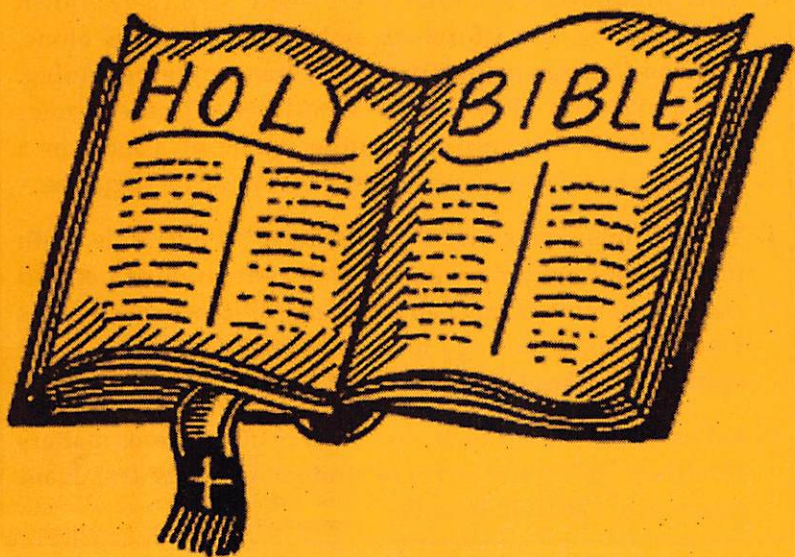


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THE BIBLE TEACHER



Our Plea

Let the Truth Prevail

1. That there should be only one church today, as it was in the beginning—Church of Christ—Which Christ Himself built, and about which we all can read in the Bible (Matthew 16:18; Col. 1:18). That congregations of the one church of the Bible everywhere may be known as churches of Christ, as we read at Romans 16:16. That there should be no denominations or sects in the name of the Church. (1 Corinthians 1:10).
2. That there should be only one plan or guideline of salvation, as is revealed and taught in the Bible, followed everywhere. All must believe in Christ, repent of wrong, confess Christ the Son of God, and be baptized for the forgiveness of sins. (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:36-38). Those who obey these commands to be saved are saved by the Lord and He Himself adds the saved ones to His church (Acts 2:47); which is His Spiritual body. (Ephesians 1:22, 23; 4:4).
3. That all followers of Christ, everywhere, should be known as Christians, and Christians only, after His name alone, with no Prefixes or Suffixes, as it was in the beginning. (Acts 4:12; Acts 11:26; 1 Peter 4:16). That all other names which exalt and glorify any other name of a man, or a doctrine, or a day or a movement, etc., must be forgotten.
4. That all man-made creed books must be put aside, with other books written by men which contain doctrines and commandments of men, and only the Bible which contains God's inspired message for man must be followed in all spiritual matters. (Matthew 7:21-23; John 12:48).
5. Let us accept the authority of Christ in all religious matters (Matthew 28:18), and strive to abide in the New Testament doctrine of Christ (2 John 9).

THE BIBLE TEACHER

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Editorial

What Does the Bible Teach?

Christ And His Church Are Inseparable

A MODERN DICTIONARY defines the word "church" as, "A building where Christians go to worship." Most people have an unscriptural idea concerning the church, as a material building made of brick, mortar and stones. The word church, however, is never used in the New Testament of the Bible to convey such a meaning. The English word "church" is a translation of the Greek word "ekklesia" which Christ actually used in Matthew 16:18 when He had promised to build His church. The Greek word "ekklesia" means, "the body of citizens or the assembly of a select people." When the Bible was translated from Greek into Latin language in the second century A.D., the Greek word "ekklesia" was translated in Latin as "chirche". In the Roman world the word "chirche" was used for a religious building or a place of worship. Later, John Wycliffe in his English translation of the Bible, in 1380-84, anglicized the word "chirche" and rendered it as "church."



The Bible meaning of the church, however, has never changed. The Bible still speaks of the church as the body of Christ (Ephesians 1:22, 23), and says, "He is the head of the body, the church." (Colossians 1:18). The church is also spoken of as the "house of God" (1 Timothy 3:15), and 1 Peter 2:5 says, Christians are living stones which make up the house of God. To Christians at Corinth

the apostle Paul wrote, "Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually." (1 Corinthians 12:27). Another striking point concerning Christ and His church or His body is found in Ephesians 5:23, where it says, "For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body." Christ is the Savior of His spiritual body, the church, over which he rules as her head. That means that He and only He has the divine authority to legislate for the church. Again, in Ephesians 5:25 we read that Christ loved the church so much that He "gave Himself for Her." And then in Acts 20:28 we read about the church that "He purchased with His own blood." The Bible certainly depicts the close affinity between Christ and His church. To belong to Christ is to belong to His church. One cannot have Christ and reject His church. Christ and His church are inseparable. Unless we have a fuller concept of the church Christ established than to liken it to a literal meeting house, then we have missed the true meaning of the church of the Bible. Such expressions, therefore, as "going to church", "what a beautiful church", or "they are building a beautiful church", and many other such expressions are a lack of understanding of the nature of the church Christ established.

