

# THE BIBLE TEACHER

*Pleading for the Restoration of Pure New Testament Christianity*

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## Editorial

### **What Does the Bible Teach?**

#### *How Does One Become A Member Of The Church Of Christ?*

AFTER HEARING THE GOSPEL of Christ (1 Corinthians 15:1-4), when one believes in Jesus Christ (John 8:24), repents of all wrongs, (Luke 13:3), confesses Christ to be the Son of God (Acts 8:37), and is baptized for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38), Christ Himself adds that individual to His church (Acts 2:47). This is the plain teaching of the Bible. There is no other way to become a member of Christ's church. Remember, we are learning how one can become a member of the church, Christ Himself had established (Matthew 16:18), of which He is the head (Colossians 1:18), and the one He had purchased with His own blood (Acts 20:28), which is His spiritual body (Ephesians 1: 22-23). In Romans 16:16 the apostle Paul wrote, "The churches of Christ greet you." When the apostle wrote this there existed not a single denominational church on earth anywhere. Multiple congregations of the one church of Christ everywhere were called churches of Christ. Put together they all were one church of Christ. The Church of the Bible is not a building made with human hands of bricks and mortar but a body of people, and the Bible teaches there is but only one body (Ephesians 4:4). So when Christ adds an individual to the church, as stated in Acts 2:47, based on one's faith in Him and obedience to His commands, He makes no mistake. He does not add different people to different churches. Therefore, if one want to be saved and go to heaven one should ensure that he is in the right church. It is just like being in a house.

I may be in a house, but it does make difference in which house I am. Not every house is my house. I may be in a most expensive and a good looking house on earth, but I am in a wrong house, if it is not my house. In 1 Timothy 3:15 the Bible calls church “the house of God”. It is also like being in a family, I may be in a family, but not every family is my family. It is just that serious. People everywhere need to consider and ponder over the question in which church they are, because today there are many different kinds of churches. People need to heed the warning of Christ: “Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted.” (Matthew 15:13). It is not a matter of our choice of which church we want to be member of. Just as there is only one Christ, so there is only one church that Christ built, to which He adds all the saved ones. Why in the beginning all followers of Christ were Christians only and members of the same one church, unlike today? Because they had all continuously followed the apostles’ teaching (Acts 2:42). Now, if we too follow the teachings of the apostles only today as it is available for us in the New Testament of the Bible, then surely we too will be Christians only and members of the one church of the Bible. Teachings of the Bible, if followed, will unite all followers of Christ into one body (Ephesians 4:1-6; 1 Corinthians 14:33), but teachings of men causes division. (Romans 16:17, 18). The Bible teaches that one can be a Christian, a member of the Lord’s church, assured of the eternal life—all without joining any denominational church; without being bound by any human creed and traditions or submitting to any human authority in religion. Let us learn to speak where the Bible speaks and to be silent where the Bible is silent. This is pleading for the restoration of pure New Testament Christianity.

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## *The Story Of Christ*

J.C. CHOATE

THE STORY OF JESUS CHRIST begins with the first verse of the Bible, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” (Genesis 1:1). The Hebrew word for God in this verse also includes Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. This is in harmony with Genesis 1:26, where God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.” There was someone with God at this time, taking part in the creation, and that someone was Christ. The Hebrew writer confirms this, “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners

spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, *by whom also he made the worlds.*" (Hebrews 1:1,2). John writes, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made." (John 1:1-3).

After the creation, when man had sinned, God said to the serpent: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." (Genesis 3:15). This is the first reference to the eventual coming of Christ, and was fulfilled according to Galatians 4:4: "But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law."

Many prophecies and fulfilments follow. We'll note a few of them. It was prophesied that Christ would be born of a virgin: "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name immanuel." (Isaiah 7:14). It was fulfilled: "Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us," (Matthew 1:22,23). It was prophesied that Christ would be born at Bethlehem; "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." (Micah 5:2). It was fulfilled: "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king...there came wise men...he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judea: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda: art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a governor, that shall rule my people Israel." (Matthew 2:1-6). Also, it was prophesied that Christ would suffer and die on the cross: "Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed..." (Isaiah 53:4-12). For the fulfillment of this turn to verses like Matthew 8:17; 1 Peter 2:24; Matthew 26:62,63; Matthew 27:57-60.

For hundreds of years God had promised the coming of the Saviour, and finally Christ came in the flesh. (John 1:14; 2 John 7; 1 John 4:2). That is, Christ came down from God to be born of woman and to take upon himself the likeness of man, to live and to suffer in the flesh upon the cross. John 3:16,17; Galatians 4:4; Romans 8:3; 1 Peter 3:18).

Of the Lord's birth, the record says, "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they were come together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all of this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of Lord by the prophet, saying Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife; And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son; and he called his name Jesus." (Matthew 1:18-25). Also, read Matthew 2; Luke 1,2.

Jesus grew up (Luke 2:52), was baptized of John (Matthew 3:13, 17), and went about preaching and healing all manner of sicknesses and diseases. (Matthew 4:23). Later, John wrote. "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." (John 20:30,31).

