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What Does the Bible Teach?

“Train Up A Child In The Way He Should Go”

RECENTLY WHEN A CITY in the United States of America exploded into rioting and anarchy over the weekend following the death of a young African-American man at the hands of the police in dubious circumstances, hundreds of African-Americans agitated youths swept across the city burning and destroying properties, and looting at will. But it transpired that the young man who was killed, had been arrested eighteen times previously by the police and had several convictions, mostly drug possession and distribution, when he was chased down by the police. It also turned out that he had a difficult childhood. However, the person who was grabbing the headlines, around the same time, was the mother of another African-American 16 year old boy who publicly smacked her son for taking part in the riot. She was caught on camera berating and clobbering her son, and chasing him home after she spotted him carrying rocks to hurl at the police. She was even heard saying, “that’s my only son and at the end of the day I don’t want him to be another Freddie Gray.” The question is not just whether the young man was killed by the police, but what caused him to get to the station in life where he was chased down by the police.

The wise one at Proverbs 22:6 wrote: “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.” Parents are custodian of their children. To them it is enjoined that they train and bring up their children in this world of vanity to keep them from sin and snare of it. “He who spares his rod,” says Proverbs

13:24, “hates his son, but he who loves him discipline him promptly.” It is the parent’s rod, not the rod of an enemy, that must be used by wisdom and love designed for good. **It is good to begin correction and discipline with necessary restraints of children from that which is evil, before vicious habits are confirmed.** The branch is easily bent when it is tender. Parents who do not keep their children under a strict discipline, by all proper methods, pretending to be fond of them, while ignoring to make them sensible for their faults being afraid of offending them regret in their later years.

In the Old Testament book of 1 Samuel, in its second and third chapters we read about the two sons of Eli, who was one of the judges that ruled over the nation of Israel before kings were appointed to rule over them. The sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, the Bible says, were corrupt and they did not know the Lord. (1 Sam. 2:12). It is parents’ responsibility to instill the fear and respect of God in their children. Eli’s sons committed grievous sins because they did not know the Lord. They treated the Lord’s sacrifices with contempt. (1 Sam. 2:3-17). They were very immoral. They gave into lusts and indulged in all kinds of vices. (1 Sam. 2:22). But the most tragic of all was, the Bible says, “his sons made themselves vile, **and he did not restrain them.**” (1 Sam. 3:13). Again, it is the parents’ awesome responsibility to raise their children in the training and admonition of the Lord. (Ephesians 6:4), and among other things that means restraining them. They should not be left to do and to have everything they desire. When we fail to raise our children in the discipline of the Lord we are honoring our children above God. (1 Sam. 2:29). Our world today is being influenced by immorality on television and in the movies, pornography in reading materials, and in music, and the deification of human bodies along with the making of worldly pleasure the highest priority. “Evil companionship corrupts good morals” (1 Cor. 15:33).

There is an urgent need in our day for parental restrain. There is a strong tendency to do evil, and this aided by so many examples of evil in our world and by so many temptations, parental restrain is imperative. As parents it is our duty not only to the children but also to God. To omit or to neglect parental restrain is ruinous not only to children, but in many cases to parents also. (1 Sam. 3:13).

DON'T BE ASHAMED

J.C. CHOATE

MANY ARE ASHAMED OF THE Gospel of Christ. They are ashamed to let others know that they believe in God, and that they are followers of Christ. They are ashamed of the church of Christ, and they are ashamed to proclaim that it is the only church that was bought and cleansed by the blood of our Lord. They are reluctant to speak out against things that are wrong and to stand up for the truth.

Why do people remain quiet? Because they love the world and want to be approved by the majority in the secular world and also in the religious world. They want to be popular and accepted. They don't want to be considered narrow-minded and associated with the minority. Rather than speak out for Christ, they quietly try to blend with their friends and neighbors, and with their family members who are not Christians, so that no one will have hard feelings toward them. Their attitude is opposite that of early Christians who were willing to die rather than deny their Lord. They rejoiced *"that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name"* (Acts 5:41).

The apostle Paul said, *"For I am **not ashamed** of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith"* (Romans 1:16,17).

We read, *"As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumbling-stone and rock of offence: and **whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed**"* (Romans 9:33). Again, *"For the scripture saith, **Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed**"* (Romans 10:11).

Paul declared, *"According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that **in nothing I shall be ashamed**, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death"* (Philippians 1:20).

Paul continued, *"**Be not thou therefore ashamed** of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made*

manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:

*"Wherefore I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless **I am not ashamed**: for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (2 Timothy 1:8-12).*

Again, Paul said, *"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, **a workman that needeth not to be ashamed**, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15).*

The Hebrews writer in speaking of God and His children, said, *"For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one: for which cause **he is not ashamed to call them brethren**, Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee" (Hebrews 2:10-12). Continuing, he said, *"But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore **God is not ashamed to be called their God**: for he hath prepared for them a city" (Hebrews 11:16).**

Peter wrote, *"Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, **they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ**. For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing. For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit" (1 Peter 3:16-18). He went on to say, *"But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, **let him not be ashamed**; but let him glorify God on this behalf" (1 Peter 4:15,16).**

Christ said, *"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever therefore shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 10:32,33). He also said, **"Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed**, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels" (Mark 8:38).*

My friend, where do you stand before the Lord?
Do you **believe** in Him (Hebrews 11:6; John 14:1), or do you reject Him?

