

THE BIBLE TEACHER

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Editorial

What Does the Bible Teach?

There Is One God—Three Persons

IN THE HEBREW LANGUAGE, the language in which most of the Old Testament of the Bible was written originally, God is called Elohim, a name which is a plural of the Majesty. That, however, does not mean that there is more than one true God. There is but one God, the Bible clearly teaches (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 44:6; 1 Corinthians 8:4). Nevertheless, the nature of the Godhead (Elohim) is such that there coexists in it a distinction of persons with absolute unity of essence.

When Christ was on earth He taught His disciples to pray to God calling Him "our Father" (Matthew 6:9). Christ Himself spoke of God often as the Father (Matthew 11:25-27; John 6:27). The Father, who in the beginning created heaven and the earth, is God (Genesis 1:1). God so loved the world that He sent the Son, who through His propitiatory death on the cross became the acceptable sacrifice for the sins of the world (1 John 4:10).

The Son, the Bible teaches, is also God. Not a second God, but another personality in the Godhead. We read, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and *the Word was God*. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made...And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1:1-3 & 14). Notice, it says, the Word who "became flesh"—a man—was God, and that all things were

made through Him. The first verse of the Bible says: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

Teaching Christians to put on humility as was in Christ Jesus, the apostle Paul said, "Who being in the form of God, did not consider it to be robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a servant, and coming in the likeness of men ..." (Philippians 2:6,7). Again, speaking of Christ in Romans 9:5 the inspired scribe wrote, "... Christ came, who is over all, eternally blessed God. Amen." In Matthew 16:18 Christ, the Son, had promised to build His church, which He did as we read from Acts 2:37- 47.

When Paul, the apostle, came to Ephesus he met with the leaders of the Lord's church, and this is what he told them: "Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20:28). It is ponderable that Christ had said that He would build His church; and He was the one who gave Himself for the church (Ephesians 5:25); who had shed His blood on the cross for the remission of sins. Yet, the inspired apostle exhorted the elders to shepherd the church of God, which He (God) purchased with His own blood. Do you see the Point?

And, notice too that the Holy Spirit had made them overseers to shepherd the church. Here we are introduced to the third personality in the Godhead. The church is the house of God (1 Timothy 3:15). God is the head of His house. He has the authority to appoint anyone in His house. The elders were appointed by the Holy Spirit to shepherd the church of God, because the Holy Spirit is also God!

God sent the Word upon earth to become a man, but He was conceived in Mary, a virgin at that time, by the power of the Holy Spirit. The beautiful and amazing story of the birth of the Son of God is found in Matthew chapters 1 and 2 and in Luke chapter 2, where we see all the three personalities of the Godhead working together for providing the plan of salvation to mankind. The Father sent the Word, and virgin Mary conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, and she gave birth to the Son of God, the Savior of humanity. **Thus we see a complete and absolute unity in the three persons of the Godhead.**

Later, at the occasion of the baptism of Christ which took place when he was about 30 years old, just before the beginning of His

public ministry, all three persons of the Godhead are dramatically exhibited together. As Jesus, the Son, came up from the water, "... the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased'" (Matthew 3:16, 17).

God—the Father, Word, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, who is also called the Helper (John 14:26; 16:7)—the three persons of the Godhead are one true God, the Elohim, who created the heavens and the earth and together provided the means by which men can be saved. Of course, in accomplishing the work of salvation there is implied a certain relative subordination in the modes of operation of different persons, by which it is the Father who sent the Word or the Son to be 'the propitiation for the sins of the world;' and the Son, when He, after His death, burial and resurrection, returned to the Father for the glory which He had with God before the world was, sent the Spirit to apply His redemption to men (John 14:25, 26; John 16:55-15; Acts 1:1-8; Acts 2:1-4).

Yet, the three persons of the Godhead are alike: God over all. Knowledge of this fact helps us to understand why Christ commanded His disciples in the beginning concerning the gospel: "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them IN THE NAME [*not names, SD*] of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:18,19).

The apostle Peter on the day of Pentecost commanded the multitude to, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." He wasn't contradicting Christ, for what we do in the name of Christ that we also do in the name of the Father and in the name of the Holy Spirit, or by the authority of all, the one triune God.

Observe also, when Ananias had kept back a portion of the proceeds from the sale of the possessions which he with his wife had promised to give that to the Lord's work, the inspired Peter had said to him: "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back the part of the price of the land for yourself? While it remained was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God" (Acts 5:3,4).

