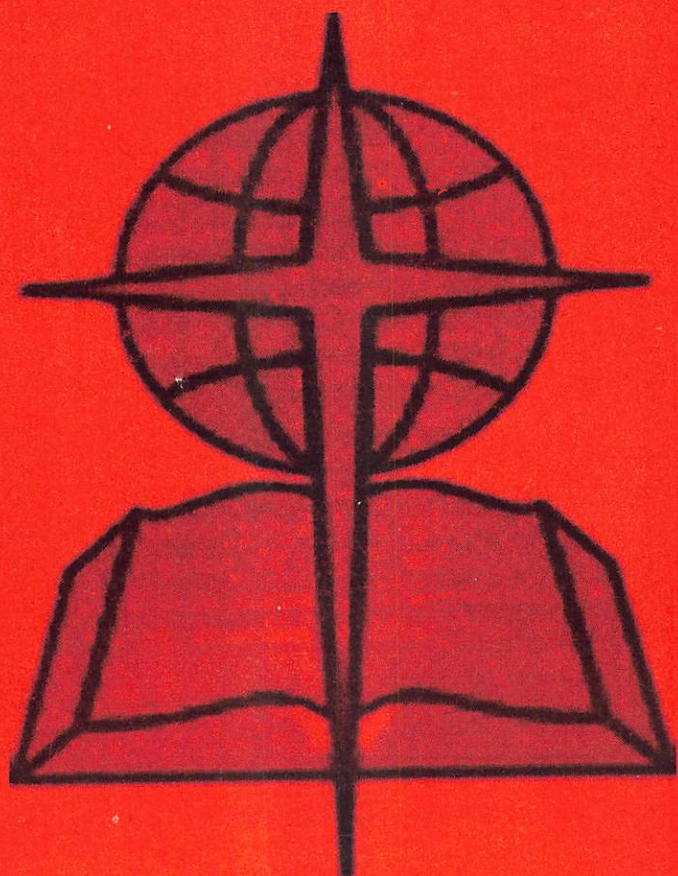


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THE BIBLE TEACHER



Back to Basics

Jesus promised to build His church (Matthew 16:18). His promise was fulfilled when His church came into existence on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). Peter commanded the multitude assembled on that day: "Repent, and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." (Acts 2:38). Those who gladly received his word were baptized (Acts 2:41), as a result three thousand were added to the church on that day by the Lord Himself (Acts 2:47). That was the beginning of Christ's church.

Of what denomination did those three thousand become members? Our contention is that they joined no denomination. Indeed, denominationalism such as we know in today's world did not even exist then. They had simply obeyed the Gospel and were added by the Lord to His church. They wore no sectarian name, adopted no denominational creed, and belonged to no ecclesiastical hierarchy. They were simply children of God, members of the church, were called Christians (Acts 11:26).

Churches of Christ today everywhere plead for a return to that same church with that same simplicity. We do not claim to be a denomination. Our goal is to be that church—nothing more, nothing less—just basic New Testament Christians as people were in the first century.

We teach the same plan of salvation—faith, repentance, confession, and baptism for the remission of sins. We practice the same worship—teaching, giving, observing the Lord's Supper, praying, and singing praises to God. (Acts 2:42; Acts 20:7; Ephesians 5:19). We follow the same congregational organization—elders, deacons, saints (Philippians 1:1), without offices and positions unknown to the Christians in the beginning.

If you want to be just what people were in the New Testament, then we urge you to investigate churches of Christ. We strive to speak where the Bible speaks and to remain silent where the Bible is silent.

THE BIBLE TEACHER

Pleading for the Restoration of Pure New Testament Christianity

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No. 2

Editorial

What Does the Bible Teach?

Many Will Turn Their Ears From The Truth

(2 Timothy 4:3-4)

For years people have heard many things supposedly taught in the Bible. Since such teachings and doctrines have been repeatedly taught and observed over and over again, people perceive them to be "Bible truth." On the other hand, when clear teachings and doctrines from the Bible itself are brought to their attention, they sound strange to their ears. Because they have not heard about them. Sound and Biblical truths have been called "a lie", while man-made doctrines have been called "truth" so often that "the truth has become a lie, while the lie has become the truth" in the hearts of most people. Through the pages of **The Bible Teacher** we have been endeavoring to bring to the attention of our readers that it is the truth of God's word, and not the teachings and doctrines of men, will save souls.

In the seventeenth chapter of the book of Acts we read, when Paul was preaching in Athens about the true and the living God, those who heard him said, "You are bringing some strange things to our ears." (Acts 17:20). Paul had told them that, ".....the One whom you are worshipping without knowing, Him I am proclaiming to you." They were worshipping God, but they didn't know Him. They didn't know His will. Their worship was based on their own imaginations. They were following traditions they had learned from others. And the truth of the matter was that while they were thinking that they were worshipping God, yet they were not worshipping

the One true and the living God in the way that was acceptable to Him. Hence their worship was a "vain worship," as Jesus had said (Matthew 15:8, 9). Hearing Paul preach of God, they exclaimed, "You are bringing some strange things to our ears."

