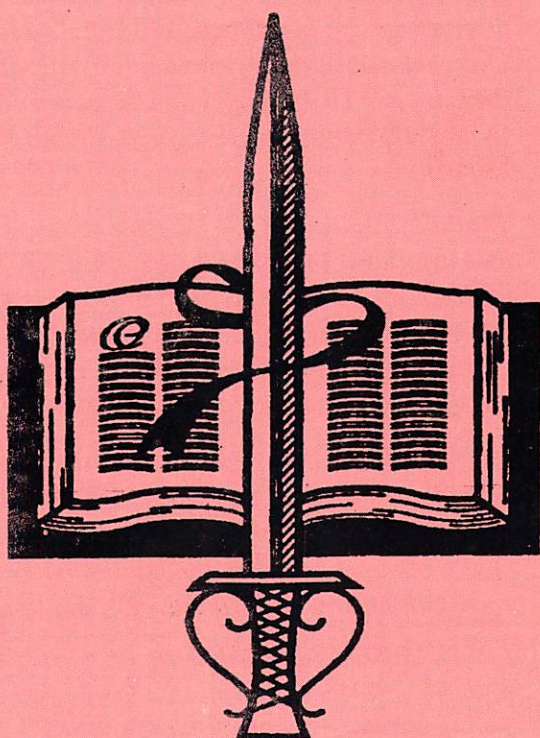


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The Bible Teacher



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 Corinthians 1:10).*
2. *That there should be only one plan or guideline of salvation, as is revealed and taught in the Bible, followed everywhere. All must 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 Testament doctrine of Christ (2 John 9).*

THE BIBLE TEACHER

Pleading for the Restoration of Pure New Testament Christianity

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EDITORIAL

What Does the Bible Teach?

Seek First God's Kingdom And His Righteousness

The beginning of a new year is always a blessing. The new year reminds us of various opportunities and challenges that are ever before us. While on earth we should live by redeeming the time (Ephesians 5:16). That is, we need to learn to use our time on earth wisely. We need to be praying to the Father in heaven, as Moses in the long ago did, "teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom." (Psalm 90:12). Living in this world we are making a record. Let us resolve to enjoy our families, guard our examples, and manifest our love for all others. But above all things, remember to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, as Jesus Christ taught. (Matthew 6:33). And if we will put God's kingdom and His righteousness first in our lives, the Lord has promised that He will add all other blessings to our lives, not only in this life, but also in the life to come.

Man is a dual being. He is both physical and spiritual, as this is how God had created him in the beginning. (Genesis 1:26, 27). Hence, he has physical needs and he also has spiritual needs. But we need to establish priorities in life. What is most important, body or soul. Physical body is that part of man which is perishable, but the soul or the spirit of man is imperishable and will live forever, because man's body was created from earth, but he has received his spirit from God. (Genesis 2:7; Ecclesiastes 12:7). The following words of Christ so rightly reveal the great importance of man's soul, "***For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world,***

and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:26).

What are we seeking in this life the most? Wherein lies our emphasis? What place does God and His will has in our lives? We all know and understand how pitifully brief is the span of our life on this earth. How suddenly does the sun of life sink into the void. How quickly does the hope of mortal life decline. Then how obtuse must he be accounted who vainly imagines that he is assured of many years of life's pleasure, ease and prosperity in this world? (James 4:13, 14). The real success of life does not lie in this world's wealth, health, fame, and power, as the rich man of Jesus' story in Luke 12:16-21 learned on the same night his soul was going to be required. The person who is not rich toward God is poor indeed!

The secret of the successful and happy life, as taught by Jesus, lies in seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. The kingdom of God is that realm where He is the king who rules over His subjects supremely. God's kingdom is not a democracy, but rather is theocracy. He does not share His rule or authority with any person on earth. He is the supreme King of His spiritual kingdom. He rules in the hearts and minds of men and women who have submitted their lives into His hands; they follow only His commandments and obey only His authority which He exerts over them through His written words in the Bible.

Since works of our own righteousness cannot commend us to God, we all need the righteousness of God, which He has made available for all in His Son Jesus Christ, "whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus." (Romans 3:25, 26).

God, our heavenly Father, who loads us each day with His manifold blessings, whose sun-shine we enjoy, and air we breathe, has not only created and given to us all things for our physical needs, but He has also made in Christ provision for the soul of man. God did not create man to suffer, but he had created man for happiness. He wants man to be happy each day of his life on earth, year after year. All suffering of man is related to sin. Man has been seeking happiness in vain and temporal things of this world, which has been the real cause of his suffering. But God, in His Son Jesus, has provided man redemption from sin. By being in Jesus Christ

man comes in contact with God's righteousness and thereby becomes a part of God's kingdom. Jesus Christ, therefore, is the source of all happiness.

New Testament Worship

Lesson Six

THE DAY OF WORSHIP

J.C. CHOATE

In the New Testament we not only have the importance of worship set forth, but we are also told on which day the Lord expects his people to assemble to worship. Which day is this?

There are those who teach that the Sabbath day is still binding upon man as the day of worship. Could this be true? Not if the law was taken out of the way, and it was according to 2 Corinthians 3; Colossians 2: 14; Hebrews 9: 16, 17 and Hebrews 10:9. It is argued though that Paul met with the Jews on the Sabbath day. This may be true, but no where does it state or indicate that he ever met for worship. Rather, he met with them to have an opportunity to teach them God's will.