The church which Christ built and purchased with His own blood, of which He is the head and the Savior, does not consist of all the various denominations found on earth today. New Testament Christianity is undenominational. The notion that thousands of denominational bodies, wearing different names, following different doctrines, and pattern of worship are the one church or the body of Christ is totally wrong. The body of Christ, His church, is not composed of many different denominational bodies which exist on earth today. Christ, according to His promise, established His church in the city of Jerusalem, on the day of first Pentecost following His death, burial and resurrection, in A.D. 33. (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2: 37-47), hundreds of years before Roman Catholicism and various Protestant churches came into existence. All of denominationalism and sectarian division is a human invention. This is not the "one body" of which we read in Ephesians 4:4. No one has the right to twist the scripture to say "there are many bodies", when the Bible explicitly says there is but only "one body." Jesus had prayed that His followers might all be one (John 17:21), not multiple divided into hundreds of denominational bodies.

The church is a spiritual body housing all the saved. The church of which the Bible speaks can be positively identified. Its unique

marks of identification and doctrinal features are very distinct, being plainly set forth in the New Testament. Its divine makeup can be easily distinguished from all other denominational and sectarian bodies of human origin. Christ only built one church. He knew that all people could be saved in that one church. Therefore He built only one and the scripture says that He adds to the church daily those who are being saved. (Acts 2:47). No one, therefore can join the church of Christ by his or her own choice. Wherever people today obey the Bible's teachings explicitly, the Lord's church exists. If people anywhere today do what men did in the first century, under the instructions of the scriptures (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16), they will be exactly what they were. They were Christians only (Acts 11:26; 1 Peter 4:16); and were members of the church of Christ. (Romans 16:16).

BE NOT DECEIVED

J.C. Choate

THE LORD'S WORD WARNS again and again that we be not deceived. To be deceived means that one has been misled, lied to, that he has been taught and has accepted false doctrine. Since we have the Scriptures to read and study, you wouldn't think that a person could easily be deceived, but he can be.



Jesus said, *"Take heed that **no man deceive you**. For many shall come in My name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many"* (Matthew 24:4,5). Just imagine people today being deceived by imposters claiming to be Christ or the Messiah! Who would think that intelligent people would fall for such lies, but there are many.

Paul warned, *"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? **Be not deceived**; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God"* (1 Corinthians 6:9,10). Again, he said, *"**Be not deceived**: evil communications corrupt good manners"* (1 Corinthians 15:33).

Writing to the Galatians, Paul said, *"**Be not deceived**; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but*

he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Galatians 6:7,8).

The Ephesians were warned, *"That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive"* (Ephesians 4:14). *"Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience"* (5:6).

Paul reminded the Thessalonians, *"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition"* (2 Thessalonians 2:3). He wrote to Timothy, *"But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived"* (2 Timothy 3:13).

James wrote, *"But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves"* (James 1:22). Then John was inspired to write, *"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us"* (1 John 1:8).

From these passages of Scripture, and others which could be given, we learn that it is possible to be deceived, misled, and for a person finally to be eternally lost because of the deception.

- One can deceive himself. He can want to do something, or to believe something, so much that he convinces himself it is right, whether it is or not. Many centuries ago the prophet Obadiah wrote in verse 3, *"The pride of your heart has deceived you."*
- One can allow himself to be deceived by others, as Paul warned in Romans 16:17,18: *"...note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them, for they who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple."* Perhaps the listener has so much confidence in a preacher or teacher that he convinces himself he is being taught the truth, even though it contradicts what the Bible says.
- **One may be deceived by a popular false doctrine.** Often the error goes back for many years, and it has been so widely taught and believed that it seems more true than the word of God itself, which it actually contradicts. The words of Paul in Romans 16:18, concerning the *"smooth words and flattering*

speeches which deceive the hearts of the simple” should keep all on their guard.

- **One may be deceived by following the majority.** He reasons that it would not be possible for so many to be wrong, but he forgets what Jesus said in Matthew 7:13,14: “...*wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it.*”

There are so many ways to be deceived when it comes to the plan God has made for our salvation, the church, acceptable worship, the kind of life He wants us to live, the certainty of the return of Christ and the judgment that will follow, and even eternity itself. Manmade teachings are generally accepted as **truth**, while the actual truths as revealed in the Scriptures may be rejected as error—simply because so many have heard men’s lies more than they have heard God’s truths! We plead with one and all to follow only God’s word in matters of the soul.

It is a sad fact that many “good” people tell themselves that God will overlook their failure to obey Him, on the grounds that they **did not know** what the Bible taught. They have **deceived themselves**. God has not promised to save us on the basis of *ignorance* but on the basis of *faith and obedience*.

SPIRITUALITY

Gregory Alan Tidwell

“EVERYTHING YOU ADD to the truth subtracts from the truth,” observed Alexander Solzhenitsyn. His critique of Communist propaganda provides a good rule to follow in all of life. We should seek “the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth,” especially as we seek to be right with God and to be spiritual men and women.

Truth, however, too often falls by the wayside because of our lack of character. We are reluctant to resist the tide of popular opinion. The church has been willing, almost eager, to compromise an absolute devotion to truth in order to gain peace and popularity.

Much of our fellowship has compromised conviction in a desire for the approval of those outside the church. This worldliness is the driving force of the community church movement. Yet, how can anyone imagine that he or she is becoming more spiritual by becoming more secular?

Even among conservative congregations, there is an

unwillingness to stand for the truth in the face of popular opposition. Those of us who should know better are tempted to tolerate, or even encourage, false approaches to spirituality.

Many church leaders and members, even in congregations that like to think of themselves as conservative, want to “go along to get along.” No one wants to rock the boat, and no one wants to cause trouble. Truth, however, is the only way to be right with God. As important as it is to get along with our fellow men, getting along with God is more important. We would do well to follow Martin Luther’s dictum: “Peace if possible, truth at all costs.”