Today, many Bible-loving, honest and sincere people find it very strange when it is called to their attention that according to the Bible one cannot be saved from sin by only believing in Christ, or by faith alone, as they have heard from different religious teachers or preachers most of their lives. But the Bible very clearly teaches that to be saved, not only must one believe in Christ, but one must also repent of sins, and confess Christ to be the Son of God and be baptized for the forgiveness of sins. Christ is the Savior. Not man. And Christ taught "*He who believes and is baptized will be saved.*" (Mark 16:16). Further we read, in Acts 2:38, the apostle Peter exhorted his listeners to "Repent, and let everyone of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ *for the forgiveness of sins.*" Can one be saved and become a Christian without receiving the forgiveness of sins? But when did Peter say one receives the forgiveness of sins? Moreover, when the eunuch, as we read in Acts chapter 8, after hearing the Gospel wanted to be baptized, Phillip told him, "if you believe with all your heart, you may." Then in Galatians 3:27 it says, "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ." Can one be saved outside of Christ? Reading these facts from the Bible, why should these things sound strange to any sincere Bible-loving and God-fearing person? Why should people continue to believe and preach that to be saved all one has to do is to believe in Christ and accept Him a personal Savior?

Likewise, to most religiously inclined people, it sounds strange that according to the Bible there is only one true church. Yet in Matthew 16:18 we read, Christ promised to build His church. And in Acts chapter 2 we read about the establishment of Christ's church. Acts 2:47 says that Christ Himself adds the saved ones to His church daily. Furthermore, the Bible teaches that He Himself is the head of His church, which is His spiritual body. (Colossians 1:18 and Ephesians 1:22,23). The Bible does not condone but definitely condemns division and denominationalism. (1 Corinthians 1:10-13). **The church Christ built is neither Catholic nor Protestant.** God, says 1 Corinthians 14:33, is not the author of confusion but of peace and unity.

Does the fact sound strange to you that the Bible is completely

silent about the month and the date on which Christ was born? That neither the church nor Christians from the beginning celebrated any religious festivals such as "Christmas", "Good Friday" and "Easter", etc.? That babies were never baptized, but always those who were penitent believers were told to be baptized or immersed in water, as Christ had instructed (Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3, 4)? That the church in her worship always sang spiritual songs to praise God and to edify one another without the accompaniment of any musical instrument (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 13:15)? That women in the church were not permitted to speak or teach, usurping authority over the men (1 Corinthians 14:34,35; 1 Timothy 2:11, 12)?

These and many other truths of God's word from the New Testament of the Bible sound strange to many people today because they have never heard them taught by their religious preachers or leaders. But genuine truth does not change. God's word remain unchanged, and on the day of judgment, as Christ said at John 12:48, we shall all be judged by His word and not by what men have taught through the years.

New Testament Worship

Lesson Eleven

THE LORD'S SUPPER

J.C. CHOATE

Still another act of worship is the Lord's Supper, Christ knew that man was very forgetful. Therefore, he wanted to leave something behind that would help him to remember. This memorial then is known as the Lord's Supper.

Before going further, let us first see how it was instituted. Turn with me now to Matthew 26:26-28: "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Please notice how simple it was to be. Christ pointed out that the bread would represent his body and therefore should be partaken of in the remembrance of his body. Then he said that the cup, or fruit of the vine, would represent his blood and should be partaken of in remembrance of his blood. In other words,

Christ did not want his disciples to forget the sacrifice that would be paid for them upon the cross, and therefore in partaking of the bread and cup every Lord's Day in remembrance of his body and blood then it would ever be fresh on their minds.

Turning over to 1 Corinthians 11:20-29, Paul writes the Corinthian brethren: "When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's Supper. For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. What? have ye not houses to eat and drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not. For I have received of the Lord which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said. Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." Now in the beginning Paul rebuked the Corinthian brethren for the way in which they were dealing with the Lord's Supper. Instead of partaking of it in the manner the Lord had prescribed, they had turned it into a feast where they were eating to be filled and drinking to become drunk. This was not intended at all. Rather, he goes on to show them the real purpose o' t and the manner in which they should partake. Paul also reminds them he received all of this information from the Lord and goes on to make his point, which were these:

1. The Lord instituted this supper on the night in which he was betrayed.
2. He pointed out that the bread was to remind them of the body that was broken for them.
3. He likewise took the cup and shows how they should partake of it in remembrance of his blood.
4. As often as it is partaken of it shows forth the Lord's death till he comes again.

5. Those who would partake of this supper unworthily would be guilty of the body and blood of Christ.
6. Each one should examine himself and then partake of it.
7. Those who would eat unworthily would eat and drink damnation to their souls.

So these are the main points that he makes and we would do well to study them carefully.

As we continue our study, there are a number of things that we want to notice:

1. The Lord is not teaching that only one cup can be used. Sometimes whole groups of people conclude that only one cup can be used in partaking of the Lord's Supper, and therefore the whole group of them end up in drinking out of the same cup. Well, the Lord was not emphasizing the container but the contents in the container. Now whether it is in one or more makes little difference so long as you partake of it in remembrance of the blood of Christ. One time a man was visiting with a congregation that believed in having only one cup, so when it was passed to him then he drank all of the fruit of the vine within it. Then they objected that he had drunk it all and what would the rest of the congregation do? He reminded them that the Lord said, "Drink ye all of it." This only illustrates how people can be misled on something as simple as a cup. Although it would not be unscriptural to use one cup, however, for health purposes, and other reasons, it would be better to use individual cups.

2. Besides remembering the body and blood of Christ in partaking of the Lord's Supper, it is a reminder to one and all that here are a people who believe in the Lord's second coming. If this were not the case then they would not be partaking of it.

3. The partaking of the Lord's Supper is a period of time in which each one has an opportunity to reflect over the past week of his life, or the last several weeks if he has not been faithful in his attendance, and thus examine himself to see what his spiritual condition is. If he finds that he is living as faithful to the Lord as possible, then it is only natural that he should go ahead and partake of the Lord's Supper. However, if he finds that there are sins in his life then he should first of all repent of them and make the necessary corrections and then he is ready to partake of the Lord's Supper, but not until.

