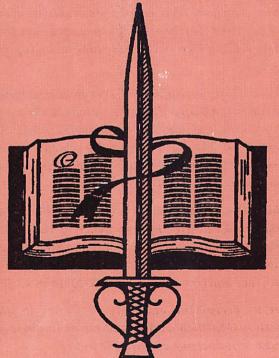
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The Bible Teacher



OUR PLEA 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 the one church of the Bible 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 Gorinthians 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 believe in Christ, repent of wrong, confess Christ the Son of God, and 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).
- 3. That all followers of Christ, everywhere, should be known as Christians, after His name alone, with no Prefixes or Suffixes, 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 which contain doctrines and commandments of 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 Testa vent 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?

Follow Five Simple Steps To Go To Heaven

All people who believe in God want to go to heaven. Heaven is a spiritual realm. It is the home of God, the eternal spiritual place where God is. Only those who have been made righteous by God Himself will be able to enter heaven. In the scheme of God, He has provided the opportunity to all people to become righteous in His Son Jesus Christ and thus to become worthy of entrance into His heavenly home. The term "righteous" means, to be right with God. Because of sin man is at enmity with God. (Romans 5:10; Isaiah 59:1, 2). Through the death of His Son on the cross for the sins of man, God has made salvation from sin available to all men. We read, "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 5:1). Christ therefore could proclaim, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." (John 14:6). What has Christ taught man must do to become worthy of heaven?

First of all, He taught, "unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3). Further, explaining the new birth, the Lord said, "unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." (John 3:5). Jesus here is talking about the spiritual birth which takes place when a person hear the good news of salvation from sin, which Christ has accomplished through His propitiatory death for all mankind, and which was written for us in the Bible by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God (2 Timothy 3:16, 17; 2 Peter 1:20, 21), and after hearing the message

of salvation when one believes in Him, and repents from all wrongs and is baptized (buried or immersed in water) by the authority of Christ for the forgiveness of sins. At the point of this spiritual birth one becomes a new person in Christ, and receives the hope of entering into heaven. (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Galatians 3:27; 2 Corinthians 5:17, 21). The Bible teaches that no man can become righteous before God by his own efforts or good works (Eph. 2:8,9). There is nothing that man can do of himself or offer something to God to make himself righteous in account of God. We read, "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit." (Titus 3:5).

Second, since Christ had died on the cross for our sins, instead of us, the Bible teaches that the born again new person in Christ, must not get involve in sin again, but must stay away from all sinful and evil activities. We read, "Do you not know that the unrighteous will no inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God." (1 Corinthians 6:9, 10). Again, in Galatians 5: 19-21, it says, "Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdress, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you before hand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God." All of these things were written to those who have been born again, and had received the promise of entrance into heaven! They had been further warned in these clear words: "For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: "A dog returns to his own vomit, and a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire"." After one has been born again of the water and the Spirit, as the Lord has said, one must not return to those sinful and evil practices from which he has been redeemed by the blood of Christ. (1 Peter 1:18, 19).

Third, Jesus taught, His followers, in preparing themselves to enter heaven, must try to become humble and harmless and pure in heart as little children. "Assuredly, I say to you," to His disciples He said, "unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 18:3). Little children are humble and harmless and hold no malice or impure thought in their hearts against others. Heart is the mirror of one's personality. For "Out of the heart," said Jesus, "proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies, these are the things which defile a man...." (Matthew 15:19, 20). From the pen of the wise man came this advice: "Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it springs the issues of life." (Proverbs 4:23). Again, Jesus, taught, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." (Matthew 5:8).

Fourth, Christ warned, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." (Luke 9:62). After being born again into the spiritual family of God, which is Christ's church, as one does his best to live the life of a true Christian, one is still living in this sinful and evil world, and therefore one faces all kinds of temptations and discouragements. Every so often the Christian is tempted to look back, and sometimes the peer pressure is very strong. The Christian must never try to look back, but should look to Jesus always, who is the author and finisher of our faith. (Hebrews 12:1-3).

Finally, and fifthly, remember, Christ taught, "Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter-the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven." (Matthew 7:21). The will of the Father God is found only in the Bible. No man on earth, whosoever he may be, is qualified enough (because all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Romans 3:23), to tell others what they ought to do to be saved from sin or how to worship God, which is acceptable to Him. Everything that God expect from man, and everything that man is required to do to fulfill His will God has given to us all equally in His book, the Bible. "Let God be true but every man a liar. As is written." (Romans 3:4). To those who follow man-made teachings and commandments Christ said, "These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men." (Matthew 15:8, 9).

Heaven is a prepared place for those who are prepared to enter there. Are you?

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Lesson Seven

THE PATTERN OF WORSHIP

J.C. CHOATE

In the religious world today there are many kinds of worship. The Catholics have their own unique way and of course the many Protestant churches have numerous patterns they follow. That means that you could spend weeks and weeks going to places where the different worship services vary. Why is this? Is this the way the Lord intended it to be?

The Bible teaches that there is but one church and it belongs to the Lord. (Ephesians 4:4; Matthew 16:18). The pattern for the church is in the New Testament. This being true, and since it is the church of the Lord that is commanded to worship, then the pattern would be the same.