Above all else, while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8). Without sin, took our sins upon himself (Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 2:22-24), and shed his blood on the cross that we might be saved. (Galatians 1:4). He not only died on the cross, but was buried, and three days and nights later he came forth from the grave to appear before many as a resurrected Lord. (1 Corinthians 15:1-8; Acts 2). He then ascended to the Father in Heaven to sit at the right hand of God and to reign as King of kings and the Lord of lords until he comes again. (Acts 1.1-11; Acts 2:33).

This same Jesus built the church (Matthew 16:18,19), offered

salvation to the world (Mark 16:15,16), and will eventually come again. (John 14:1-3). Do you believe in him? If not, read the Bible, learn of him, and you will. He is the hope of the world.

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## Don't Place Limitations on God!

DILLARD THURMAN

AS CREATOR AND LORD over all things, God has the right and power to place restrictions upon man! Yet the Lord was longsuffering toward His people, Israel! *"But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not: yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath... For he remembered that they were but flesh; a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again."* But His people still did not respond, to His love and compassion; *"How oft did they provoke him in the wilderness, and grieve him in the desert! Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel"* (Psa. 78:38-41). In a figure of speaking, they bound the hands of God and limited what He could do for them as His people!

### THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL LIMITED GOD!

Our text speaks of a nation's rebellion against God in turning from Him, even as He sought to lead them to the Land of Promise. Because of their lack of faith, they *"limited God Almighty"*! Therefore it was recorded: *"They soon forgot his works; they waited not for his counsel: but lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert. And he gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul"* (Psa. 106:13-15). Yes, they effectively limited God, but found to their chagrin that they had, in reality, limited themselves! God recorded for us, *"And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness: And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt."* (Ex. 16:2-3).

By their actions, Israel was already limiting what God could do for them because of unbelief and rebellion. Is it any wonder that God would say, *"Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh."* (Prov. 1:24-26). They had spurned the goodness and mercy He desired to give, and thus they limited God! For this they wandered in the wilderness forty years; and because of this they died outside the Land of Promise!

## **MAN'S SINS AND INIQUITIES LIMIT GOD!**

When man stands removed from God's blessings, it is never because God has withdrawn! Always man is the one at fault! *"Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear"* (Isa. 59:1-2). The wall of separation is always built by man, and not God. Man's sinful behaviour leads him away; and in this act, man limits the blessings of God.

To fully see man's futility, read God's answer in Isa. 50:1-5. Surely God desires to bless His people abundantly, but obstinately man turns from Him. Even the patience of God wears thin. Hear Him: *"Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh"* (Prov. 1:24-26). When man tries to limit God, he finds that God, in turn, will limit man! Calamities and distresses multiply when God is not near to help! Sanity and reason then declares, *"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth"* (Psa. 121:1-2). God stands ready to help, but man holds the key to unlock the trap door that binds him in sin!

## **OUR WRONG RELATIONSHIPS CAN LIMIT GOD!**

Our personal right of prayer to God is a most precious spiritual blessing. However, there must be a right relationship with God for our prayers to be accepted! *"They cried, but there was none to save them: even unto the LORD, but he answered them not"* (Psa. 18:41). Those who oppose God need not expect their prayers to be answered. Their own sinfulness limits God so He will not hear and answer prayers. But not so with the righteous: *"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much"* (James 5:16).

## **MAN'S FAILURE TO PRAY LIMITS THE LORD!**

Many times God's people are bereft of His blessings because they refuse to pray! The Lord appeared to Solomon with the promise: *"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."* (2 Chron. 7:14). But there are disciples that limit the Lord by failure to pray often and fervently! James said so! *"Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts."* (James 4:2-3).

Man's malevolent spirit limits God, and so does a failure to pray! God's children limit Him by not asking! We skirt the shores of His great providence because of weak faith which prevents us from casting ourselves out into the oceans of His love and abundance! Jesus told Simon, *"Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught"* (Lk. 5:4). But we are afraid to test the waters! We don't ask, for we haven't enough faith to expect; thus, our lack of faith limits the Lord! Yet our Lord promised, *"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened"* (Mt. 7:7-8). Jesus didn't tie that up with IFs, ANDs and BUTs! It is our lack of faith that limits the Lord.

### **WRONG KIND OF PRAYERS LIMITS THE LORD!**

There are those who limit the Lord in their prayers by not presenting the right life to Him! The Lord has decreed, *"He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination"* (Prov. 28:9). Saints limit the Lord in answering prayers by asking for the wrong things! Even Job learned this lesson: *"There they cry, but none giveth answer, because of the pride of evil men. Surely God will not hear vanity, neither will the Almighty regard it"* (Job 35:12-13).

Even as we learned from James 4:3, *"Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts."* As parents refuse to give a child that which is bad for him, so God withholds from us that which is detrimental to our spiritual life. *"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"* (Matt. 7:11). Don't limit God by asking for things to gratify your fleshly lusts!

### **LACK OF BIBLE STUDY LIMITS THE LORD!**

Our attitude toward God's word determines God's attitude toward our prayers! Do you know why the scriptures have been preserved for us? *"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works"* (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Because of this, saints are instructed to *"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth"* (2 Tim. 2:15). Thus God has revealed Himself unto man through His word; but man limits God by failure to study His scriptures!