4. If one fails to examine himself and goes on and partakes of the Supper in spite of his unworthy condition, then instead of eating

and drinking to be eternally saved, he is eating and drinking damnation to himself. Of course none of us is worthy in that we all sin. However, the Lord knew that we were not perfect and so when we do our best then that is as good as we can do, and therefore on this basis we are encouraged to partake of it. But if an individual purposely, carelessly, or negligently sins, then he is not prepared to partake of the Lord's Supper. He will not be any more lost because of partaking of it other than the fact that he is deceiving himself and others into thinking that he is all right. But the Lord knows, and he should correct his life so that he might partake of it spiritually and scripturally.

5. We are not to have closed communion, and therefore refuse to allow all but a certain number to partake of it. The scriptures put it on the basis that we examine ourselves. Should an individual, who is not a member of the church, partake of it, then don't get excited; when he learns the truth then he will obey God. If we refuse to allow him to partake of it then he may never obey God.

In conclusion, we read in Acts 20:7 where the early Christians met on the first day of the week to partake of the bread. Therefore, we are to do the same. But which first day of the week? Each first day of the week. Who has given you or me or anyone else the authority to set a particular first day of the week as being the Lord's Day, on which we are to partake of the Lord's Supper? No one has. Therefore, let's leave it as God left it, with his people assembling on the first day of the week to worship and this includes the Lord's Supper.

Safeguards Against False Teaching

CLARENCE DELOACH

Peter's second correspondence with those who *"had obtained like precious faith"* is one of the strongest denunciations of *"destructive doctrines"*, *"damnable heresies,"* and *"false teachers"* that you will find in all the New Testament.

The key word is *"knowledge"*, found ten times in three chapters. The best safeguard against what is false is to know the truth. Counterfeits are easily detected if one knows the real item. Peter's emphasis was to *"stir minds"* that they would be *"mindful of the words spoken by the holy prophets and the apostles of the Lord Jesus"* (2 Peter 3:1,2).

Peter's emphasis upon the Word of God is described by three wonderful facts:

1. **First, it is the shining Word.** The world lies in darkness. Evil men love darkness. But, the Word shines in a dark place! The glorious Gospel can bring a *"new day"* and the *"morning star"* to lives (2 Peter 1:19). Paul's mission was *"to turn men from darkness to light"* by preaching the Gospel (Acts 26:18). The *"light of the gospel"* can remove the veil of blindness caused by sin and false doctrine. Christians everywhere are challenged to *"holdfast the word of life"* and thus *"shine as lights in the world"* (Philippians 2:15,16).
2. **Second, it is the sure Word.** Peter mentioned the fact that he was an *"eyewitness of His majesty"* and had heard *"the voice from the Excellent Glory"* on the Mount (2 Peter 1:16,17). Then, he quickly added, *"We also have the prophetic word made more sure"* (2 Peter 1:19a). What a testimony to the accuracy and dependability of the inspired Word! David said, *"The testimony of the Lord is sure"* (Psalm 19:7) and, *"your precepts are right concerning all things"* (Psalm 119:128). The Word is sure, true, right on everything it touches.
3. **Third, it is the Spirit-given Word.** Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21). The very words of Holy Scripture are *"God-breathed"*. The Word is *"divine revelation"* plus *"inspired-transmission"*.

There is no greater preventive to false doctrine than to love and know the truth. The Word is shining, sure, and Spirit-given. Take Peter's reminders to heart and you won't be one of the unstable souls taken in and exploited by false teaching.

Psalms, The Book of Praises

DON LEE

Introduction

One of the most popular books of the Bible is Psalms. The title comes from the Greek word *psal-moi* which means "songs". The Hebrew title is *tehil-lim* which signifies "praises". It has also been called "The Book of Hymns" or "The Book of Praises".

There are 150 Psalms. David wrote 73 of them. 12 were written by Asaph, 12 by the sons of Korah, 2 by Solomon, 1 by Moses, 1

by Ethan, and 49 are anonymous.

The Book of Psalms is actually 5 books. They are divided like this: Book 1: Chapters 1-41; Book 2: Chapters 42-72; Book 3: Chapters 73-89; Book 4: Chapters 90-106; and Book 5: Chapters 107-150. Because the Book of Psalms was written by several writers and written over a period of many years, the hymns were gradually collected and used in Jewish worship. We don't know why they are in the order in which they now appear, but they have been fixed in this order for more than 2000 years. The Book of Psalms is quoted in the New Testament more than any other Old Testament book. There is only one Old Testament book referred to by "chapter" number specifically in the New Testament. Acts 13:33 says, "*As it is written in the second Psalm, 'Thou are My son, today I have begotten Thee',*" quoted from Psalm 2:7. There are 115 additional quotations from Psalms in the New Testament.

The Old Testament was divided by the Hebrews into The Law, The Prophets, and The Writings. In some manuscripts, Psalms appears as the first book of The Writings. Psalms has been a favorite to many, maybe for the comfort found there, maybe for the poetic-type writing, maybe for the Messianic prophecies, maybe for praises to God.

Chapter 1: The righteous and the wicked contrasted.

1. *How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers!*
2. *But his delight is in the law of the LORD and in His law he meditates day and night.*
3. *And he will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither; and in whatever he does, he prospers.*
4. *The wicked are not so; but they are like chaff which the wind drives away.*
5. *Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgement, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.*
6. *For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.*

In Chapter 1, we find that no author is named. Some think David, who became King of Israel, perhaps about 1048 BC, was the writer. Others think it was Ezra, who lived about 536 BC, some 500 years later than David. The dates I use are from my Thompson Chain Reference Bible.