Notice the fact that Peter said, "You have lied to the Holy Spirit," and then he said, "You have lied to God." That is, in lying to the Holy Spirit Ananias had also lied to God, because the Holy Spirit *is* God.

In the Revelation of Jesus Christ to John, Christ said: "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, says the Lord, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty" (Revelation 1:8). Some 800 years before Christ, the prophet Isaiah wrote in his book, in Isaiah 44:6, "Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, the Lord of Hosts: I am the First and I am the Last; besides Me there is no God."

There is only one God, who is the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. This is the essence of the God-head. When we do what the Son says it is also the will of the Father and the Holy Spirit. When we hear and obey one, we hear and obey all three; and when we refuse to do what one of them says we are refusing to do what God has said.

THE CHURCH OF THE BIBLE

J.C. Choate

Lesson Two

The Coming of the Church

THE CHURCH DID NOT COME into existence over night. It was planned, prophesied, promised, and then established. The Bible shows all of this clearly.

First, the church existed in the mind of God. Paul declares this unto the saints at Ephesus. He said, *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved"* (Ephesians 1:3-6). Please note that he is talking to the church at Ephesus and he says God had chosen them before the foundation of the world. That means that God was thinking about the church even before the world was created. That is, he was planning it at that time, and

so it originated in the mind of God. How absurd then to belittle and underrate that which God planned from the beginning.

Second, the church was spoken of in prophecy on numerous occasions. Isaiah said, *"Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it. Many people shall come and say, come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths. For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem"* (Isaiah 2:2,3). Joel stated, *"And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days"* (Joel 2:28,29). Then Daniel pointed out, *"And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever"* (Daniel 2:44). Now let us draw some conclusions:

1. The kingdom would be established in the last days.
 2. It would be established in the mountains.
 3. All nations would flow unto it.
 4. The Lord would pour out his Spirit upon all flesh.
 5. It would be established in the days of the fourth world empire!
 6. It would consume all other kingdoms and stand forever.
- Now, where is all of this fulfilled? Read Acts 2.

Third, the church was promised. John said it was at hand (Matthew 3:2). That means it was near by or would soon be established. Christ promised, *"And I say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it"* (Matthew 16:18). *"And He said to them, Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power"* (Mark 9:1). *"Then He said to them, Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things. Behold, I send the Promise of*

My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:46-49). Now observe these facts:

1. The kingdom was near.
2. Christ promised to build it in spite of death.
3. Some of those who were with Christ would still be living at the time of its establishment.
4. It would come with power
5. Repentance and remission of sins would be preached in his name among all nations.
6. It would begin in Jerusalem.
7. The apostles would be endued with power from on high in the city of Jerusalem.

Please keep all of these points in mind as we come finally to the establishment of the church and you will see all of this unfold.

Turn now to Acts 2. On doing so, read it carefully several times. All Bible scholars admit that the church was established at this time. Furthermore, the place was Jerusalem, the time was the last days, the days of the kings of the Roman Empire, the power came, repentance and remission of sins were preached to all the nations, and the church has been in existence ever since. So, the church that God had in his mind was established, the prophecies concerning it were fulfilled, and the promises regarding it were kept.

(To be continued)

THE ARMY OF THE LORD

W.A. HOLLEY

WHATSOEVER THINGS written in the Old Testament were written for our learning and admonition (Romans 15:4; I Corinthians 10:11). The New Testament is fixed firmly to the hopes and expectations of the Old Testament. Jesus came to fulfill the promises, the promises of the Old Testament (Matthew 5:17-19; Luke 16:16-17). Many New Testament passages could never be understood if we did not have the Old Testament. For example, Jesus commanded, "Remember Lot's wife" (Luke 17:32). This would be an impossible command if we did not possess the Old Testament. Read the 19th chapter of Genesis.

The word *Sabaoth* is used twice in the New Testament (Romans 9:29; James 5:4). This is a Hebrew word which means hosts or armies.

God won a great victory at the crossing of the Red Sea under the leadership of Moses (Exodus 15:3, 13-18). Thus, God is able to give great blessings to those people who know, respect and obey Him. In Exodus 15:3 we read, "The Lord is a man of war; the Lord is his name."

Again, the conquest of Canaan represents God as fighting in the background to win over idolatry and paganism. These forces were in full bloom throughout Canaan when the Israelites entered it (Genesis 15:16; Leviticus 18:24-28).

As Joshua was preparing to attack Jericho, he saw a very strange sight. He saw a man with a drawn sword in his hand. He identifies himself as "the prince of Jehovah's host—the Lord's army. 'The prince' represents himself as the 'captain of the host (army) of the Lord am I now come.'" Hence, God did not want Joshua to think he could win through his own prowess (Joshua 5:13-15; 6:1 ff).