In order to find out how the Lord would have his people to worship today then we must go back to the New Testament. There is no other way to know. By going to it we may discover exactly what the Lord would have us to do in worship. It reveals the following things:

1. God is the one to be worshipped.

When being tempted by the devil, Christ said, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." (Matthew 4: 10).

2. The day of worship is to be the first day of the week.

The disciples were commanded to meet on the first day of the week to lay by in store: "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." (1 Corinthians 16:2).

3. Christians must follow the Apostles' Doctrine.

We have examples of this: "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." (Acts 2:42). "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight." (Acts 20: 7).

4. We are told how we must worship.

Christ said, "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and in truth." (John 4:23, 24).

5. The five items of worship are clearly set forth.

These include Bible Study (2 Timothy 2: 15), Prayer (Acts 2:42), Singing (Ephesians 5:19), the Lord's Supper (Matthew 26:26-28), and Giving (2 Corinthians 9:6,7). These are the only acts of worship that we read about in the New Testament. Therefore we must limit ourselves to these.

6. We are told that we must be faithful in attending the assemblies for worship.

The Hebrew writer said, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is: but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as you see the day approaching." (Hebrews 10:25).

7. The way of worship is simple and to the point.

It is not difficult for anyone to engage in. Rather all are invited to participate.

8. The whole worship program is based on the teachings of the Lord's word.

We speak only as the oracles of God. (1 Peter 4: 11). Nothing is done without a "thus saith the Lord".

The church of Christ is peculiar in that it follows the New Testament pattern of worship. Therefore we do not have certain things in worship that other groups have. For instance, we do not have these:

- 1. We do not have mechanical music. The New Testament clearly teaches that we are to sing praises to God. Paul says, "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." (Ephesians 5: 19). We'll say more about this in the lesson on singing.
- 2. We do not have closed communion. Rather, Paul wrote the Corinthians, "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread, and drink of the cup." (1 Corinthians 11:28).
- 3. We do not practice tithing. Again, Paul wrote that Christians should give as they have prospered. (1 Corinthians 16: 2).
- 4. We do not have collection on days other than the Lord's day. Many groups have one collection or more every time they meet whether it is on the first day of the week or not. But Christians are

commanded to give on the first day of the week. (1 Corinthians 16:2).

5. We do not have choirs and special singing groups to sing in worship. The Scriptures teach that each individual Christian must sing and therefore we have congregational singing only. Paul said, "What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also." (1 Corinthians 14: 14,15).

- 6. We do not have special days of worship like Easter, Christmas, etc. Paul warned his Galatian brethren, "Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain." (Galatians 4: 10,11).
- 7. We do not have the Lord's Supper only once a month, every three months, or once a year. We have the Lord's Supper every Sunday or every first day of the week. We read of where the early Christians did this. (Acts 20:7). Which first day of the week? Who has been given the authority to say which one? There is a first day in every week and that is how often we are to gather to partake of it. We meet to partake of the Lord's Supper as often as we meet to give, to study, etc.
- 8. We do not go through any formalities, rituals, and traditions to worship the Lord. Peter said, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers." (1 Peter 1:18). Paul adds, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world and not after Christ." (Colossians 2: 8).
- 9. We do not follow after the doctrines and commandments of men. The Apostle wrote, "Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; Which all are to perish with the using;) after the doctrines and commandments of men." (Colossians 2:20-22).
- 10. We do not follow the Old Testament law in our worship. Many go to the law for such things as the sabbath, tithing, mechanical music, etc., but this is a misuse of that portion of Scripture. The law is no longer binding. (2 Corinthians 3; Hebrews 10:9; John 1:17).

Therefore we are to follow the New Testament all the way without addition, subtraction, or substitution. (Revelation 22:18,19; Galatians 1:7-9). It completely furnishes man to every good work.

(2 Timothy 3: 16, 17). All things that pertain to life and godliness are contained within its pages. (2 Peter 1:3).

If all people would return to this pattern for worship, as well as all other things that they say and do in the name of religion, then, we could have unity. Surely the Lord has not commanded me to worship one way and you another. Rather, He would have all of us to worship alike. We all will worship alike when we follow the one true pattern that He has given.

Trembling at the Word of God!

JERRY BATES

In our modern world we normally think of trembling only when we are terrified, and certainly it is not good to be frightened to that extent. One would never think that we should tremble at God or His Word. After all, some would say, "God loves all of us, and we are His children." Should a child tremble in the presence of his father? NO!

If we think of trembling in the sense of fear, then I would agree with the above sentiment. But there is another sense of trembling that is good. Notice the words of Isaiah in chapter 66, verse 2: "But on this one will I look: on him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word "Here we find some characteristics of that man with whom God has a special relationship. God is a God of the universe, but He will condescend to the depths of man if we are of a certain character. God does not dwell in temples made with hands but in certain human hearts.

First of all, we are to be of a poor and contrite spirit, that is, a humble spirit. God does not look with favor upon a man simply because he is poor, but He looks upon those with a humble spirit. He also wants us to have a contrite spirit. This is a spirit that is deeply affected by sin. It is the opposite of pride and self-righteousness. God wants us to wholly lean upon Him, realizing that without Him we are nothing.