Will you **believe** and **be baptized** to be **saved** (Mark 16:16), or have you accepted the teachings of men?

Are you a member of **the church of Christ** (Matthew 16:18), or do you belong to a denominational church that began with man?

Do you wear **the name of Christ** (Acts 4:12), or do you wear a manmade name?

Remember that in the last day we will be judged by the word of the Lord itself (John 12:48).

Please do not reject Christ and His will. Do not be ashamed of Him. Believe in Him, obey Him, and live for Him, and one day He will acknowledge you as His own and give you an eternal home in heaven.

What About Instrumental Music in Christian Worship?

LOUIS RUSHMORE

THE CHURCH BELONGS TO CHRIST (Matthew 16:18; Romans 16:16) and is obligated to conduct itself according to what Jesus authorized (Colossians 3:16,17). People living in the Gospel Age must heed the words of Jesus Christ rather than the words of Moses or the words of Old Testament prophets. God the Father emphasized this at the Transfiguration of Jesus Christ when He uttered, *“This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!”* (Matthew 17:1-5 NKJV). Remember that Moses (the lawgiver of the Old Testament) and Elijah (representing all the Old Testament prophets) were present at the Transfiguration. Hence, the Father essentially said, “Listen to my Son, Jesus Christ, rather than to Moses or to the prophets.” Jesus Himself stressed that during His earthly ministry when He said, *“He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day”* (John 12:48).

Further, Jesus Christ is the Lawgiver (James 4:12) and Mediator of the New Testament (Hebrews 9:15). Little surprise, then, that Jesus Christ condemned alteration of divine revelation (Judaism then, Christianity now) with *“the commandments of men”* (Matthew

15:9), and that the apostle Paul also condemned false Gospels (Galatians 1:6-9) and human will instead of God's will (Colossians 2:23). One must turn **exclusively** to the New Testament to learn what God has authorized, including the topic of worshipful music under Christianity.

The Old Testament and heaven are incorrect places to look for what God has authorized for worshipful music today. The Old Testament has been replaced with the New Testament for people now living. It has been "*done away*" (2 Corinthians 3:6-11), "*abolished*" (Ephesians 2:15) and taken out of the way by nailing it to the cross (Colossians 2:14). People living today have been "*delivered*" from all of the Old Testament, including the Ten Commandments (Romans 7:6,7). Further, the New Testament is a "*better covenant*" (Hebrews 8:6,7). Therefore, the Old Testament is an incorrect place to look for what God has authorized in worship today (including worshipful music).

What may or may not occur in heaven is irrelevant regarding the Christian Age, and often passages about heaven are misrepresented in a vain attempt to justify what God has not authorized for Christian worship. Every soul will be judged at Final Judgment respecting the law of God under which he or she lived (Revelation 20:12-15). Therefore, supposed references to instruments of music in heaven are meaningless regarding what **is authorized** in worship of God **today**. First, Revelation 14:2 really discusses "voice" compared to "harps." In addition, the Book of Revelation is highly figurative and comprised largely of symbols, so that mention of "harps" in heaven does not literally refer to instruments of music (Revelation 5:8; 15:2). What may or may not occur in eternity is irrelevant regarding Christian worship today.

Singing is the only type of music that God has authorized for use in worship today. Instrumental music existed in the first century when the church was begun by Christ, and could have been authorized by our Lord for Christian worship, though He did not authorize instrumental music for Christian worship. Early in human history, Jubal invented "*the harp and flute*" (Genesis 4:21). King David introduced instruments of music into Jewish worship (1 Chronicles 23:5; 2 Chronicles 7:6; 29:26; Amos 6:5).

All worshipful music associated with the Lord's church in the New Testament is **singing without accompaniment by instrumental music** (Matthew 26:30; Mark 14:26; Acts 16:25; Romans 15:9; 1 Corinthians 14:15; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 2:12; James 5:13). A sample of a first century

Christian worship assembly identifies singing as the type of worshipful music that had apostolic sanction or authority (1 Corinthians 14:15). “*Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs*” in first century worshipful music were spoken through singing, and the instrument used to make melody was the “*heart*” (Ephesians 5:19). “*Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs*” through singing taught one another spiritual truths (Colossians 3:16), which instruments of music are incapable of doing. The type of music in a first century congregational assembly was singing (Hebrews 2:12). Irrespective of the place or occasion, first century worshipful music involved singing “*psalms*” (James 5:13).

The first century church did not use instrumental music in worship because there is no biblical authorization for it. For hundreds of years after the establishment of the Lord’s church, no congregation used instrumental music in worship. Even famous religious leaders throughout history realized that instrumental music is **not authorized** by the New Testament for Christian worship. There was a time when neither the Catholic Church nor denominational churches used instrumental music in worship.

Luther called the organ an ensign of Baal [comparable to idolatry]; Calvin said that instrumental music was not fitter to be adopted into the Christian Church than the incense and the candlestick; Knox called the organ a kist [chest] of whistles. The Church of England revived them, against a very strong protest, and the English dissenters would not touch them. (“Music, Instrumental.” *McClintock and Strong Encyclopedia*.)

No one has ever been authorized to add instrumental music to Christian worship! Everyone who respects biblical authority and wants to please God will render to the Almighty worshipful music that He has authorized—singing. Not using instrumental music in worship is a legitimate matter of faith, rather than a mere preference. The churches of Christ are obligated to practice what Jesus Christ has authorized, and He has not authorized instrumental music in Christian worship.