This explains why King David was punished for numbering the Israelites (II Samuel 24:1-25).

The thrilling story of the two most famous prophets of the Old Testament show how God demonstrated the power of His army to accomplish His mighty purposes (II Kings 2:8-12; 14-21).

The Syrians were wreaking havoc on the Israelites. They thought that the situation was hopeless. Elijah prayed, "Fear not; for they that are with us are more than they that are with them. And Elisha prayed, and said, Jehovah, I prayed thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And Jehovah opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire about Elisha. And when they came down to him, Elisha prayed unto Jehovah, and said, Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness..." (II Kings 6:16-19).

The wonderful story of Gideon shows how God can fight for His people. The Midianites had made the Israelites lives so difficult, they were forced to live in dens, caves, and strongholds. The Midianites had an army of about one hundred and twenty thousand men (Judges 8: 10). Gideon had an army of thirty two thousand men, but the Lord told Gideon that he had too many soldiers. Who ever heard of any general having too many soldiers? But Gideon's army, at the command of the Lord was reduced to three hundred men. God wanted to teach Gideon to rely upon the Lord for victory, not upon power and strength (Judges 7:1 ff). Hence, it was "The sword of Jehovah and Gideon" that won the battle. The New

Testament teaches that "...foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men" (I Corinthians 1:20-25).

Perhaps these thoughts will help us to understand how Sennacherib's army of 185,000 were slain in one night. We are told, "It came to pass that night, that the angel of Jehovah went forth and smote the camp of the Assyrians a hundred fourscore and five thousand: when men arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies" (Read the entire chapter of II Kings 19:1-37).

When we come to the New Testament the situation is changed. "For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law" (Hebrews 7:12).

II Timothy 2:15, teaches us to rightly divide God's word. The Old Testament is no longer applicable (Colossians 2:14-17; Ephesians 2:11-22; Hebrews 9:15-17). Now the Old Testament has been replaced by the New Testament (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 8:7-13).

The land promise which God made to Israel has been fulfilled (Joshua 22:43-45; 23:14-15). The land promise before the cross was physical but the Israelites forfeited their right to the Land of Canaan when they departed from the law of God and served idols. Deuteronomy 28 discusses the fearful consequence of their disobedience. Read it and see for yourself! The law of "if you do not, and if you do" is clearly stated. The land of Palestine no more belongs to the Jews than it belongs to you.

Now God's kingdom is the church, and is spiritual. God's kingdom is worldwide and age lasting. Jesus uses church and kingdom to refer to the same institution (Matthew 16:18-19). One cannot be in the church and out of the kingdom. Hebrews 12:18-29, contrast the events of Sinai with the events of Mount Zion. Today, we have Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, hosts of angels, the church of the first born. God is the Judge of all. Just men are made perfect. Jesus the mediator of a new covenant. Those who obey the gospel of Christ are in the process of 'receiving a kingdom that cannot be moved (Hebrews 12:28-29)." Today the Lord's church or kingdom has no earthly boundary.

At the birth of Jesus Christ God sent His heavenly host to protect Him: "And this is the sign unto you: you shall find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God,

and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace good will toward men" (Luke 2:12-14).

Now, under the New Testament, the army of the Lord are those who have become soldiers of the cross, Christians, the children of God. Their armor is described in Ephesians 6:10-17.

Christ is their Captain (Hebrews 2;10). The last orders Jesus issued are His marching orders. We suggest that our readers commit to memory these divine words (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47).

We have no right to wait for sinners to come to us; we must carry the gospel of Christ to them. Many object to the Lord's command of baptism, but why should an anxious soul draw back unto perdition? Many do not mind being baptized into a church, but they object to being baptized into Christ (Romans 6: 3-4; Galatians 3:26-29).

From What Source Do We Learn Christian Faith?

HOLLIS MILLER

WERE YOU GIVEN the choice of only one source from which to learn Christian faith, what source would you choose? Most people would likely choose the New Testament. They would do so because it was written by men who were either directly associated with Jesus or by men who were associates of those who did witness His work and teaching. The associates of Jesus heard Him teach, they witnessed His miracles, and were eye witnesses of many other, of his deeds. They also saw him after His bodily resurrection from the dead.

The apostle John wrote: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (John 1:1.) "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:14.) The same apostle also wrote: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life—the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal

life which was with the Father and was manifested to us—that which we have seen and heard we declare to you....” (1 John 1:1-3.)

