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Editorial

What Does the Bible Teach?

One Must Be In The Church To Be Saved And To Finally Enter Heaven

THE BIBLE TEACHES, CHRIST JESUS came into the world to save sinners (1 Timothy 1:15). To be saved from sin one must, He taught, believe in Him and be baptized (Mark 16:16). Those whom He saves, He adds them to His church (Acts 2:47), which is His kingdom (Matthew 16:18, 19). At His coming again on the last day, Jesus will receive His kingdom unto Himself and will deliver the kingdom, the church, to God the Father (1 Corinthians 15:24). "And thus we shall always be with the Lord" (1 Thessalonians 4:17). One must, therefore, be in the church to be saved and to finally enter heaven. However, as much as it is required to believe and obey the gospel to be saved and become a member of the church of Christ, it is also equally important to remain saved in Him until the end. Christ taught: "Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life." (Revelation 2:10). Some time people become followers of Jesus Christ, after hearing His gospel; believing in Him, repenting of their sins; confessing Him to be the Son of God and being baptized for the remission of their sins. Christ, according to His promise, adds them to the church, and they try to be faithful to Him for some time by attending worship services of the church every Sunday and staying away from all sinful things and bad habits in which they formerly engaged. But due to



the lure of sin and peer pressure they again fall back into the worldliness. The Bible describes such Christians as: "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the Way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: "A dog returns to his own vomit," and "a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire"." (2 Peter 2:20-22). Sin, if persisted in, is a process which progressively hardens. A Christian who goes back to his former life of sin becomes more and more insensitive to the voice of God and even of conscience. It becomes apparent that he finds himself in a state that is worse than the state he was in prior to his becoming a Christian. He or she had previously been in condition where they were more easily reached with the gospel than they are after turning away from that which they have espoused. Also the former state of such is better insofar as the reputation of the church is concerned, for those who have never known and obeyed the gospel of Jesus Christ do not bring reproach upon His church as do those who fall away and go back into the world.

To remain faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ, the followers of Christ are taught to, "Do not love the world or the things of the world." And, then the warning, "If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever." (1 John 2:15-17). What is the will of God the Father for His people? In his epistle to Christians the apostle Peter wrote: "As His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the pollution that is in the world through lust. But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord

Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your calling and election sure, **for if you do these things you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ.** (2 Peter 1:3-11). Christians are citizens of the kingdom of Christ on earth; they enter Christ's kingdom at the same time when the Lord adds them to His church at their conversion (Colossians 1:13). But the entrance into the eternal kingdom of heaven into which they will enter at the time of the second coming of Christ will depend on the fact if they have been faithful to the Lord until their death on earth. This is exactly what Christ had taught in His parable of the tares found in the thirteenth chapter of Mathews' account of the gospel, where He said, "Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will **gather out of His kingdom** all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!" (Matthew 13: 40-43). Remember, Jesus said that on the last day of judgment and reward His angels will gather "**out of His kingdom**" all things that offend and those who practice lawlessness! What is the kingdom? It is the church.

"SAVE YOURSELVES"

J.C. CHOATE

THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT WE ARE SINNERS (Romans 3:23) and, as such, we need a savior (Luke 19:10). After the Lord's death, burial, and resurrection, when the Apostles had gathered in Jerusalem, they received the outpouring of the Holy Spirit from God-the "baptism of the Holy Spirit". The accompanying sound, as of a rushing mighty wind, caused a great throng of people to gather, to see what was happening.

Peter, with the other Apostles, began to preach to the crowd, telling them of the Lord's coming into the world, of the miracles He



performed to convince people that He was truly the Son of God, and of how he had been crucified for the sins of the world. They spoke boldly of His resurrection, and declared that he had returned to the Father in heaven, to reign as the king they had been expecting.

Many of those who heard that sermon were cut to the heart, becoming believers, and they wanted to know what they must do to be saved. "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38). The record goes on to show that "with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls" (Acts. 2:40,41).

Please notice in Acts 2:40 that Peter said that they should save themselves! Can one person—or a whole multitude of people—save themselves? The answer is obvious: No, we cannot save ourselves! We can't save ourselves with money. There is not enough money in the world to save us. We can't save ourselves by living a good moral life, having a good conscience, or by any other standard we might add to these. We can't even save ourselves by piling up a mountain of good works! why? because there is no way that we can earn or merit salvation.

That is not to say that we can be saved, either, without obeying the Lord and doing the good works he teaches us to do, but even after we have obeyed in "all that He asks" being born into His family and living for Him, being faithful to Him until we die, still if we are saved eternally it will be by the grace of Almighty God (Ephesians 2:8,9). Salvation is His gift of grace and mercy, held out freely to all men. In order to receive it, we need only to submit to His will in penitence and obedience.