Chapter 1 is a psalm of doctrinal instruction. It can be divided into two parts: (1) the happiness of the godly (verses 1-3) and (2) the unhappiness of the ungodly.

I'd like to look at some key words in this chapter. In verse 1, we have the word "blessed", which also means happy—*"How happy is the man ..."*. "Wicked" can also mean guilty, unrighteous, morally wrong, ungodly or vicious. "Path" can mean way; course of life, or journey. "Sinners" can also be criminal offenders. "Seat" can mean assembly, inhabited places, situation, or sojourning. The Hebrew word for "scoffers" (*Luwts*) literally means "make mouths", similar to the way we use "mouthing off. It also means mockers, scornful, or deriders.

In verse 2, "delight" also means pleasure, wish, or desire. "Law" can also be instruction, doctrine, regulation, direction, precept, or statute. The Hebrew term for "meditates" (*Hagah*) can describe a low moaning sound like that of a dove (Isaiah 38:14; 59:11) or the growling of a lion which has trapped its prey (Isaiah 31:4) Here, though, it is referring to righteous ponderings. It is possible that the Scriptures were read audibly during the process of meditation. Meditating on God's Holy Word is more than a fleeting glimpse. A footnote from the New King James Version says "ponders by talking to himself. "Day" and "night" can be taken literally or can also mean in good times or bad.

In verse 3, "Streams of water" can also mean canals or as a footnote from the New King James Version, "channels". "Season" can also mean time, the right time, the proper time; in the plural it can be circumstances, courses of time, occurrences or events. Here are three principle situations for "season". (1) Regular events, (2) the appropriate time for a nonrecurring incident, and (3) a set time (from the **Lexical Aids to the Old Testament: Key Word Study Bible**). "Leaf can be foliage, not just one leaf on the tree but all of them. "In whatever he does, he prospers", or all that he does prospers. "Does" is work, labor, make, create, construct, build, accomplish, acquire, earn, procure, prepare, offer, or fulfill. "Doing" shows faithfulness. There is no halfway in doing God's will.

In verse 4, the Hebrew word for "wind" (*Ruwach*) is an interesting term used here. The basic meaning is air in motion. Rushing air through one's nose (a snort) depicts emotions of aggressiveness (Isaiah 25:4) or anger. The wicked are not rooted in God like the righteous in verse 3. This passage reminds me of Matthew 7:24-27: *"Therefore everyone who hears these words of*

Mine, and acts upon them, may be compared to a wise man, who built his house upon the rock. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded upon the rock. And everyone who hears these words of Mine, and does not act upon them, will be like a foolish man who built his house upon the sands. And the rain descended and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and it fell, and great was its fall."

In verses 5 and 6, "judgment" can be a sentence, a formal decree, justice, right, or privilege. "Assembly" can also mean meeting, congregation, family, troop, gang, or crowd. "Righteous" is one who is just, lawful, honest. "Knows" can also mean approves or has regard. "Perish" means destroy or fail. It suggests utter defeat or to wander about aimlessly without orientation, to be lost, whether literally or morally.

Humans have grown so self-assured in their own powers that many either no longer believe there is a God, or they have forgotten that we will all answer to Him in judgment. But God is real, and now is the time to prepare to meet Him.

The New Life

STEPHEN D. ECKSTEIN, JR.

Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him.

For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 6:8-11).

After a person has left the world of darkness and entered into the kingdom of God's dear Son with all its glorious light, he is to act in a completely different manner. The former acts are to be left behind; a whole new way of life should begin and continue until death or the second coming of Christ. What does this new life entail?

A NEW RULER

The *old* man, under the domination of Satan is now a *new man* in Christ, under the loving rule of his Master, even the Lord Jesus

Christ. The harsh servitude of the Devil has been exchanged for the voluntary reign of God; the bondage to sin for the dominion of righteousness. Paul's magnificent comparison to the Roman saints is of great encouragement to Christians. "*As sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord*" (Romans 5:21).

A NEW MIND SET

The old man of sin set his mind on the flesh and how to gratify its desires. The new man in Christ sets his mind on the things of the Spirit. Paul affirmed, "*To set the mind on the flesh is death but to set the mind on the things of the Spirit is life and peace*" (Romans 8:6). To the Colossians, Paul held up the high and noble challenge, "*If you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God; Set your mind on things above...*" (Colossians 3:1,2).

In a world that is corrupt and in the process of passing away, it seems the Christian is encompassed on every hand by evil and is enticed to think about sordid and base things. However, even if you must stand alone, think of these things:

Whatever is:

TRUE—that which is worthy of praise; thus is real or *genuine*.

HONORABLE—that which is venerable, dignified; thus, not frivolous, but what is *important*.

JUST—that which is approved, commended; therefore, no effort to be shady or tricky, but *above-board*.

PURE—that which is chaste, innocent, blameless; thus, think on the things that have all the *dross removed*. Only the good remains.

LOVELY—that which is acceptable, amicable; thus, does not lead to conflict but contributes to *harmony*.

GRACIOUS—that which causes a good report, what is reputable or favorable, therefore is *optimistic*.

If one thinks in this manner, Paul concluded that such would be of **VIRTUE** (of worth, value) and thus would cause one to break out in **PRAISE** —applauding the good and its effect.

NEW GOALS

If we have changed our minds, we have new aims and aspirations in life. Our primary goal is to become like Jesus who called us out of the world to Himself. **We want to be like HIM!** This becomes a constant and ever increasingly important desire of the

saint as a joint-heir of Christ. Its effect is pointedly depicted by John. *"Everyone who thus hopes in Him purifies himself even as He is pure"* (1 John 3:3).