The apostle Matthew wrote concerning the birth of Jesus: “... and she shall bring forth a Son and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.” (Matthew 1:21.)

Luke, a companion of the apostle Paul, quoted Jesus as saying: “The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.” (Luke 19:10.) And the writer of Hebrews declared that Jesus tasted death for every man. (Hebrews 2:9.) These, and many similar passages, establish the mission of Jesus to mankind.

Following His resurrection, Jesus commanded His apostles to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe “all things He had commanded them.” (Matthew 21:19,20.) The book of Acts is a record of approximately the first thirty years of carrying out the Lord’s command. Disciples were made, and churches were established in many lands.

The early disciples of Jesus were called Christians (Acts 11:26.) However, the most common designation for them was saints. (Romans. 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; Ephesians 1:1; and other texts.) The word saint means holy; holy because those who are so recognized are separated to God, having been delivered from the defilement of sin. The modern idea of saint is one who has been so designated because he/she lived an especially holy and righteous earthly life. Such a concept of saint is unknown in the New Testament.

Sadly, with the passing of the centuries since Jesus and His apostles lived and taught, their teaching has been altered by the philosophies and theologies of men. As a result there is great confusion in the general Christian world. That the confusion is not pleasing to God is made plain by the declaration of Paul in 1 Corinthians 14:33 that God is not the author of confusion. Reason requires that all of the various systems of belief which wear the name Christian cannot be derived from the teaching of Jesus’ and His apostles. How, then, does one decide what to believe? A few questions will help.

1. Did the writers of the New Testament understand Christianity? If they did, it is certainly reasonable to turn to them for guidance in matters of faith.

2. Were the first Christians true Christians? If they were, then should it not follow that all today who believe as they believed

are also true Christians? Does it not also follow that all who refuse to believe as the first Christians believed should at minimum hold their faith in suspect? It is important to recognize that the New Testament does not teach anyone to be a disciple of church doctrine(s). Rather, it teaches us to be disciples of what Jesus and inspired men taught.

3. If one finds that a particular church doctrine(s) does not agree with the teaching of the New Testament should not that doctrine(s) be abandoned? If not abandoned, then has the church doctrine not replaced Jesus as Lord? (See Luke 6:46.)

What are some of the basic teachings of the New Testament? (Note: space does not permit mentioning every teaching.) (1) All men must believe in Jesus. (John 3:16.) (2) All men must repent of their sins. (Luke 24:47; Acts 17:30.) (3) All who believe in Jesus are to be baptized for/unto the remission of sins. (Acts 2:38; 22:16.) (4) Worship of God is to be in keeping with the worship He seeks, not patterned after human preference. (John 4:23,24.) (5) Life is to be lived in harmony with Jesus' teaching. (Matthew 7:24,25; 1 John 2:4.) (6) Love is to live in the heart, mercy is to be rendered, and prayers are to be uttered.

Jesus did not come into the world to introduce a series of confusing and contradicting teachings. Rather, He came to draw all men to Himself, and to fashion unity among all who would follow Him. (John 17:20-23.) How sad it is that a faith that is meant to be united in oneness has become a tangle of factions, each of which is going its separate way. Such cannot possibly be harmonized with the Lord's prayer that all who would follow Him be one. What is the solution? Can it be other than a return to the New Testament, permitting it to be the sole guide in all matters pertaining to faith and practice?

Jesus Made A Promise

JERRY JENKINS

ALMOST 2000 YEARS AGO, some one hundred and twenty miles north of Jerusalem, near the foot of Mount Hermon, Jesus made this promise: *"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hades shall not prevail against it"* (Matthew 16:18). In less than five years

this church which He promised was a growing, blooming organism which would impact the world forever.

What did the Lord build? It was not a physical building, a political association, or a social club. It was and is His body, His family, His kingdom. The primary purpose of His progeny was to tell an old, old story of a Savior and His love for His followers.

Though membership in this church is open to men and women of every nationality, there are conditions which all adherents must meet. These include: [1] Faith in Jesus Christ (John 8:24), [2] Repentance of all past sins (Acts 17:30), [3] Confession of the precious name of Jesus (Matthew 10:32), [4] Baptism by the authority of Christ and for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).

The worship of this spiritual family of the Lord consists of praying (1 Thessalonians 5:17), singing (Ephesians 5:19), communing (Acts 20:7), giving (1 Corinthians 16:1,2), and studying (2 Timothy 2:15). This worship is characterized by simplicity. It may be conducted in the most elaborate building ever constructed, or it may be conducted under the shade tree of a farmer's pasture.