If the Sabbath day then is not the day of worship, then which day is? As we turn through the pages of the New Testament we have more than one Scripture reference that answers this question. First of all, we will take an example of a group of New Testament Christians that have assembled for worship and we will see on what day they chose to assemble. For instance, when Paul was travelling through the city of Troas, the record says that he stopped off there for a few days in order that he might have the opportunity of meeting with the local Christians for worship. Now let us notice the reading itself: "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). Please observe that Acts 20: 6 says that he dwelt in Troas seven days. That meant that he was also there on the Sabbath day or on Saturday, but the record does not say that he met with the Christians on this day, but rather on the first day of the week, or the first day after the Sabbath day. Now what would be the significance of that? The significance would be that he did not tarry to worship on the Sabbath day, but rather to be

there to worship on the day that the Lord had appointed for worship and that was the first day of the week.

What is the first day of the week anyway? Well, under the law the Sabbath day was the seventh day of the week. That means that if the Sabbath day was the seventh day of the week, and there are only seven days in each week, then immediately after the Sabbath day would come the first day of the week, the second day of the week, and so on. Of course in modern times we call it Sunday and Sunday is listed as the first day of the week.

Why the first day of the week? Well, under the Law of Moses the day of worship was the Sabbath day or the last day of the week. Under the law of Christ the day of worship is Sunday or the first day of the week. That means that the Lord no longer comes last but first. (Matthew 6: 33).

But continuing, let us notice in the second place that the Apostle Paul instructs his Corinthian brethren as to the day they should give of their means. Let us read: "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. 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 16:1,2). But why was this day chosen as the day for them to give as they had been prospered? Because this was the day of worship and since they would be together for that then it would be an ideal time for them also to give of their means. Now surely if the day of worship had been the Sabbath day then Paul would not have asked them to assemble again on the very next day to give their contribution. On the other hand, those today who teach that the day of worship is Saturday, do they return again on Sunday to obey God's command concerning giving? If not, then why not?

Later on John spoke of the first day of the week as being the Lord's day. He said, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day." (Revelation 1: 10). It is true that in one sense that every day is the Lord's but John must have been speaking of this day in a special way. The Lord's day here would refer to the day of worship or the first day of the week. Otherwise, why would he have called it the Lord's day?

But why is the first day of the week so important? Apart from the fact, as already pointed out, it is suggestive of a change in laws and that the Lord now is to come first, there are several other reasons as to why it is important.

1. Christ was Resurrected on the First Day of the Week

On the morning of the Lord's resurrection, the record says, "In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalane and the other Mary to see the sepulchre." (Matthew 28: 1). A little later that day, we read, "Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in their midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you." (John 20: 19).

2. Jesus appeared before the disciples again on the first day of the week.

Not only did Jesus come forth from the grave on the first day of the week, and appeared to his disciples later in the same day, but now once more it is interesting to note that he again appears to them on the first day of the week. It says, "And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you." (John 20: 26). If Jesus appeared to his disciples on the first day of the week, and then eight days later re-appeared, on what day would the second visit be made? The first day of the week, of course. Why do the Scriptures call this to our attention again and again? Because it was going to be a very important day under the law of Christ. It was going to be the day of worship.

3. The church had its beginning on the first day of the week. (Acts 2).

The day of Pentecost came fifty days after the Passover and the day the Lord was resurrected from the grave. So if the Lord was resurrected on the first day of the week and then Pentecost came fifty days later, then what day would Pentecost come on? The first day of the week. But what is so important about the day of Pentecost? In this case it is important to the extent that it came on the first day of the week and it was on this day that the Lord's church was established. Not only so, but many important things happened on this day for the first time, and all of these things tend to place more emphasis on this particular day. For instance, the Holy Spirit came on this day, the first gospel sermon in fact was preached on this day, the first obedient souls were saved and added to the church on this day. Therefore, the day on which these things occurred cannot be over-looked.

Surely by now we are convinced that the Lord has chosen the first day of the week as being the day for his people to assemble

on and to worship. With the example of the early Christians meeting on this day, and then their being commanded to meet on this day to give, this should take away any doubts that might have once existed. Remember, the Lord is to come first in worship and in all other things. That is why each first day of the week Christians are to assemble to worship and to remember Him who died for them and who arose for them on the first day of the week.

How Well Do Your Eyes See?

W. FRANK WALTON

"Blessed are your eyes, because they see" (Matt 13:16). Jesus pronounces the supreme happiness of seeking foremost the truth of the gospel. Faith is the eye of the soul. By faith, we can see forever.

Also, Simeon rejoiced when he saw baby Jesus in the temple, realizing the Messiah had come. He could die in peace, as he himself said, "for my eyes have seen your salvation" (Luke 2:30). "Eyes that look are common, eyes that see are rare". How well do we see?

1. Open Eyes. The gospel of God's unfathomable grace in Christ to unworthy sinners is the greatest story ever considered in the heart of man. The apostle Paul's stirring commission was preaching "to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God" (Acts 26:18). Our greatest need is to first realize what our soul's greatest need is. Our greatest problem is sin and God's greatest gift is salvation from the just penalty of our sin.

The centerpiece of God's part in this plan is the Person and work of Jesus Christ. The Galatians obeyed the gospel of Christ, "before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified" (Gal 3:1). Paul rebuked them because their focus was being taken off the heart of the pure gospel of Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 15:1-4).