NEW CONDUCT

The real key to transition is the new life lived in harmony with, and motivated by, the change in rulers, mind, and goals. It is reflected in behavior, in these ways:

1. The Christian is happy to share the good news of Jesus with others. In fact, he uses opportunities in his avocation (working on some job), in recreation, social gatherings, on vacation, etc., to live in such a manner that people will ask, "Why are you so happy while others are unhappy? peaceful while others are distressed? patient while others are impatient? self-controlled while others do what the moment demands?" These questions will provide you the opportunity to explain what Jesus is doing for you, living in your life.

2. The Christian is engaged in doing good to all men as he has the opportunity—visiting the sick and aged, ministering to the widows and orphans, writing letters of encouragement, trying to comfort the bereaved and disconsolate, greeting strangers, praying for friends and enemies—out of appreciation for what God is doing for him.

If the saint is living the new life, he will exclaim with the ex-murderer, Saul of Tarsus, now Paul the blessed apostle of the Lord, *"For me to live is Christ ..."* (Philippians 1:21). So be it.

THE REAL TEST: WILL IT WORK?

CLEM THURMAN

We are a people obsessed with "bargains." We want value, but we want it at our own price. We want to get our money's worth. And involved in its worth to us many factors enter in. Is the price right? Will it last? Does it look good? Will it help us in our social circle? Whether it be a new car or new house or new clothes, these questions are asked. But there is one question that is most important of all: "Will it work?" All of the other questions become meaningless, if the answer to this one is negative.

When you get into an automobile, it really doesn't matter how pretty it is if it won't run. With a refrigerator, a small price tag doesn't

mean a bargain unless it will keep the food cool, or frozen. The real test, then, is: **"Will it work?"** The cannon shown above is worthless because it doesn't fulfill its purpose—it won't shoot. And if it doesn't work, it is without real value. It doesn't accomplish its purpose. We don't come home from the grocery store and put our ice cream in the back seat of the car. And we don't jump into the refrigerator to drive to town. Each has its own specific purpose. This is true with everything we have—each has its purpose.

Our religion should be chosen, and tested, on that same basis. **"Will it work?"** Will it accomplish what it should? If one's religion will not accomplish what it should, it is worthless. There are four great tests that any religion should face. And it clearly should pass the test on all four of them. Let's look at these four tests.

THE TEST OF TRANSFORMATION

The apostle Paul wrote, *"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service. And be not fashioned according to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God"* (Rom. 12:1-2). **Transformed** . . . Your religion should make you a better person. It should make you a better husband, or wife. It should make you a better employee, a better employer, a better citizen, a better neighbor, a better friend. A religion that will not stand this test is not worth having or practicing.

When John came to prepare the way for the Lord Jesus, he preached, *"Repent ye..."* A changed life was demanded when some came to be baptized of John: *"Bring forth therefore fruit worthy of repentance"* (Matt. 3:8). And the choice given by Jesus was simple: *"Except ye repent, ye shall all in like manner perish"* (Luke 13:3). Christ died so that we would *"no longer live unto yourselves, but unto him who for their sakes died, and rose again"* (2 Cor. 5:15). Repentance demands that the thief quit stealing (Eph. 4:28), that the liar speak the truth (Col. 3:9-10), that the immoral person lives a pure life (1 Cor. 6:9-11).

Note that the apostle Paul shows that we are not to be *"conformed to the world"* but instead be *"transformed"* (Rom. 12:2). My faith should cause me to live by a higher standard than that of the world. Unless your religion has a better "moral code" than that by which the world lives, it fails the test.

The life we live is to show to others what we believe and what we are. When Jesus pointed out that we are to be *"the light of the*

world," He then added, *"Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven"* (Matt. 5:16). If your religion is to have real value, it must encourage others to live a better life, because of what they see in your life. The apostle wrote to Timothy, *"Be thou an example to them that believe, in word, in manner of life, in love, in faith, in purity"* (1 Tim. 4:12). If your religion does not encourage others to follow it, it has failed the first test.

THE TEST OF PERSONAL SATISFACTION

The second test is: "Does my religious faith bring me personal satisfaction?" Although this is not the most important test, it is still a valid one. And it is important. Jesus is *"the Prince of Peace"* (Isa. 9:6; Eph. 2:14), and He came that we might have peace with God and also have peace of mind that comes from a good conscience. If your religion is not personally satisfying, then it really doesn't work for you.

The Bible says, *"Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he approveth"* (Rom. 14:22). In other words, we must live a life which we are convinced we should live. For our religion to work for us, it should cause us to strive to have a good conscience (Acts 24:16). This is one of the purposes stated for the cleansing power of the blood of Christ, to *"cleanse from an evil conscience"* (Heb. 10:22; 1 Pet. 3:21). And if your religious faith hasn't given you an easy conscience, it has failed to work for you.

Does your faith bring real happiness? Does it give you a sense of real achievement? A feeling that you help to make the world better? It should. The Lord intends us to be happy. He tells us, *"Rejoice, and again I say, rejoice"* (Phil. 4:4). A religious faith that makes you miserable is just not working. Real faith should make you among the happiest people on this earth. The apostle Paul said it well, *"Godliness with contentment is great gain"* (1 Tim. 6:6). If your religion doesn't bring you contentment, joy and the *"peace of God which passeth understanding"* (Phil. 4:7), then your religion doesn't work.

THE TEST OF TRUTH

No matter what else it may do, if your religious faith is not based on the truth of God, it cannot provide what you need. Jesus said, *"Ye shall know truth, and the truth shall make you free"* (John 8:32). For your religious faith to work, it cannot be based on superstition, wishful thinking or false promises. The apostles emphasized this

in Matt. 14:33 when they said to Jesus, *"Of a truth thou art the Son of God."* That is the reason they followed Him. As Jesus said later, *"I am the way, and the truth and the life"* (John 14:6).