Why I Am A Christian

CLEM THURMAN

IN VISITING WITH PEOPLE, and talking about the Lord and His gospel, I often ask them, “Why aren’t you a Christian?” Recently,

the tables were turned when I was asked the question, *“Why are you a Christian?”* I was very happy to hear the question, for it provided me an opportunity to answer from the Bible an honest seeker of the truth. The Scripture says, *“Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you”* (1 Pet. 3:15). There are many reasons why I am a Christian, and I want to share some of them with you. I am a Christian:

1. Because I Believe In God, the Creator

There is something indelibly stamped in my inner being—a longing, a craving—that calls for God. Some call it *“religious instinct,”* but whatever you call it, the apostle Paul declares that God put it there! *“God made the world, and all things therein... He hath made of one all nations of men to dwell on the all the face of the earth... that they should seek after God”* (Acts 17:24-27). When I read in Gen. 1:1, *“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,”* a part of that longing is answered, **And** as I read in Gen. 1:27, *“So God created man in his own image,”* I find further answer to the inner quest, the longing of my soul

Alone of all of God's creation, man has a spiritual appetite. *“As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God”* (Psa. 42:1). Even when some try to reject knowledge of God, the evidence remains: *“That which is known of God is manifest in them; for God manifested it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse”* (Rom. 1:19-20). How can I look at the universe, and deny The Creator thereof? The evidence is overwhelming. God is the Creator.

2. Because I Believe the Bible is His Word

Of all the plain the fanciful theories of man to explain the universe and its workings, the most believable is still that found in the Bible. *“In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is. . . By the, word of the Lord were the heavens made”* (Ex. 20:11; Psa. 33:6). The Bible: a book of sixty-six books, with more than forty human writers, written over a period of more than 1,500 years. But that book gives our history, our purpose, our plight, our possibility and our eternal destiny. One central theme, the salvation of man, finding its climax in the cross of Calvary, runs from Genesis to Revelation.

Writers foretold events which human beings could not have known would happen. More than 300 prophecies of Christ are found in the Old Testament Scriptures, all fulfilled in the life of Jesus of Nazareth. The conclusion is inescapable: *“Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit”* (2 Pet. 1:21). Those who heard Jesus, reported back to the Jews, *“Never man spake like this man”* (Jno. 7:46). And the word preached, and written, by the apostles later was *“as the Spirit gave them utterance”* (Jno. 14:26; Acts 2:4). They correctly said of that message, *“We thank God without ceasing, that, when ye received from us the word of the message, even the word of God, ye accepted it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God”* (1 Thes. 2:13). Thus, the Bible does not simply contain the word of God. It is the word of God.

3. Because I Believe that Jesus is the Christ

When Jesus was born, the angels announced to the shepherds, *“Unto you is ‘born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord’”* (Lk. 2:11). At His crucifixion, the Roman centurion declared, *“Truly this was the Son of God”* (Matt. 27:54). Those who were companions with Him stated, *“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God”* (Matt. 16:16). And Jesus, on trial before the Jews and Pilate, acknowledged being the Christ: even at peril of His life (Matt. 26:63-64; 27:11). He said, *“I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me”* (Jno. 14:6). The preaching of the apostles later was: *“God made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified”* (Acts 2:36). From all those who knew Him and heard His words and observed His life comes the testimony: *“Jesus is the Christ!”*

We see Jesus as He healed the sick (Mk. 1:32-34), stilled the storm (Matt. 8:23-27) and even raised the dead (Lk. 7:11-15; 8:49-56; Jno. 11:17-46). Why were these miracles done? *“These are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God”* (Jno. 20:31). The conclusion was well stated by Nicodemus, *“We know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him”* (Jno. 3:2). If Jesus is the Christ (and the evidence is overwhelming that He is), then I must reach the conclusion stated by the apostles, *“Thou hast the words of eternal life”* (Jno. 6:68). Because Jesus is the Christ, *“The love of Christ constrains us”* (2 Cor. 5:14). We must live for Him!

4. Because, without Christ, I Am Forever Lost

The Bible plainly teaches that I must live in eternity somewhere: either in heaven or in hell. Jesus points out the choice of destinies in His picture of the judgment in Matt 25, *"These shall go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life"* (v. 46). The judgment is certain for all of us: *"It is appointed unto men once to die, then cometh the judgment. . . For we must all be manifest before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad"* (2 Cor. 5:10). Where will I live in eternity? Well, *"The soul that sinneth it shall die"* and *"the wages of sin is death"* (Ezek. 18:20; Rom. 6:23). And, *"All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"* (Rom. 3:23). Because I have sinned, I am under sentence of death; justly so.

Christ came, lived and died for me, and thus gives me a choice where I want to live in eternity! *"That he by the grace of God should taste of death for every man. . . He died for all. . . For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son"* (Heb. 2:9; 2 Cor. 5:14; Jno. 3:16). Jesus Christ, by His death for me, makes salvation possible! *"Come unto me. . . He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. . . In none other is there salvation, neither is there any other name under heaven, given among men, wherein we must be saved"* (Matt. 11:28; Mk. 16:16; Acts 4:12). Without Christ I am forever lost. With Christ, I *"obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory"* (2 Tim. 2:10). I am a Christian, therefore, because Christ is my only means of salvation.