Church members often effectively shut the mouth of the Lord by

leaving the Bible closed on the shelf; and thereby they limit God! They fail to win souls to Christ by not using the gospel; and thereby they limit God, for it is their mouth that HE must use to spread His word! We limit God in failure to *"handle aright the word of truth"* because we *"are unskilful in the word of righteousness"* (Heb. 5:13). God is limited in our lives and influence when abysmal ignorance could be overcome if we would lovingly read the "love letter" which He has given us! We limit God when we give more time to reading sports and political news than to our priceless word of salvation from our Saviour! How pathetic that it may be said of us: *"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children"* (Hos. 4:6). It is indeed a rebellious people that turns away from their God who loves them! Yet this is a picture of many who profess discipleship; and then limit the Lord!

### REFUSAL TO WORK FOR HIM LIMITS THE LORD!

The Lord is limited in His church by members who refuse to work for His cause. Parabolically, Jesus taught: *"Go work today in my vineyard"* (Mt. 21:28). Christians must know that Jesus has no feet but **ours** to go; no hands but **ours** to work; and none other than **ourselves** to serve! If we do not answer His call, we limit the Lord! His commission was, *"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen"* (Mt. 28:19-20). This commission was self-perpetuating, and reaches down even to us! If we don't do this work, it will remain undone!

Keep this in mind: YOU have a work to do that no other can effectively accomplish! There are souls YOU can reach that possibly no other can! When each member of the body of Christ begins to perform to the extent of his or her ability, THEN we will take the world for Christ! But until EVERY member is ready to be used by the Lord, we have effectively limited the Lord!

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## *The Great Battle*

JOHNNY RAMSEY

THE BIBLE, FROM FIRST to last, deals with the struggle between conflicting concepts. The battle lines are drawn between the following points:



**Right and Wrong  
Truth and Error  
Darkness and Light  
Heaven and Hell  
God and Satan**

In the arena of carnality versus spirituality, the tremendous contrast makes it clear that it will not be easy to maintain integrity and honor before the eyes of our Creator. Satan has a much larger following because it takes valor and courageous character to be victorious over the schemes of the devil: *“Be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil”* (Eph. 6:10-11). The *“devices of Satan,”* as Paul puts it in 2 Cor. 2:11, are clever and cunning and most attractive to worldly people. To be a sincere disciple of Christ takes fortitude in the midst of glamorous sinfulness.

**TRUTH NEVER DIES**

Amos ran into a foe of heaven in the high priest which is mentioned in Amos 7. If Satan ever had a valuable servant, it was that spineless character who invited the fearless prophet to leave Israel and go elsewhere to preach. Sounds familiar, does it not? According to Ezek. 34 and Acts 20:28-32, elders over the house of God can be some of the devil’s greatest contributors. How sad it is to contemplate that those who should assist the Savior actually, at least at times, oppose His precious work.

Preachers who refuse to boldly preach the Word (Acts 14:1-3), and *“Speak as the oracles of God”* (1 Pet. 4:11) do not serve the Lord. Such men who should speak for Christ and are afraid to rebuke error (Phil. 1:17), serve the devil while pretending to be soldiers of Christ. When the final Day of Judgment peals forth, their compromising spirit will be exposed! Truth never dies, but those who refuse to embrace and promote the truth certainly will! Let us ever strive to serve faithfully Him Who is Truth (John 14:6).

**THE VICTORY IS OURS IN CHRIST**

Let us never allow any room in our lives for the enemy of righteousness to launch his evil deeds. *“Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: neither give place to the devil”* (Eph. 4:26-27). Rather, let us always *“resist the devil, and he will flee from you”* (James 4:7). Not only that, it will also cause his friends to tremble (James 2:19).

*The fight is on, O Christian soldiers,  
And face to face in stern array*

*His banner streaming, the armor gleaming,  
The right and wrong engage today.*

Satan and his servants need to be constantly aware of the fact that they shall not win. The battle is pitched, and we are ready! The apostle Paul encourages us: *"Being confident of this very thing, that he who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ"* (Phil. 1:6). Another great passage of genuine hope is 2 Cor. 2:14, *"But thanks be unto God, who always leadeth us in triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest through us the savor of his knowledge in every place."* Satan cannot win, his final defeat is certain: *"And the great dragon was cast down, the old serpent, he that is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world; he was cast down to the earth, and his angels were cast down with him ... And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony; and they loved not their life even unto death"* (Rev. 12:9-11). Satan may appear to be an awesome foe, but we have the word of God and the blood of Jesus Christ to thwart the diabolical schemes of hell!

### **THE CHRISTIAN ARMOR**

The Bible tells us: *"Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil... Wherefore take up the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; withal taking up the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God"* (Eph. 6:10-17).

When we use this Christian armor properly, the devil can never win. We have the ability to resist Satan (James 4:7). We are able to *"fight the good fight of faith"* and can *"lay hold on eternal life"* (1 Tim. 6:12). A powerful hymn offers a challenge to be strong and valiant in battle:

*Under the standard exalted and royal,  
Strong in Thy strength we will battle for thee.  
Over our will and affections victorious,  
Freely surrendered and wholly thine own!*

Yes, in Christ, we surrender and win!

### **IN CHRIST, OBEDIENCE IS NOT AN OPTION**

Sadly, many believe that we can serve any way we choose, and then only when it is convenient to do so. However, the Bible instructs

us as to the nature of acceptable service and genuine loyalty. Jesus said, *"Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"* (Luke 6:46). As Mary told the servants at the wedding feast, *"Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it"* (John 2:5). If we would be servants of Jesus Christ, we must *"obey from the heart"* (Rom. 6:17) what He tells us to do. The burning question of Rom. 4:3 is clear indeed: *"What saith the Scripture?"* So, how shall we serve the Lord in this life?