Secondly, notice that God through Isaiah tells us that He wants us to "tremble" at His Word. Of course, God is not saying that we should literally tremble as we pick up the Bible to read it. He is referring to the sense of awe, respect and reverence we should have toward God and His Word. We do not add to or take away

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from what God has said (Revelation 22:18,19), and we should seek to obey it with all our hearts. That type of respect is sadly lacking among most people, even among those who say they believe the Bible is God's Word. Many read and then go on to live their lives pretty much as they please. Most will try to hide their actions, and then if discovered, attempt to justify themselves in a number of ways. Excuses are offered in an effort to defend their behavior or at least to lessen the supposed severity of their offences. It seems that to most people, sin is not a big problem, and certainly not something about which we should be overly concerned.

The Word of God is our Authority and our Law to which we are amenable. God tells us that He expects us to obey it at all costs. Some would say they agree with that statement, but then they add a disclaimer saying that Christ died for us, hence we can have a right relationship without perfect obedience. They might also add that God knows we are weak, human creatures; therefore, God will excuse our failures and shortcomings. However, just because we can have our sins forgiven through Christ should not cause us to somehow forget the terrible nature of sin, to overlook the high price of sin that Christ paid, or to think that God is no longer interested in absolute obedience. It is a sad commentary upon our society when survey upon survey shows little difference in how a Christian and a non-Christian live their lives.

The humble and contrite heart is always going to deeply feel the pain of failing to live up to the standard that God desires of His children. When the apostle Peter denied Christ, doing the very thing that Jesus had just a few hours earlier predicted he would do, Peter did not try to justify it or think that it wasn't really his fault. Matthew 26:75 records simply that "he went out and wept bitterly," indicating his genuine repentance. In Acts 8 we read about the conversion of a man, Simon the Sorcerer. Soon after his conversion, he sinned by trying to buy the power to pass the gift of the Holy Spirit on to other people, just like Peter had the power to do. In verse 22 Peter told him to "repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you." I suggest that there were several excuses Simon could have offered to lessen his guilt, the chief of which might be that he had been a Christian only a very short time. However, Simon presents no defense. He simply pleads, "Pray to the Lord for me, that none of the things which you have spoken may come upon me" (Acts

8:24). I can imagine the "trembling" as he spoke those words. The church needs more people who "tremble" at God's Word, servants who conform their lives as closely as possible to what God wants them to be. In addition, the church needs more members who genuinely repent when mired in sin, offering no excuse or defense, but simply asking forgiveness from God and others. Those are the ones God will bless.

When Winds Blow Against Us

HANS J. DEDERSCHECK

Life is a stormy path. People seek for quiet and beautiful days of peace and perfect harmony. What a dream. Sure, there are many wonderful moments in life: great experiences with our families, with friends, and at our work. However, there are also days of dark clouds and stormy winds

that blow around our fragile ship, and our souls fill with fears and trouble; sometimes, we even lose our hope to see again better events. Yet, God will help us when the winds blow all around us. "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers [manifold] temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience" (James 1:2,3).

Christians should not forget that they are sent into adverse winds. That was the case with Jesus' disciples. Matthew 14:22-24 is the proof of this. The storm happened in order to strengthen the faith and confidence of the disciples. God teaches and trains us through adverse winds, but He never abandons us!

Even our Savior had to go through contrary winds (Matthew 4:1-10). Christ was constant and faithful. Our Christian life should always be characterized by a purpose. Our purpose is to serve Christ. Paul said, "For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries" (1 Corinthians 16:9). Problems are there to be taken away. A faithful Christian stays always at the Lord's side. "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work" (John 9:4). While the light of the Gospel prevails in the midst of us, let us do the Lord's will without fear and trembling.

Christ said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). The apostle

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Paul noted, "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Timothy 3:12). The apostle Peter adds, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try (prove) you, as though some strange thing happened unto-you: but rejoice" (1 Peter 4:12,13).

Christians suffer, developing their character in Christ in a world of wickedness. God wants us to be "blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world" (Philippians 2:15).

There is a powerful value in contrary winds. They disclose our special works. Winds of opposition may blow with great force, but God's way of living and God's work must never be given up. Paul was convinced about this when he said, "We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain" (2 Corinthians 6:1). It is absolutely possible for Christians to leave Christ's path of truth, because they are not willing to fight against unrighteousness and sin.

In God we hope. Christ is our stronghold and a fortress for times of struggle and spiritual warfare. "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved" (Psalm 55:22). What a splendid hope.

Paul tells us, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28). And, as Paul "can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13), so you and I can do the same. Because of our faith in Christ, we are able to be winners over the world, the flesh, and sin.

"And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (2 Corinthians 1:9). When storms of trouble and fear afflict your fragile soul, and your small ship of life is about to sink in waves of darkness, think on these words of Him who watches over your life. Jesus will be at your door to provide help.

Can a Christian Still Be an Evolutionist?