5. Because of the Constant Help of the Lord

John wrote of Jesus, *"In him was life; and the life was the light of men"* (Jno. 1:4). There was that in His life which gave new meaning and purpose in the lives of those who followed Him. He made promise, *"Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world"* (Matt. 28:20). The apostles who heard those words changed from cringing cowards to courageous preachers, they went to a rebellious people with the message, *"God made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified"* (Acts 2:36). When they were persecuted, *"They rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the Name"* (Acts 5:41). When threatened, their courage never waned: *"We cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard. . . I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus"* (Acts 4:19; 21:13). Christ made the difference.

Jesus could well be speaking to us today, as He did with the apostle Paul, *“Be not afraid, but speak and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee”* (Acts 18:9-10). The question still rings, *“If God is for us, who is against us?”* (Rom. 8:31). He promises to be with me in trials, problems, sickness and death. He is that *“friend that sticketh closer than a brother”* (Prov. 18:24). As I follow Him, I have His assurance, *“I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee”* (Heb. 13:5). Because He is with me, and I in Him, *“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me”* (Phil. 4:13).

6. Because of the Victory That Is Mine in Christ

When we live in sin, we are *“bondservants of sin”* (Jno. 8:34; Rom. 6:17). Only Christ can break the shackles: *“That through death he might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage”* (Heb. 2:14-15). Only Jesus Christ can set me free, no one else can overcome Satan: but He has! We live, we sin, we die; then what? Christ is the answer. We live for Him (Eccle. 12:13). Even though we sin, *“Christ died for us”* (Rom. 5:8). The fear of death is destroyed by His resurrection from the dead. The apostle writes of that resurrection in 1 Cor. 15: *“If we have only hoped in Christ in this life, we are of all men most pitiable. But now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of them that are asleep... If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body... As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly... For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality... The sting of death is sin; and the power of sin is the law: but thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ”* (v. 19-20, 44, 49, 53, 56-57). Jesus says, *“Be of good cheer I have overcome the world”* (Jno. 16:33). If I live for Him, walk with Him, then His victory is mine! That’s why I am a Christian.

Friend, those are some reasons why I am a Christian. Now, back to my question: *“Why aren’t you a Christian?”* Jesus wants you to be. He promises to save you from sin, to help you through this life and take you home with Him to live forever. If there is a God, and the Bible is His word, then Jesus is the Christ. If that is true (and it is), then Jesus Christ is the only means of coming to God. But if you will come to Him, surrender your life to Him, yours will be the eternal victory! Then, *Why aren’t you a Christian?*

Ever In Pursuit Of Eternal Life

JAMES FARRIS

PERTAINING TO THE BELIEF IN eternal life there seems to be four categories of people: (1) the atheist who views eternal life as an absurdity thereby making it personally irrelevant; (2) the heathen who does not give notice to the fact that eternal life is a reality he must one day face; (3) the sincere believer who can be led astray by false teachings; and (4) the faithful and obedient followers who desires and strives for the goal of Heaven.

Regardless of personal opinions and popular religious belief, the fact will always remain that eternity will be in only one of two places. Our divine standard, the Bible, teaches that the wicked will be separated to everlasting fire and the righteous to an everlasting reward. (Matthew 25:31-46.)

There are several conditions which must be met to receive eternal life after being raised with Christ in baptism. (Colossians 2:11,12.)

1. God wants those who are unashamed of his Son. In Romans 1:16 Paul said, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ..." In Like 18: 28-30, we learn that a life of sacrifice by renouncing the ways of the world for Christ's sake is applauded. Christ is to come first in all circumstances without shame. (Matthew 10: 37-38.)

2. Continual faith in Christ. Faith in Christ is the belief that he will do as he said. In Hebrews 11:6 we learn that if we are to come to him we must, "Believe that he is and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Obedience to the commands of Christ are seen in actions that are triggered by our faith in him. If we truly love Jesus, we will have the faith required to do as he says. "If you love me, keep my commandments." (John 14: 15.)

3. Spiritual service is necessary when eternal life is sought. We are to be workers that reap the harvest of souls to the glory of God. When we put this off it is both detrimental to us and those around us. It is imperative we work now while we are able. Even Christ saw the urgency in working while there was time! (John 9:4.) If we reap, we will be deserving of the reward sought. (John 4:35-36.)

4. We need a deep, ever growing relationship with our glorious creator. How could we ever think that God would invite strangers into his home forever? Jesus said to his Father, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true and living God, and

Jesus whom you sent.” (John 17:3.) A life of earnest prayer, daily study and careful meditation will help us draw closer to God.

5. Since we are to gain Heaven, it is natural that we will want to share this gift with as many as possible. We must sow spiritual seeds as a condition of eternal life. Galatians 6:8 gives a parallel of how spiritual things should far outweigh the physical desires we have. Paul writes, “For he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption, but he that soweth to spirit shall of the spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting.”

One day the final harvest will come. We can and will be partakers in the eternal kingdom if we abide by his will and remain steadfast until the end. Eternal life is a reality and can be ours.

The Gainsaying Of Korah

NEAL POLLARD

IN JUDE THREE, THE WRITER exhorts God’s people to strive earnestly for the faith in view of some who sought to undermine it. In “vivid imagery, Jude identifies them. They are deceivers. They are distorters. They are disowners. They are disbelievers. He goes on to compare them to the faithless Jews who were denied Canaan. They are compared to the angels that sinned. These individuals are placed along side the immoral inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah. Then he labels them dirty dreamers, dominion despisers, and dignity defamers. Jude says they are brute beasts who corrupt themselves. Then, in verse eleven, he says, “Woe unto them!” They are like the murderer, Cain. They have recklessly followed the crowd-pleasing Balaam. And, they “perished in the gainsaying of Core” (verse 11). Notice three things about this last phrase in Jude eleven.