### **WE WILL SERVE THE LORD . . .**

- Gladly: It is a joy, not a burden (1 John 5:3)
- Loyally: Being true to God is the epitome of dedication (Rom. 14:17)
- Eternally: Mark 10:30 ties this life to the world beyond in serving the Savior
- Prayerfully: Rev. 8:4-5 lets us know that heaven hears our petitions and gratitude
- Scripturally: We must serve in harmony with truth and obedience (1 John 5:4)
- Personally: Since Judgment is individual, so is our service to God (Rom. 14:12)
- Gratefully: In all we do, say or think, we should be guided by thankfulness (Phil. 4:6)

### **TRUE SERVICE IS BASED ON REAL TRUST**

Throughout the Scriptures, we can find noble principles that guide our lives successfully. These eternal truths bolster and encourage our decisions and destiny. Such powerful points strengthen our resolve and enlighten our days as pilgrims on our way through foreign territory to the beautiful home of the soul. When we learn to put our ultimate trust in the One who made all things (Prov. 3:5-7), we will have proper direction in our lives. That path that leads to glory may seem paradoxical, but it is nevertheless worth the struggle and heartache:

*I asked for health, that I might achieve,  
I was made weak, that I might do better things.*

Paul prayed to the Lord about his *"thorn in the flesh,"* and was told: *"My grace is sufficient for thee: for my power is made perfect in weakness ... Wherefore I take pleasure in weaknesses, in injuries, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong"* (2 Cor. 12:9-10). It has been well-stated, "Courage is fear that has said its prayers." With steadfast loyalty, we receive the necessary peace from God to see us through the darkest hour and the loneliest day (Psa. 91:15).

## GOD'S ASSURANCE OF HIS PROVIDENCE

One of the foremost principles of the Bible is the providence of the Almighty. The psalmist makes it clear, *"They came upon me in the day of my calamity; but Jehovah was my stay. He brought me forth also into a large place; He delivered me, because he delighted in me"* (Psa. 18:18-19). Daniel declared, *"There is a God in heaven"* (Dan. 2:28), and that faith guided his life. God's promise is sure, *"I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee"* (Heb. 13:5). He gives us every material blessings we have (James 1:17), and *"in Christ"* He also gives us all spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:3). God grants us comfort (2 Cor. 1:3), protection (1 Cor. 10:13) and joy in believing (Rom. 15:13). Tennyson wrote:

*More things are wrought by prayer  
Than this world dreams of.*

## GOD IS OUR REFUGE

*"God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble ... Jehovah is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? Jehovah is the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid?"* (Psa. 46:1; 27:1). God will *"guide us continually"* (Isa. 58:11) and supply all of our needs (Phil. 4:19). May we never overlook the demands and rewards of genuine Christianity found in Deut. 3:22 and 2 Chron. 15:7, *"You must not fear them, for the Lord your God Himself fights for you ... But you, be strong and do not let your hands be weak, for your work shall be rewarded."*

When we obey the command of 1 Pet. 5:8-9, we become dead to sin and alive unto God: *"Be sober, be watchful: your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour, whom withstand stedfast in your faith."* Though our weapons as Christians are not carnal, they *"are mighty before God"* (2 Cor. 10:3-5) and cause the demons in hell to tremble (James 2:19). Christ entered *"the strong man's house"* and spoiled his goods (Mark 3:27). Sin should never have dominion over us again, for we have *"died to sin"* and now *"live unto righteousness"* (Rom. 6:11; 1 Pet. 2:24). As the Lord emphatically declares, *"We are more than conquerors"* (Rom. 8:37).

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## ***"Baptism" Is A Transliteration***

BASIL OVERTON

"BAPTISM" IS A TRANSLITERATED form of Greek "baptismos," and according to the Greek lexicon means "an act of dipping, or

immersion.” Those who know English understand the meaning of “dipping,” and “immersion,” but just knowing English would not help one to know the meaning of “baptismos.” There has been, and continues to be, much controversy and confusion over whether “baptism” includes “sprinkling” and “pouring.” This could have all been avoided if the English translators of the Bible had not transliterated “baptismos” and instead had translated it “immersion” or “dipping.”

The great Christian scholar, Alexander Campbell made this important truth very clear in his article in the November 1824 issue of **The Christian Baptist** of which he was the editor.

Brother Campbell lamented the fact that the translators of the King James Version of the Bible transliterated “baptismos” instead of translating it. He said King James of England commanded the translators not to translate certain categories of words, and “baptismos” was one of them. He recited Lewis’ **History Of The English Bible** as proof. At the time the King James Version was made in the beginning of the 17th Century, the Church of England of which King James was Head, that church was practicing sprinkling and calling it baptism. Had the translators translated “baptismos” into “immersion” and/or “dipping” it would have erected pandemonium! Campbell regretted very much they did not translate “baptismos” and so do I, and so should all lovers of the word of God!

