their evil to turn out for the good of both Joseph and his brothers (Gen. 50:20).

Jezebel is the epitome of evil. Very few little girls have been given that name. That wicked ruler served the devil in various ways and, as a result, always hated the prophets of God. When folk do not love the truth, they plot against those who teach it

plainly. Jehoiakim could not tolerate the prophets rebuke and exhortation, and tried to mutilate the Scriptures (Jer. 36). He has many relatives today. But out of the burning embers of his diabolical scheming, arose the wrath of the Lord against puny man. Earthly rulers rise and fall, empires come and go, but truth never dies!

It is a truly brutal affront to God when we disdain His holiness and exchange it for the trinkets of shallowness and personal covetousness. The desire to have our own way is what idolatry is all about. Jehovah just will not brook any rivals, as He told Israel: *"And God spake all these words, saying, I am Jehovah thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me"* (Ex. 20:1-3). When the pagan world dazzles with the bright lights of hedonism, we walk in forbidden paths that can never bless us. Following the heathen may satisfy lustful passions, but it will never grant us peace or heaven.

The Preacher Is...

W. TOM HALL

The work of a preacher is the most diverse and challenging work in the world. In just the span of a few hours a preacher can have his emotions swing from sorrow to joy. Many preachers have had a funeral and a wedding in the same day.

There is not a Sunday morning that goes by that the preacher is not faced with a varied audience. How does one connect with every facet of the spirituality in the room? The preacher must just preach the word. (2 Timothy 4:1-5.) When he does this and remains faithful to Christ, he is to be rewarded with a crown. (2 Timothy 4:6-8.)

The preacher is to bring glad tidings of good things. (Luke 2:10.) Our world is in desperate need of "Good News." (1 Corinthians 15:1-4.) On a daily basis from the media we hear bad news. It can be discouraging to see and hear how so many humans mistreat other humans! As preachers we need to identify the problem of sin. (Romans 1:18-32; 3:10,23; 5:12; 6:23.) Then we need to give the solution to the sin problem. The solution to

sin is the Savior Jesus Christ. (Matthew 1:21; Acts 4:12; Matthew 17:5; Mark 16:16; Luke 13:3; Matthew 10:32,33; Acts 2:38.) We must never lose sight of our number one mission.

The preacher is not an enforcer but an informer. The preacher is not a policeman. The preacher is one who informs people of God's word. (Romans 10:13-17.) People develop faith as a result of what they hear through preaching from the preacher.

Preacher, keep believing in the power of the spoken word. (Romans 1:16.) Keep believing it does make a difference in what is said from the pulpit and the classroom. The preacher is a vessel through which the word of God is able to flow. (2 Corinthians 4:7)

May God continue to bless and smile on the efforts of men who preach the unsearchable riches of Christ. (Ephesians 3:8.)

Unthinkable Things From the Foot Of The Cross

W. DOUGLASS HARRIS

Some actions are made unthinkable by their very nature, such as tunneling through a mountain with a toothpick, clipping the wings of a cyclone with scissors, sweetening an ocean of quinine with a pint of sugar, lighting a darkened city with one small candle, etc. In the same way when one figuratively stands at the foot of the cross of Christ, by nature there are some things unthinkable. Paul expressed surprise and amazement that some of the Galatian Christians were returning to Judaism after the crucifixion of Christ had been portrayed before their eyes in such a vivid way. (Read Galatians 3:1.) What are some things unthinkable in the light of the crucifixion?

1. THAT RELIGIOUS DIVISION IS DESIRABLE

Prayers are heard in religious circles thanking God that there are so many churches that one can attend the church of his choice, which is equal to saying this is a desirable way. But can one stand at the foot of the cross and be honest in saying such? Does not such reveal either ignorance or lack of concern for the Lord's prayer in John 17:20,21? Did not the shadow of the cross loom over this prayer? Is not a prayer thanking God for division

in defiance of Paul's inspired command? (Compare 1 Corinthians 1:10.) Notice Paul's question to the Corinthians: "Was Paul crucified for you?" (1 Corinthians 1:13.) It is impossible to view the crucifixion of Christ in the right way and say that religious division is desirable.