The Bible tells us, *"The law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ"* (John 1:17). Confronted by the Pharisees, and charged with neglecting the traditions of the elders, Jesus replied, *"Ye hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, This people honoreth me with their lips; But their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, Teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men"* (Matt. 15:7-9). If your religion is not based on truth, it just will not work.

Jesus, in praying to the Father in heaven, said of the apostles, *"Sanctify them with the truth, thy word is truth"* (John 17:17). Jesus promised the apostles that He would send them the Holy Spirit to guide them: *"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth"* (John 16:13). The apostle Peter wrote later, *"That his divine power hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that called us by his own glory and virtue"* (2 Pet. 1:3).

The word of God contains all truth in the spiritual realm. If it is the word of God, it is true. Many assume that they can do whatever they want in worship and God will accept it. But that idea is not in His word. And any religion that is based on something else is not true. That is why Jesus said of the Father, *"God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and truth"* (John 4:24). If the worship of your religion is not found in the word of God, it will avail nothing. It will be vain worship (Matt. 15:9).

THE TEST OF THE FINAL JUDGMENT

As important as those first three tests are, the greatest test is yet future. Paul wrote, *"But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing against myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord"* (1 Cor. 4:3-4). One may have a religion that is endorsed by the social community and that brings satisfaction to him, but if that religion is not pleasing to God, he will fail the greatest test of all. How can we know if our religion will pass the test or not? Jesus replies, *"He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my sayings, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day"* (John 12:48). No matter how popular is my religion nor how well I like it, if it does not work for me when I face the Lord in Judgment, then

I will lose my soul.

We are to serve our God in His Son, Jesus Christ (John 14:6; Acts 4:12). We read in Rev. 20 that we shall be judged by our works. And Paul wrote, *"Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ"* (1 Thes. 1:3). It is our works **"IN CHRIST"** that will be remembered in the Judgment of God. But the punishment of God awaits those who, *"Know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus"* (2 Thes. 1:8). One may live a good moral life and serve his fellow man, but if he is not in Jesus Christ, his religion will not avail him anything eternally.

I often hear people say that "which church" doesn't matter. "Just choose a church, serve God in it, and everything will be fine." That may pass the first two tests, but it miserably fails the last two! According to God's truth (John 17:17), the Lord Jesus only built one church (Matt. 16:18) and adds those whom He saves to that one church (Acts 2:47; Eph. 5:23). Friend, if you are not in **THAT** church, you do not have the right religion, for Christ is the Savior of His church (Eph. 5:23), and he has not promised to save any other.

Obedience to the Lord's command of baptism can be casually brushed aside now. But when we face Christ in Judgment, it becomes crucial. He may well ask, "Did you not read what I said in My Father's word?" *"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved"* (Mark 16:16). The Lord tells us that we are, *"Baptized into Christ, baptized into his death. We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death"* (Rom. 6:3-4). Again, *"For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ"* (Gal. 3:26-27). If this is not part of your religious faith, you've got the wrong religion! For that is what God plainly says. And remember that Jesus is *"the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him"* (Heb. 5:9).

What of your religion? Will it pass all four of the above tests? Really, most people only use the first two tests, and some only the second one. But it should be apparent that the most important test our religion could face is the Lord's test. After all, He should be the Author of our faith, *"Looking unto Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith"* (Heb. 12:2). As noted before, His word will judge us in the last day (John 12:48), so we had better know that word and learn what He requires of us. In view of that test, will you be satisfied with your choice of religious life? Or, are there changes that you

need to make so that God will approve your religion?

You cannot afford to wait till the final test to see how your religion measures up. Test it now. *"These were more noble than they of Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things be so"* (Acts 17:11). A "dud cannon" in a cartoon may be humorous, but a "dud religion" in the judgment will be an eternal disaster. *"Try your own selves, whether ye are in the faith; prove your own selves"* (2 Cor. 13:5). What of your religion, will it pass all of the tests? Will it work?

TRUST LEAD

MIKE BENSON

Confession time (James 5:16). There have been periods during my forty-three-year sojourn that I have experienced a certain *apprehension* about the future (Mark 9:24). As much as I hate to admit it, I've not always taken the "Christian perspective" in regard to my days (Psalm 90:12). "Fearful"—Yes; "faithful"—No.

I have occasionally fantasized about how much easier and nicer life would be if (dare I say it?) if I wielded control over the future. If I, in some God-like fashion, could keep tomorrow and all its attendant circumstances under *my* tight supervision. I would manage my surroundings—controlling **where** I live, **how** I live (i.e., my standard of living), what I **buy**, where I **go**, what **happens** to me, etc. (Did you notice all of those personal pronouns)? My life-text would read, "And Mike said...", and it would be so (cf. Genesis 1). Life would be according to my script—with no anxiety, no uncertainty, no trepidation.

Well, experience has been something of a "tutor". Newspaper headlines and untimely events continue to remind me that physical security is fleeting at best and subject to fluctuation (Job 1:13-2:7; 2 Corinthians 11:23-27). I'm not in control of tomorrow, nor will I ever be. Mike is Mike; God is God—and each of us has different roles and functions—mine is to learn faith and trust (Matthew 14:31; Hebrews 11:6a); God's is to oversee and determine my days (Daniel 4:35). Doug Sherman, in **Keeping Your Head Up When Your Job's Got You Down**, p. 108 explains it like this:

"Imagine two fight-type aircraft three feet apart in tight formation through a wide range of maneuvers. Perhaps you have seen the

Thunderbirds do this at five hundred miles an hour. Now picture the return to base for landing. These aircraft can fly in tight formation all the way to touchdown. When the weather is poor, landing becomes a little 'hairy'." Let me explain.