Twice the New Testament says baptism is a burial. (Romans 6:3,4; Colossians 2:12.) If you have not been “buried in baptism” in order to reach the cleansing power of the blood of Christ so God will forgive your sins, no doubt about it, there is nothing more urgent for you than doing just that so you can start walking in “newness of life!” (Romans 6:4.)

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## ***BURYING A LIVE MAN?***

EDDY GILPIN

ONE WHO WOULD COMMIT such an atrocious act as burying a live man would be and should be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. Such an act would be a violation of civil and moral laws, as well as an infringement upon one’s personal rights. Not only that, but the mentality of the one committing the act would also come under scrutiny.

Although the above facts would not be questioned by good citizens nor negated by its judiciary, this insane act is committed repeatedly in the religious world. In Romans 6:3, 4 the Bible states: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into his death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Thus, the passage states that baptism is a burial; a burial from which one is raised to "walk in newness of life". Logically, a burial infers a death as does a resurrection infer a bringing back to life. With these in mind, notice a prominent teaching of the religious world and compare it with what the Bible and common sense teach.

An eminent doctrine in the religious world is that which states that man is "saved at the point of faith without any further acts of obedience." Taking this into account, consider the scenario as it is compared with Paul's inspired statement previously mentioned. Proponents of the doctrine of "faith only" basically contend that one is saved at the point of faith, and that he should then be baptized to show others of his decision and commitment. A comparison with Romans 6:3, 4 reveals that this doctrine teaches that one should be buried a live man! According to "faith only" one is saved, born again, made alive by and at the point of faith alone. This "saved, born again, made alive" man is then BURIED by baptism. Thus, he is buried after having been made alive by faith alone. Therefore, a live man is buried! This does not even display common sense, let alone revealed sense. No live man is ever buried, neither in the physical nor the spiritual realms.

The Bible teaches that when one believes in Jesus as the Christ (Jn. 8:24) that he must repent of his sins (Lk. 13:3; Acts 17:30). Repentance is a change in direction and walk of life. One dies to sin through repentance. That old man of sin is put to death (Rom. 6:6), along with the deeds thus committed by him (Eph. 3:9). What, then, is to be done with this one who is dead, having died through repentance? Naturally, he is to be buried. Having confessed the Christ (Rom. 10:10; Acts 8:37), he is to be "buried with him by baptism" (Rom. 6:4). Notice that he is buried a dead man, which makes both logical and revealed sense.

According to the Bible, man is not saved, born again, nor made alive at the point of faith. Hebrews 5:8, 9, John 14:15 and other passages teach that complete obedience is necessary in order to

be pleasing to God. "Faith only" avails nothing (Jas, 2:14-26). One is saved from past sins, born again, and made alive when he is baptized into Christ (Mk. 16:16; Jn. 3:3-5; Rom. 6:4; Gal. 3:27). Salvation is found only "in Christ"(II Tim. 2:10). The ONLY way that the Bible reveals that one can get INTO Christ is through baptism into him (Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3).

Note also that the doctrine of "faith only" not only would bury a live man, but it would also raise a dead man. In baptism one is raised to "walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4). In other words, that which is raised is completely opposite from that which was buried. Proponents of "faith only" bury a live man and, thus, raise a dead man. This is completely contrary to common sense as well as God's word. The Bible explicitly teaches that baptism is that which saves (Mk. 16:16; I Pet. 3:21), remits sins (Acts 2:38), affords one's calling on the name of the Lord (Acts 22:16), puts one into Christ's death (Rom. 6:3,4), and puts one into Christ (Gal. 3:27). Thus, baptism is essential to salvation. Its design, intent and purpose are simply stated in God's word. The wisdom of God is readily seen in its likeness to the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (Rom. 6:3,4). To bury one in baptism who has already been "made alive" by some other means is to say in essence that Jesus was not dead when He was placed in the tomb. Romans 6 speaks of the two as being figuratively the same. To deny the importance and meaning of one is to do the same to the other. Without baptism, no one is capable of walking "in newness of life", being pleasing in the sight of God, nor having the hope of eternal life.

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## ***"THY KINGDOM COME"***

GENE OVERTON

CHRIST TEACHING HIS DISCIPLES to pray said, "Thy kingdom come." (Matthew 6:10.) Of course the Kingdom had not come at that time, but it came within the lifetime of some of His disciples. A little later on, Christ speaking to His disciples said, "Verily I say unto you, that there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste death, till they see the kingdom of God come with power." (Mark 9:1.) If the Kingdom has not come, evidently there are some very old men still upon the earth.

The power came when the Holy Spirit came upon the day of Pentecost, giving the apostles the power to speak in languages

which they had not learned. This was done so that the many people visiting in Jerusalem at the time could hear the Message of Christ in their own language. (Acts 2:1-8.) We read in this chapter, for the first time, of people being added to the church, as they were being saved. (Acts 2:47.) When the power came the Kingdom of Christ, which is His church was established.

The Kingdom had been established when the apostles Paul and John lived, because they said they were in it. Paul writing to the members of the church at Colosse said, "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." (Colossians 1:13.) About A.D. 96, John wrote, "I John ... am in the kingdom." (Revelation 1:9.) John was a member of the Lord's church. These passages clearly teach that the kingdom is here, and has been for nearly 2000 years.