But the majority in the religious world—those in Catholicism, Protestant denominationalism, and other religions—evidently think they can save themselves! They have devised all kinds of ways to be saved. One will tell you that if you want to be saved you must do this or that, and another will tell you something else most Protestants say, on the one hand, that it is necessary only to accept Jesus as one's personal savior to be saved; but on the other hand, if a good moral person dies without ever "accepting Christ" the thinking is, "He was such a good person—you know he is saved." So such people are reasoning that one's own goodness is enough to

save a person from condemnation, even if he has never been “born again”. In those cases, they have accounted the cleansing blood of Christ as totally unnecessary for salvation!

Of course, those who do not believe in Christ have devised their own ways to be saved: through inflicting pain and suffering on their bodies, through their own ideas of “good works”, through “rebirth”, through saying prayers and chanting words, through offering sacrifices—the list of works and ways to obtain salvation seems endless!

How can anyone who knows anything about the teachings of the Bible accept such far-out ideas?

But let’s go back to Peter’s statement in Acts 2:40, when he exhorted the people to save themselves. While we cannot save ourselves by our own efforts and goodness, without Christ, we can save ourselves by accepting the salvation Jesus offers. That is, by believing in Him, repenting of our sins as He has asked us to do, by being buried into His death in the waters of baptism for the remission of our sins, as . pointed out in Acts 2:38, we can save ourselves through our response to Christ.

On that day, when Peter told the people to save themselves, those who gladly received his word were baptized and were added to the church—the body of saved people by God, Himself, according to Acts 2:47. So, who was baptized? The penitent believers. And who was saved? Those who were baptized. And who was added to the church? Those who responded to Peter’s admonition to “save themselves”! And who saved them and added them to the church? The Lord!

Now, in the sense of their ready response to Peter’s command, those people saved themselves. But they did not save themselves, separate and apart from the Lord. It was through his gracious invitation, coupled with their penitent obedience, that those people were saved. If they had not responded with glad hearts to the gospel, they would have died lost, no matter how good they might have been or how many good works they might have done. Just as it was necessary for Christ to die to atone for the sins of mankind, it is also necessary for each one of us to be washed in His blood in order to experience the cleansing power of His blood.

The point in all of this is that you can hear the gospel, the good news of salvation, and you can come to understand in your heart what the Lord would require of you in order that you might be saved, but if you hear only, or believe only, you cannot and will not be

saved. To be saved, you must not only hear the Gospel and its commands, but you must believe it and obey it. Christ will not force you to accept salvation; He will not force you to believe in Him and to follow Him. If you choose to be lost, that is your choice. But if you want to be saved you must accept salvation on Christ's term: To have forgiveness of your sins and to become a part of the Lord's family, you must be born into that family through faith and baptism. In order to remain saved throughout life and to live with God eternally after this life is over, you must remain faithful to Him until death (Revelation 2:10). Again, He said, "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (Revelation 22:14).

I ask again, "Can one save himself?" The answer is both Yes and No! Yes, by believing in the Lord and obeying His will. No, one cannot save himself without the cleansing blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Trinity: Father, Son, Holy Spirit

PAUL SMITHSON

THERE IS MUCH CONCERNING GOD that the finite mind of man cannot comprehend. We are blessed, however, that God saw fit to explain to us in the Scriptures some wonderful things concerning Deity.

The Scriptures teach that the persons of Deity are one in purpose, yet distinct persons of Deity. When Jesus said, for example in Jn. 10:30, "I and the Father are one", "one" in the Greek is neuter—"one thing", not "one person." The Father is God (Deity). "...Giving thanks always for all things to God the Father" (Eph. 5:20). The Son, Jesus is also God (Deity). "The Word was God" (Jn. 1:1). The Holy Spirit is God (Deity). Peter said to Ananias and Sapphira, "You have lied to the Holy Spirit...you have not lied to men but God" (Acts. 5:3-4).

Some believe that there is only one person in the Godhead, teaching all three persons of Deity are actually Jesus. However, if this is true how is Mt. 3: 16-17 explained? "When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, 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” (Mt. 3: 16-17). If Jesus is actually all three persons of the Godhead, what you have in this passage is Jesus coming up out of the water, lighting upon Himself in the form of a dove, and speaking to Himself from heaven, all at the same time!

The plurality of the Godhead can be seen in the opening verses of Scripture. “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Gen. 1:1) The word “God” is translated from the Hebrew term “*Elohim*” which is plural. Essentially, “*El*” a term for Deity and “*ahim*” shows the plurality. We find the plurality of the Godhead again later in the same chapter, “And God said, Let Us make man in *Our* image, after *Our* likeness...” (Gen. 1:26). This plurality of Deity can be seen again in Genesis 11:3.

Some might ask, “What about Deuteronomy 6:4?” which states, “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord,” The word “one” actually comes from a Hebrew term that means “a united one,” as opposed to a singular “one.” The same term is used in Gen. 2:24, “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.” The man and his wife do not become one person, but the two are united as “one.”