We must constantly remember that public opinion is not a safe guide to truth. “Fallacies,” as G.K. Chesterton observed, “do not cease to be fallacies because they become fashions.” What is conventional wisdom today may well be ludicrous tomorrow. God’s truth and His Spirit, however, never change.

Eluding the Truth With Terminology

The struggle for truth today gets lost in redefinition of religious words. “All words are pegs to hang ideas on,” Henry Ward Beecher noted. As words shift in their definition, the ideas they convey change as well. Maintaining a veneer of religious devotion, we eliminate the inner content of truth. Wolves wear sheep’s clothing.

Nowhere is this pretense more dangerous than in the way “spirituality” is commonly redefined among churches of Christ. As the word “spiritual” is used in most discussions within the church, the term describes an emotional experience and has nothing to do with biblical truth.

This emotional approach is popular and trendy. It is marketed heavily, particularly to teenagers, college students and young adults. It is the driving force of many youth rallies and college retreats. It is the reason entertainment is being substituted for worship, both at instrumental concerts and in progressively more eccentric shenanigans being brought into the worship services of congregations.

The redefinition of spirituality as emotionalism takes many forms. Often spirituality is identified as liveliness. The most animated person, under this definition, is the most spiritual. Sometimes spirituality is identified as mysticism, something weird or perhaps spooky that provides people with an unusual experience. Thus, the person with the wildest experience is the most spiritual. Some people look for a spiritual experience through artistic expression, in special music or dramatic presentations. This approach makes the artist

into the spiritual master. There are many paths to apostasy, even as there is only one path to truth.

Spiritual Ambiguity

Emotionalism is never a safe guide, and emotionalism is not even necessarily Christian. "The heart is deceitful above all things," Scripture warns, "and desperately sick; who can understand it?" (Jeremiah 17:9). Thinking we are having an experience with God, we may only be having an experience within ourselves. Self-delusion is a common result of emotionalism.

The final installment of the Star Wars movie series, *The Revenge of the Sith*, makes this point graphically. Anakin Skywalker constantly received guidance from one or another of the "good guys," a Jedi master, telling him to "trust his feelings." The problem was that the evil Chancellor Palpatine also told Anakin to "trust his feelings." In the end, he trusted the evil feelings that turned him into a monster.

Emotionalism is also an open invitation to spiritual frauds. As Canadian novelist Robertson Davies observed, "Nothing is so easy to fake as the inner vision." Eugene Peterson's paraphrase of Matthew 24:24 describes the situation clearly: "Fake Messiahs and lying preachers are going to pop up everywhere. Their impressive credentials and dazzling performances will pull the wool over the eyes of even those who ought to know better" (The Message).

Many well-meaning Christians have traipsed down the road to apostasy led by swindlers who pandered to their emotions. It has happened before, and it is happening today.

God's Truth Never Changes

Emotions are God-given and are a completely appropriate part of being human. God, however, never commands us to have a particular emotion at a particular time. He commands attitudes, not emotions. Emotions are transient and malleable.

In contrast, Christian character is firm. Spirituality comes from conviction not from titillation.

Paul's synopsis of spirituality in Galatians 5:22-23 bears this out: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law" (NASB). The term "fruit" is singular, showing that all of these various qualities are aspects of the same thing—a life committed to the gospel and thus under the control of the Spirit of God.

These attitudes go beyond mere emotion and represent a

commitment to do what is right despite how we may feel at the time. As Paul commended the Thessalonians, "You ... received the word in much tribulation, with the joy of the Holy Spirit" (1 Thessalonians 1:6). This conviction to maintain an attitude of joy in the face of affliction was demonstrated most clearly by our Lord, "who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:2).

The joy Jesus experienced in going to the cross was not mere exuberance. Quite the contrary, the emotion He felt at the time was misery. His joy, in contrast, was an attitude born of conviction which could not be shaken even by the darkest emotions. Jesus could deal with the pain of the cross because He knew the truth of the resurrection.

To be spiritual, then, is to have conviction that is informed and strengthened by the truth of God. This association of spirituality and faithfulness should not be surprising because the Spirit is the source of all revealed truth, as Jesus promised the apostles: "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come" (John 16:13).

Our experience of salvation comes "through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth" (2 Thessalonians 2:13). Apart from God's truth there can be no participation in God's Spirit.

Knowing God's truth, there can be an assurance of the Spirit's work apart from what one may or may not feel emotionally at a particular moment. This objective reality is seen in the blessing of baptism: "This is the One who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is the truth. For there are three that bear witness, the Spirit and the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement" (1 John 5:6-8).

How am I sure of salvation? I have assurance because of the promise of the Spirit and the cleansing of the blood that are given in the water of baptism. It is not the emotion I feel that provides a conviction of God's truth. Rather, being convicted of God's truth, my heart and mind are guided by His Spirit. Being spiritual is not a factor of the emotions which engender our feelings but of the truth that empowers our convictions.

The HEART Of The Matter

Tom Holland

OUR SAVIOR, IN AN agricultural parable, clearly and accurately explained the ways hearers would receive and react to the Word of God. Reactions of hearers would reduce the effectiveness of the Word to 25 percent. The Word of God is indeed the seed of the kingdom, and there is productive power in that seed. However, the soil in which the seed is planted is vital to the seed's effectiveness. George A. Buttrick, in his book about the parables of Jesus, identified the parable of the sower as the "parable of the soils."

In Matthew's record of Jesus' parable of the sower, the good soil represents the person who "hears the word and understands it" and is productive (Matthew 13:23 *ESV*). Mark's record has Jesus explaining the good soil/ground as hearing the word and receiving it. (Mark 4:20).