Korah, The Gainsayer (“the gainsaying of Core”)

Korah had a good heritage, for his great-grandfather was Levi. He had influential followers, princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown (Numbers 16:1, 2). According to his resume, he was a natural leader. He could have been a faith builder in Israel. However, he had heart problems. He was jealous of Moses! He blocked out of his heart the fact that God had hand-picked Moses and Aaron to lead the Hebrew wanderers.

By gainsaying, Jude is suggesting that Korah was “opposing,”

“contradicting,” or “denying” Moses. Korah thought the way he had devised was better than God’s way, despite the fact that God’s thoughts and ways are higher than any man’s (Isaiah 55:8-9). Korah should have seen that God was holding Moses’ hand as he had at the Red Sea, at Mount Sinai, and at the watering rock. But, he could only see himself and his grand designs of being the “leader of the pack.”

In mentioning Korah, Jude is putting his finger over the pulse of an attitude of heart present in the early church. As in the days of Korah, in Jude’s day there were those who thought they had a better way than God’s way. So, they contradicted the faith once for all delivered unto the saints. What motivates individuals to bemoan New Testament teaching and preaching? What causes people to challenge the plea for the old paths? When the doctrine of Jesus is being undermined, surely those responsible for such are guilty of having a heart like Korah’s!

The Followers Of Korah

(“Have gone after the way of...”)

Who followed Korah? In Numbers 16, we see again the 250 princes of the assembly (16:2). It is not altogether improbable to believe that Korah was the ringleader of the whole uprising, more responsible for God’s anger than his cohorts Dathan and Abiram (Numbers 16:1) were. The followers of Korah were willing to follow him all the way, despite the warnings of Moses (Numbers 16:9-11; 24-30). Because of this, the followers of Korah were equally guilty.

Who followed Korah? According to the book of Jude, they are those who speak evil of those things which they know not. The followers of Korah to which Jude refers in his writings are those who choose not to believe or defend’ God’s wonderful words of life. False teachers are followers of Korah.

Who followed Korah? In the church of today, the followers of Korah are those who wish to scratch itching ears (II Timothy 4:3, 4). The followers of Korah are those who devise their own doctrine (Matthew 15:9). They are false teachers who deny the Lord that bought them (II Peter 2:1). They are the ones who deny the deity of Jesus Christ (I John 2:22). The followers of Korah are as guilty as he was.

The End Of Their Gainsaying

(“Perished ...”)

Back in Numbers 16, we read the end of the story about Korah. To determine who God was with, Moses challenged Korah to a

test. Because Korah and the princes challenged the priesthood, Moses suggested that Korah take his censers, put incense in them, each of the 250 princes do the same, and Aaron also do the same. Moses said that God would show to all who was holy and acceptable. The next day, the challenge was issued by Moses. Korah and his princes made their offering at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. Noticing Numbers 16:31-35, we find, "And it came to pass, as he [Moses] had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that was under them [Korah and the princes]: And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods. They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation. And all Israel that were round about them fled at the cry of them: for they said, Lest the earth swallow us up also. And there came out a fire from the Lord, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense." When the people murmured that Moses and Aaron had "killed the people of the Lord" (verse 41), the Lord readied to destroy the whole congregation of the people. Because the Lord sent a plague upon the congregation, Aaron had to rush to make an atonement for this crowd swayed by the influence of Korah. Aaron stood between the dead and the living, making an atonement for the people. The plague spread no further, but "they that died in the plague were fourteen thousand and seven hundred, beside them that died about the matter of Korah" (Numbers 16:49). God made it clear that Aaron was his High Priest. Korah was merely a trouble-making gainsayer.

What did the story of Korah illustrate to Jude's audience? False teaching would cause both false teacher and followers to perish. As confident and smooth as Korah seemed to be, he led the people of God astray. Two hundred fifty men were consumed with fire because they followed Korah. Fourteen thousand and seven hundred Israelites were destroyed by the plague the Lord sent because they were swayed by Korah. How tragic! How heart-breaking! God's children were destroyed, not because they led an insurrection against Moses and Aaron, but because they followed the wrong leader. If they had trusted God and had known God's will, they would not have died. So, the inspired Jude could predict the same spiritual end for those who teach false doctrine and for those who are swayed by it. How sad to be lost because we follow a teacher down the path of error! If only more children of God studied His will to know what truth is, fewer and fewer would go astray.

As Jude suggested, let us “build up ourselves in our most holy faith,” “keep ourselves in the love of God,” and “look for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life” (Jude 20-21). As we look to God’s word and the doctrine of Christ as our standard for religious authority, we will avoid following the path that Korah blazed!

The Message Of The Empty Tomb

DOUGLASS HARRIS

SKEPTICS AND UNBELIEVERS HAVE NEVER been able to explain convincingly the empty tomb which the disciples of Christ discovered on the third day after His burial. To contend that His disciples stole the body does not square with the facts at all. There were five death penalties associated with the disappearance of the body. Each of the following were punishable by death: (1) for the guards to go to sleep, (2) to break the seal, (3) to allow the seal to be broken, (4) to steal the body, and (5) to allow the body to be stolen.