Staring at someone is often considered bad manners but not in the religion of Christ! We need to run our spiritual race, "fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith" (Heb 12:1-2). We need to fix our attention on Jesus' supreme value in our lives "to see him more clearly, to love him more dearly and to follow him more nearly."

2. Enlightened Eyes. "The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness" (Matt 6:22-23). In context of laying up heavenly treasures (v. 20), Jesus urges a spiritual eye examination. Our spiritual eye is the window of our soul. If our eye is diseased with materialism or worldly worries (cf. Matt 6:19-34), we cannot see what's most valuable. Without clear spiritual perception, we'll blindly stumble into damnation. "Better keep yourself clean and bright; you are the window through which you must see the world" (G.B. Shaw).

Paul prayed "that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of his calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe" (Eph. 1:18-19). Do we see that we're richer in Christ than a multi millionaire? By obedient faith, we have a secure future in heaven, forgiveness from past sins, a present loving family in Christ with a Father's constant care and more! Do we see it?

3. Searching Eyes. "Open my eyes, that I may behold wonderful things from Your law" (Psa. 119:18). This should be the prayer of every Bible student and reader of this paper. Do we approach the study of Scripture with eager delight and exquisite anticipation? A rich blessing awaits every time we open the Bible reverently, study it deeply, and obey it carefully. Alexander Campbell helped to blaze a trail to restore men to the ideals of New Testament Christianity. He approached his daily, 4 a.m. study of the Bible afresh by seeing the text as if he had never read it before. Do we?

Soaring With Eagles

HAL HAMMONS

There are two kinds of people in the world: people who love to fly, and people who are terrified of flying. I count myself in the first category. If I were to become independently wealthy, I'm sure flying lessons would be one of my first indulgences. The idea of escaping the bonds of gravity itself is inspiring to contemplate and thrilling to experience.

How much more inspiring is it for the Christian to soar above the drudgery and depravity that so characterizes our life here on earth. In Christ I can, whenever I like, pick up God's word or sing

a psalm or utter a prayer, and in so doing access a bottomless reservoir of spiritual refreshment. Jesus told the woman at the well how He would give His followers "a well of water springing up to eternal life" (John 4:14).

But sometimes I have to wait. I don't feel invigorated at first. I feel mentally and spiritually drained. I wonder where the Lord is in my hour of need. But with patience, and often with the assistance of passages like Isaiah 40:31, I "mount up with wings like eagles." I find that reserve of spiritual strength that I need to survive and thrive in conditions that are often adverse.

I could run scared of the Lord, of course. I could shy away from the responsibility that comes with being His child, trusting that I can find inspiration on my own. But in so doing I would miss the greatest thrill imaginable — living apart from sin, living in the service of the King, and one day living with Him and the saints of all ages in heaven. Yes, I can soar even as high as heaven — but only if I put my trust in Him.

THE LORD'S SUPPER

DAVID TARBET

The Lord's Supper was observed on Sunday and only on Sunday in the early church. At Troas, the disciples came together to break bread on the "first day of the week" (Acts 20:7). This is the only New Testament passage that specifies the day on which the Supper was observed, but several reasons explain why this particular verse provides ample direction for the church of our day.

First, we should notice that the breaking of bread was not the same thing as a common meal. A distinction is made between the two in the context that reads, "Then he went upstairs again and broke bread and ate" (Acts 20:11). The word "and" implies two separate actions: the breaking of bread and a common meal.

Paul and his companions had been present in Troas for seven days (Acts 20:6). Word would certainly have spread through the church and the community that the famous apostle was a guest in their midst. Yet on the first day of the week, the disciples did not assemble to hear the apostle preach. They gathered "to break bread." The Lord's Supper was the most important reason for their meeting together — the prime purpose of Lord's Day worship. Although preaching the gospel is very important to the spiritual

maturing of a congregation, the Lord's Supper should remain the primary focus of worship.

The first day of the week was uniquely significant to the early Christians. Jesus Christ arose from the dead on the first day of the week (Mark 16:9). The resurrection made Christianity different from all religions. Jesus did what no other person had ever done — He conquered death, overcoming the effect of Eden's curse and assuring His disciples that they, too, would live because of Him (John 6:57).

Jesus was declared to be the Son of God with power by His resurrection from the dead (Romans 1:4). The resurrection of Christ on the first day of the week would, in and of itself, be sufficient reason to expect early Christians to meet every first day of the week in His honor. Every first day of the week, as they met to remember the atonement in sweet communion, they were reminded that "it was impossible for death to keep its hold on Him" (Acts 2:24). The weekly observance of the Lord's Supper is not a shock to discover. If the primitive church did not celebrate the death and resurrection of Jesus every Sunday, we would be surprised indeed!

Some have mistakenly thought the church in Jerusalem partook of the Lord's Supper on a daily basis. However a careful reading of the context shows that they met together on a daily basis for teaching in the temple courts (Acts 2:46). The "breaking of bread" took place in a different location: "in their homes." The context does not indicate how often the breaking of bread occurred but indicates that it was observed with frequency, for they "devoted themselves ... to the breaking of bread" (v. 42). In their homes they also shared common meals, for they "ate together with glad and sincere hearts" (v. 46).