The commitment of this family is to bring glory and honor to the name of the Father by living in a manner pleasing to Him. Christ affirmed His desire to please the Father when He stated: "... *for I do always those things that please him*" (John 8:29). Christ was the model of early Christians (1 Corinthians 11:1), and He must serve as our example in every area of life. "*For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps*" (1 Peter 2:21).

Perilous Times

WAYNE BARRIER

THE APOSTLE PAUL was trying to prepare his preaching brother, Timothy, for coming days as he wrote this second letter. The Holy Spirit, with a longer view, was giving us information for help in times like today. He warns us in 2 Timothy 3:2-5, "*For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away.*"

The people described in these verses are familiar to us. We see them everywhere. Maybe they have always been around, but it seems that there are more of such ungodly people now than in the recent past. It is not only in the world that we find them but even in the church, and they are the basic reason for many of the problems both in the world and in the church today. They are further described in 2 Timothy 3:7 as "... *always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.*"

Paul gave advice regarding these people, and we need to follow his advice today: "... *from such people turn away.*"

In our own lives, **first**, we must be careful not to fall into the same trap as these men. We must use God's word to guide us through life and life's decisions. Paul says in 2 Timothy 3:10-17:

But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, persecutions, afflictions which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra—what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.

But as for you, continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Second, preachers have a responsibility regarding the perils of these times. Preachers who fail to properly accept and handle their work are the reason for many problems in the church today. Preachers don't *preach* in many congregations. They perform other duties: public relations, marketing, counseling, program management (education, involvement, etc.) cheerleader, and crowd control speaker. All of these duties may be necessary, good, and useful, but none can replace the primary work of a preacher. This work is defined in 2 Timothy 4:1-5:

I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His

kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.

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.

But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

Perilous times result in the loss of many souls and lots of heartache. These times are especially hurtful, considering where we came from, and where we could be going. We can survive and even overcome the problems of today to win. Paul's words in 2 Timothy 4:7,8 remind us that all can end well:

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

SANCTIFICATION

MAX PATTERSON

THERE ARE THOSE WHO claim that God chose us (Christians) through justification (the first work of grace) to sanctification (the second work of grace). In other words, one is justified and then he is sanctified. However, Paul says, "*God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth*" (2 Thessalonians 2:13). If sanctification comes after justification, then so would belief of the truth.

The man who is righteous is upright, and just. He does what is right in the sight of God: "*For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified*" (Romans 2:13). John said, "*Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous*" (1 John 3:7).

The man who is sanctified is made holy or just, consecrated. He is set aside for holy and dedicated purposes. God has forgiven this person and set him aside for His holy purposes. When we were baptized into Christ, God sanctified and justified us (1 Corinthians 6:11).

Actually, being justified or obtaining the forgiveness of sins, and being sanctified are involved in the same process, Acts 26:18. Just as when one becomes a member of the church he also becomes a child of God, so when one is forgiven or justified one is also set apart for God's service, or sanctified.

How wonderful it is that our sins can be forgiven and that we can be considered a part of the great work of God on earth!

How Can We Know, We Have Repented?

O.P. BAIRD

GOD WANTS EVERYONE TO REPENT, because all have sinned (Romans 3:23), and all who have sinned will perish if they do not repent. God's Word tells us this in 2 Peter 3:9:

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, ... but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." Therefore, it is very important to know what it means to repent.

Repentance is not sorrow for sin, but the right kind of sorrow causes a person to repent, *"For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death"* (2 Corinthians 7:10). If a man is sorry he has sinned just because he suffered for it, that is sorrow of the world. If he has godly sorrow, he is sorry because he hates sin and loves God.

Repentance is not the change in conduct, but repentance causes the change in conduct. Jesus said,

"But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work today in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went" (Matthew 21:28-29). He repented first, and then went.

Thus we see that repentance is the change in the heart which is caused by godly sorrow. The heart controls the actions, so the change in heart results in a change in conduct or actions.

Some Tests of Repentance

Knowing the scriptural meaning of repentance, we can apply some tests to see if we have repented toward God.

- IF we have repented, we hate sin—all sin. We hate it because it is evil in the sight of God. We hate what God hates.