Christ’s disciples should not have been surprised by the empty tomb. He had told them it would happen. (Matthew 12:40.) Many may not have understood why the seal was broken and the stone was rolled away. It was not to let Christ out, but to let the witnesses in. Every precaution possible was taken by divine oversight to eliminate any appearance of deception or fraud.

Not only did that empty tomb have a message then, but for future generations—a message which is the dynamic of Christianity. What was that message?

1. It proves Christ’s deity. (Romans 1:3,4.) He claimed in life that He was the Son of God; the empty tomb was the consummating proof of it. This is the only evidence that brought absolute conviction even to His disciples. (John 20:8,9; 24-29.) Peter used the empty tomb in his sermon on Pentecost as proof of His divinity. (Acts 2:29-33.) Others have been raised from the dead, but not to die no more as He was. (Romans 6:9,10.)

2. It gives assurance to our Christian Hope. Christ’s resurrection is the bed-rock foundation upon which our faith rests. (1 Corinthians 15:12-20.) Try to imagine the difference had He not been raised; we never would have heard of Him; there would have been no Bible or church established by Him and no grounds for our hope of a resurrection to another life. That empty tomb gives life,

reality, and vitality to our hope.

3. It is proof of the immortality of the soul. (2 Timothy 1:10.)

Death reigned supreme until Christ conquered it. (Romans 5:17.) As far as human wisdom was concerned, life ended abruptly at the grave. Wonder about it and faint hopes of a life beyond this life were expressed by Job. (Job 14:14.) But his question was not answered until Christ arose. That grave is not man's end and is the testimony of the empty tomb. (John 5:28,29; 11:25,26.) Paul labors at length on the question in 1 Corinthians 15:35-57.) For nearly two thousand years that empty tomb has proclaimed that Christ conquered death, and that by saving faith in Him we can also.

A man said to a Christian: "We have proof in our religion that you do not have. When we go to pilgrimage, we find the tomb of the founder of our religion, so we have proof that he lived. When you go to Jerusalem, you cannot be sure you have the burial place of Jesus. You have no tomb as we have." "True," replied the Christian. "We have no tomb in our religion, because we have no corpse. Our gospel ends not in a corpse, but in a Conqueror."

The firm believer in the resurrection to come can face life and all its problems; death and all of its hopes with a victorious faith and assurance. THANK GOD FOR THE MESSAGE OF THE EMPTY TOMB!

A Consciousness Of God

JOHN GIPSON

THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO HAVE only a vague awareness of God. Some wonder about His existence; others acknowledge the possibility of His presence; some even believe that the creation could not have happened without Him, but with these folks God is only given a passing thought from time to time. They live their lives and make their plans as if they were completely in charge of their time and destiny.

There are others, however, who have a consciousness of God in every day of their lives and in all that they do. They are happy to acknowledge that "we live and move and have our being" in God, and even confess with the ancient poets, and the apostle Paul,, "For we are indeed his offspring." (Acts 17:28.) One elderly lady told me that the first thing she did as soon as she opened her eyes every morning was to say aloud, "Thank you God for giving me

another day.” She also told me that she devoted her evening prayers to her concern for others, and that this prayer list had grown so long that it required at least two hours. (I felt blessed that she had included me on that list.) A consciousness of God leads one to a consideration of His goodness. When one remembers, “Every good endowment and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights,” it awakens the question, “What shall I render unto the LORD for all His benefits toward me?” I know how one widow responded. Mark records the incident for us. It happened in the temple when a poor widow came “and put in two copper coins, which make a penny” into the treasury. Many, out of their abundance, had given large sums of money on that day, but this was the gift which impressed Jesus and caused Him to say, “but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, her whole living.” (Mark 12:44.)

Every Lord’s Day I have an opportunity to express my consciousness of God and His goodness toward me. One sure test of my awareness is found in how much I contribute into the treasury. (1 Corinthians 16:1,2.) It is in expression of my thanks “for all His benefits toward me.”

INSECT LIFE: EVIDENCE OF A CREATOR

HUGO MCCORD

A TINY, FRAIL, LAND-BOUND maggot, able only to wiggle, somehow transforms itself into a skillful flying machine, complete with antennae, gyroscopes, and wings. (Cf. Rutherford Platt, “Those Remarkable ‘Two-Animal’ Animals,” Reader’s Digest, July, 1970.)

The pilot in that remarkable airship, flying faster than the eye can follow, executes a half-roll and lands upside down on the ceiling on six legs. From there, without the use of a runway, he can take off instantly. Helpless scientists can no more explain the change from larva to pupa to adult than they can explain the fly’s aeronautical ability. When they speak of inborn “blueprints” or of “instruction from the DNA,” or “the DNA code script” they are saying they have gone as far as they can, and have no answer without using the name “God.”

Another example among thousands is the cicada, often called “the seventeen-year locust.” Cicadas have various cycles, with the longest being seventeen years. Almost exactly on May 24 each seventeenth year these insects climb out of a seventeen-year period spent some 18 inches below the frost line, underground. When they emerge they are still encased in a protective subterranean suit resembling plastic.

After shedding the transparent suit, wings, never before used, but now ready for a new life, are dried in the breeze.

After mating, the female, equipped with a sharp blade, cuts under the bark of a twig, deposits her eggs, and then cuts the twigs three fourths through. As a result, the twig dies, falls to the ground, and carries the eggs to the soil. Then the eggs hatch, and the larvae dig into the ground.