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## LITTLE FAITH

T. PIERCE BROWN

IN MATTHEW 8:25 WE find a very interesting verse. "And his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish." There are several things that make this exceptionally interesting. First, we wonder what they thought he could or would do to save them. When he did what they asked of him we find in Matthew 8:27, "But the men marveled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!" We find no commentary that casts any light on this peculiar situation, giving any answer to the question, "How did they expect him to save them?"

Second, when he did save them, since they had enough faith to ask him, and apparently believed he could, why did they marvel at his doing it? Third, although they had enough faith to ask him, Jesus rebuked them for their little faith. (Verse 26.) Although we cannot answer all the questions we can ask about situation, we think there are several lessons we can get from it.

First, regardless of how little faith a disciple has, if he exercises that, it can produce great results. We think this is the lesson Jesus is trying to teach in Luke 17:6 where he said, "If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you." They had asked him to increase their faith. Most commentators seem to think he was saying, "If you just had a little faith, the size of a mustard seed, you could do great things." We



think they miss the point, slightly. They already had a little faith, comparable to the size of a mustard seed. What makes a mustard seed grow to a big plant is that it has life. My judgment is that Jesus is saying, "You do have a little faith. What you need to do is to exercise what little you have. Then it will be like the mustard seed - alive." Are you exercising what little faith you have by obeying the Lord, or do you expect him to increase your faith by some miracle? If you exercise it properly, you can be reasonably sure it will grow, regardless of how little it is.

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## WARNING SIGNALS

CLARENCE DELOACH

"NOT FORSAKING THE ASSEMBLING of yourselves together,.." (Hebrews 10:25.)

I've seen it happen many times! A Christian begins to absent himself from assemblies for worship. At first it seems so harmless. But gradually it gets worse. Regular attendance becomes the exception, not the rule. The slightest excuses prevail. Gradually and insidiously something has happened to the heart. A spiritual hardening has occurred. Have you observed this phenomenon? More importantly, has it occurred to you? If you detect that is happening, change your direction now.

It can be disastrous to your spiritual destiny to ignore the warning signs. The American Heart Association educates the public on warning signals of heart attack. Pressure and pain in the chest, dizziness, fainting, sweating, nausea, or shortness of breath signals: "Don't wait - get help immediately!"

Don't kid yourself - you can't neglect the assemblies of the church and grow into a strong Christian. A Christian out of the assembly is like the proverbial fish out of water. Take a leaf from a branch, lay it carefully aside and watch. Slowly the color fades, the leaf goes limp, curls up, and finally dies. Take a fish out of a lake, lay it carefully on the sand and watch. Frantically it twists, struggles, gradually weakens, and then dies.

A Christian stays away from the fellowship and worship of the church. He remains at home; takes numerous weekend trips; then watch him. Gradually he stops praying, reading his Bible, and serving the Lord. Soon his conscience begins its death quivers. Soon everyone at church is a hypocrite. Suddenly, the church appears to

him to be closed, unloving, and uncaring. Some even go so far as to attack the validity of the church.

Admittedly, there is more to the Christian life than attendance. But, nothing else will substitute for it in insuring a mature, vibrant Christian experience. If your church attendance has become casual - heed the warning signals and get help today!

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## AN ETERNAL WEIGHT OF GLORY

WALLACE ALEXANDER

DO PROBLEMS WITH YOUR body cause you concern? Are the years causing the body to become weaker and experience deterioration that often comes with age? Does some disease cause bodily pain or even threaten death?

If so, a very graphic statement of the apostle Paul can be yours. And when taken to one's heart it can put things in perspective and give hope and comfort beyond measure. Read the statement in 2 Corinthians 4:16-18.

But to the context. Paul had recently experienced a work in Ephesus which had been very promising. He had planned to remain a while because "a great door and effectual is opened unto me, ..." (1 Cor. 16:9). His bold work in the synagogue caused verbal opposition so he began reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus and stayed there two years. Much good was done (see Acts 19:1-20). However, Paul's opposition to idolatry caused the silversmiths to instigate a riot which, but for God's grace, could have caused his death.

Paul departed Ephesus for Macedonia from which he very likely wrote 2 Corinthians. No doubt recalling the riot, he wrote "concerning our affliction which befell us in Asia, that we were weighed down exceedingly, beyond our power, insomuch that we despaired even of life: yea, we ourselves have had the sentence of death within ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, ..." (2 Cor. 1:8-9). Have you ever felt that death is imminent? That maybe in the next few moments you will die? Apparently Paul did.

In that context he wrote 2 Corinthians 4:16-18. He determined not to give up ("Wherefore we faint not") but he realized the frailties of the body ("the outward man is decaying"). Modern-day saints can have the same feeling. Disease, age, or other physical maladies

cause many to realize the body cannot last much longer. And to dwell on this can cause unnecessary despondence, in times of such difficulty, may Paul's resolve be adopted: "yet our inward man is renewed day by day." He'll tell us in verse 18 that the inward man is most important.

In verse 17 he contrasts the bad and the good, the here and hereafter, the temporary and permanent. First, the affliction, he says, is *light* and *for the moment*. What affliction do you mean, Paul? What was your "light" affliction? Maybe the stoning at Lystra, or the beating and jail at Philippi, or the riot at Ephesus? "Light!" What an understatement! But he knew it was just for a moment, and then it would be over.