In Luke's recording of the good soil, Jesus explained the reason the Word was both received and understood: The seed was sown in an "honest and good heart" (Luke 8:15).

It should be both interesting and informative to observe the emphasis Jesus placed on the heart, to determine an explanation of the heart that is both good and honest, and to examine those today who have a heart that is receptive to the Word of God.

Emphasis on the Heart

In both the Old and New Testaments, a significant emphasis is made on the heart. The "issues of life" come from the heart (Proverbs 4:23 *NKJV*); those "issues" are the "springs of life". The heart is the place where life's decisions are made. Jesus said the "pure in heart" will be blessed to "see God" (Matthew 5:8).

When Jesus was on earth, He often encountered religious leaders who placed the emphasis in religion on the externals, minimizing the need to have the heart right with God (Mark 7:5-13, 18-23).

If one investigates the problem people in the first century had living faithfully, he will find that the heart of the problem was a problem with the heart. Such was the problem of Ananias, Simon and the Hebrews (Acts 5:3; 8:21; Hebrews 3:12-13). Informed people know that every avenue (act) of New Testament worship requires the worship to come from the heart (Colossians 3:16-17).

The Good and Honest Heart

In His description of the heart that receives and understands God's Word (cf. Luke 8:15), Jesus used two words that are often translated "good" in the New Testament. Jesus used the same word for both the soil and the heart that is good. The first word is *kalos*, which, according to Vine's Expository Dictionary, means "that which is intrinsically good, and so, goodly, fair, beautiful." This is translated "honest."

The second word Jesus used in describing the receptive heart is *aga-thos*, which means "that which, being good in its character or constitution, is beneficial in its effect" (Vine's). This is translated "good."

The good and honest heart has not been defiled by lust. This heart has not been prejudiced against the truth by false doctrine. This heart has not been abused by procrastination.

Good and Honest Hearts Today

The easiest job I have ever had is teaching the Lord's way of saving people if I am teaching a person who sincerely wants to know the Lord's answer to this question: What must I do to be saved?

Recently, I said to a young lady: "I've discovered what you already knew about your fiance. He has a good and honest heart."

I had talked to him about his soul and the importance of obeying the Lord. On the occasion when I made this remark to his bride-to-be, we had been talking about their forthcoming wedding plans. Again, I talked to him about the importance of his obedience to the Lord, first for his soul's sake and also for his marriage so that they both would be Christians.

I said to him, "Why don't you obey the Lord now?" So we were making preparations for his baptism when I told her that I had discovered his good and honest heart.

Think how many young people obey the Lord. Think of older people who make the good confession and are baptized into Christ (Galatians 3:27).

We should not be discouraged by hard-hearted soil, by shallow-commitment hearts, or by care-confused "ground." There are people today with good and honest hearts. They are found in remote villages of Guyana. They are found in Tennessee. They are in your area, and in these good and honest hearts, God's Word is received by people who live productive Christian lives.

Can Women Lead Public Worship?

Jack Evans

IN THE WAKE OF THE Women's Liberation Movement, the church of Christ is encountering much rhetoric about the role of women in the public ministration or leadership of the church. Some self-proclaimed scholars among churches of Christ are claiming to have found teachings in the Bible, based on the original linguistics, that allow women to lead the singing, preside over the communion, lead prayer and collect the contributions in the public assembly of the church. Most of these scholars say women may not preach the gospel because preaching is strictly forbidden by the Scripture but they may do whatever else in the public assembly not restricted by the Scripture, such as the aforementioned. Such a position by any person is most untenable and self-contradictory. The same scriptural reasoning that strictly forbids a woman to preach by assigning that role to men is the same scriptural reasoning used in restricting all leadership roles in public worship to men.

The basic weakness in the stance of these observers is they are trying to affirm a negative, which is impossible on the polemical stage. They say the Scripture does not say women may not lead in the singing, praying, communion or contribution. That, on the surface, is correct. In that same sense, however, the Bible does not say that women may not preach. If so, where? Likewise, the Bible does not say that the church should not use Dr Pepper in the communion. If so, where? But the Bible does teach by direct command, approved example, and/or necessary inference, the old hermeneutic, that only men are authorized to lead in the public ministration of the church.

In order to grasp this biblical principle, it is necessary to understand that the Bible says some things a certain way that it does not teach. For example, the Bible says in Mark 16:17-18: "And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover" (KJV). This is what the Bible says, but it does not teach that all the believers would do these miraculous things. Thus, in arriving at the biblical truth of a subject, a person must study the total teaching of the Scripture on the subject and not derive a conclusion based on a

single verse or the utilization of a single Greek word, which must be governed by the context of the passage.

In reference to the public ministration of the church, the total teaching of the Scripture is that men only were authorized by God to lead. While men and women are equal in Christ (Galatians 3:28), the hierarchical view of their roles is taught in the Bible, rather than in the egalitarian view. The Godhead is equal, but "the head of Christ is God" (1 Corinthians 11:3). This is showing the importance of roles in equality. The role of the woman in the work of the church is important. Paul commended many women for their gracious works in the church (Romans 16). But in the public ministration of the church, the Bible teaches that only men were given authorization by God. The "praying and prophesying" of the men and women of 1 Corinthians 11:4-5 were limited to people who possessed the spiritual gift, and it was not for all women and men (1 Corinthians 12:1-11, 28-31). And the spiritual gifts were limited to the first-century time frame (1 Corinthians 13:8-11). Thus, no person can deduce a teaching here for the church of today. The women praying in this passage were also prophesying. The indication here is that person who had the special permission by God to prophesy (Joel 2:28-29; Acts 2:17-18, 21:9) also had permission to pray. The Bible does not say that this was the public worship service of the church, but it does bind the praying and prophesying together, denoting that this was a special activity. And no scholar can separate the praying from the prophesying. Thus, this passage does not teach the role of women in the church in general, for all women did not have the gift of prophecy then (1 Corinthians 12:28-29), and there are no women with that gift today. God gave the gifts of the Spirit as He willed (Hebrews 2:4; 1 Corinthians 12:10-11). Contextually, a woman may pray publicly, if she can also prophesy. And that gift no longer exists (1 Corinthians 13:8-11),