Why are the persons of the Godhead referred to as the Father, the Son, and the Spirit? These names simply refer to the different roles each fulfill. These roles involve voluntary submission that their one purpose might be fulfilled (1 Cor. 11:3; Jn. 15:26).

The fact that each fulfills different roles which include voluntary submission does not mean they are not equal in deity. For example, men and women are both human beings equal in the sight of God. The apostle stated, “There is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28). Yet each have different roles to fulfill. The man is the head of woman and the woman is to submit to her husband (Eph. 5:22:ff). Each are to fulfill different roles, however, this does not make them unequal. The same is true of the persons of the Godhead, though each fulfill a different role, each are equally Divine.

How blessed we are to have such a loving Godhead whose one purpose toward us is salvation, a Father who had such a wonderful plan (Eph. 1:3-5), a Savior who was willing to empty Himself of the glory of heaven to execute that plan (Philip. 2:5-11), and a Holy Spirit who came to reveal the plan to us (1 Cor. 2:10-13).

The Bible Doesn't Say, "Don't Do It," Does It?

WAYNE JACKSON

SOLOMON ONCE WROTE THAT "there is no new thing under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 1:9). Certainly that saying is true with reference to the arguments that a swelling "progressive" element within the church is employing in defense of the idea that the use of musical instruments is permissible in Christian worship. Or at the very least, they allege, the issue is not one that should prevent fellowship between churches of Christ and denominational groups that use the instrument.

Professors in several Bible colleges are attempting to argue this case, and a number of churches already have begun incorporating the instrument into their services. An even greater number contends that the matter is of no consequence, and there is little doubt that these will have the instrument in the not-distant future.

It once was the case that those who advocated the instrument attempted to make arguments that were at least remotely related to the biblical text. But those arguments proved to be so baseless that most of them have been abandoned. The mantra now appears to be that stale quip, "The Bible doesn't say, 'don't do it.'"

One cannot but believe that with some of these folks it would not matter if the Bible explicitly stated, "You must not use mechanical music in Christian worship." They would do it anyway, for they are "will-worshippers" (Colossians 2:23) who are enamored with carnality, rather than truth.

Imagine for a moment the following scenario. A man takes his car into an automotive repair shop. He informs the proprietor that the vehicle is not running smoothly and he wants a tune-up. When the customer returns the following day, he is presented with a bill for more than \$2,000. In addition to the tune-up, the repairman installed new brakes, a muffler, a carburetor, a fuel pump, and a new set of tires. The customer is enraged and protests: "I did not authorize these extra expenditures!" "I know that," the mechanic responds, "but you did not say **not** to do it." Suppose the case is taken to court. How do you reckon a judge would rule?

The issue is one of authority. While we recognize that there are many laws in the Bible that are explicitly negative, one may not

draw the inference that everything **is permitted** that is not **specifically condemned**.

In the table of the Ten Commandments, the Lord said regarding “graven images,” i.e., idol gods, “you shall not bow yourself down to them” (Exodus 20:5). But what if some renegade Hebrew simply “stood” before an idol and prayed? Do you suppose that if he had done such, and made the defense, “He said, ‘don’t bow’; he didn’t say, ‘don’t stand’”? Do you suppose the Lord would have been impressed with such a depraved defense?

Can reasonable people not mentally anticipate the logical consequence of this type of reasoning? It throws wide open the gates of apostasy. Consider the following questions that surely could be posed by modern innovators.

1. Why can’t we pray to Mary and the saints? The Bible doesn’t explicitly condemn it.
2. Why can’t we observe communion on Saturday? The Bible doesn’t say not to.
3. Why can’t we have Pepsi and pizza for communion? The Bible doesn’t forbid it.
4. Why can’t we baptize babies? The New Testament doesn’t censure it.
5. Why can’t we smoke marijuana in worship? No text prohibits it.

It has become increasingly apparent that not only do we see a new generation emerging that knows practically nothing about the Scriptures, largely it is a people that cannot reason. Logic, to them, is a like an alien language.

For many, their entire religious emphasis (under a leaky umbrella they call “spiritual”) is one of feelings, self-centeredness, and an appeal to the carnal.

The Church and the World

ARDRON HINTON

A STATEMENT IN ROMANS 1:22 sums up the root cause of the moral and ethical decline in our world: *“Professing to be wise, they became fools.”* A majority of the people living in the world at this time would seem to be among the guilty regarding this accusation. What we want to notice are some of the dangers which *human conceit and claim to wisdom* have caused.

1. Under a banner labeled “freedom” numerous groups have pushed laws and rules that are rapidly eroding genuine freedom. The family, the church, educational entities, and traditional standards are all taking blow after blow. National organizations actually fight against parental rights and against restrictions on freedom of access regarding libraries, the internet, etc. These same people then turn in the opposite direction and seek to restrict, even silence, any who do not share their viewpoints. Churches are far more vulnerable today than most people realize. The same regulations of government bureaucracies or rulings by courts that have proved to be a threat to many organizations and businesses are at the door of the church building also. Even meritless lawsuits could ruin a congregation financially.