Primitive believers coined two new words from a common root, thereby tying together the Lord's Day and the Lord's Supper. The first of these is translated in English "the Lord's Supper" (1 Corinthians 11:20), the other "the Lord's Day" (Revelation 1:10). Both words come from the root word that means "belonging to the Lord." Although the root expression occurs in inscriptions and papyri prior to the coming of Christ, it is used only in reference to earthly authorities, such as a master, proprietor or emperor. First-century Christians applied the root word to the Lord Jesus Christ, to the Supper belonging to Him and to the day belonging to Him. These two expressions should still be considered together — the Lord's Supper belongs to the Lord's Day; whenever the Lord's Day comes

around the Lord's Supper will be eaten.

History affirms that the Lord's Supper was observed every Sunday and only on Sunday in the early church. The Didache (A.D. 130) declares: "come together each Lord's day of the Lord, break bread, and give thanks." Justin (A.D. 150) writes: "And on the day called Sunday there is a gathering together in the same place ... When we cease from our prayer, bread is presented and wine and water. ... A distribution and participation of the elements for which thanks have been given is made to each person." The Acts of John (end of second century) records: "On the next day, since it was the Lord's day and all the brethren were assembled, John ... broke bread and gave to us all, praying for each of the brethren to be worthy of the Lord's grace of the most holy eucharist."

When we observe the Lord's Supper with the same frequency as did the early church, we are doing what has to be right. Why would anyone want to do something other than what is authorized by Scripture?

BAPTISM

HUGH FULFORD

The New Testament mentions several baptisms; yet Paul emphatically states that there is "one baptism" for all. (Ephesians 4:5 NKJV). Of the several baptisms mentioned, which is the "one baptism"?

John's baptism (Matthew 3:4-6) ceased to be valid after the formal inauguration of the Christian era (Acts 19:1-7). The baptism of suffering (Matthew 20:22-23) was fulfilled in the agony of Christ on the cross and the subsequent persecution of His disciples (Luke 12:50; 1 Peter 2:21). The baptism of fire described in Matthew 3:11 is yet to occur in the eternal punishment of the disobedient (2 Thessalonians 1:6-9). Holy Spirit baptism could be administered only by the Lord (Matthew 3:11), but the baptism commanded by Christ in the great commission (Matthew 28:18-20) could be and was administered by men in water (Acts 8:36-39). Thus, water baptism is the "one baptism" of which Paul spoke when he wrote to the Ephesians in A.D. 62/63.

To understand the place of this "one baptism" in God's scheme of redemption, three questions, each encapsulated in a single word, need to be asked.

What?

Baptism is described as a "washing." Saul was instructed to "arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins" (Acts 22:16). God, "according to His mercy," has "saved us by the washing of regeneration" (Titus 3:5). The church, the aggregate body of the saved, has been sanctified and cleansed "with the washing of water by the word" (Ephesians 5:25-26).

The New Testament describes baptism as a going "down into the water" and a coming "up out of the water" (Acts 8:38-39). Paul says that we were "buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God" (Colossians 2:12). Neither sprinkling nor pouring meets the requirements of baptism as set forth by God in the New Testament.

Who?

Biblical baptism is for a believer in Christ who has repented of his sins. Jesus said, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved" (Mark 16:16). The apostles stressed that one must "repent, and let every one ... be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 2:38). Without a personal faith in Christ and a genuine repentance of sins, baptism has no efficacy. Because children under the age of accountability are not charged with sin (Matthew 18:3; 19:14; Ezekiel 18:20), they have nothing of which to repent and thus are not proper candidates for baptism.

Why?

A number of things occur when a proper candidate is baptized. Baptism is "for (eis, unto, in order to obtain) the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). Baptism is into the death of Christ (Romans 6:3). Because Christ's blood was shed in His death (John 19:34), when one is baptized he contacts the blood of Christ which takes away sin (Matthew 26:28; Revelation 1:5). Thus in baptism one's sins are washed away (Acts 22:16), and he becomes clean again.

Baptism puts one into Christ (Galatians 3:27). It likewise inducts one into the spiritual body of Christ, the church (1 Corinthians 12:13; Colossians 1:18). The person who has been cleansed by the blood of Christ is saved and added to the church (Acts 2:47). Thus the church itself is said to have been purchased by the blood of Christ (Acts 20:28). No wonder in referring to Noah's deliverance from the corrupt world of his day, Peter declared, "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience

toward God), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 3:21).

Conclusion

Every morally accountable person on earth needs to hear the good news of Christ's death for the sins of the world, believe that news, confess that Christ is truly the Son of God, repent of his sins, and be immersed in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit for the remission of sins (Matthew 28:18-20). This is the only true way to the Father, and the blessings of forgiveness of sins.

Personal Holiness

WENDELL WINKLER

Repetitiously God affirms and exhorts in several forms, "Be ye holy, for I am holy" (Leviticus 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7, 26; 21:8; 1 Peter 1:16 ASV). Notice the "I" and "ye" in these passages. Thus, based on the holiness of God, man is expected to be holy. In other words, man is to partake of the very nature of God (2 Peter 1:4).

God desires that man be like Him, holy. What father does not swell with pride when someone observes, "Why your son is just like you, a carbon copy, your very image." Indeed, father-son identity! Our Father in heaven wants us to be like Him.

Notice the ways we are to be holy. We are to "worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness" (1 Chronicles 16:29; Psalm 29:2). We are to "put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Ephesians 4:24). God tells us to "follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14). We are set apart to be a holy temple (1 Corinthians 3:17), a holy nation (1 Peter 2:9) and a holy priesthood (v. 5). We must be holy to draw close to God (Numbers 16:5; James 4:8). Therefore, God desires man to be holy.