The adults live only about three weeks, and never see their offspring. What makes them operate so? Their defense from being eaten by birds is an unbearable noise, equivalent to that of "a pneumatic hammer or a subway train screeching to a halt in an underground station." (Dr. James A. Simmons, Princeton University Auditory Research Laboratory, says the intense noise is 80 to 100 decibels measured 60 feet away.)

The intense noise damages eardrums, driving away birds and all other animal life. But some source gave the cicada a tiny muscle which automatically collapses his eardrum just before he "sounds off." Scientists know how the muscle operates, but they do not know how it could have "evolved" in one springtime to allow one generation of cicadas to mate and to preserve the species, nor can they explain the inborn seventeen year almanac which the cicada carries with him underground.

Walking By Faith Means Walking By The Bible

CHARLES BOX

CHRISTIANS HAVE BOTH THE OBLIGATION and privilege to walk by faith. "For we walk by faith not by sight." (2 Corinthians 5:7.) All things done by Christians must be done "in the name of the Lord Jesus" or "by His authority." "And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him." (Colossians 3:17.) The Bible is the standard of faith for Christians. "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Romans 10:17.) Christians must have a deep respect for Bible authority in all religious matters. Everything done by Christians must be authorized by the New Testament.

1. God authorizes by direct statement. Mark 16:16 authorizes both belief and baptism as conditions of salvation. "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned." (Mark 16:16.) Colossians 3:1-2 authorizes seeking heavenly things. "If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set

your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.” (Colossians 3:1-2.) Ephesians 5:19 authorizes singing from the heart (without mechanical instruments of music). “Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.” (Ephesians 5:19.) Many direct statements in the Bible make it possible for Christians to “walk by faith.”

2. God authorizes by examples. Christians are commanded to observe the Lord’s Supper. “And when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me. In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.” (1 Corinthians 11:24,25.) We follow their example.

Both by precept and example Christians are instructed to observe the Lord’s Supper every Sunday. (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2.) You may observe it in an upper room, but that is optional, not binding, as one may observe by studying the several passages concerning communion. Christians are also commanded to give. (2 Corinthians 8 and 9.) By example we are taught to give on the first day of the week. (2 Corinthians 16:1-2.) Many examples in the Bible make it possible for Christians to “walk by faith.”

3. God authorizes by inference. An example of inference is in the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. The Bible teaches that Saul was baptized. It says nothing of his repentance. But, all Bible students know he repented. Paul said God commands all who become Christians to repent. “Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent.” (Acts 17:30.) God commanded communion. Involved in the command is the authority to purchase or provide the items necessary for communion and for serving communion. Many inferences in the Bible make it possible for us to “walk by faith.”

4. God authorizes by expediency. Every thing God commands involves expediency. God commanded singing. “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching, admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” (Colossians 3:16.) The song book is expedient to that part of worship. God commanded worship. “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.” (Hebrews 10:25.) The place is an expedient. Many expediences make it possible for us to “walk by faith.”

Christians can know God and have eternal life. “And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ

whom You have sent.” (John 17:3.) Knowing and obeying truth is possible. “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (John 8:31-32.) Thank God we can “know” how to go to heaven!

To Be In Christ Is To Be In His Kingdom

LEE JAMIESON

THE GRACE THAT IS IN CHRIST JESUS

RECURRING PHRASES IN SCRIPTURE need closer scrutiny by the student of the Bible. By inspiring men to use repetition, obviously God is trying to tell us something. One oft repeated phrase—“in Christ” (or an equivalent)—is used by the apostle Paul over 160 times. Our Father in heaven has blessed Christians with “every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ.” (Ephesians 1:3.) The ultimate spiritual blessing is “salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.” (2 Timothy 2:10.) This teaching is important enough to investigate and understand so that we might live it and teach it to others!

Paul encourages Timothy (and us) to “be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.” (2 Timothy 2:1.) The grace of God “with which He favored us in the beloved” (Ephesians 1:6) is the saving grace of God in which we stand and rejoice. (Romans 5:2.) If God’s grace is bestowed “in Christ,” can one be saved “outside” of Christ? Obviously not. Consider that “the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 6:23.)

Can you be a Christian and be “outside” of Christ? According to Paul the saving grace that is bestowed is the grace that re-creates us as Christians. “We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus on the basis of good works that we should walk in them.” (Ephesians 2:10.) Our sin makes this “re-creation” essential if we are to be acceptable to a just God. “But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in transgressions made us alive together in Christ (by grace you have been saved).” (Ephesians 2:4-5.)

The grace of God is bestowed only “in Christ.” If we can grasp the wonders of this blessing, and live our lives accordingly, we can grow to be the “peculiar people” of God zealously serving Him. When we are baptized into Christ, God re-creates us (Ephesians 2:10), transforming us into children of God in Christ. (Galatians 3:26,27.)

THE CALLED OUT

The church is the “called out,” and Jude expands on this concept

when he addresses his epistle to Christians, “the called in Christ Jesus.” (Jude 3.) We are the redeemed. Paul points again to Christ, teaching, “in whom we have the redemption through His blood; the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace.” (Ephesians 1:7.) God’s redeeming grace is truly a spiritual blessing beyond compare. Those who obey the gospel are “justified as a gift of His grace, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.” (Romans 3:24.) The full impact is seen in our treatment of others, however, as we are to “be gracious to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another just as God has forgiven you in Christ Jesus.” (Ephesians 4:32.) Then we truly become a blessing to others.