2. Under a banner labeled “progress” we are being dragged into the same excesses of self-indulgence, sexual licentiousness, and senseless violence that destroyed other nations in the past. Biblical morality may be out of style to this generation, but it is still the only protection we have for avoiding the total ruin produced by these “politically correct” notions of our day. And the astounding expansion of the communication industries which has fueled this “progress” creates the most dangerous social climate the world has ever faced.

3. Under a banner labeled “scholarly wisdom” we see the role of God in human affairs being either ignored or completely denied in educational circles. Humanism, with its claim to superior wisdom and knowledge, holds onto power in political, educational and social realms, even as evidence mounts that its ideas are more damaging than helpful. Throughout human history, we see how human conceit and vanity led to the pursuit of policies and practices that undermined the social or political structure of the time *until it collapsed*. History is repeating itself under our very eyes.

How shall we respond? Not with apathy but with resolute determination and commitment to righteousness. Not with blindness to the facts but with a dedication to truth and to truth-seeking.

What about the Thief on the Cross?

BOB PRICHARD

THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE man we know as the thief on the cross was saved by Jesus. Jesus told him, “Today shalt thou be

with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). The question is whether or not he provides an example that we may follow to be saved.

What is often overlooked in this discussion is that the thief lived at a time when God's conditions for salvation were completely different from what they are for us now. The penitent thief lived during the earthly ministry of Jesus, before the new covenant, the will of Christ, came into effect. For a will to come into effect, the testator—person making the will—must die. The Bible says, "For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth" (Hebrews 9:16-17). Christ saved the thief before he died, and before His will went into effect.

During the earthly ministry of Jesus, He forgave many people of their sins, under whatever conditions He prescribed. Before He healed the palsied man of his physical disease, Jesus said to him, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee" (Matthew 9:2). After a sinful woman showed her love for Him by washing His feet with her tears and wiping them with her hair, Jesus told her, "Thy sins are forgiven" (Luke 7:48). These cases are similar to the thief, because Jesus saved them without baptism. But the key is, they were also saved before His death—before the new covenant came into effect.

Consider it this way. Suppose you were to write to the Internal Revenue Service that you were not going to file your income taxes any more because you know that Abraham Lincoln never filed income taxes, and he was considered a loyal citizen. Would they accept this? No, because Lincoln lived long before our laws for filing income tax came into effect. He was not bound by them.

It is very clear that baptism is part of the new covenant or will of Christ. After His death and before His ascension, Jesus commissioned His disciples to preach the gospel to every creature, saying, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). Every single account of conversion in the book of Acts, which describes events under the new covenant after the death of Christ, mentions baptism. When Peter told the multitude at Jerusalem, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38), he was following the command of Christ. If we would obey Christ today, we also should repent and be baptized for the remission of our sins.

The Savior Of All Does Not Save All!

BASIL OVERTON

WRITING OF OUR WONDERFUL SAVIOR, the beloved apostle John wrote, *"And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world"* (1 John 2:3).

The Holy Ghost said that by the grace of God, Jesus Christ tasted death for every lost person (Hebrews 2:9).

If Jesus is every lost person's Savior, why isn't every lost person saved? The answer to this question is very easy. The Lord Jesus saves only those who respond to His call to salvation, which is in the Gospel (2 Thessalonians 2:14). He saves only those who get into Him and put Him on in water baptism (Romans 6:3; Galatians 3:27).

Baptism that puts one *into* Christ, and by which one puts *on* Christ has to be preceded by one's faith in Christ as God's Son, the Savior who came down from above (John 8:21-24). Baptism must also be preceded by repentance of sin, and by confession that Jesus is God's Son (Acts 2:38; Romans 10:9,10).

WHAT PLANS ARE YOU MAKING FOR ETERNITY?

KEN TYLER

WE LIVE IN AN AGE WHERE GREAT emphasis is placed on making plans for the future. I am sure that many of you work for a company that provides a retirement benefit so that when you reach a certain age you will be able to retire and still receive an income. Most people who have reached an adult age have been approached at one time or another by someone who sells life insurance, and most of us have life insurance. Also, many of us have fire insurance on our homes and possessions, we have hospital insurance, we may have cancer insurance, and even a burial policy. On and on it goes about the things you and I do to take care of our future. We put great emphasis upon the preparation that needs to be made for the years before us.

Why have a retirement plan or life insurance? The answer, of course, is to provide for the food, clothing, and housing our bodies

will need as long as we live.

But when I think of such things, I am mindful of the fact that these provisions place emphasis on the material and not the spiritual. Of course, there is nothing wrong with providing for our material needs in the future, but the point I want to make is that the majority of emphasis is on the physical, with little or none on the spiritual. A person will make all kinds of sacrifices to have a retirement and the proper insurance so he and his family will be taken care of physically, yet to forget about the spiritual needs will result in him and his family going to hell. Friends, ***that doesn't make sense.*** Jesus asked, *"For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"* (Mark 8:36,37).