- IF we have repented, we love righteousness because it pleases God. We love what God loves.
- IF we have repented, we will be grieved instantly when we realize we have violated God's will in anything.
- IF we have repented, all that is necessary to cause us to refuse to do something is to know that it displeases God, who loves us.
- IF we have repented, all that is necessary to cause us to do a thing is to know that it is God's will that we do it.
- IF we have repented, we "*hunger and thirst after righteousness*" (Matthew 5:6). We will love God's truth. The Word of God is truth. Jesus prayed for His disciples, saying, "*Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth*" (John 17:17). That is the only place where we find God's truth—in His Word, and we have that in the Bible. Search there for His truth, and follow it.

LOVING GOD MEANS LOVING HIS WORD

KENNETH MCCLAIN

THERE IS NO GREATER WAY we can show our love for God and His Son than to love His Word. 2 John 1:6 says, "... *this is love that we walk after his commandments* " Jesus also said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). God's Word contains all things that man needs in order to live a life that pleases God. It contains all things necessary to prepare us to live eternally with God and all the redeemed in heaven. How can we show that we love His Word?

We show that we love God's Word by accepting it as inspired, rather than the words of men. Paul declares that "*all Scripture is given by inspiration of God*" (2 Timothy 3:16). Therefore, when we deny the inspiration of the Scripture, we not only show a lack of honor and respect for it, but we make God a liar, because His Word says it is inspired.

We show that we love God's Word by obeying what it says. The Hebrew writer describes God's Word as "... *quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword*" (Hebrews 4:12). In Hebrews 5:8, 9 we learn that Christ is the author of eternal salvation to everyone who obeys Him.

We show that we love God's Word when we attend the services of the church. God's Word teaches us not to forsake the assembling of the saints (Hebrews 10:25) When we fail to assemble, we violate this" command and must make it right in God's sight. If we have the right attitude toward God's Word, attending services will be a blessing, not an obligation. It will not be a "Do I have to?" situation. The services will be an opportunity to be inspired to do greater things in the service of God, and we will look forward to the next service.

We show that we love God's Word when we tell others about it. When we tell others about God's Word, we are telling the wonderful story of Jesus and His love for sinful man. Through obedience we have been set free from sin, and as Christians, we enjoy a new life in God's Son. No greater deed can be done for sinful man than to introduce him to the Savior of the world, Jesus Christ, and to help him understand the salvation He offers.

We show that we love God's Word as parents when we teach our children to have proper respect for the Scripture. Parents, God has placed a tremendous responsibility upon you to bring up your children in the way of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4). Let us give our children a good foundation to build on, so that when they are adults, they will have the proper attitude toward God, His Word, His church, and going to heaven.

We show that we love God's Word when we are faithful to it. Have you been faithful to obey every commandment of God? David said, *"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path"* (Psalm 119:105). Will you let God's Word be a lamp unto your feet and a light unto your path? If you have not been faithful to the things mentioned above, why not begin now to show your love for God and His Word?

WE ARE SET APART

DALE GRISSOM

CHRISTIANS ARE SET APART from the world in a spiritual sense. We have committed our lives to Christ and are looking for another home—a home in heaven. Because of this commitment, Satan works night and day to entice Christians to turn from Christ and follow him. Satan knows his time is limited; he knows that when

Christ comes again, he and his followers (those who have refused to repent) will be put into the devil's hell to suffer forever.

It is so sad when one of God's children turns away from the hope of heaven and sells his soul for the pleasure of sin. God has made the supreme sacrifice: He gave His Son to die for us. If we turn from the joy of living for Christ, we will make a terrible mistake.

I believe that the reason some Christians go back into the world is because they haven't fully given themselves to Christ. When one obeys the Gospel and begins to live for Christ, he must continue to study the Word and grow as a Christian. Christians need a very active prayer life to help us become stronger in our convictions. We need to become concerned about the souls of others and reach out to them to help them learn about Christ and what they must do to be saved.

It is difficult to imagine anyone who has enjoyed all the blessings Christians receive ever turning his back upon the Lord and neglecting to tell others the story about Jesus. The hope of salvation is such a blessing to those who have obeyed the Gospel! Wouldn't it be wonderful to know you had helped someone to obey the Gospel? God uses His children to teach others; we are the earthen vessels. We must be about our heavenly Father's business.

"Heap Coals of Fire On His Head!"

DAVID R. KENNEY

THE APOSTLE PAUL WROTE: "Therefore if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head." (Romans 12:20.) When I was younger, I used to look at this verse and "match it up" to the previous verse which states: "Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord." I would wonder if God meant that I should be doing good to everyone and not worry about when I am mistreated because God will avenge my mistreatment. I often wonder if some would think "I will tolerate my enemy and not teach them the gospel. This way, they will get their 'just desserts.'"