Seeking to understand our salvation should be an unending quest. In Christ we are called to lay aside our anxieties and trust God, “And the peace that surpasses understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:7.) With this assurance, we can confidently overcome the circumstances of our lives.

God’s providential care is yet another spiritual blessing that is only offered to those who are in Christ. “But my God shall supply your every need according to the riches of His glory in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:19.) Here is where many miss the point. These promises are not to every human being but only to those who are in Christ! “How does one get into Christ?” Three times, Paul tells the answer in Scripture ... one of which says, “for by one Spirit, we were all immersed into the one body.” (1 Corinthians 12:13.) Are you in Christ?

CHRISTIANS ARE TO BE UNITED

We have explored the Scriptures to glean how the grace of God is bestowed only “in Christ” and God providentially cares for His children “in Christ.” Christians are both unique and unified as children of God, for “there is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither slave nor free; there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” (Galatians 3:28.) Finally, then, let us consider that the “more excellent way” (1 Corinthians 12:31b and 13:13), faith, hope, and love, is only “in Christ.”

Paul weaves the tapestry of truth together for us in teaching the spiritual blessings of faith, hope and love. In Christ we receive all spiritual blessings (Ephesians 1:3), grace (Ephesians 1:6), redemption and forgiveness (Ephesians 1:7), and knowledge of the mystery of God’s purpose. (Ephesians 1:9-11.) Then Paul tells us “why,” teaching, “in order that we who first hoped in Christ may be unto the praise of His glory.” (Ephesians 1:12.) We are saved by hope (Romans 8:24) and hope anchors our souls. (Hebrews 6:19.) John explains that we have “this hope” only because of God’s love. (1 John 3:1-3.) Only in Christ is there hope of eternal life!

In the kingdom of God, the church, God intertwines faith and love

in His children. "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has meaning, but faith working through love." (Galatians 5:6.) Love that is not displayed is not love at all, and faith that is not displayed is dead. (James 2:17.) These two together, working on the foundation of hope makes us pleasing to God and fruitful in His service. Paul told Timothy that "the grace of our Lord super-abounded with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." (1 Timothy 4:14.) Only three times in Scripture are we told "how" to get "in Christ." "For as many as have been immersed (baptized) into Christ have put on Christ." (Galatians 3:27.) 1 Corinthians 12:13 teaches, "For by one Spirit we were immersed into the one body." "As many of us as were immersed into Christ Jesus were immersed into His death." (Romans 6:3.)

Faith, hope and love are the "more excellent way" ONLY in Christ, according to God. The body of Christ is the body of the saved (Colossians 1:13-18), those who are redeemed and added to the kingdom of God's beloved Son. Salvation and grace are therefore only found "in Christ" or "in the body" ... the church. As you consider these things, the question, again is: "Are you in Christ?"

I Am Not Ashamed

DAN FLOURNOY

"I'M NOT ASHAMED To Own My Lord" by Isaac Watts, is one of the great songs of the church. It expresses a noble sentiment that should characterize every Christian. Yet, many who claim to be God's people demonstrate that in reality, they are ashamed of the name of Christ, the church of Christ and the doctrine of Christ.

Why do some congregations seek to evade the name "church of Christ;" by using some other designation? Over the past few years several churches once affiliated with churches of Christ have changed their designation, leaving the name of Christ off. Often the word "community" is used in connection with the name of the church, i.e., "Podunk Community Church." Could it be that these groups are simply ashamed of the Lord's name?

How could anyone be ashamed of the Lord's church? Evidently, some are because they seldom refer to her except to criticize. They will speak of "our heritage," "our movement," and "our faith-tradition" in place of the church of Christ. Could it be that they are ashamed of the Lord's church? These terms are never used in Scripture to refer to the body of **Christ**. Jesus did not say, "Upon this rock I will build my faith tradition!" He said, "Upon this rock I will build my church." (Matthew 16:18.) Paul did not say "our movement" salutes you! He said, "The churches of Christ salute you." (Romans 16:16.) He did not charge the elders of Ephesus with the

responsibility to “feed our heritage” but to “feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood.” (Acts 20:28.)

The apostle John taught that Christians are to abide in the teaching given by Christ. (2 John 9; compare Acts 2:42.) Likewise, the apostle Paul warned brethren at Corinth “not to go beyond the things which are written....” (1 Corinthians 4:6.) However, some seem to be ashamed of the doctrine of Christ and prefer to go beyond that which is written to follow the doctrines of men. Some have abandoned Christ’s doctrine of unity and teach the false doctrine of “unity in diversity.” (John 17:20-21; 1 Corinthians 1:1-17.) They go beyond what is written regarding singing in worship and add instrumental music. (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16-17.) They seek to replace simple, godly worship for worldly entertainment including choirs and solos for which there is no authority. They attack and minimize gospel preaching and substitute drama in its place. (1 Corinthians 1:21.) They have replaced Christ’s terms of pardon with the false doctrine of “faith only” and substituted the so-called “sinners’ prayer” for baptism for the remission of sins.” (Acts 2:38; 22:16.)

The warning of Christ is clear: “For whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of man also shall be ashamed of him, when He cometh in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.” (Mark 8:38.) Loyal Christians are not ashamed of the name of Christ, the church of Christ, or the doctrine of Christ.

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(See Rule 3)

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