What is holiness as it relates to man? Let us first consider what holiness is not. It is not a pseudo piety because of which we tiptoe when we walk, whisper when we talk, and ooze spirituality in our demeanor. Nor is holiness a canopy under which our sincere motives cover a failure to conform to the Lord's teaching, morally and doctrinally. Polygamy and serial marriages are still a violation of God's will (Matthew 19:1-9; Romans 7:1-4), regardless of the sincerity of those thus situated. Premillennialism is still a system of error, regardless of the sincerity of those who teach or believe

it. To affirm otherwise in these matters results in man's being his own subjective standard of authority rather than the Scriptures' being his objective standard for behavior and teaching. The results? The floodgates are open! The time of the Judges is duplicated (Judges 21:25).

When we consider what holiness is, however, we observe: (a) the Greek word *hagios*, translated "holy," according to Vine, "fundamentally signifies separated (among the Greeks, dedicated to the gods), and hence, in Scripture in its moral and spiritual significance, separated from sin and therefore consecrated to God, sacred." Vine adds, "It is evident that *hagios* and its kindred words ... express something more and higher than *hieros*, sacred, outwardly associated with God ... something more than *semnos*, worthy, honorable; something more than *hagnos*, pure, free from defilement. *Hagios* is ... more comprehensive ... it is characteristically godlikeness" [in this development, Vine quotes G.G. Stephens in *Hastings' Biblical Dictionary*], (b) Then, there is the Greek word *hosios*, also translated "holy". This word means, "undefiled by sin, free from wickedness, religiously observing every moral obligation, pure, holy, pious ... be pious towards God, God's pious worshippers" (Thayer).

Consequently, holiness, as it relates to man, involves two matters: sanctification (being set apart) and God-likeness. Vine, in defining *hagiasmos* [translated "holiness" in the Authorized Version and "sanctification" in the Revised Version] says, "It signifies (a) separation to God (1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:2). (b) The resultant state, the conduct befitting those so separated (1 Thessalonians 4:3-4,7). ... Sanctification is thus the state predetermined by God for believers into which in grace he calls them [not unconditionally], and in which they begin their Christian course and so pursue it. Hence, they are called 'saints' (*hagoi*)." He then adds that "the corresponding verb *hagiazō* denotes to set apart to God." First, holiness as relates to man, involves the idea of separation or sanctification. Indeed, Christians are set apart from the world. This concept is inherent in the word *ekklesia*, translated "church," "the called out." Christians are in the world, but we are not of the world.

Second, holiness as relates to man involves the idea of God-likeness. We previously observed that G.B. Stephens states, "It is evident that *hagios* and his kindred words ... express' something more and higher than *hi-eros* ... *semnos* ... *hagnos* ... it is

characteristically God-likeness." Yes, "God-likeness." We are to "be partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4). We are "to be conformed to the image of His Son" (Romans 8:29).

To illustrate, the sabbath was holy because it was separated from the other six days and because it was dedicated to the service of God. Separation and dedication are two elements involved in our personal holiness.

If we perfect holiness in the fear of God (2 Corinthians 7:1), never wavering from the way of holiness (Isaiah 35:8), we will one day join the redeemed of all ages and sing with voices of perfection throughout the non-ending ages of eternity, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!" In the meantime, let us meaningfully sing, "More holiness give me."

JESUS PRAYED FOR UNITY

DAVID COOK

Nothing saddens the Father more than to see the unity of the body of Christ broken. As we look back over our current history, it does not take us long to see that very thing has happened and continues to happen in our brotherhood. A plea for unity comes from the heart of Christ as He passionately prays in the garden for strength to endure His impending crucifixion and for unity among those who would believe in His name (John 17:20-21).

This seems to be in keeping with the character of God. In 1 John 4:7-10, we read that God is love. A true knowledge of God is based entirely on one's ability to display love for his brother or sister (vv. 7-8). What John attempts to do, both through his gospel and his epistles, is to explain the depths of God's love. It is on the basis of the relationship we form with God through the sacrifice of Christ that we enter into fellowship with Him. We see this first in the prayer Jesus utters in the garden scene in John 17.

• "That they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee" (John 17:21 NASB). The oneness He is praying for is in direct comparison with the relationship He has with the Father. He enjoys a father-son relationship with God, and He prays that we future believers will share in that relationship. Because of the loyalty Christ showed to His eternal purpose, we can all become children of God (1 John 3:1). Fellowship with God was established and paid for at the foot of the cross. By the grace of God, I can be

considered His child. Becoming a child of God is not a relationship I can merit but one that is initiated and established by the willingness of Christ to die on a cross. By His sacrifice, I now can be counted as a forgiven child of God (Romans 8:14-15). I now have a relationship with God that did not previously exist. This relationship cannot exist without the sacrifice of Jesus. Notice that the unity for which He prays was not at all possible until after the cross had been endured.

- "That they also may be in Us" (John 17:21). The relationship we enter into is one with the Father and with the Son (1 John 1:3). It is maintained and sustained by God. Because of the cross and the answered prayer of Jesus, I am able to enter into a holy relationship with Jesus Christ and God the Father. This holy union is held together and instituted by a loving Father who wanted more than anything else to have a relationship with me.