2. THAT THE COST OF LOYALTY TO CHRIST IS TOO HIGH

Pitiable excuses are offered so often for not being more loyal in daily living for Christ, in attendance, giving, etc. There are demands that are made to be sure and the cost should always be considered, but when the crucifixion is clearly viewed, can one say that God's demands are too severe? Peter and John met this test and passed without hesitation. They were offered safety by the Jewish authorities in Jerusalem if they would not speak any more in the name of Christ. (Acts 4:18, 19; 5:28,29.) How could they have done such and be loyal to Christ?

What did the cross demand of Jesus? Answer: Read Philippians 2:5-8 and Hebrews 12:2-4. Faithfulness to His Father's will was Christ's first duty. (Matthew 26:38-44.) He faced the hostility of a blood-thirsty mob, suffered three mock trials, and died an ignominious death. Was His loyalty too high? In view of His excruciating death by crucifixion is the cost and demand of loyalty to Him too high?

3. THAT THE CHURCH IS LESS THAN "ALL IMPORTANT"

I refer to the church that Christ purchased with his blood. (Acts 20:28.) And He purchased ONLY ONE. (Ephesians 4:4; 1 Corinthians 12:20b.) He died that He "might reconcile them both (Jew and Gentile) in one body unto God through the cross, having slain the enmity thereby." (Ephesians 2:16.) In the light of Christ's teaching, that one body is all-important. That one body is the church. (Colossians 1:18.) Its all-importance is seen in the concern His apostles had for it; they suffered incredible persecution, even martyrdom for it. It is seen in all the letters addressed to the churches of the first century. It is seen at the foot of the cross by what Christ gave Himself for. (Ephesians 5:23.) It is seen in the way Paul impressed the elders of the church at Ephesus with its importance by telling them that He purchased the church with His life's blood. (Acts 20:28.) Could He have paid a higher price to bring it into existence? He paid too much, if it is not all-important.

4. THAT SIN IS TO BE LIGHTLY REGARDED

When the cost for the cure for sin is viewed properly - Christ crucified - it is terrible testimony as to what sin is and what it does. His blood was shed for the remission (forgiveness) of our sins and the redemption of our souls. (Matthew 26:28; Ephesians 1:7.) Sin is not just a headache, but is rebellion to God. (Compare Hebrews 9:22; Romans 5:6-8.) It is no wonder that Paul said: "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." When Paul surveyed the motivations of the One who was crucified for him, the world no longer had any allurements for him.

5. THAT THE VALUE OF THE SOUL IS NOT LESS THAN OF THE UTMOST IMPORTANCE

Note these attention-arresting statements of the Lord: "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mark 8:36,37.) The soul should be given more concern than the body. (Matthew 10:18.) Man's soul is the only possession he will carry with him beyond the grave. Inspiration says that to convert a sinner from the error of his way is to save a soul from death - eternal death, or eternal separation from God. (James 5:19,20.)

CONCLUSION

In the text suggesting our topic, Paul directed a question to the Galatian Christians to help them keep their religion straight. (Galatians 3:1.) He calls them foolish and thoughtless suggesting that they were not using their minds. Is not the same true now by our failure to see the crucifixion of Christ in its proper light and to attempt to justify the unthinkableables discussed in the preceding?

Warnings From God!

KENNETH DAVIS

A few years ago a man was driving through a blinding rain. On the side of the road another man was wildly waving his arms. The man in the car went on by. He should not have ignored the warning. A short way up the road his car fell over the edge into

swirling waters where the road had washed away. Two other drivers also perished at this place. They failed to heed the warning. Man often does this with the warnings that come from God.

Often there are road signs that tell us of danger. Work may be in progress on the road or there may be an accident that has occurred. We need to heed all these warnings. God also has given warnings to which we should give heed. They are given for our benefit.

In the beginning of God's dealings with man, God told Adam and Eve that if they ate of the tree of knowledge of good and evil they would surely die. They did. God warned ancient Israel through Moses that they should not become like the Canaanites when they inherited the land. They did become like them and suffered the consequences. Jonah warned the people of Nineveh of their coming destruction due to their wickedness. They repented.

Christ warned the people of Chorazin and Bethsaida when He said, "...for if the mighty works, which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you." (Matthew 11:21,22.)