We would say that a person is foolish if he does not prepare for his future **physical** needs. What would we say about the individual who does not prepare for his future **spiritual** needs? It goes without saying that spiritual preparation is far more important than physical. Eternity is everlasting. Isn't it the supreme tragedy not to prepare?

God Has Spoken To Men

CHARLES BOX

THE BOOK OF HEBREWS begins by showing the Gospel dispensation as superior to the law of Moses. In Old Testament times, God spoke at different times and in different ways (Hebrews 1:1-3). Today, God has spoken through His Son.

GOD SPOKE IN OLD TESTAMENT TIMES

In Old Testament times, God spoke through the prophets. The prophets were men through whom God revealed His will to mankind. God spoke through the prophets to the fathers. His revelation came to man little by little. "Whom will he teach knowledge? And whom will he make to understand the message? Those just weaned from milk? Those just drawn from the breasts? For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little" (Isaiah 28:9-10). He spoke in different ways (dreams, types, shadows, audible voice, His own hand and many other ways). The message is powerful—in Old Testament times, God spoke.

GOD SPEAKS IN NEW TESTAMENT TIMES

In these last days, God has spoken through His Son. There are no modern-day prophets nor any continuing (new) revelation today. The Gospel is God's final revelation to man. "God, Who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by, the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, Whom He has appointed heir of all things, through Whom also He made the worlds; Who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Hebrews 1:1-3). God made this final revelation through His Son. "...This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!" (Matthew 17:5). God's revelation sprang out of love and compassion for lost mankind. How shall we escape if we neglect the Lord's message which brings the great salvation? (Hebrews 2:3).

Lessons: (1) Let the unconverted understand that God has spoken. (2) Let the church be serious about getting God's message to the world. (3) Let the church faithfully try to gain more knowledge of Christ and His will. (4) Let the church remember that in Jesus we have the full and final revelation of God. (5) Let all recognize their personal responsibility (God has spoken).

TRUTH OR CULTURE?

CHARLES COBB

MEN HAVE ENDEAVORED NUMEROUS times to soften, change, or deny the teaching of God in one way or another. Doctrines contrary to the truth have frequently been promoted. A "new hermeneutic" has been proposed. Even so-called translations of the Bible have come about with obvious errors that are devised to teach some brand of doctrine to support a denominational concept instead of positive truth. It is alarming to think of what man has tried to do to the Word of God (Galatians 1:6-10).

Now, we hear voices declaring that the Bible must be interpreted in keeping and in harmony with present-day culture. For instance, our culture is persuaded that it is acceptable to lie. The Bible teaches, "All liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone" (Revelation 21:8). God did not intend to appease modern

culture. It is wrong, sinful to lie regardless of the prevailing thought in an existing culture. Men will often lie when it is cheaper, better, and certainly right to tell the truth.

God has not given mankind a license to lie.

It can be observed that some of our leaders, those in high positions, do not always tell the people the truth. (Could this even be said of some in the leadership of the church?)

Jesus Christ our Lord presented Himself as “the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). He plainly stated, “Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32).

It is evident that God wants people to be truthful—and culture to the contrary does not change God's will in the matter.

The admonition of the Lord is, “Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor...” (Ephesians 4:25). We are also admonished, “...but speaking the truth in love...” (Ephesians 4:15).

God is true. Jesus is true. The Spirit is truth (I John 5:6). Every man is urged to speak the truth. A culture cannot change this. This, however, when believed and practiced, can change a culture.

NOT BY BREAD ALONE

WALTER SWAIN

IT WAS THE GREATEST confrontation of all history. Two powerful opponents came face to face. Who would defeat the other? At stake was the eternal fate of all mankind. No greater battle has ever taken place.

One opponent had been fasting for 40 days and 40 nights. He was famished, hungry, in desperate need of food. His foe suggested that He turn stones into food, so that He could eat and satisfy His physical hunger. He was fully capable of doing that; yet He refused. His answer to the challenge was to quote an Old Testament Scripture, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every w'ord that proceeds out of the mouth of God.” With this declaration, He overcame the first attack of the enemy.

Of course, this confrontation was between the devil and Jesus Christ. Matthew records this great meeting in Matthew 4:1-11. Jesus resisted the temptation of the devil by reminding satan that there is more to life than satisfying physical needs. Man does not live by

“bread alone.” He also has a desperate need to satisfy his spiritual needs by the Word of God.

This passage of Scripture also suggests the power of the Word of God to sustain us spiritually in our life on earth. The Hebrew writer tells us, “For the word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12). Paul told Timothy, “Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work” (II Timothy 3:16-17).