BRAD HARRUB

If one were to believe everything that the scientific community

has offered regarding man's origins, we would find that very few theories include acts by a supernatural Creator. In fact, scientists are quick to point out that the universe took billions of years to form, and thus it would be absurd to believe that it was created in just six days. For instance, consider what Thomas Hayden wrote when he added another "certainty" of life, besides taxes and death. His effort to shore up the ever-faltering theory of evolution was the cover story of the July 29, 2002 issue of *U.S. News & World Report*. In explaining "how evolution works, and why it matters more than ever," Hayden stated, "It's an everyday phenomenon, a fundamental fact of biology as real as hunger and as unavoidable as death."

Sadly, this type of grandstanding and propagandizing in the media occurs all too often, and people by the millions accept it as the "final word" on the subject—without any real knowledge as to what the evidence truly reveals. Even within the church, Christian's often subconsciously find themselves favoring science over the Bible. We have forgotten the truth on the matter, which can be summed up simply with the first ten words that appear in the Bible: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). If this is not true, then every word that follows should be called into question.

Because of the prevailing idea of an ancient Cosmos, many people have tried to find ways to fit evolution and its billions-of-years time frame into the biblical account of creation. In essence, they still espouse belief in God and the Bible, but they also pledge a great deal of allegiance to science and the evolutionary theory. As the old adage says, they want to "have their cake and eat it, too." Can both the Bible and evolutionary theory be true? People clinging to both the Bible and evolution are commonly known as "theistic evolutionists". "Theistic" comes from the Greek *theos*, which means "God". Thus, theistic evolutionists believe God does exist, but they also hold to the theory of evolution as true. They rationalize their beliefs by stating that "Yes, God created the heavens and the earth," but then He used (or allowed) evolutionary processes to produce the universe we see today.

Thus, "Bible believers" find themselves in the awkward position of compromising the opening chapters of the Bible. If Genesis 1-11 is tossed aside as merely a mythological story, then we must toss out the entire Bible, because the one major theme that is taught

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throughout the Bible is redemption. Man's relationship with God started at the pinnacle of creation week in the Garden, and degenerated from there. Christians need to be fully-aware that theistic evolution teaches that man started out at the bottom and worked his way to the top (via the old amoeba-to-man story). Therefore, either man started at the top and fell, as the Bible indicates, or he started at the bottom and rose to the top, as evolution indicates. Both cannot be correct! The prophets long ago declared the fall of humans, and the resulting need for a Savior. Scripture indicates that this was the reason for Christ's death—to bring men back into a covenant relationship with God. If man truly did not fall as described in the creation account, then why did Jesus Christ, the Son of God, come to this planet and suffer a cruel death on the cross?

Additionally, consider the following: Surely, evolution will not have to reverse itself and concede that it reached its zenith with the birth of the Christ child a long, long time ago. Surely, this colossal system will not have to concede that it is less able now to produce a greater than Jesus than it did produce two thousand years ago. If evolution is not now able to produce a greater than Jesus, then it seems the system has ceased to be evolution and has become devolution, at least in one sense. Today, this theory appears more like "devilution" than devolution.

As long as we are tossing aside Scripture, we might as well get out our scissors and cut out all references to the creation, starting with the Gospel accounts-Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Jesus Christ Himself made reference to the creation when He stated in Matthew 19:4; "Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female ..." These words indicate that Adam and Eve had been on the Earth "from the beginning of creation" (Mark 10:6). Of course, we also would have to throw out John, because the first few verses of Chapter One review the beginning and creation. Other Scriptures such as Acts 4:24, Acts 17:25, Romans 1:20, Colossians 1:16, 1 Timothy 2:13, Hebrews 1:2, 1 Peter 4:19, and Revelation 4:11 also would be called into question if the creation account is merely a nice story and not historically accurate. As a matter of fact, the only books that do not refer to the creation in some form are the books of Jude, Philemon, and 2 and 3 John!

Additionally, if we do not accept that God created the heavens

and the earth in six literal days, then we are making Jesus Christ — our Savior — a liar. Jesus stated: "But from the beginning of the creation, male and female made he them" (Mark 10:6), affirming that Adam and Eve were on the earth since the beginning of creation. Paul affirmed in Romans 1:20,21 that the things God had made had been "perceived" even "since the Creation of the world". According to evolutionists, man did not come into the picture until about 3-4 million years ago. It does not take a rocket scientist to figure out that if the Earth is supposedly 5-6 billion years old, then the last 3-4 million is not, by any stretch of the imagination, "from the beginning". Rather, it is "from the end". Therefore, we are left with a choice: either Jesus Christ lied and the evolutionists are correct, or we can believe that the words Jesus Christ spoke are true, and therefore evolution is 100% wrong. The belief in theistic evolution allows for the Savior to be called a liar!

Ah, but you say, "Adam was just a mythological creature. We know today that man originated from a Neanderthal-type creature." However, if this is true, why did the inspired apostle Paul pen these words: "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Corinthians 15:22), and then in reference to Christ write, "So also it is written, The first man Adam became a living soul. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit" (1 Corinthians 15:45)? If Adam and Eve are merely mythological, does this mean that this "last Adam", Jesus Christ, was a mythological creature as well?

What Does It Mean To Be LOST?

AUBREY JOHNSON

The Great Commission is heaven's version of the AMBER Alert System. In His final words before ascending to heaven, Jesus commanded His followers to join in the search for those who are missing from their Maker. His emergency bulletin is preserved in Mark's gospel and reads, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:15-16 NKJV).