But we look to something else: "an eternal weight of glory"! No more affliction, but *glory*! And not just for a moment, *eternal*. And not just "light" glory, *a weight of glory*! Paul could very well have been alluding to the kings and other royalty of his day whose degree of glory was seen by the weight of the crown, jewels, the gold which adorned them. The heavier the weight the greater the glory! Indeed, "an eternal weight of glory"!

"An eternal weight of glory" is for those willing to look beyond that which can be seen with the natural eye, to that which can be seen by the eye of faith. He was looking, he said, at the "things which are not seen." He was seeing the unseen!

Look around you. What do you see? Is there anything that you see with the natural eyes that you can take beyond this life? anything that will not eventually decay, deteriorate, and cease to exist? This world will pass away. But the "eternal weight of glory" is seen through faith.

Paul continues in chapter 5 discussing the dissolution of this earthly tabernacle and the eternal house not made with hands. Though not anxious to die (a characteristic of mortality) he is anxious for his eternal abode.

Paul suffered much after penning these statements to the Corinthians, culminating in his death in Rome. His endurance, courage, and peace must have come because he refused to see the "light affliction for a moment" and focused on "an eternal weight of glory."

By the grace of God, that same truth can comfort today when we, like Paul, see the "outward man decaying."

# ***Preaching and Teaching The Word***

WALTER SWAIN

JESUS' COMMISSION TO THE church, given in Matthew 28: 18, 19 and Mark 16: 15, 16, commands us to go into all the world, and to preach and teach the gospel to the lost; then to continue to teach the saved all that Jesus has given us.

This command emphatically emphasizes the need, the urgency, and the importance of gospel preaching and teaching. In a society that looks so much to subjective feelings, human philosophy, and human creeds it is all the more necessary that we in the Lord's church realize this need today.

The church had its beginning on the day of Pentecost of 33 A.D. from the powerful preaching of the first gospel sermon, by the apostle Peter. On that glorious day 3,000 responded to be baptized, having heard only one sermon. What a demonstration of the power of preaching!

Luke tells us that preaching and teaching of the Apostles' doctrine began immediately as a part of Christian worship (Acts 2:42). And we read in Acts 5:42 that, "... every day, in the temple and at home they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus as the Christ." The effect of this preaching is seen in Acts 6:7, where Luke records that, "the word of God increased, and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem exceedingly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith."

When the church at Troas gathered one Lord's day to worship, the apostle Paul preached to them (Acts 20:7). And the book of Acts concludes noting that Paul was "preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 28:31).

The early church began, grew, expanded, and was established and strengthened by the preaching and teaching of the Word of God. Paul encouraged the young preacher Timothy, to "preach the Word; be urgent in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching" (2 Tim. 4:2). Above all, Paul wanted Timothy to preach and teach the Word. This was because of false teachers and those who would preach to satisfy those who heard (vss. 3-5).

The Restoration of the New Testament church in the 19th century in America began because of powerful and learned men, who

preached and taught the Word of God and opposed the errors of denominations. The church grew greatly in 1940-1960 because of great preachers. Gospel meetings often lasted one or two weeks during those times, but we seldom even hear of gospel meetings being held today.

Perhaps our troubles today in the church are not caused as much by those teaching error, as by our failure to powerfully and continually proclaim the Word of God, as men did in previous times. Stories, jokes, fables, quoting well-known denominational writers and theologians is not getting the job done. Trying to emulate the denominations in entertaining people, and making worship a “showtime” is not doing it either. Paul’s plea to Timothy needs to be repeated over again—“Preach the word.” When this happens we will see the church begin to grow again and most important of all, we will be doing it the way God wants it done.

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## ***Why Was Jesus Baptized?***

**Matt. 3:13-15; 21:23-27**

JASON ROBERTS

OUR SACRED TEXT AFFIRMS, “Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.”

Why was Jesus baptized? Was it because he had sins that needed remission? After all the Bible does teach us that baptism is for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; cf. 22:16). In fact Jesus himself said, He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16). Peter recognized the truth of this statement when he penned, “The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us” (1 Pet. 3:21)

The Bible teaches us that Jesus was one “who knew no sin” (2 Cor. 5:21), “who did no sin, neither was any guile found in his mouth:” (1 Pet. 2:22), who “was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Heb. 4:15). If our Lord was baptized because he had sins that needed remission, then that implies that He had transgressed the very law of God (1 John 3:4), but he said, “...for I

do **always** those things that **please** him. (John 8:29b, emp. added JRR). If our Lord would have committed sin, he would be in need of a savior, and he who needs a savior cannot be one.

Jesus gave us the reason as to why he allowed John to baptize him. He said to him, “suffer (allow) it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to **fulfill all** righteousness? the word fulfill (pleroo) means to fill up, to complete. The same word is used when Jesus referred to the Law of Moses which he came to fulfill (Matt. 5:17).

The word righteousness is also found in I John 3:7 in the context of obedience, “he that **doeth righteousness** is righteous.” It means attaining that inward character or quality of being just, or right with God. Did Jesus fulfill this quality of righteousness? The prophet Isaiah testified in the affirmative. He wrote in view of the death of our Lord, “He (God) shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall **my righteous servant** justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities” (Isa. 53:11). The apostle Paul, and his testimony in view of his own death clearly reveals this, “For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, **the righteous judge**, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing” (2 Tim. 4:6-8). When Paul was in Athens he said that Jesus would “judge the world in **righteousness**” (Acts 17:31). Here the idea of course is quite clear. It is inconceivable for a righteous person to receive a crown of righteousness from someone who wasn’t righteous. John, in writing about Christ being the propitiation for our sins, identified him as “...Jesus Christ **the righteous**.” Therefore he met the qualifications of being the satisfactory sin offering for the sins of humanity. Indeed, our Lord’s character exemplified a life of righteousness.