Every word of God is necessary to furnish us to every good work. Past, present, and future manifest the power of God’s Word in our lives. Peter speaks of four aspects of the manifestation of this power in human history:

1. In the creation of all things (II Peter 3:5). Physical life originated by the Word of God (Genesis 1:3, 6, 9; Hebrews 11:3). God spoke this world into existence. We only exist because He continues to perpetuate and sustain our lives (Acts 17:28). Being made in His image, we have a need for spiritual sustenance.
2. In the creation of a new spiritual being through the new birth (I Peter 1:22-25). Spiritual life in each Christian originates by the Word of God when one hears the Word and obeys it (Romans 10:17; 1:5; John 3:5). As spiritual beings, we have need of spiritual food. Man does not live by bread alone.
3. In sustaining our spiritual lives (I Peter 2:2). Man must have “bread,” both physically and spiritually. We manage to eat our three meals a day physically, but often neglect our spiritual “meals.” Man cannot live by bread alone. Daily Bible study (Acts 17:11), attending Bible classes regularly, listening to the Word preached each Lord’s day, teaching others the Word at every opportunity—these are absolute musts, if we are to grow spiritually, and sustain our spiritual lives. We will “starve” spiritually if we neglect them.
4. In God’s final judgment of all mankind (I Peter 4:5). Jesus said that the Word will be the basis of our judgment on that day (John 12:48-49). John was shown in a vision the great white throne and God judging the world from that throne. In Revelation 20:12, he writes, “...and books were opened, and another book was opened, which is the book of life, and the

dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works.” God will judge us by His Word.

Jesus’ answer to satan’s first temptation goes far beyond that one confrontation. His statement still rings true today. We cannot exist on a physical level alone. Made in God’s image, as spiritual beings, we need more than physical “bread.” Human doctrines, philosophies, and religions will not sustain us. We must have every word of God. We must come to know it and obey it. We must partake of it on a daily basis as the “bread of life.”

Man cannot live by bread alone.

Only A Great Moral Teacher?

TOM KELTON

JESUS OF NAZARETH IS the most important figure the world has ever known. This Galilaeen teacher has had more influence on mankind than any other person.

He was a great moral teacher—one in a class of His own. He spoke with great authority: “You have heard it said, but I tell you...” He spoke with great simplicity so that ordinary people could understand Him. He taught with remarkable depth: “Love your enemies, do good to those who mistreat you.” His wisdom silenced opponents time and again: “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and to God the things that are God’s.” His teaching was specific and highly relevant to daily life: “Go and do likewise,” said Jesus at the conclusion of His parable of the Good Samaritan.

No wonder people marveled at the teaching of Jesus. No wonder they followed Him everywhere, hanging on His words. “No one ever taught like this,” they said, and they were right.

But, something else is remarkable about Jesus and His teaching. As well as teaching the highest standards known to mankind, He actually kept them. He not only taught people to love their enemies but also forgave those who crucified Him. He did not only call people to lay down their life for their friends, but actually did it. This makes Him the most remarkable of all teachers.

Jesus was a great moral teacher. Jesus was either something very much more or very much less. He made the most astonishing claims, claims that have never been paralleled by any sane person.

He claimed that He could forgive people's sins, that He had the right to people's worship, that He alone represented the way to God, the truth of God, and the life of God, that He had come to seek and save the lost, that He would give His life as a ransom for many, that He would rise from the dead, and that on the day of judgment, humanity would be accountable to Him.

All four Gospel accounts bristle with supernatural claims on the part of Jesus. If He was only a teacher, He was a very misleading one.

To say Jesus was simply a good moral teacher is untenable. If He is not the One Who makes God real to us by sharing our human nature, He is either an untrustworthy liar or deluded.

Jesus of Nazareth was not simply a great moral teacher. We can call Him a liar, if we think we can sustain such a charge. We can cast doubts on His mental state. But, the tag of "only a moral teacher" does not fit.

THE NAME CHRISTIAN

FRANK L. COX

THREE TIMES THIS BEAUTIFUL name appears on the pages of the New Testament (Acts 11:26; 26:28; I Peter 4:16). Concerning the name Christian, we shall make some observations.

First, the meaning of it: Belonging to or pertaining to Christ or the religion based on His teaching. In that name, the name of Christ is embedded and honored—Christian.

Second, the origin of it. Now, let us ask the questions that follow: (1) When was it given? Prior to the establishment of the church in Antioch, the name was unknown. The followers of Christ had been called by other names: Believers (Acts 5:14); brethren (Acts 6:3); disciples (Acts 9:1); men of the Way (Acts 9:2); by way of contempt, they had been called Nazarenes (Acts 24:5) and Galileans. (2) By whom was the name given? By one of three parties: The disciples themselves, the enemies of the disciples, or the spokesmen of the Lord. By a process of elimination, we can arrive at the answer, (a) Not by the disciples themselves. This is clear in the text: They "were called." (b) Not by their enemies. It is unlikely that a name so honorable and unoffensive began with them. It is unreasonable to suppose that a name given by their enemies should be so universally

approved by the disciples themselves, (c) Therefore, the name must have originated with the Lord's spokesmen—Paul and Barnabas. This is implied in the context (Acts 11:25-26).