The Bible does not say that when the church would come together (1 Corinthians 14:26), the public assembly, the leaders exercising the spiritual gifts of tongues and prophecy were to be men only (1 Corinthians 14:27-33) and that the women were not to speak publicly (vv. 34-35). Evident in this passage is that this assembly was not the same kind of assembly Paul is speaking about in 1 Corinthians 11:1-12. Surely, he would not now be forbidding what he had permitted of women in the same kind of assembly. The clear teaching here is that men only, when the church comes together, must lead in public expressions of worship.

If all other passages leave some doubt about this fact, 1 Timothy 2:8-14 makes it clear. In verse seven of this passage, Paul reaffirms his authority as an apostle. He then says, "I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting." The fact that this was a public leading of prayer is indicated by the phrase, "lifting up holy hands," which was a tradition in that day, signifying leadership of the person doing the praying. The fact that he is authorizing men only to lead the prayer is substantiated in his use of the Greek noun *aner*, meaning male only and never inclusive of women. Paul did not use the Greek noun *anthropos*, meaning male or female. The authority here is for men only, and their attitude must be without wrath and doubting. In some translations, Paul then says, "In like manner also," an adverbial phrase that some people, erroneously, try to connect to men praying in verse eight. No honest Bible student will knowingly misapply that phrase. Contextually, "in like manner also" has reference to Paul's "I will" in verse eight. In other words, Paul is saying, "Just as I will ("in like manner also"—verse nine) that women adorn themselves." The emphasis of "in the same manner also" is not on men praying or women dressing, but on Paul's will or desire for both sexes and his instructions to each. That is why some translations say in verse nine, "I also want women to dress modestly" (NIV). A grammatical modification that has to do with attitude could be taken from verse eight and teaches this same attitude in Philippians 2:14-15. But Paul says nowhere in this passage and does not even imply it that women are also to lead public prayer. I challenge any scholar to prove Paul does indeed authorize women in this passage to lead public prayer.

On the contrary, Paul strengthens the teaching of the entire New Testament on the leadership of men only in the public ministration of the church. Beginning in verse 11, he says, "Let a woman learn in silence (quietness) with all subjection" (KJV). Subjection to whom? The New Testament teaching is subjection to the man (1 Corinthians 11:3). How is she in silence and in subjection to the man if she is leading him? Paul then solidifies the total teaching of the New Testament regarding the role of women in public ministration of the church by saying, "But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority (or have authority) over the man, but to be in silence" (1 Timothy 2: 12). And then Paul buttresses his point about the leadership of the man over the woman by appealing to the creation order and the establishment of God's original law in this matter (vv.

13-14; Genesis 1:27; 2:18, 22; 3:6,16; 2 Corinthians 11:3).

In choosing leaders for the public ministration of the church's work in Jerusalem, the apostles told the church to select seven men, *aner*, from among themselves to do it (Acts 6:1-6). If there ever was a time when women could have been used in the leadership of public ministration of the church, it would have been here because the problem was between women. But the apostles said that men, and men only, must be appointed "over this business" (v. 3). And only men were chosen (v. 5). And while women are servants, which is the literal meaning of the Greek noun *diakonos*, like all Christians, they cannot hold the "office of a deacon" (1 Timothy 3:10) which is the hierarchical structure of the government of the church (Philippians 1:1). One of the qualifications of a deacon in the ministration of the church is being "the husband of one wife" (1 Timothy 3:12). Can any woman meet this qualification? It is obvious then that a woman cannot be a deaconess in the sense of public ministration of the church.

Preaching, singing, praying, communing and contributing are all expressions of worship in the public assembly of the church or when the church comes together in one place (1 Corinthians 11:18, 20). The New Testament teaching is that only men are authorized to take the lead in this public ministration of the church. It is not just a matter of some person passing out the communion, it is a matter of public ministration of or leadership in an expression of worship of the assembled church. There is no command, example, necessary inference or Greek word in context that shows authorization for a woman to preside over any phase of the public ministration of the church.

Can We Be Saved Today In The Same Way That The Thief On The Cross Was Saved?

John Thiesen

THE THIEF ON THE cross possessed certain convictions and a changing of his mind which we must also have if we are to be forgiven of our sins, but we cannot be saved in exactly the same way he was. His salvation was a direct speaking of pardon from the Lord personally while they were face to face on their respective crosses. Jesus often pardoned people during His ministry, and the thief was

just another beneficiary of this personal ministry of the Lord.

Before the cross, Christ could forgive men on any terms He pleased. But when He died for our sins, the Bible says He set into force what is called a "testament," or will. From then on, the terms of His testament must be met by all, without respect of persons. The Hebrews writer points out that Christ's testament was not in force while He was alive before the cross, but that it is now in effect (Hebrews 9:15-17). **Some Things We have In Common With The Thief** The thief possessed some attitudes of mind which are essential in all who would come to the Lord. For instance, something about Jesus' manner on the cross persuaded him to believe that Jesus was the promised Christ. He begged Him, "*Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom*" (Luke 23:42). Seeing his faith, Jesus told him, "*Today shalt thou be with me in paradise*" (verse 43). We must also come to this same conclusion and confess that Jesus is Lord if we are to be saved today.