In Matt. 21:23-27 another reason is given as to why Jesus was baptized. In this text we have the account of Christ teaching in the temple. The chief priests and elders question the authority of His teaching (v.23). Jesus responds by asking them a question, “The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or men? (v. 24). Jesus, in effect, had them on the horns of a dilemma. They were unable to answer His question, but by implication they knew that the baptism of John was divine in its given nature.

But if Jesus had not been baptized they would have had “Him”

on the horns of a dilemma. They would have looked him straight in the eyes and said, "well if the baptism of John is by the authority of heaven (God) then why haven't you submitted to it?" Consequently the credibility of Christ would have been diminished beyond measure.

The chief priests and elders knew that "all of God's commandments are righteousness (Psalm 119:172), and that's why Jesus said that his baptism was to "fulfill all righteousness." (Matt. 3:15). Doing the commands of God makes one righteous. Jesus said, "...for I do always those things that please him" (John 8:29b).

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## Leprosy, A Type Of Sin

W. GADDYS ROY

LEPROSY DOES TO THE body what sin does to the soul. One living in sin should take a close look at the disease of leprosy in order that he might understand his spiritual condition. Therefore, we shall study the analogy between leprosy and sin.

Leprosy was treated not only as a disease but as an uncleanness (Leviticus 13). A person with leprosy would let the hair of his head go loose, he would cover his upper lip, and cry, "Unclean." He could not live with the people, but he would dwell alone outside the camp (Leviticus 13:45, 46). Sin is a disease and uncleanness of the soul (II Corinthians 7:1; I Peter 1:22). Sin is of the devil, and without forgiveness one cannot enter into heaven (I John 3:8; Revelation 21:27).

Leprosy dwells in the corruption and impurity of the blood. It is of a spreading nature, contagious, and it is a disease for which there is no human cure (II Kings 5:7). All of this is characteristic of sin. Sin dwells in the moral defilement of the nature of man. Sin is of a spreading nature. The Apostle Paul said, "Evil men and imposters shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived" (II Timothy 3:13). Sin affects the body, soul, and spirit. Sin is indeed contagious. The Apostle said, "Evil companionships corrupt good morals" (I Corinthians 15:33). Sin has no human cure (Mark 1:40-45). The only cure for sin is through Christ (Ephesians 1:7; 2:8,9; Hebrews 9:15). Leprosy is exceedingly painful and loathsome. A leper might live many years, and be so afflicted that

his fingers and other members of his body would drop off, one by one, at the joint. Sin is a hard master (Proverbs 13:15; Romans 6:23). One who lives in sin will reap what he sows (Numbers 32:23; Galatians 6:7). "Some men's sins are evident, going before unto judgment; and some men also they follow after" (I Timothy 5:24). One thing is certain, and that is that sin will find the sinner out one way or another.

Lepers were excluded from the society of the healthy (Leviticus 13:45, 46). Sinners are excluded from the communion of God and His saints (Exodus 32:33; I Corinthians 5:1-11; Hebrews 3:13). God will not hear a willful sinner's prayer (Psalm 66:18; Isaiah 59:2; John 9:31). Sin caused our first parents to be cast out of Paradise, and all now must bear the yoke of death because of their sin (Genesis 3; Romans 5:12; I Corinthians 15:22). Sin caused the wicked angels to be cast out of heaven (II Peter 2:4). Sin makes it necessary for the church to withdraw fellowship from its ungodly members (I Corinthians 5; II Thessalonians 3:6). Sin will keep many out of heaven (Galatians 5:19-21; Revelation 21:8, 27).

Leprosy, uncured, terminates in death. Sin, when finished, terminates in spiritual death (James 1:13-15). God had power to heal leprosy. God healed Naaman through the prophet Elisha (II Kings 5:7-14). Jesus healed those with leprosy who came to Him to be healed (Matthew 8:1-4; Luke 17:11-19). Jesus will save all sinners who come to Him in humble obedience (Matthew 7:21; Mark 16:16; John 5:40; 6:37). All who fail to obey Him will be lost (Acts 3:22, 23; II Thessalonians 1:6-9).

One cleansed of leprosy had to go show himself to the priest and offer for his cleansing that which was commanded by Moses. The priest had the authority to pronounce a leper clean (Leviticus 14:1-22; Mark 1:44). The law of God had to be obeyed. To be saved or cleansed from sin, one must obey the law of Christ (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). Man is saved by grace through faith, but grace does not dispense of all law (Ephesians 2:8, 9; Galatians 6:2; Romans 8:3-4). Jesus is our high priest and He has power to forgive sins when we obey Him (Mark 2:10; 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Hebrews 4:15; 10:19-22). Jesus is our mediator, and He has given the word of reconciliation (II Corinthians 5:17-21). It is our responsibility to obey God and be cleansed from sin, and thereby be reconciled to God.