On an earlier occasion, Jesus issued a severe warning to those who prey on God's people: "Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven their angels

always see the face of My Father who is in heaven. For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost" (Matthew 18:10-11). Jesus was putting spiritual predators on notice that the forces of heaven were united to protect God's children and to punish those who contribute to their becoming lost.

The Lord chose the word "lost" because of its emotional impact and because it clearly communicates the concept of spiritual jeopardy. It is a sobering term that stresses the need for urgent action. The primary idea behind the Greek word for "lost" (apollumi) is danger. In the New Testament, it is variously translated to destroy, abolish, ruin or kill. In John 3:16, the middle passive form of the word is interpreted "perish." But as a passive participle, it suggests the prospect of ruin accompanied by the possibility of recovery. One who is lost may be found, and that is exactly what God desires.

In a rare statement of purpose, Christ declared that saving the lost was His express reason for coming to earth (Matthew 18:11; see also Luke 19:10). The tender title "Son of Man" was used by Jesus to convey how much He identified and empathized with human beings and their plight. He left heaven to embark on a rescue mission of global proportions because He passionately cared for lost people. Through the shedding of His blood, He paid the price for their return. Through the preaching of the gospel, He revealed the path for their return. The possibility of recovery is good news indeed!

In Matthew 18:12-14, Jesus illustrated His point with a heartwarming pastoral analogy. "What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them goes astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine and go to the mountains to seek the one that is straying? And if he should find it, assuredly, I say to you, he rejoices more over that sheep than over the ninety-nine that did not go astray. Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish."

The dominant image of lostness in the Bible is that of lost sheep. The imagery grows out of the prophetic writing of the Old Testament where the nation of Israel is portrayed as God's flock and inept leaders are represented as unfeeling shepherds (Ezekiel 34:1-10). Jesus is the compassionate shepherd who came to replace the callous caretakers who neglected their responsibilities to the detriment of the flock (John 10:1-30). The goodness of the Good Shepherd is seen in His unbounded joy at the discovery and re-

covery of wayward sheep. Most impressive is the fact that every animal is considered important.

In these shepherding analogies, the Holy Spirit is teaching something about the meaning of spiritual lostness. To be lost is to stray from safety. It is separation from the Shepherd and His flock. Spiritual security is not possible apart from Jesus and His church. Only they can provide adequate protection from predators and nourishment for the soul.

Lostness is one of many biblical figures depicting the idea of spiritual death. Death means separation, and what does it mean to be lost if not to be distanced from caring companions and safe surroundings that support spiritual well-being? The terms "lost" and "dead" are both relational in nature. They are pictures of what it means to be cut off from God, from others, and from one's own spiritual potential.

The word "lost" not only conveys danger but disorientation. In 1937, Amelia Earhart set out on a 29,000-mile flight around the world. With only 7,000 miles remaining, she took off from Lae, New Guinea, in search of Howland Island, 2,556 miles distant in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. Her last radio reports were received by the Coast Guard Cutter *Itasca* positioned just offshore the mile-and-a-half long island. At 7:42 a.m., the ship picked up the message, "We must be on you, but we cannot see you. Fuel is running low. Been unable to reach you by radio. We are flying at 1,000 feet." One hour later they heard the final words, "We are running north and south." Rescue efforts commenced immediately, but the \$4,000,000 operation covering 250,000 square miles ended in disappointment. Amelia Earhart and her navigator, Fred Noonan, were lost at sea (www.ameliaearhart.com).

Spiritual lostness involves a dangerous disorientation of the spirit. When a person is lost, it means he has lost touch with truth and reality. Important values have vanished from his radar screen. He is misguided in his beliefs and off course in his behavior. Lostness is losing one's way in life, morally, ethically and spiritually. And unless one repents, the repercussions are everlasting.

In summary, "lost" is a biblical term describing the state of a person or group of people who are spiritually confused, separated from God, and in serious danger of eternal punishment. Foremost, it is a state created and characterized by a loss of love, that loss being the foundation of all sin (Romans 13:8-10). By receiving and

sharing Christ's love, the effects of lostness are reversed and spiritual bearings are regained (1 Peter 1:22-25).

Jesus compared the joy of salvation to the flood of emotions one experiences when finding something precious that was feared lost forever (Luke 15:1). Frances Rodman said, "Just think how happy you would be if you lost everything you have right now, and then got it back again." When a person becomes a Christian that is precisely what happens. In sin you lose everything that matters (Luke 9:25). In salvation you get it back: your ability to love again, and with it your soul; joy beyond measure, and peace that passes understanding; the hope of heaven, and abundant life on earth. Yes, you get it all back and more. That's why they call it good news!

What Does It Mean To Be In CHRIST?

JUSTIN ROGERS

The writings of Paul continually impress us with their combination of deep theological concepts and practical instruction. Often the simplest words and phrases, upon further investigation, reveal dramatic and powerful meanings. Consider the two-word phrase "in Christ." The Greek phrase *en Christo* is found 86 times in Paul's writings and in every one of his writings with the exception of Titus. What does Paul mean when he describes believers as "in Christ"? How does one get into Christ? How can all of this be applied to the church today?