- "That the world may believe that Thou didst send Me" (John 17:21). Jesus closes His prayer for unity by asking the Father to use the relationship as a tool for evangelism. One of the blessings of baptism so often overlooked is that we are added to a number (Acts 2:41). Not only have I been put into a unified relationship with God, but I also have been added to a body of believers. John says, "Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another" (1 John 4:11). Because God has proved His love by sending Christ to the cross (John 3:16; 1 John 4:10), we ought to display love for one another. This relationship between brothers and sisters is one that has been purchased with a price. It is a relationship we ought to cherish.

In the final words of Christ's prayer, we receive the application for us today. Let us consider with careful hearts what we are winning people to. If we truly have a desire to return to the church of the New Testament, we must be unified. As the church is first established in Acts 2, we see an image of a church based on the principles John describes in his epistles. They loved one another (vv. 44-47).

If we want to overcome the challenges facing the brotherhood today, we need to consider prayerfully the vision Christ had for the church. After all, it is His body; He died for it, and I am confident He knows what is best for it. His body is not one that can grow if it is divided against itself. How much more effective would our methods of evangelism be if we were winning people to a unified movement involved in the ministry of loving one another!

Who Can Live With God?

JIM WARD

Psalm 15 asks two questions: "LORD, who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill?" That is, who is fit company for God? The psalmist then sketches the character of such a person. One deft stroke reveals the godly man as one "who despises a vile man but honors those who fear the Lord" (v. 4). This implies at least three points.

The most obvious one is that a righteous man hates evil and loves good. Psalm 97:10 commands, "You who love the LORD, hate evil!" David said that because he loved the law of God (Psa 119:113, 163) he hated every false way (Psa. 119:104, 128).

Moving to the New Testament, Paul tells us that love "does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth" (1 Cor 13:6). John has no doubt about the lineage of wicked men: "He who sins is of the devil... In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother" (1 John 3:8, 10).

The second point is that a righteous man must be able to distinguish between good and evil. Isaiah 5:20 says, "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" Hebrews 5 notes that, while infants are not "acquainted with the teaching about righteousness" (v. 13), mature saints are those "who by constant use (of the teaching) have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil" (v. 14).

The third point, which grows out of the first, is that one who has fellowship with God is impartial. He hates evil and loves good no matter where or in whom he finds them. He eschews double standards. Exodus 23 strongly illustrates this in forbidding both favor to the poor and injustice against them. Verse 3 says, "You shall not show partiality to a poor man in his dispute," which verse 6 balances with, "You shall not pervert the judgment of your poor in his dispute." Poverty is not the issue in deciding what is just, a principle which we honor in our culture by having justice wear a blindfold.

Leviticus 19:15 puts the matter even more succinctly: "You shall do no injustice in judgment. You shall not be partial to the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty. In righteousness you shall judge

your neighbor." Wisdom declares, "He who justifies the wicked, and he who condemns the just, Both of them alike are an abomination to the Lord (Prov 17:15; see also Prov. 24:23-25; 28:21).

Now before we assume that this truth applies only in a court of law, let's remember James 2:1-4: "My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality. For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, 'You sit here in a good place,' and say to the poor man, 'You stand there,' or, 'Sit here at my footstool,' have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?"

To the contrary, "If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself,' you do well; but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors" (Jas. 2:8, 9).

How does God view sin? It's an abomination — in the rich or in the poor, in men as well as women, across all colour lines, in me or in others. Name any double standard you can think of, and understand that God will not have it. To Him, sin is an abomination-period! A person who longs for God's companionship will come to see it in the same way. An abhorrence of our own sins will lead us to repentance, not to denial or excuses. The sins of others will call us to rescue them, some with compassion and others with fear (cf. Jude 22, 23). But one who aspires to fellowship with God will never be indifferent to sin, much less tolerate it.

CANNOT SIN

WELDON WARNOCK

We are told by some of our religious neighbors that the soul of a child of God cannot sin, but rather only the outward man sins. This erroneous position is taken in order to justify a denominational dogma of "once saved, always saved." A child of God may sin over and over, they reason, but this has no effect on his soul.

I read an article some months ago wherein a preacher stated that it is impossible for the soul of a born again person to sin. He quoted 1 John 3:9. This passage declares: "Whosoever is born of

God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." The phrase, "doth not commit sin," is *present active indicative*, which means, "does not keep on doing sin as a life habit." The idea is that a Christian quits living in sin, not as he did when walking in darkness. John adds that he "cannot sin" or go right on living in sin and expect to go to heaven.

To say it is impossible for a child of God to sin contradicts 1 John 1:8, 9, 10; 2:1. In these passages John states that we have sinned, we do sin, and we shall sin. The "seed" in 1 John 3:9 is the word of God (Luke 8:11). It fortifies us against sin. David said, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Psa. 119:11).

It is rationalized that saved, children of God, may engage in adultery, lying, stealing, homosexuality, murder, cursing, idolatry, hatred, bitterness and wrath, and still go to heaven even if they die while practicing any, or all of these sins. Why? Because, as they say, the soul is protected from sin; that the body is what sins in these sinful and ungodly practices. Let's introduce the beloved apostle Paul and find out what he says about the inward man. He writes: "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (1 Cor. 9:27). Notice the contrast between "I" (the inward man) and "body" (the outward man). Which one could become a castaway (rejected at the judgment)? Clearly, and quite obviously, the inward man, the "I." Of course, the body is used as an instrument in committing many sins as well as the instrument for righteousness (Rom 6:13). Sin, however, originates in the heart or soul and often is manifested through the body.