"These two aircraft in the clouds have about twenty feet of visibility. They fly very close, and the lead pilot just looks at his instruments. The number two pilot just looks at lead. When they approach the field, the two pilots will, on signal from the lead, lower the landing gear, and together the aircraft change pitch like a porpoise in the water. Because the number two pilot is looking out the side of the aircraft instead of straight ahead, his sensory perception gives him funny signals as he decelerates and the nose pitches up and down. Sometimes he feels as if he is in ninety degrees of bank when he is wings-level with the horizon. Now if he shifts his focus from lead to the cockpit, he could easily either slide into lead or away from lead in the clouds close to the ground. Either could be disastrous.

"What we as instructors had to burn into the memory of students learning to fly in bad weather is to trust lead no matter how scary it feels. 'Your job,' we would say, 'is to follow lead and stay in position; his job is to make a safe approach.' But this is tough when you feel as if the plane is in a steep bank and about to crash. It involves focus and trust."

1. Trusting God with my future is like formation flying in a fighter jet. It involves following His lead no matter how scary it feels at times. *"Though the fig tree may not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines; though the labor of the olive may fail, and the fields yield no food; though the flock be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stalls—Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The Lord God is my strength ..." (Habakkuk 3:17-19a).*

2. My job is to focus on the here and now—today. *"See then that you walk circumspectly (carefully), not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Ephesians 5:15,16; cf. Matthew 6:11).*

3. God is responsible for my future. *"Come now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit'; whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. Instead you ought to say, 'If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that'"*

(James 4:13-15). He wants me to relax about the days ahead and trust Him. *"Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ... For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you"* (Matthew 6:31-33,11; cf. Psalm 31:1,9; Proverbs 3:5,6).

POWER—MY RIGHTS: THE RIGHT TO BECOME

JERIL (POLLY) CLINE

Where there is more than one human being, there will be a power struggle. Man's will exerts itself and clashes with other wills, seeking his own desires. No one has ever been exempt ... not even the Son of Man.

In truth, where there is one human being, there is a power struggle ... **within**. Whose will is going to be done—mine or my Maker's? God reveals our Savior's humanity as He struggles with this great dilemma just hours before His arrest, trial, and crucifixion: *"My soul is deeply grieved (see Hebrews 5:7).... My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as Thou wilt"* (Matthew 26:38,39).

Our Lord continues to pray a second and third time: *"My Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, Thy will be done"* (Matthew 26:42,44). Control is being relinquished. The Father's will is becoming the will of the Son.

Hebrews 9:14 tells us that Christ offered Himself through the eternal Spirit to God. This, then, is the key to our own victory over self/sin. As Jesus said, *"I can do nothing on My own initiative"* (John 5:30) and tied it directly to His will, *"because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me,"* so we can do nothing apart from Him (John 15:5). Through Him we offer ourselves up to God, resulting in righteousness, holiness, fruit for God, and eternal life for us (Romans 7:4-6).

Hear Ephesians 5:2: *"Walk in love just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma."* *"Just as"* (in the same manner as) Christ loved me and gave Himself up for me, I offer my "self on the altar

as a fragrant aroma to God. There is no greater sacrifice than to give my will up to the will of the One who made and loves me. By this voluntary emptying of myself, those around me come to see a living demonstration of Christ (1 Peter 3:1-5; Ephesians 5:22-29); I become the fragrance of Christ to God; an aroma of life to those who long for life; and God is glorified (2 Corinthians 2:14-16).

Over and over in the Gospel of John, Jesus uses the phrase *"My own initiative."* *"... the words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works"* (14:10). *"... I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me"* (8:28). *"... I have not even come on My own initiative, but He (God) sent Me"* (8:42). *"For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a commandment as to what to say and what to speak"* (12:49). Even the Spirit of truth will not *"speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak"* (16:13).

Nothing was done on His own initiative. Nothing. Except... *"For this reason the Father loves Me. Because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority [permission, lawful power to act] to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father"* (John 10:17,18).

Only He could offer Himself. Only I can offer myself. No one can make me give myself up—except me. Only I can initiate it. I have the right to empty myself of myself and to be filled with God and the light of His life and love, or to go on struggling with myself in a living death full of darkness and separation. It is my God-given right.

John begins his Gospel with these words: *"All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of men, but of God"* (John 1:3,4,11-13).

In the way of God, empty becomes full ... not filled with yourself, but filled with Jesus Christ. His living, loving nature and personality, lifestyle and manner become yours (2 Peter 1:4). As He changes you, your husband, your wife, child, church, and community are

affected. Now that is real power—the power to become, by the working of God (Hebrews 13:21; Philippians 2:13; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Romans 8:29).

From this point on, how are you planning to obtain all that belongs to you? By maneuvering, protesting, recounting, litigating—the world's way—or by relinquishing—God's way?

Deceitful Persuasive Words VS. Sound Doctrine

OWEN B. MOSELEY

In Colossians 2:4, Paul said: *"Now this I say lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words."* Paul warns of the danger of being deceived by the persuasiveness of words. Paul understood that the greater threat against the church, then, was from men who would use subtle and deceptive reasoning rather than threats from an obvious persecutor. Nothing has changed. Today, in many congregations of the church, the devil is actively at work from within through the use of enticing words that make light of doctrine. He deceives also, by appealing to the emotions and by focusing on the "felt" needs of the "unchurched" (a euphemism for sinners).