Simply put, to be in Christ is to be in the church (1 Corinthians 1:2; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:2). In this sense, the phrase is identical to the term "Christian." Yet "Christian" is found only three times in the New Testament and in none of Paul's writings, although he was certainly familiar with the word (Acts 11:26; 26:28). We have abused the name "Christian" in modern times, allowing it to become so inclusive and accessible that it is scarcely possible to distinguish those who are and those who are not Christians. The popular definition of a Christian today is simply one who believes in Jesus (however misguided he may be). The phrase "in Christ" will not lend itself to such a liberal interpretation. Scripture strains out the inclusive connotations of "Christian" in the modern world and forces us to look deeper into Paul's definition of a Christian -

one who is in Christ.

In Paul's view, "Christian" is more than a name. One who has entered into union with Christ has associated himself with a cosmic reality (Ephesians 2:4-6), a plan predestined from the creation of the world (1:9-12). He has accepted God's gift of redemption (Romans 3:24) and emerged from sin as a "new creation" (2 Corinthians 5:17 Esv). Beginning this new life, he recognizes that his relationships in Christ transcend racial, social and gender barriers (Galatians 3:28). He is aware of the fact that Christ is now the source of the life he enjoys (1 Corinthians 1:30). He understands that his eyes are turned away from this world and fixed on the world to come (Philippians 3:14). He has no fear of death, for he knows that "the dead in Christ will-rise first" (1 Thessalonians 4:16b). He is a man complete, confident and determined. He is in Christ.

GETTING INTO CHRIST

Now that we have briefly described what it means to be in Christ, how does one gain access to this exclusive sphere? In short, only those who have been baptized into Christ for the remission of sins are appropriately in Christ (Acts 2:38; Galatians 3:27).

Of course, an awareness of sin, a belief in the power of Jesus to save, repentance of those sins, and so on necessarily precede baptism; but it is at the point of immersion in water that one is cleansed from his sins and reconciled to God (Acts 22:16). It is no accident that Scripture combines baptism "into Christ" with life in Christ. These prepositions are often illustrated in a diagram that proves helpful to our discussion:

into (eis) \rightarrow in (en)

The Greek word *eis* indicates motion toward a particular place or object. This definition is clear in Romans 6:3, "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?" and Galatians 3:27, "For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ" (NASB). Both examples emphasize the same point: namely, that in baptism an individual is transported from one realm to the next from the realm of the unsaved to that of the saved. When such a transfer has taken place, the individual is in Christ.

Comparably, the Greek *en* indicates being in a location. When one has been transported into the realm of Christ, he has received the forgiveness of sins and has been sealed with the Holy Spirit

(Ephesians 1:13). He is a Christian. He is in the church. He is in Christ. Baptism is not the last stop on the road, but the first. An individual must continue to press on, carefully guarding himself against worldliness (Titus 2:12) and apostasy (Hebrews 3:12). We know the name of at least one who was formerly in Christ but turned away - Demas. He is called a fellow worker in Philemon 1:24, but Paul sadly reports his desertion in 2 Timothy 4:10. Therefore, just as one can enter, one may also exit the realm of Christ.

Many aver that baptism is an option and not a requirement. Many argue that the silence of the Scriptures permit the use of the instrument, rather than prohibit it. These and other permissions enable them to flex the text of Scripture to include in Christ virtually whomever they wish. When one rises up to challenge their opinions, he is deemed divisive and dismissed as ignorant and unscholarly. These false teachers have separated themselves from God and in so doing have separated themselves from the church. We must pray for their repentance with the same earnestness that Paul prayed for Israel (Romans 10:1ff). They left our fellowship in search of unity but will find only division - that is, division from Christ.

This article is intended to remind us of the rigid boundaries in the Christian sphere as Paul describes them. There is no merit assigned in Scripture to those who divide. There is no merit to those who resist the Lord. There is no merit to those who invent their own theologies of what God will and will not do in judgment. Let us permit God to speak clearly. Let us allow the Scriptures to declare who is a Christian. Let us submit ourselves to the Lord Jesus and stand resolute against false teachers, praying for their return to the Lord's way.

What Does It Mean To Be FAITHFUL?

NEALE PRYOR

"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life" (Revelation 2:10b Asv). These are the words of our Lord to the church at Smyrna. In the letters to the seven churches of Asia, it is interesting that Smyrna is the only church of the seven for which the Lord had no criticism. Philadelphia was a close second. The only derogatory statement about them is that they had "a little power" (3:8).

The Lord may have been telling His people at Smyrna to be faithful as long as they lived on this earth. The Christian race is not a 100-yard dash. It is an endurance race, a marathon. We don't have to be the first at the finish line. We only have to finish.

In many distance races, some set the pace for the first few hundred yards and then drop out of the race. They are sometimes called the rabbits. But the winners are those who find a pace they can sustain and do not quit until the race is finished. Some start off great right after baptism, on fire for the Lord, but do not remain faithful. When a friend dies, often the question is raised, "Was he ever baptized?" Although baptism is essential for salvation, that is only the beginning. Being baptized, although necessary, is not all that the Lord meant when He told us to be faithful.