Jesus said, "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man" (Matt 15:19,20). Yet, Calvinistic preachers have the audacity to tell us that the soul which has been saved never sins. Jesus, in unmistakable language, says that sin originates in the inner man, the heart.

If a child of God cannot be lost, regardless of what he does, then why the warnings about falling, the exhortations to endure, and the examples of God's people falling away? Paul warns, "take heed lest ye fall" (1 Cor 10:12). Peter stated: "If ye do these things, ye shall never fall" (2 Pet 1:9). "These things" in the context are virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, etc. Peter implies if we

do not do them we shall fall. Jesus taught that there are those who for a little while believe, but in time of temptation, fall away (Luke 8:13). The writer of Hebrews says, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God" (Heb 3:12). Notice that these are Christians, and through becoming unbelievers, they depart (apostatize) from the living God. Observe that the heart could become evil, that is, the inward man. As an example, Paul stated that 23,000 Israelites fell in one day by committing fornication (1 Cor 10:8). Yet, these Calvinistic preachers keep right on singing the same old man-made tune, "Once saved, always saved."

Friends, be not deceived. Those who practice sin shall not inherit the kingdom of God, including children of God (1 Cor. 6:9,10; Gal. 5:19-21).

JUST WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

DILLARD THURMAN

THE CHURCH: THE KINGDOM OF GOD!

No other term of reference is used for the church more often than "the kingdom" of God or heaven. Even of old, the prophet declared: "*Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.*" (Jer. 23:5). Thus it was fixed in God's revealed plan! The Seed of David had been promised as their future King! The Psalmist sang: "*Yet have I set my king upon the holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.*" (Psa. 2:6-7). When Daniel saw "*One like the Son of man,*" he then prophesied, "*And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.*" (Dan. 7:13-14). This finds expression in the words of Heb. 12:28— "*Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.*" As Jesus became the Head over all things to the church (Eph. 1:22-23), so He also was the King over the kingdom of God. The word *church* speaks of its relationship

to the world as the *called out*. The word *kingdom* speaks of its governmental aspect, with Christ reigning over it as King.

Christ, a King With a Kingdom!

Before His birth, an angel announced to Mary, "*He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.*" (Lk. 1:32-33). Thus when Wise Men from the East sought Him as a babe, their question was: "*Where is he that is born King of the Jews?*" (Mt. 2:2). It was known afar that this One would be King! When Nathanael was brought to Him, he exclaimed: "*Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.*" (Jno. 1:49). Such accolades did not cease; at His triumphal entry, Jesus was greeted by those who cried, "*Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord.*" (Jno. 12:13). Finally, during His appearance before Pilate, Jesus was asked, "*Art thou a king then?*" And to this He replied, "*Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.*" (Jno. 18:37). That was made abundantly clear when they made their charge against Him, saying, "*We have found this fellow perverting the nation. . . saying that he himself is Christ a King. And Pilate asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answered him and said, Thou sayest it.*" (Lk. 23:2-3). At no time did He deny being a King over the kingdom of God!

Jesus Taught Gospel of Kingdom

As we studied earlier, John the Baptist, Jesus Christ, the twelve and the seventy, went forth preaching one central theme: "*Repent; the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*" This was recorded as the work of Jesus: "*And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom.*" (Mt. 4:23). Later, Jesus said, "*There be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.*" (Mk. 9:1). To His trusted disciples He made promise: "*Fear not, little flock: for it is the Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.*" (Lk. 12:32). It was to His disciples that He promised the keys of the kingdom (Mt. 16:18-19; 19:28). These keys Peter used on Pentecost to bring in the Jews, and at the household of Cornelius to bring in the Gentiles (Acts 2:36-42; 10:34-48). The same keys were used for both Jew and Gentile, and Jesus was King over both!

The Nature of That Kingdom

It was the nature of the kingdom that men most misunderstood. They visualized an earthly kingdom, with Jerusalem its capital, reclaiming all the glory of David's and Solomon's! Even His followers had this erroneous conception, and sought to make Him king by force (Jno. 6:15). Jesus sought to clarify this: "*And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, He answered and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo here! or, Lo, there! for behold, the kingdom of God is within you.*" (Lk. 17:20-21) Later, when on trial, Jesus said: "*My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.*" (Jno. 18:36). Jesus plainly taught that the kingdom would not come with the sound of trumpets, the waving of banners, and great parades! His kingdom was not of this earth, and would not have such world ostentations to draw attention!

You hear a constant, blatant harangue on radio and TV by religious racketeers who promote the same erroneous conception of the kingdom! They claim that Jesus Christ will return to the Mount of Olives," march across the Kidron Valley to the Beautiful Gate, which will miraculously open, and He will then set up His Throne where the Dome of the Rock now stands, and will reign for a thousand years! The error of this is it makes a liar of Jesus who said His kingdom was not of this world; and it also denies all that is said of Christ's second coming! He is not coming back to reign, but to abdicate His throne!

The Authority of this Great King!

When He left the earth, Jesus stated: "*All power [authority] is given unto me in heaven and in earth.*" (Mt. 28:18). Thus Paul wrote of "*the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords.*" (1 Tim. 6:15). Also it was revealed unto John: "*And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.*" (Rev. 19:16). Jesus well knew "*That the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he came from God, and went to God.*" (Jno. 13:3). Thus He could say, "*The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son.*" (Jno. 5:22). There is no limit on that authority: "*He is the head of the body, the church: who is the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence. For it*

pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell." (Col. 1:18-19). His kingdom will stand forever; but He will voluntarily give up that reign!