The word "doctrine" is used 37 times in 36 different verses in the NKJV of the Bible. Jesus talked about the doctrine of God in John 7:16,17: *"Jesus answered them and said, 'My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me. If anyone wants to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority.'"* In John 18:19 we read: *"The high priest then asked Jesus about His disciples and His doctrine."* Are those who want to de-emphasize doctrine suggesting that the doctrine of God and Christ is less important? Less important than what? Making people feel good? Do the ones who de-emphasize doctrine not fit into the category Paul warns against in 2 Timothy 4:3,4, *"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables."*

Paul did not make light of erroneous teaching (doctrine). Paul knew that doctrine has a power to mold the character of an

individual. In Romans 6:17 Paul said: *"But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of **doctrine** to which you were delivered."* In Romans 16:17 Paul said: *"Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the **doctrine** which you learned, and avoid them."*

Notice the importance Paul attached to doctrine in the following verses: 1 Timothy 1:3—*"As I urged you when I went into Macedonia; remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other **doctrine**."* 1 Timothy 1:10—*"for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound **doctrine**, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust."* (Notice that sound doctrine is according to the glorious Gospel of the blessed God. Many today attempt to separate doctrine from the Gospel.) 1 Timothy 4:6—*"If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good **doctrine** which you have carefully followed."* (Notice that Timothy would be a good minister of Jesus Christ when he carefully followed words of faith and the good doctrine.) 1 Timothy 4:13—*"Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to **doctrine**."* 1 Timothy 4:16—*"Take heed to yourself and to the **doctrine**. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you."* (By taking heed to the doctrine, Timothy could save himself and others.) 1 Timothy 5:17—*"Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and **doctrine**."* (If doctrine is not important, or is less important, why are elders especially worthy of double honor if they labor in the Word and doctrine?)

John also considered doctrine to be important. 2 John, verses 9, 10—*"Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the **doctrine** of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the **doctrine** of Christ has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this **doctrine**, do not receive him into your house nor greet him."* Notice that John talks about the doctrine of Christ, not the doctrine about Christ. The teachings of Christ and the teachings about Christ are two different things. Both are important. Equally important are the inspired teachings of the writers of the Bible.

May God help us to not be deceived by the persuasive words of men. May we all do everything within our power to adhere both

to the teachings about Christ and the teachings (doctrine) of Christ as revealed by Christ and the inspired writers of the New Testament.

His Grace Reaches Me

BOBBY WHEAT

One of the most descriptive and feeling-filled songs that we sing is the one written by Whitney Gleason entitled, "His Grace Reaches Me". Gleason's lyrics are filled with marvel and awe at the magnitude of God's love. The Savior's grace is "deeper than the ocean and wider than the sea", it is "higher than the mountains and brighter than the sun".

The most astounding thing about God's grace, though, is not its magnitude. The greatest thing about God's grace is that it reaches me. It is widespread, it was offered for everyone, but it affects even me.

How amazing! The God of the universe, who made the oceans and seas and mountains and sun—His grace, His gift reaches me! The Psalmist shared this sense of wonder: "*When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers,*" he said, "*what is man that you are mindful of him?*" (Psalm 8:3,4). To paraphrase, "How is it that you, God, can care about something so insignificant as puny man?" The amazing thing is that He does; He really cares!

Even more significant is the fact that God didn't just say that He cares. No, even better, He **showed** that He cares! Paul describes the marvel of God's grace by telling what God did for us: "*At just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly*" (Romans 5:6). Look at verse eight, where Paul tells us, "*God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*"

Did you get that? **CHRIST DIED FOR US!** No more death, no more guilt, no more lives broken by sin. In one painful, powerful act, God wiped the slate clean. I am saved! God's grace reaches me! "*It is by grace*" that I have been saved (Ephesians 2:8).

Now, all of this may or may not have been news to you. Regardless of where you are, though, the truth about God's grace can be life-changing if you will just let it. There are some appropriate responses to what God has done that will enable Him to work even greater wonders in your life. Here are two responses that the

knowledge of God's grace should cause in us:

1. Bask in the warmth of God's grace. So much of religious rhetoric is designed to elicit guilt feelings over personal and spiritual imperfections in our lives. However, the truth is that, in spite of our failure to measure up, God still loves us and pours out His gift of salvation.

2. Respond to His gift with a gift of your own, the freewill offering of your entire being to God. Let yourself be used for His purposes. God showed His love by doing something for you; show your love by returning service to Him.

The Great Designer

TOM J. MARSHALL

Dr. A. Cressy Morrison, former president of the New York Academy of Sciences, is the author of the book, *Man Does Not Stand Alone*. He argues that it is possible to demonstrate mathematically that the universe could not have happened by chance, but was designed purposefully.

Dr. Morrison points out that the earth rotates on its axis at 1,000 miles per hour. If it rotated at only 100 miles per hour, our days and nights would be ten times as long as they are now and the earth would alternately burn and freeze. Vegetation would not be able to survive. Again, the sun has a surface temperature of 12,000 degrees Fahrenheit, and our earth is at the exact distance from the sun that it must be to get just enough heat, but not too much.

The earth is tilted at an angle of 23 degrees, and this enables us to have our seasons. If the earth were not tilted at this angle, vapors from the ocean would move north and south, piling up continents of ice. If the moon were not at the exact distance that it is from the earth, the ocean tides would inundate the land mass completely, twice a day.

If the ocean were just a few feet deeper than it is, and the carbon dioxide and oxygen in the earth's atmosphere just a little thinner, many of the meteors which are now burned out in space would bombard us, starting fires everywhere.

Could this delicate balance have happened by chance? "Not a chance in ten million," says Dr. Morrison.

Design demands a designer.



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).

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