A few years later and I still believe that God will dispense righteous justice; however, I do not rest on the pending possible destruction of my enemies as consolation for my days of labor

here as some may be tempted to do. This verse has always been perplexing to me so I consulted with other students of the Scriptures for their insights about the meaning of heaping coals of fire on an enemy's head.

The view that we are to store up coals of fire and brimstone on an enemies head for God to render at Judgment Day is seen to be incorrect when you look at the context of the passage. In verse 17 of Romans 12 Paul states, "Repay no one evil for evil..." Certainly withholding the gospel from our enemies for eternal punishment and retribution is repaying evil with evil. Also, the verse following the passage under consideration states "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." (Romans 12:21.) So there must be another concept to "coals of fire" besides eternal hell-fire and brimstone.

Clearly, God will repay for the evil we experience in this life. However, we should be moved to action in fulfilling His will. We are commissioned to preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15) and to teach all nations (Matthew 28:19) without partiality. (James 2:8-9.) Jesus taught concerning our relationships with our enemies: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect." (Matthew 5:43-48.)

That is painfully plain. Painfully, because it is difficult for me to love and pray for my enemies. Plain, because there is no misunderstanding what Jesus taught. It is not enough to tolerate our enemies. We must do good toward them.

Some have mistakenly thought that the old law condoned doing evil to your enemy. The confusion is generally made in assuming that our enemy is always God's enemy. Notice these words in the law of Moses: "If you meet your enemy's ox or his donkey going astray, you shall surely bring it back to him again. If you see the donkey of one who hates you lying under its burden, and you would refrain from helping it, you shall surely help him with it." (Exodus

23:4-5). So the law did not permit Israelites to ignore or retaliate against their enemies of their own accord. Punishment for misdeeds were to be settled by the rulers of Israel and the law of Moses.

Romans 12:20 is a quote from Proverbs 25:21-22. To date, my favorite explanation of the imagery used in this passage is by a man named William Arnot of whom I have no knowledge. Arnot stated: "The idea of a furnace is introduced here with reference to the smelting of mineral and not torturing of living creatures. The coals of fire suggest not the pain of punishment to the guilty but the benefit of getting his hard heart softened and the dross removed from his character.

Love poured out in return for hatred will be what the burning coals are to the ore: it will melt and purify. In the smelting of metals, whether on a large or small scale, it is necessary that the burning coals should be above the ore as well as beneath it. The melting fuel and the rude stones to be melted are mingled together and brought into contact particle by particle throughout the mass. It is thus that the resistance of the stubborn material is overcome and the precious separated from the vile.

The analogy gives a comprehensive view both of the insurer's hardness and the power of the forgiver's love. It is the business of Christians to pile forgiveness over injuries, layer upon layer, with an object as directly and substantially utilitarian as that which the miner pursues."

Another writer summed up the point of this passage quite well when he wrote: You will make him feel that burning sense of shame and remorse which comes to one whose unkindness is repaid by love. In a word, do not let the evil done to you drive you to revenge, but overcome evil by the good you do to your adversary, transforming him from an enemy into a friend.

Now, this will not always be the result of your good faith efforts toward your enemies. I was fortunate to hear brother Jack P. Lewis at Freed-Hardeman Lectures speak on the subject of "Proverbs as General Rules." During this lecture, he pointed out that the Proverbs are to be viewed as general rules not absolute laws. In other words, Proverbs show what is most likely to happen, not what will always happen. We, as Christians, are to do good to all. Sure, there will be times when we will not win our enemies. It is interesting to note the last phrase of the proverb that Paul omitted in his quotation in Romans. Proverbs 25:22 states: "For so you will heap coals of fire on his head, And the Lord will reward you." We can count on God

to reward us for our obedience.

Refusing to help our enemies by withholding the gospel while we are showing a face of good toward them and for them in anticipation that God will deal out sorer punishment to our enemy is not overcoming evil with good. We are to help all mankind come to the knowledge of the truth. Remember, we were once enemies of God. What if God or Christ would have taken such a position?

“If Christ Be Not Raised...”

DILLARD THURMAN

ONE OF THE MOST arresting facts proclaimed in all the Bible is the testimony of an open, empty tomb in the garden where they had lain body of Jesus! What great resurgent vitality spread through the force of Christianity when two angels confronted the women that morning: *“And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen”* (Luke 24:5-6). This exploded a bomb-shell of religious activity, and to prove it true, Jesus appeared unto them repeatedly until His ascension. How tragic that a great segment of the religious world ignores the Lord’s Table each first day of the week where He is remembered as a risen Lord.