As stated before, Jesus will not return to reign and rule — He is coming back to abdicate the throne! *"Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death."* (1 Cor. 15:24-26). Read carefully the entire passage, and you will see there is no place to allow any reign of a thousand years! The kingdom (church) was established on Pentecost (Acts 2), and from that point, it was spoken of as being in existence! (See Acts 8:12; 20:25; 28:23; 1 Thes. 2:12).

Citizens of the Kingdom of God

Jesus emphatically declared, *"Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."* (Jno. 3:5). This new birth is more easily seen by studying what they did on hearing the first gospel sermon, as being led by the Spirit's word they were baptized for *remission* of sins (Acts 2:36-41). Or study Rom. 6:3-4, where it is shown we are led by the Spirit to obey the Lord in baptism, and raised to walk in newness of life. We are then *"delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son."* (Col. 1:13). Remember that Jesus taught: *"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."* (Mt. 7:21). But all the more, after entering the kingdom, we must render obedience to the King!

Humility and Meekness in Citizens

The mother of James and John came to Jesus with the request that her two sons would sit on either side of Him in His kingdom. But Jesus used the occasion to teach a needed lesson on humility! Jesus said, *"Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."* (Mt. 20:20-28). The road to greatness is in servitude and ministering! A proper relationship is thus given: *"Likewise, ye younger submit yourselves to the elder. Yea, all of*

you be subject one to another, and be clothed in humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." (1 Pet. 5:5). *"Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another."* (Rom. 12:10). As the kingdom of God differs from the world, so the citizens of God's kingdom also are different.

IF A MAN DESIRES OVERSEEING

DAN R. OWEN

Today's church is truly at a momentous time in its history. If ever the church needed leaders, it is now. Many churches are comprised of people from four or five different generations and a multitude of backgrounds. To grow in the direction God intends, the church needs strong, concerned, forward-thinking men dedicated to doing the will of God as revealed in Scripture. It needs men who have been shaped by the Spirit of God. It needs men who have the task of shepherding deep within their hearts.

In 1 Timothy 3:1, the King James Version says, "This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work." In our day, this translation of the passage leaves some gross misimpressions. First, it uses the term "bishop," which carries with it many images of power and prominence from the 17th century English church. Those Anglicans that translated the King James Bible envisioned something quite different than the New Testament elder. Next, they translated the word "*episkopes*" as "the office of a bishop." This also leaves a wrong impression. The word in the original language would more accurately be translated "overseeing," or "caretaking." It has reference not to some high church office but to the task of looking after or caring for people's souls. It describes the task of a shepherd who looks after his sheep. The passage itself explains: "He desireth a good work" or as other translations say, "desires a noble task". What precisely is it that such a man is to desire? It is the task of looking after people spiritually. It is the caring for the souls of others. It is the helping of other people to maintain a good relationship with God so that they will be welcomed by God in eternity.

Several things can be said about such a man. First, such a man cares about souls. He no longer views other people in a fleshly way but sees them as valuable, eternal, immortal souls who are precious in the sight of God (2 Corinthians 5:16). He sees the value of these souls and wants to help them spiritually.

Second, such a man understands the gravity of spiritual matters. He knows what it means to be lost and what it means to be saved. He understands the way of salvation and wants to help people walk in that way. He takes spiritual matters seriously when others may view them casually.

Third, such a man has a great desire to do the will of God. One who

would truly try to look after souls has a powerful sense of responsibility toward God. Such a man wants to obey God and wants to help other people obey God. The will of God super-cedes the desires of people in this man's mind because he knows that what is ultimately best for the people is to obey God.

Fourth, such a man as described in 1 Timothy 3:1 will have a strong sense of God's mission. He will lead people to accomplish what God has called us to accomplish. God's mission is the sharing of the gospel, reaching out to the lost, and the nurturing and training of those who are saved. Such a leader will have a vision of where the church is supposed to go.

Fifth, such a man will be jealous of every soul in the church. He will want to guard each one from evil influences both doctrinally and morally. He will watch for wolves and warn the flock about them because he cares for their souls.

Sixth, such a man as described in this passage will be one who tries hard to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3). He knows that God wants the church to be a place of peace and brotherly love. He will work to bring brothers and sisters together and will encourage them to have one heart and one spirit as they serve God. Because he knows that division is destructive to souls, he works hard for peace and unity.

Finally, such a man who desires to care for souls will be a humble man. He will realize how great is the task and how many obstacles Satan will place in the way. He will feel small and inadequate to such a huge task and will beg God regularly for His help and strength. He will trust God to work through his feeble efforts and not trust in himself and his ability.

There is no nobler task than the task of looking after the souls of others. Loving people and helping them toward heaven is the greatest work in all the world. It is eternal work, this work of shepherding. Those of us who teach must try to implant a vision of what this work involves, so that only such men as are qualified will seek to do it.

May each of us pray diligently and daily for God to raise up such men for the church today so that we can move forward in the years to come as the people of God.

FEAR OF GOD

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge But fools despise wisdom and instruction. (Proverbs 1:7)

The fear of the Lord prolongs days, But the years of the wicked will be shortened. (Proverbs 10:27)

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. A good understanding have all those who do His commandments. His praise endures forever. (Psalm 111:10).

Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil. (Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14).

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