The penitence of the thief was obvious in that he now rebuked his fellow thief for reviling Jesus. Earlier he had joined with him in this activity, but now he scolded him saying, "*Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds*" (Luke 23:39-41). He was now ashamed of his sins and sorry for them. We have to feel that way about our sins, as well, if we are to be forgiven today.

Where Our Salvation Differs From The Thief

Although our salvation is similar to that of the thief in regard to faith in Christ and repentance from sin, it differs in that we must be baptized into Christ. This is one of the requirements of Christ's testament, which went into effect after His death on the cross. From that time Jesus told His apostles to preach the Gospel to every creature, and "*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned*" (Mark 16:15,16). The thief was not subject to this requirement because Jesus had not yet given it when they were on the cross.

Who Intercedes And Mediates For Us?

T. Pierce Brown

THE QUESTION IS SOMETIMES asked, "Since 1 Timothy 2:5 says that there is one mediator between God and man—Christ Jesus,

who intercedes on our behalf (Romans 8:24)—how is it that Romans 8:26 indicates that the Holy Spirit also intercedes for us?” The basic question is, “If there is one, and only one, mediator, how can there be two?” Possibly a related problem would be, “If we can discover that there is more than one mediator, maybe some man, such as a preacher, priest, or Pope, might also be one.”

One key to the problem is the failure to distinguish between things that differ. “Intercession” is from the Greek word “enteuxis” and means “a petition with respect to.” The verb “entugchano,” translated “deal with” once and “make intercession” four times, means “make petition or intercession **either for or against** a person.” (See Acts 25:24, where the Jews made intercession against Paul.) The Spirit makes intercession (Romans 8:26), Christ makes intercession (Romans 8:24; Hebrews 7:25), and we are to make intercession for each other (1 Timothy 2:11; 4:5). God in no way, at no time, limited the number of persons who are allowed to intercede for another.

However, the word “mediator” is from the Greek word “mesites,” and literally means “a go-between”—one who mediates between two parties to produce a reconciliation of differences. Christ is our mediator in a way that no one else is or can be. The peculiar nature of man’s relationship with God demanded a special mediator. Man was estranged from God by sin, and there needed to be a price paid, an offer made and accepted before man could be reconciled to God. Although Moses could be a mediator of the law (Galatians 3:19), he could not accomplish what Christ needed to and did accomplish as a mediator.

In a dispute between labor and management, a federal mediator may be able to offer certain things to management on behalf of labor, and to offer certain other things to labor on behalf of management. He may or may not intercede, but if he does, it is a different function from that of mediation.

As the *mediator* of the New Testament (Hebrews 9:15), Christ entered once (for all) into the Holy Place to make possible this reconciliation of man to God (Hebrews 9:24-28); but one can *intercede* to God on behalf of man without being a *mediator*.

Although this is a slightly different aspect of the same subject, it is my considered judgment that the intercession of the Holy Spirit spoken of in Romans 8:26 is done through the prayers of the individual who does not know what to pray for as he ought, so he makes inarticulate groans in the spirit, and the Spirit by whom he

lives knows and “interprets” these groanings to God who searches the hearts. One would need to have an unusual concept of the Holy Spirit to conclude that the Holy Spirit Himself had to express his mind by inarticulate groanings. But this intercession of the Spirit, however it may be done, is not the same as the mediatorial office or function of Jesus as spoken of in 1 Timothy 2:5.

I realize that a far more scholarly and definitive article could be written about this profound subject, answering additional questions, and dealing with them in greater depth, but perhaps this is at least enough to help make us more aware of the differences between intercession and mediation, and that the particular kind of mediation Christ does for us is unique.

I Am FREE

Jimmy Jividen

IN THE MASS CONFUSION of contemporary religion I am thankful that I can be a part of a group that knows true freedom in Christ.

It is a group where I am not required to believe any human creed, follow any human tradition, or support any clergy. I am free to follow the Bible only.

It is a group in which I am not required to participate in any form of worship, ecclesiastical organization, or religious practice that is not authorized by Jesus Christ Himself. I am free to follow Jesus only.

It is a group in which I am not required to give fellowship to or approval of religious teachings and moral conduct which are contrary to the will of God. I am free to follow my conscience which has been sensitized by the teachings of the Scriptures without having to compromise my convictions.

It is a group in which I am not required to accept without question either the status **quo** of the past or the novel visions of the future. I am free to open the Bible myself and ask, “What saith the Scriptures?”

It is a group in which I am not required to be affiliated with or give support to any human institution. I am free to be the church of Christ as planned by God, founded by Jesus Christ, and filled with the Holy Spirit.

I have thrown off the chains of human ecclesiastical traditions. I have broken out of the prison house of clergy oppression. I have

refused to be enslaved by either the subjective human experiences of self or others.

I have issued my declaration of independence from human religions and have committed myself to follow Jesus Christ and Him alone. I will dwell in the fellowship of other children of God who, like myself, are blood-bonded to one another in the church of Christ.

REPROVING

Tom Kelton

THE SCRIPTURES ARE profitable for reproof (2 Timothy 3:16). They confront and rebuke misconduct and false teaching. According to French, to reprove is “so to rebuke another, with such effectual wielding of the victorious arm of the truth, as to bring him if not always to a confession, yet at least to a conviction, of his sin.”