Third, the fitness of it. For a number of reasons, the name is fitting for a disciple of Christ. (1) He receives his teaching from Christ. The student wears the name of his Master. (2) He has been redeemed by the Christ. The redeemed wears the name of the Redeemer. (3) He is married to Christ—joined in spiritual wedlock. The bride wears the name of the Bridegroom. (4) He partakes of the nature of the Christ. Christ is in him; he is in Christ (Colossians 1:27; II Corinthians 5:17). (5) The name honors the Christ. In the name Israel, God's name was honored—Isra-El. In the name Christian, Christ's name is honored—Christian (I Peter 4:16).

Fourth, the acceptable-ness of it. The name is acceptable to all professed followers of Christ. If ever the different religious groups unite, in answer to the Savior's prayer (John 17), they will unite under the name Christian—not under any other name.

It is a distinct honor to wear the name of Christ. But, before a person begins to wear the name of Christ, he should yield himself to Christ's authority, imbibe His spirit, partake of His nature (Galatians 3:26-27).

Very earnestly we admonish you:

Be a Christian in character;

Be a Christian in name.

Be a Christian—no more and no less.

The Finished Work Of The Cross

HERSHEL DYER

WHAT IS MEANT BY the expression, "The finished work of the cross"?

A few hours before He was crucified, Jesus stated in His prayer to the Father, "I have finished the work which You have given Me to do" (John 17:4). Resolute to face the shame and suffering that was now so imminent, the Son of God reflected upon His life of obedience to the Father.

After several hours upon the cross, He felt the final ebbing of His physical life and the fading of His mental processes. Knowing the end to His sorrow and pain was at hand, our Savior uttered that

memorable declaration, “It is finished” (John 19:30).

But, what did He mean was “finished” that day? All believers know that the atonement for the sins of mankind was completely and forevermore finished then and there (Hebrews 10:10; I John 2:2). Never, in time or eternity, will sinful humanity need another sacrifice for sin.

It is regrettable that some have distorted these words of our Lord to mean that all work for the sinner’s salvation had been completed. If this be true, then all persons, regardless of belief or unbelief, godliness or ungodliness, will be saved. This would logically follow since Christ died for all! (II Corinthians 5:15). But, few among those who believe in the atonement of the cross are ready to accept universal salvation based upon it.

Most do not see faith or belief as a rejection of “the finished work of the cross.” Yet, faith in Christ is, according to Jesus, “the work of God”—that is, the work ordained by God for man to do (John 6:29). Neither is repentance, sometimes called “the hardest command,” viewed as a repudiation of the atonement.

Why is it that the baptism of a penitent believer “for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38) is declared to be a rejection of “the finished work of the cross”? After all, such baptism is calling upon the Lord for salvation (Romans 10:13; Acts 22:16; Colossians 2:12; I Peter 3:21). Men who repudiate baptism as being “for the remission of sins” constantly tell souls to pray for salvation. Since it is conceded that prayer does not invalidate belief in “the finished work of the cross,” by the same reasoning it must be conceded that neither does baptism.

Trusting God Eliminates Fear

DAVID MACY

“SO THAT WE MAY boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me” (Hebrews 13:6).

God is all powerful and men can do nothing against the one who is protected and assisted by the Almighty God unless He allows it.

Trust in God gives boldness when everyone around is shaking with fear. The one who is anchored in Jehovah is unafraid of stormy sea and unknown waves of trouble. He knows the Master of the

sea is on board his ship and will guide him safely to the eternal haven of rest where the uncertainties and disappointments of this life will be forgotten in the light and joy of an endless day.

The shepherd boy, David, is an outstanding example of a person who was completely unafraid because he trusted in God with all his heart. When the giant Goliath stood on a mountain and shouted a challenge, every man in the Israelite camp, except David, was filled with fear. King Saul told David he was not able to fight this Philistine giant because he was only a boy. But, David informed his majesty that the Lord had delivered him from the paw of the bear, therefore, he would deliver him from the hand of the Philistine. When David actually faced Goliath, he was ridiculed unmercifully, and the heathen giant promised to give his flesh to the fowls of the air and the beasts of the field. But David calmly and confidently informed Goliath that God would deliver him into his hand and he would take his head from him that very day.

Trusting in the Almighty God eliminates fear even in the presence of the most gigantic obstacles. Sometimes these obstacles seem as formidable as Goliath, but if our trust is in Jehovah, we can and will overcome these gigantic obstacles and we will live victorious lives.

“They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever” (Psalm 125:1). Those who trust in God and obey His Holy Word will be steadfast and unmoveable when they are attacked on any front. All the evil powers on earth and in hell cannot change them from the path of righteousness which leads to the land of eternal day. Yes, satan knows all about the power of trust. This is the reason he is relentlessly seeking the tiniest crack in our armor so he can inject a devastating dose of doubt and fear!