THE LORD JESUS FORETOLD HIS RESURRECTION!

Even during His personal ministry, Jesus spake of His approaching death to His disciples, but also of the triumphant rise from the tomb; and though vague terms were used at first to foretell it, He later became more specific! *“Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”* The Jews didn’t understand: *“But he spake of the temple of his body”* (John 2:19, 21). He was more explicit when He spake again: *“But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth”* (Matt. 12:39-40). This may have confounded them then; but surely all should have remembered this when He arose the third day; and fulfilled His word! At the last He found it necessary to be very open with His

chosen: *"Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: And they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again."* But the disciples could not grasp this: *"And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken"* (Luke 18:31-34). No man had ever spoken such clear and concise prophecy concerning his personal death; much less foretelling his own resurrection! This was the proof that He was the Christ!

THE TRANSFORMING EFFECTS OF THE RESURRECTION!

The lives of the women who went to the tomb that morn were changed forever! After telling them Jesus had risen, the angel said, *"And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you."* To reinforce this word, Jesus met them, *"Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me"* (Matt. 28:7,10). This is what Jesus had promised before: *"But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee"* (Mt. 26:32). But words of the women seemed like idle tales, and the disciples believed them not (Luke 24:11). *"Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted"* (Matt. 28:16-17).

If the apostles seemed to be overly cautious, put yourself in their place: had they ever known anyone who arose from the dead, and walked among men again? I wonder if it was Thomas who doubted? But all doubts were soon removed, as Luke explains: *"the things which Jesus began to do and teach, until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God"* (Acts 1:1-3). He showed Himself alive by infallible proofs, and was seen forty days by His chosen disciples as witnesses of His resurrection!

SPIRITUAL FORCE OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION!

Never minimize the spiritual force of the resurrection, for therein

lies proof of Christ's divinity! After Jesus was raised from the dead, He gave charge to His disciples: *"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned"* (Mark 16:15-16). On Pentecost, Peter preached Christ as a crucified but risen Lord (Acts 2:23-24), and quoted David as a prophet who had sworn with an oath to raise up Christ to sit on his throne, saying, *"He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses"* (Acts 2:31-32).

It was because the apostles could claim, *"We are eye witnesses of these things"* that they could boldly face a hostile world and proclaim the gospel of Christ! Remember also that it was by His resurrection that they were enabled to receive the Holy Spirit: *"Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear."* (Acts 2:33). No other force could account for their willingness to lay down their lives for His Cause! The high priest and the council lodged a charge against them, *"Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us"* (Acts 5:28). Those early saints faced a threat of death, but forged ahead: *"And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ"* (Acts 5:42). Except for the resurrection, how could you explain all this?

PAUL'S LIFE CHANGED BY THE RISEN LORD!

Paul wrote that Jesus Christ was *"declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead"* (Rom. 1:4). Paul was the last apostle to see the risen Lord (see Acts 9:3-5), being chosen *"out of due time."* But he set forth the strongest treatise on His resurrection in 1 Cor. 15; the longest chapter Paul wrote, given solely to the treatise of the bodily resurrection! Study the IFs which Paul sows in this chapter, all connected to the resurrection! *"By which also ye are saved, IF ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain"* (v.2), *"IF Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some there is no resurrection?"* (v. 12), *"IF there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen"* (v.13),

"If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain" (v.14), "We are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, IF so be that the dead rise not" (v.15), "For IF the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised" (v.16), "And IF Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins" (v.17), "IF in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable" (v.19), "Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, IF the dead rise not at all?" (v.29), "If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, IF the dead rise not?" (v.32).

Weigh Paul's arguments regarding the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the tomb! He pointedly highlights the effect it had on each believer, and the substantiated faith in Him! The glorious triumph is reached in Paul's words: *"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."* (1 Cor. 15:20-22).

OUR OWN RELATIONSHIP TO HIS RESURRECTION

The lives of saints are transformed by the resurrection of Jesus Christ! Paul writes, *"For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection"* (Rom. 6:5). Thus our primary obedience reflects His death, burial and resurrection: *"Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead"* (Col. 2:12). This is shown in more detail in Rom. 6:3-6. Therefore Paul exhorted those saints, *"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God"* (Col. 3:1).

Because of the resurrection of Jesus, Paul was willing to endure much for his Lord: *"That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead"* (Phil. 3:10-11). Paul, as well as Peter, enjoyed that *"lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you"* (1 Pet. 1:3-4). Because Christ was raised, we trust we also shall be raised, and be with God and His Son eternally!