Two aspects of reproof are evident in the Scriptures: reproof of sinful conduct and reproof of erroneous teaching. Paul instructed Timothy, who was trying to clean up the church at Ephesus, “*Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort*” (2 Timothy 4:2). Timothy was to preach and apply the Scriptures so that people would turn from sin—even though the time would come when most people would not tolerate such preaching (verse 3).

Hebrews 4:12,13 also speaks of reproving sin. Verse 12 pictures God’s Word as a two-edged sword that cuts deep into a person’s being to expose and judge his innermost thoughts and motives. Verse 13 says, “*There is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.*” God penetrates our hearts with His Word and lays us open before His eyes.

When the Word is faithfully and accurately preached, Christians will be convicted of their sins and either repent or leave. Few people will allow themselves to be exposed to the reproof of God’s Word if they have no desire to obey the Lord. Jesus said evil doers hate the light and don’t come to it so their deeds won’t be exposed (John 3:20).

Christians who have been taught by preachers about “reprove, rebuke, and exhort” will have a thorough grasp of biblical truth and not be like undiscerning infants, but will be like strong young men

who can easily recognize false teachings, and avoid being *"children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming"* (Ephesians 4:14).

GOD'S FAMILY

(Where Everyone Is Important)

Roy D. Baker

"WHILE HE WAS talking to the multitudes, behold, His mother and brothers stood outside, seeking to speak with Him. Then one said to Him, 'Look, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, seeking to speak with You.' But He answered and said to the one who told Him, 'Who is My mother and who are My brothers?' And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, 'Here are My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother'" (Matthew 12:46-50).

This section of Scripture teaches a marvelous lesson on spiritual relationships. Jesus had recently come forth filling the whole country around Galilee with excitement and wonder at His teaching and His mighty miracles. His fame spread over the land. Multitudes followed Him wherever He went.

Almost no one understood Jesus when He began His public ministry. John wrote that His own brothers did not believe in Him (John 7:5). Mark tells us that when He came back to Nazareth, His own people went out to take custody of Him, saying, *"He is out of His mind."* That's saying, "He's insane!" Our text states that His mother and brothers were standing outside, wanting to talk to Him, but they couldn't reach Him for the large crowd. The Bible doesn't say why they wanted to talk to Him. Not being able to reach Him, they relayed the word along until someone whispered in His ear, *"Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak to You, Jesus."*

His answer to the message was to let them know that He, in the deepest sense, was related not only to those who, humanly speaking, were the most closely related to Him, but also to those who believed and obeyed the Word of God brought to them by

Jesus. He looked toward His disciples and shocked them with a question: *"Who is My mother and who are My brothers?"* Jesus lifted His language from the physical/fleshly to the spiritual. *"Here are My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother."* In other words, He was saying that anyone who does the will of God is His family.

In no way was Jesus implying His ingratitude for His earthly family. To the contrary, He was expressing gratitude for them, and yet, as dear to Him as was His mother, He was also saying that there is a spiritual relation just as dear and just as strong. Let none think He lightly esteemed His mother who had borne Him and nursed Him and followed Him with anxious heart. If one should think so, go with Him to the cross; see Him there forgetting His suffering, the anguish, and the pain of that torture-stack so that in His anxiety He might provide for the comfort of His mother throughout her remaining days on earth.

As faithful and devoted as He had been to His mother and home relatives through all the years, His attitude toward His Father in heaven and His Messianic calling caused fleshly kinship to be relegated to a subordinate place. It furnished Jesus the opportunity to teach a lesson in spiritual relationships. He used this occasion to make a point—if we put ourselves at the disposal of God, we are part of His family.

What an honor, what a privilege it is to know that those who hear the Word of God and obey it are the nearest relatives to Jesus! This spiritual relationship outranks the tenderness the natural and fleshly relationship, and it is more vital than any blood relationship. Human ties are physical and temporary. The ties of Christ are spiritual and eternal. Jesus includes in the family of God all believers in Him; He binds them together with strong cords of love and sympathy. *"For whosoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother."*

Obedience to God's will is the spiritual test of our discipleship. Jesus calls those who obey the Father's will by the endearing names of brother, sister, mother. Why? Because those who obey Him do what the Father requires. One believes, which is the first step and the beginning of obedience; he repents of past sins, confesses Jesus as the Christ, and is baptized for remission of sins, putting him/her into Christ. Those who obey these commands are then added to the church, which is the family of God. They are members of His

Body and members one of another.

We are part of God's great family, and in no way is one member more important than the other as far as God is concerned. Jesus said, "My mother, my brothers? All of you are part of My family if you listen and do the will of God." We are part of this spiritual communion we call the Community of saints, a community of believers, the family of God.

Truth And The Middle Of The Road

Cecil May, Jr.

NOTHING IS SO EXTREME but that someone can find some way to be more extreme.

That being true, any extremist can present himself as "moderate" or "in the middle" by pointing to someone more radical than he. Any of us, wherever we are doctrinally, can comfortably see ourselves as the center.

It is often helpful to highlight and clarify a particular truth by contrasting it with its extremes. It is important to realize, however, that *one does not arrive at truth just by staking out the middle.*

God's word is truth (John 17:17). When we seek God's will with a submissive heart (John 7:17), we can read and understand what the will of the Lord is (Ephesians 3:3-4; 5:17). When we understand it, it will be a midpoint between extremes, but that is not what makes it truth.