It is possible that Revelation 2:10 was exhorting the church at Smyrna to be faithful even if it cost them their lives. Perhaps both thoughts are intended. It is interesting that in the description of the speaker (v. 8) the Lord described Himself as "the first and the last, who was dead, and lived again." When the Lord encouraged them to remain faithful even in the face of death, He was not asking of them more than He Himself did for us.

Notice that of the seven churches of Asia, the ones that were most faithful to God were the ones suffering the greatest persecution. No mention is made of persecution in the letter to the lukewarm church at Laodicea (Revelation 3:14-22). Why should the devil persecute them? He already had them in his grasp.

Our Lord's words to Smyrna could be spoken to every congregation of the Lord's people. The bottom line of the Christian race is not finishing before the others but making it to the finish line. God does not ask us to be perfect or to outdo other brothers and sisters, only to finish, to be faithful.

Jesus told His disciples, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Matthew 16:24). Our Lord told the rich young ruler that if he wished to be perfect, he should sell all that he had and follow Him (19:21). The young man was willing to make an effort to have eternal life, even doing more than keeping the commandments. But he could not make the ultimate sacrifice for the Lord - to sell all that he had, give to the poor, and follow Jesus.

We hear of many who want to be saved like the thief on the cross and just turn to Jesus right before death. But we seldom

hear of anyone who asks why he cannot be saved like the rich ruler by selling all he has and giving it to the poor.

Being faithful to Christ can be seen in our lives every day. It is a lifetime commitment to do what He would have us do, to go where He would have us go, and to speak as He would have us speak.

Being faithful is being careful not to forsake the assembly. We attend because there is no other place we would rather be. Here is where our friends are. Here is where our interests lie. Here is where we have an opportunity to worship our God with those of kindred spirits.

Some concern us when they miss worship because they are not regular in their attendance and as such do not show the commitment they need to have to the Lord and His church.

But others cause concern among us when they miss because we know something must be wrong or they would be there. Are they sick? Are they out of town?

Being faithful is also seen in our efforts to spread His word, to teach all we can, and to support others who are seeking to do the same.

To sum it up, being faithful is seen in the way we live, our involvement in the church, our desire to spread the gospel, our homes, and in everything we do.

Many years ago, I heard a story of a young girl with very bushy eyebrows. Someone was teasing her and asked, "What are you going to do when your eyebrows grow together?" She replied, "Just keep on going to Sunday school." What a marvelous attitude.

Whatever happens to us, even if our eyebrows grow together, may we keep on going to Sunday school. May we always be found faithful. Perhaps Job put it best: "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him" (Job 13:15 KJV).

Purity Vs. Pornography

DILLARD THURMAN

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." (Mt. 5:8). These words of Jesus Christ in the "Sermon on the Mount" are well known by all lovers of God's Word. The Son of God emphasized the importance of purity in thought and in deed. Through His apostle Paul, He tells us: "Now the end of the

commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." (1 Tim. 1:5). This is the spiritual base of operation! Christ wants His saints to "call on the Lord out of a Pure heart." (2 Tim. 2:22). And therefore Paul instructed Timothy, "Keep thyself pure," and also "Be thou an example of the believers in purity." (1 Tim. 5:22; 4:12). However, we live in a society where attaining and maintaining purity is a most difficult achievement. We are bombarded on every side with temptations in the most powerful and alluring forms! Drinking, gambling and illicit sex is enticingly presented on the screen by TV networks. Then even more explicitly it is shown on cable TV programs. Cries against TV violence have gone unheeded. As a result, sex crimes have become more prevalent and violent.

THE LAW OF SOWING AND REAPING

Long ago the prophet warned of calamities that come from sowing the wrong seed: "They have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind." (Hos. 8:7). Our sowing determines what the harvest will be! Paul has warned us: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." (Gal. 6:7-8). A wayward, lustful generation has spread the seed of wantonness, lasciviousness and degeneracy through sleazy sheets and degrading TV programs. Their heroes and heroines hold to the same morals as alley cats, but all the while glamorize "our liberated lifestyle." Violence and lawlessness is a regular diet! This display of perversion and depravity is now seen in the screaming headlines: "Child Molesting; Incest; Sexual Assault; Rape; Sodomy; Murder; Etc." Humanity has sown to the flesh; and now of the flesh are reaping corruption!

HAVE WE COUNTED THE COSTS?

It is downright foolish to sow the evil seed, and then pray for a crop failure! The harvest was determined by the seed chosen! The great force behind sexual promisquity and violent crimes will be found in pornography! It is the base for crime syndicates and drug traffic. It is not a "fly-by-night" undertaking! It is BIG BUSINESS, and it pours large amount of money per year into the coffers of the underworld! This is the life-blood of organized crime, and they care not that it is robbing innocents of their life-blood to fatten their bank roll! The Michigan State Police recently reported a study made of 35,000 sex crimes over a 20-year period. It showed that a minimum

of 43% of those crimes were porno-graph related! Police squads now report that over 80% of child molesters admitted being arroused by pornography! A lame, disgusting argument of sensual depravity "between consenting adults" doesn't hold water here! We are speaking of innocent children being marked for life by a sick pervert who was hooked on "porn."