ETERNAL WARNINGS

In the Bible God has given some eternal warnings. These are warnings that are true in any dispensation or in any circumstances. They were good during the Patriarchal Age, prior to the giving of the Law of Moses. They were true for the Israelites and during the time the Law of Moses was in effect. They are true in the age in which we live, the Christian Age. Before the Israelites went into Canaan the members of the tribes of Reuben and Gad came to Moses and desired that their inheritance be in the land east of the Jordan River. Moses told them that this could be done, but first they would have to help subdue the land of Canaan west of the Jordan River and then return to the land they desired east of the Jordan. Then Moses told them, "But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the Lord: and be sure your sin will find you out." (Numbers 32:23.) This is an eternal warning, an eternal principle - our sins will find us out.

WATCH THE DOCTRINE!

In the New Testament is recorded the words of Jesus when He told His followers, "beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees." (Matthew 16:6.) His followers thought He was talking about bread. Jesus explained to them He was not talking about bread but about the "doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees." (Matthew 16:12.) The word "doctrine" means "teaching," or "that which is taught." In every place and in every time we need to be concerned about the teaching that we hear. There are so many teachings that God has not given and yet man often acts as if what God says is not important, just so we are sincere. That is not the message that God wants us to know. He wants us to be concerned that His teaching is faithfully given. Moses had to deal with false prophets. The prophet of God, Jeremiah, as well as other true prophets had to warn ancient Israel against false prophets in their midst.

JESUS DID - PAUL DID!

Jesus had to warn against false doctrine and so did Paul. The warning that Jesus gave about "doctrine" tells us that it was a problem in Jesus' day. Paul warns against false doctrine in his letters. (1 Corinthians 15:15; 2 Corinthians 11:13; Galatians 2:4; 2 Timothy 3:3.) It is not surprising that today people seeking to be followers of God are faced with a similar situation. There is so much false teaching in the world, that the one who would be a true follower of God must be warned against it. Another eternal principle has been given.

SELF-EVALUATION

In 1 Corinthians 10 Paul used the Israelites as an example of those who were not pleasing to God. He wrote about their many acts of sin and rebellion against God. Then Paul wrote "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed, lest he fall." This is a warning needed by everyone in every age. The reason is that when we think we are strongest, Satan's temptations often show that we were not really as strong as we thought. Pride enters in and we succumb to the temptation of the moment. Peter thought that he could handle any temptation and that he would never deny the Lord. However, when Peter warmed by the fire in a crowd of unbelievers, and the maid said that he was with Jesus, Peter

began to curse and to swear and say, "I know not this man of whom ye speak." (Mark 14:71.)

REGARDING OTHERS

God's book, the Bible, also gives us a warning regarding others. One translation states it this way, "Do not be misled, bad companions corrupt good character." (1 Corinthians 15:33.) Evil influences are all about us and may even come from our friends and associates. This may be an unexpected source, but it is a danger most feel can be overcome. When Lot settled in Sodom, the New Testament tells us that he was "vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked." (2 Peter 2:7.) Another verse states that it "vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds." But he did not move from Sodom. The wickedness of the city was so great that God determined He would destroy it. The angels "hastened Lot," his wife and two daughters as the destruction was coming upon the city. (Genesis 19:15.) Even his wife, looking back, did not survive the event.

This warning about the influence of others upon us is a warning we must heed. God's warnings are given for our benefit. Whether or not we will heed them depends upon the decisions we make. What will be your decision?

Speaking In Tongues

BASIL OVERTON

USES OF THE WORD

The word tongue is used in the Bible to refer to an organ in the human body. (Lamentations 4:4; Ezekiel 3:26; Mark 7:35; Luke 1:64.)

Tongue is used in the Bible many times to refer to what is done with the tongue. Here is an illustration: "He that hath a forward heart findeth no good: and he that hath a perverse tongue falleth into mischief." (Proverbs 17:20.) Obviously "perverse tongue" in this passage refers to the wrong kind of speaking; or wrong use of one's tongue.

Many times tongue is used in the Bible to refer to a language or dialect. (Daniel 1:4; Acts 1:19; 2:8.)