Christians And Governments

ROD RUTHERFORD

MAY A CHRISTIAN SERVE in the government? May Christians vote in elections in their country? May Christians salute the flag of their nation and sing the national anthem? These questions are asked because Christians are aware that some politicians are dishonest and some government officials are corrupt. What does

the Bible say?

When Jesus lived upon the earth, His nation (Israel) was ruled by Rome. The Jews hated the Romans. Roman officials often were corrupt and oppressive. On one occasion when the Pharisees wanted to get Jesus in trouble, they asked Him a question: "Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not" (Matthew 22:15-22). If Jesus said it was wrong to pay taxes, He would be in trouble with the Roman rulers. If He said it was good to pay taxes, He would be in trouble with the Jews. They thought He was trapped. Jesus asked them to bring a Roman coin to Him. He asked them whose picture and name were on the coin. They replied, "Caesar's." Then Jesus replied, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's" (Matthew 22:21).

Every Christian lives in two kingdoms (nations). One kingdom is spiritual. The other kingdom is physical. We are citizens of the kingdom of Christ, which is the church of Christ (Matthew 16:18-19; Colossians 1:13). At the same time, we are citizens of an earthly nation. We must be good citizens in each kingdom. We have duties to fulfill in each kingdom.

The apostle Paul also lived during the time that Rome ruled much of the world. He was a Roman citizen (Acts 22:25-29). Nero, one of the most corrupt rulers who ever lived, was on the throne when Paul wrote: "Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore, whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you, then, want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. For he is God's minister to you for good. But, if you do what is evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who does evil. Therefore, you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience's sake. For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor" (Romans 13:1-7).

The apostle Peter also commanded Christians to "...submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, or to governors, as to those who are sent

by Him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good. For so is the will of God that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men—as free, yet not using your liberty as a cloak for vice, but as servants of God. Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king” (I Peter 2:13-17).

Sometimes the question is asked: “What if the government commands Christians to do something which is against God’s law? What if the government forbade Christians to worship God? What should we do? If there is a conflict between man’s law and God’s law, then God’s law must be obeyed! The Jewish officials arrested the apostles for preaching Christ. They said to them: “Did we not strictly command you that you should not teach in this name? And indeed you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine and intend to bring this Man’s blood on us! Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, ‘We ought to obey God rather than men’” (Acts 5:28-29). We must obey God’s law and man’s law. If there is a conflict, then God’s law must be obeyed even if we must disobey man’s law. This is the only exception!

Some say worldly people can serve in the government, but Christians can not. The Bible does not teach this. God has just one law. It is for all men. If it is wrong for a Christian to serve in the government, it would be wrong for anyone. If it is right for a non-Christian to serve in the government, it would be right for a Christian to do the same.

Surely, there are many temptations to do wrong if one has authority over his fellow men. It is easy to abuse power. There are also temptations to get rich by using one’s authority in a dishonest way. Christians must be honest and fair in all their dealings with their fellow men.

This is true in business. It is also true in government.

Must a Christian pay taxes? May a Christian show respect for his nation by saluting the flag and singing the national anthem? May he vote in an election? May he serve in a government or political office? The answer to all these questions is “yes.” However, a Christian must put God and His kingdom first (Matthew 6:33). He must also be honest in all things (II Corinthians 8:21).

FINDING THE BOOK

JACK HARRIMAN

DURING THE REIGN of King Josiah, the book of the law of God was found. Who lost it and how long it had been lost, no one knows. Its discovery initiated a series of events that touched the life of every person in Israel and Judah (2 Kings 22 and 23). When King Josiah read it, he was extremely alarmed. He was alarmed because their lives and doctrine were not in harmony with the teaching of the book. Then he and all the people made a covenant with God to carry out that which was written in the book. Josiah then led the people in the removal of all the things which the book condemned. He also led them in the doing of all that the book commanded. As a result, a great reformation took place.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could have a reformation today like that one? In this example we have the simple formula for such a reformation. First, like Josiah of old, we must find the book of the law of God and read it. In our day, that book is the New Testament. It is not lost in the sense of being out of sight. It is lost on book shelves and coffee tables. It is lost in plain sight. It is lost because it is not being read. What we need most today is to read the book and hear the book read. The New Testament is God's present day message for you and me! Turn off the television, cancel subscriptions to numerous magazines. Throw the junk mail in the trash can. **Read the book!**

Secondly, like Josiah of old, we must make a covenant with God to obey it. It does little good to read the book if we do not obey—all of it! This will require some soul-searching and cost-counting. Read Luke 9:57-62.

Thirdly, like Josiah of old, we must stop doing all those things the book condemns and start doing all those things the book commands. Here is the real key. There must be **doing**. And the doing of it is both negative and positive. Some things we must exclude, others must be included. Some must be stopped and others started.

This is the answer to troubled homes and broken marriages. This is the answer for drug abuse and suicide. This is the answer for crime and violence. This is the answer for lying and cheating. This is the answer for rape and child abuse. This is the answer for hunger and strife. **Find the book!**