Find the truth in Scripture. Then turn neither to the right—as an extreme fanatical—nor to the left—as a liberal. *"Therefore you shall be careful to do as the Lord your God has commanded you; you shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. ...that it may be well with you, and that you may prolong your days in the land which you shall possess"* (Deuteronomy 5:32, 33).

The New Testament Is Eternal And Universal

G. Devadanam

UNLIKE THE LAW OF Moses, the New Testament is both eternal, following its inauguration, and universal in its application. There is

no question of the validity of this basic concept, but if anyone needs proof, numerous examples will provide evidence to establish this fact beyond any controversy.

- **The first proof** is from the book of Matthew, chapter 28. The context is: The resurrected Christ meeting His apostles at a certain mountain place in Galilee (Matthew 28:16,17). In His message to them, the Lord epitomized His constitution for the church-kingdom and delivered it to them, putting it all in a nut-shell of just three verses! We read:

*"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach **all nations** (universal), 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 always, even **unto the end of the world**" (eternal) (verses 18-20). Can there be any dispute concerning this proof? Who would argue with our Lord?*

- **The second proof** is from Acts 2, on the occasion of the inauguration of the New Testament itself, on the day of Pentecost! The Chief Guest for the event was no insignificant person: He was the Holy Spirit, Himself, sent down from heaven (Acts 2:1-4)! The apostle Peter was the human agent used by Him, to cut the ribbon and declare the doors of the kingdom "open", as it were (verse 14ff).

Guilt ridden Jews were the august audience. They were convicted guilty of crucifying their much-awaited Messiah. Responding to their desire to purge their guilt, Peter said, *"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. For this promise is unto you, and to your children..."* (implying the Jewish nation). If he had been speaking of the Law of Moses, the promise would have stopped abruptly with those words, excluding the rest of humanity as aliens (Deuteronomy 6:1-10; 7:1-10).

The New Testament, however, is a different covenant altogether. Therefore, Peter continued his speech unabated. The New Testament promise, without any prejudice or reservation, is extended equally *"to all that are afar off* (implying universal application), *even as many as the Lord our God shall call*" (indicating that it is age-lasting, too) (Acts 2:38,39).

- **The third proof** is taken from 1 Corinthians 1:2. There Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, wrote thus: *"Unto the church of God which is at Corinth..."* Had he ended his statement there, it would have

meant a different thing, but Paul continued his description to explain that the church and its law have eternal and universal application: *"...with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours"* (cf 5:11; 14:37).

Sighted examples support the fact that the New Testament is eternal and universal. But our concern is: *in what way are the New Testament principles applicable to us now?*

Before we look for the answer to this very important question, let me illustrate a problem, taken from 1 Corinthians 5. There we find a fornicator in the church. The church was ignorant of its responsibility toward him. Divine direction was offered by the apostle, the church carried out the instruction, and the problem was settled. Now, see how this typical New Testament principle is applicable with universal and eternal force!

At present, for instance, in the church at Perawbur, we do not have that problem, which once plagued the church at Corinth. So the solution offered there has no relevance to us now. But somewhere, in some remote place, if a member of the Lord's Body happens to keep another man's wife, the universal nature of New Testament precept is revived there. The same instructions that applied in the church at Corinth apply there, too, bringing about the same effect.

Suppose such a problem is not existing in any congregation anywhere in the present world. Does that mean that the solution once offered by the apostle to meet that specific problem is out of place? Not at all. As long as the church remains on earth, when the problem recurs, the same solution shall be revived, regardless of its place and time (cf 2 Peter 1:12-15).

Thus the New Testament contains the stipulated precepts to meet any spiritual requirement of its recipients. It was handed over to the church with an express purpose: that the church must be guided and directed by the eternal and universal principles stated therein.

In other words, the New Testament is the Divine Constitution for Christ's spiritual church/kingdom on earth. The eternal or age-lasting kingdom requires an eternal constitution. If the kingdom is universal, encompassing *"every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation"* (Revelation 5:9), it naturally requires a universal code of conduct.

If the New Testament is such a constitution, and if Revelation is an inevitable part and parcel of it, irrespective of the language used to impart it, can the message of Revelation now be applied differently

from the rule of faith and practice of New Testament pattern? No, it too is a message meant for all people for all time, until the Lord returns with His mighty angels and the sound of the trumpet, ending the earthly age.

RECEPTION ***Of The Gospel***

Albert Gardner

WHEN PAUL ARRIVED AS a prisoner in Rome, the Jews of the city came to him to hear him, *"He explained and solemnly testified of the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets, from morning till evening"* (Acts 28:23).

Notice what this apostle taught them. **He explained the kingdom, which is the church, and he taught them about Jesus.** It is strange that some today want us to tell about Jesus but not mention the church, because they say, to tell them about the oneness and undenominational nature of the church will turn people away.

It is a fact that some reject Bible teaching about the church. Does rejection by the majority make the teaching false? *"For what if some did not believe? Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect? Certainly not! Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar"* (Romans 3:3,4). Truth is not determined by what is popular but by the written word of God.

It is not the *method* and *manner* people are rejecting, it is *the truth* they refuse. They did not kill Jesus because of *the way* He said it, but they rejected *what* He said.

When a person hears the gospel in a clear, kind, understandable way, he can never be the same again. One can never be neutral about Jesus. Notice the result of Paul's teaching in Rome.

"And some were persuaded by the things which were spoken, and some disbelieved" (Acts 28:24).

The Parable of the Sower (Luke 8), shows the different receptions to the sowing of the same seed. Because we have the power of choice, we make up our own mind about Bible teaching. That is why some believed and some believed not.

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