SPEAKING IN TONGUES WHEN THE APOSTLES LIVED

The apostles of Christ and some who lived when they did were endowed by the Lord to speak in tongues or languages which they had not studied. Sometimes this is referred to in the King James Version as speaking in an unknown tongue. (1 Corinthians 14:13,14.) The word unknown in such passages in the King James Version is italicized which means it has no corresponding word in the Greek text of the New Testament. The translators supplied the word unknown to emphasize that some spoke in languages that were unknown to them; languages they had not studied. To do so was a miracle.

GRANTED TWO WAYS

The miracle or spiritual gift of speaking in tongues was granted in two ways. These were: (1) baptism of the Holy Spirit as in Acts chapters two and ten, and (2) the apostles laying their hands on others as in Acts 19:6.

ACCOMPANIED BY OTHER MIRACLES

When our Lord Jesus promised that some would "speak with new tongues" he also said they would cast out devils, handle serpents, and heal the sick. He also said they would not be hurt by drinking any deadly thing. (Mark 16:17,18.) Those who claim to speak in tongues are inconsistent if they do not also claim to perform the other miracles mentioned with speaking in tongues in the New Testament.

The New Testament teaches that speaking in tongues and all the other miracles were limited to the time of the revelation and the confirmation of the New Covenant. (Mark 16:20.) I deny that anyone now speaks in tongues or performs any other miracles! This view is supported by the New Testament.

SIGN TO UNBELIEVERS

There were those in the church at Corinth who could speak in tongues by the power of the Holy Spirit. In teaching the church there with respect to their misunderstanding of this miracle or spiritual gift, Paul told them that tongues were for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not. (1 Corinthians 14:22.)

Those who claim they can speak in tongues which they have not studied are inconsistent unless they use their alleged gift to

convince unbelievers that what they do is of God.

I do not claim to be able to speak in tongues that I have not studied, and I deny that others can do so! To those who claim they have the gift of tongues, I am an unbeliever. They should use their tongue speaking "as a sign to them that believe not" and try to convince me to be a believer! I challenge any one of them to demonstrate that he can speak in a language he has never studied! I will be glad to arrange such a test for anyone who may want to try it!

TONGUES WERE LANGUAGES

The miraculous tongue speaking of the New Testament was speaking actual languages. The Holy Spirit gave the apostles utterance and they spoke with other tongues. (Acts 2:4.) When the people heard them they inquired "And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? ... we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God." (Acts 2:8,11.) Obviously, they meant by tongues, the languages they spoke.

The tongues referred to so much in 1 Corinthians Chapter 14 were also real languages for Paul illustrated what he meant by tongues by quoting from Isaiah 28:11,12 where Isaiah referred to the languages of people. (1 Corinthians 14:21.) Tongues in 1 Corinthians 14 were not senseless jargon, or silly gibberish, or balderdash! Tongues in that chapter and elsewhere in the New Testament were actual languages of people!

TONGUE SPEAKING DID NOT ASSURE SPIRITUALITY

Modern "tongue speakers" argue that the church needs speaking in tongues so it can be more spiritual. This is not a sensible or scriptural claim. The Corinthian church had an abundance of tongue speaking and other spiritual gifts but that church was not spiritual, but it was instead carnal, and Paul told them why they were carnal in 1 Corinthians 3:1-3.

TONGUES WERE TO CEASE

When Paul wrote the first Corinthian Letter the church in Corinth was plagued with much strife and division. They were even fussing over their spiritual gifts like speaking in tongues. Paul taught them a more excellent way which is the way of love. (1 Corinthians 12:31-13:1-13.)

Paul explained that soon the spiritual gifts of special knowledge, prophecy and speaking in tongues would cease when "that which is perfect is come." (1 Corinthians 13:8-10.)

"That is which is perfect" is of the same kind as "that which is in part." "That which is in part" obviously referred to the gradual giving of the will of God in the new covenant. Therefore, "that which is perfect" refers to the completed revelation of God's will. Paul explained the difference in having "that which is in part" (The gradual giving of God's will) and "that which is perfect" (the completed revelation of God's will). He illustrated this difference by saying, "For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." (1 Corinthians 13:12.) "Through a glass darkly" is more literally translated "in a mirror obscurely."