Don't bother to write in that flimsy dodge, "Why don't you stick to the Bible, and leave this alone?" The Bible has a clear, clarion warning against nudity and illicit sex! Remember that David was a "man after God's own heart" (Acts 13:22); yet on seeing Bathsheba bathing, he lusted for her, committed adultery, contrived to have her husband killed, and by his foul deeds he would lament over three sons and a daughter! Long before God had warned: "Be sure your sin will find you out." (Num. 32:23). Friend, I will admit this is not a pretty subject: but I'd rather you face it with me now than face it in judgment! Have you really looked frankly and openly at what pornography is doing to our society? It is high time we unite, lift up our voice together as a trumpet, and cry out against this cancerous evil!

JUST WHAT IS PORNOGRAPHY?

The word, pornography comes from two Greek words: Porne, prostitute; and graphein, to write. Simply stated, pornography is that which is written or pictured that prostitutes the sexual powers purposed by God. A British social anthropologist, J.D. Unwin, wrote: "The energy which holds society together is sexual in nature. When a man is devoted to one woman and one family, he is motivated to build, save and protect, plan and prosper on their behalf. However, when his sexual interests are dispensed and generalized, his effort is invested in the gratification of sensual desires. Any human society is free to display great sexual freedom. They cannot do both for more than one generation. History reveals that entire societies deteriorate when free love reaches a position of social acceptance." Our current promisquity convinces me that we are nearing the brink! Most TV/movie heroes and heroines are profligates; their vice squads are themselves licentious; the "alternate lifestyle" of homosexuals is shown to be acceptable; and we are horrified at the results!

THE EVIL FRUIT OF PORNOGRAPHY!

We have plastered our magazine racks and adult bookstores with nudity; we have made all materials "sex oriented," designed to arrouse base passions; we have glorified "liberation" for boys

and girls—and, we must face the crisis of teenage pregnancies in Jr. & Sr. High Schools! Now it is too late to pray for a "crop failure." Neither is the solution found in murdering the unborn babies! We have placed the matter of sex education in the hands of Humanists in our schools, and our children have not been taught the principles that would help them make, the moral choice! No Humanist would refer them to the words of Jesus: "But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." (Mt. 5:28). Pornography brings this sin into the family room by way of TV!

Let us look to one example: Denmark legalized pornography in 1967, and made sex education compulsory that same year. They legalized abortion, and removed most sex crimes from the statute books. They had a sudden drop in sex crimes! But remember that which was a crime before they had legalized! Here is what they did not publicize: Assault rape increased by 300%; venereal disease jumped 200% among those over 20, by 250% between age 16-20, and by 400% with those 15 years and younger! The abortion rate rose 500%; divorce doubled in six years; and illegitimate pregnancies were up 50%! Whereas in Japan where pornography was not allowed, they showed a decrease of 49%. What does this tell you of this experiment?

FROM DEFENDERS OF PORNOGRAPHERS

There are those who would try to defend pornography, but though it may have defenders, pornography has no defense! Its defenders plead for "freedom of speech and information." This is guaranteed by our Constitution: but there is a vast difference between free speech/information and dissemination of filth/corruption! No man has the right to pollute and corrupt the minds of boys and girls, or even other adults! Strident voices cry out, "You can't legislate on morality!" But this is not so! We have rigid laws against theft, drunkenness, rape, murder, and yes, even libel! No man has yet advanced one good fruit of pornography! It is not productive of better living! It cannot improve society, or our culture!

WHY THEN DOES PORNOGRAPHY EXIST?

Pornography is BIG BUSINESS for a certain element in our society. Organized crime is its principal promoter. It is dispensed through choice outlets. One of the greatest outlets for this smut and sewage will be found in your neighborhood convenience store! Every year Southland Corporation makes a \$30 million profit from pornography sold in 7-Eleven stores! It is no wonder that many

churches have boycotted 7-Eleven Stores, and refuse to enter them! Greed and profit dictate their policies! "But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish, and, hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil." (1 Tim. 6:9-10). If you could take away the greed factor, they would clean up their shelves! By withholding patronage, they can be brought to reform! When shopkeepers learn that decent folk will not shop where pornography is pushed, they will clear it off their shelves! It is money that make sense to them!

LET THE BIBLE SPEAK TO US!

It is easier to turn from pornography when we hear the Bible: "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded." (Jas. 4:8). Pornography finds no place in clean hands and pure hearts! Carefully and prayerfully study Gal. 5:19-21; then ask yourself how pornography (both salacious writing and pictures) measure up! It is the impure fare upon which the lecherous glut! The indictment of Rom. 1:24-32 still falls on the pornographer to this day! We, too, must beware!

The Wise Man counsels: "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." (Prov. 4:23). We keep pure hearts by guarding our thoughts: "Where with all shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word. . . Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not, sin against thee." (Psa. 119:9, 11). Such filthy thoughts will find no lodging in a heart filled with God's Word! Paul assures us that God supplies strength to the "bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." (2 Cor. 10:5). Thus he tells us, "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." (Rom. 12:2). Our spiritual mind is renewed by seeking and thinking pure thoughts! Rather than filling our lives from the moral cesspool of pornography, let us heed his words: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely. whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." (Phil. 4:8). Jesus surely is coming: would you want such filth as pornography reflected in your life when you are called to meet Him?

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