While God's revelation was being gradually made one could not see himself clearly. But when that revelation was completed one could look into that "perfect law of liberty" (James 1:25), the complete revelation of God's will, or "that which is perfect" and see himself clearly. One can thus know as he is known.

As surely as God's will was completely revealed as contained in the New Testament, so spiritual gifts like speaking in tongues ceased when that revelation was completed. History of the era immediately following the apostolic era confirms this.

Lord, To Whom Shall We Go?

JAMES RICKARD

In John chapter six our Lord gave His disciples, along with some of the unbelieving Jews, a discourse on the Bread of Life. The Jews "murmured" and "strove one with another" over the words He spoke. (Verses 41, 52.) Many of His disciples, when they heard His words, said, "This is a hard saying; who can hear it?" (Verse 60.) With this, many of them "went back, and walked no more with Him." (Verse 66.)

How sad it is that some of those who had walked with the Son of God and had heard Him speak the words of life would turn from Him and walk away! It reminds us of what Peter said about

those who have "escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and are again entangled therein and overcome, the last state is become worse with them than the first. For it were better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after knowing it, to turn back from the holy commandment delivered unto them." (2 Peter 2:20,21.)

Our Lord then asked the twelve if they would also go away. (John 6:67.) In response to His question, Peter, the impulsive one who was always ready to speak, uttered a profound question and statement when he said, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of life." (Verse 68.)

From this question and the statement that followed it is obvious that Peter's heart and mind were set on eternal life. It would be safe to say that it was uppermost in his mind. He had "left all" to follow Jesus. (Matthew 19:27.) Moreover, he recognized that eternal life could come only through obedience to the words of Christ. (James 1:21.) The unbelieving Jews were simply not ready to accept Him. They thought that eternal life was to be found in the Old Testament scriptures. Jesus had said to them that, "Ye search the scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of me; and ye will not come to me, that ye may have life." (John 5:39,40.) Peter knew the source of eternal life. Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John 14:6.) Unfortunately, there are billions of people in the world today who do not know the way of eternal life.

Satan has a bag full of tricks that he uses in trying to lure Christians away from following the Master, the source of eternal life. Materialism and pride rank high among his tools of warfare against the souls of men and women. His tools of warfare were very effective early in the history of man. Consider Genesis 3:6. When tempted, Eve saw that the tree was good for food (as if she needed any food other than what God had provided), it was pleasant to the eyes, and its fruit was such that would make one wise. Then, pride and materialism took over and Satan won his very first battle and he remained undefeated until Christ died on the Cross. But, thanks be to God, when our Lord arose victorious from the grave, He bruised the head of Satan, broke the bonds

of death, brought life and immortality to light through the gospel (2 Timothy 1:10), and won the war for those who believe in Him.

In mad pursuit of worldliness many people (perhaps including some Christians) are like the rich fool we read about in Luke 12:13-21. In this parable our Lord makes two very significant points. 1) A man's life does not consist in the abundance of the material things that he possesses, and 2) It is deadly foolish for a person to lay up treasures for himself and not be rich toward God. (Verses 15,21.) This parable sets forth one of Satan's most powerful tools in drawing people away from the source of eternal life. Like so many people today this rich fool thought little about eternal life. After all, he was so "well fixed" in material things in this life that he was enjoying "heaven on earth." He simply didn't feel the need to seek eternal life.

The rich young ruler is another case in point. (Matthew 19:16ff; Mark 10:17ff; Luke 18:18ff.) This man had qualities that the world looks up to today. He was young, he was rich, and he was influential. Besides that, he was really seeking eternal life and he came to its very source! But, he was not willing to pay the price! He must have put great trust in his possessions. After he sorrowfully went away, the Lord explained to the disciples how hard it is for those who trust in their riches to enter heaven. Being compassed about with the affluence of this world we should heed these words that Paul wrote to the Colossian Christians, "If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth." (Colossians 3:1,2.) The Christians' "mind set" should be on eternal life at any cost!

Christians may become involved in sinful relationships which, if not terminated, will cause one to draw back and walk no more with the Lord. These may be marital, personal, business, or other types of relationships. Whatever the case may be, eternal life is worth whatever the cost may be. What will a man give in exchange for his soul? Our Lord has given us the words of life. There is no other to whom we may go. If a person would seek eternal life these words must be followed at any cost.

