

# THE BIBLE TEACHER

*Pleading for the Restoration of Pure New Testament Christianity*

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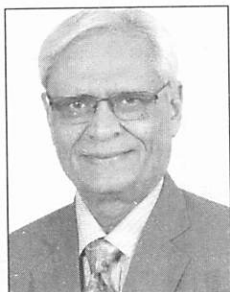
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## Editorial

### What Does the Bible Teach?

#### *He Who Believes And Is Baptized Will Be Saved*



THE GREEK WORD "baptisma" has been transliterated or rather anglicized and transported into the English language Bible as "baptism". However, had it been translated then it would read, in Mark 16:16, "He who believes and is immersed will be saved", and in Acts 2:38, "repent, and let everyone of you be immersed in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." The Greek word "baptisma" means immersion or burial, as we read in Colossians 2:12, "buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, Who raised Him from the dead." Likewise Romans 6:4 reads, "Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in the newness of life." Baptism is one of the most beautiful and important acts of obedience for salvation. Through the act of baptism the good news of Christ's death, burial and resurrection is proclaimed. As one is lowered into the body of water, as one who has died, and is brought up from the grave of water to portray the resurrection of Christ, one is ready to walk in the newness of life in Christ. Before salvation is attained, the forgiveness of sins is gained, and the gift of the Holy Spirit is received one must be baptized in water. (Acts 8:35-39).

According to God's way of salvation, one must believe in Christ with whole heart that He has died for the sinners as the propitiation for our sins (1 John 4:10), and must repent or turn away from all sins and ignorance, and thus become dead to sin (Luke 13:5), then one must confess Christ to be the Son of God, as eunuch did, and must be baptized, buried or immersed in the body of water for the remission of sins. This is the scripturally authorized process by which a person is born anew spiritually, and thus becomes entitled to enter the kingdom of God, as Christ told Nicodemus, in John 3:5, "Most assuredly I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."

One believes with heart, repents in the mind, confesses with mouth (Romans 10:10), and is baptized in water to portray the good news of salvation that Christ has died for our sins and was buried and has risen again according to the Scriptures. (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).

The command of Christ to baptize is directed only to those who can personally believe, repent and confess Christ to be the Son of God. This definitely excludes infants and small children, as they are not proper subjects of baptism. Speaking of small children, Christ taught, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 19:14). That is to say, they are fit to enter the kingdom of heaven. Baptism is for sinners (Acts 22:16), not for the saved. Little children have not sinned, and as long as they remain small and innocent they are acceptable in the kingdom of heaven. At what point does then one become a sinner in the eyes of God? Let the Bible speak, James 1:14-15 says, "But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full grown, brings forth death." One becomes a sinner by choice, not by inheritance. "All have," Romans 3:23 teaches, "sinned." When one grows up and become old enough to differentiate between wrong and right, an individual who is penitent, that is the point when one should come forward to be baptized into Christ, after believing in Him, repenting of sins and confessing Christ to be the Son of God. In fact, the Biblical purpose of baptism is to transport one from the old life of sin into a new life in Christ. Those who think that one is first "saved" when he believes and then he should "join a church" and then be "baptized", are ignorant of what the Bible teaches on the subject of baptism. According to the Bible, those who are baptized for the remission of sins, the Lord adds them to the church. (Acts 2:38, 41, 47).

# The Compassion Of Christianity

J.C. Choate



THERE IS MUCH IN THE Bible about mercy toward the needy. In Judaism, God said, *"When you reap your harvest in your field, and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that the Lord your God may bless all the work of your hands."*

Mercy and compassion are also taught in the New Testament. Christians are commanded to *"... visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world"* (James 1:27). James explained even further, *"If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Depart in peace, be warmed and filled, but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself if it does not have works, is dead'* (James 2:15-17).

Paul, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, instructed in Galatians 6:2: *"Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."* Jesus, Himself, gave the classic example of the compassionate neighbor in the story of the traveler who fell among thieves and was robbed, beaten, and left destitute (Luke 10:25-37). Two hypocritical religious leaders saw the man and passed by on the other side of the road, ignoring his plight. Then a stranger, not even of the victim's own nationality, stopped, treated his wounds, sat him on his donkey, and took him to an inn where he made provisions for the continued care of the man. Jesus praised the "good Samaritan" as being the real neighbor.

Often Christianity is portrayed as being socialistic in nature because of the account in Acts 2:44,45: *"Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need."*

While this passage is used as an example of Christianity in action, it does not portray the complete picture. Yes, people sold their possessions and shared with those in need. Why were some in such dire straits? Many who read this part of the account would not be aware that the church at this beginning point of its existence was made up of many who had come to Jerusalem to celebrate the

Jewish feasts of Passover and Pentecost. Acts 2:9-11 says that in the multitude were *visitors from sixteen parts of the world!* These people had come from great distances, at great expense, for an expected short period of time. After their conversion, however, they stayed on in Jerusalem to learn more about the Christ, His kingdom, and their new life, from the teachings of the Apostles. As their funds ran out, Christians from the area began to sell their own possessions so that the needs of all could be met.

Later, in Acts 11:28-30, a great famine was prophesied, and Christians in Antioch decided to send relief to the brethren in Judea, *"each according to his ability."*

Think with me: if it had been the continued practice, since the church began numerous years earlier, for all Christians everywhere to sell all of their possessions and to divide them among the other Christians of the area, the folks in Antioch would not have had any possessions to share (each according to his ability) with the destitute Christians in Judea.

Obviously, the situation in Jerusalem had been the exception to the norm. People selling their possessions, and all Christians in an area sharing what they had, was a description only of an emergency situation. In normal circumstances, when there was a need, Christians made voluntary contributions *"according to his ability."*

Does God want people to selflessly support one another financially, when there is no crisis? Paul commanded, by direction of the Holy Spirit, *"If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat"* (2 Thessalonians 3:10). He explained further: *"Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need"* (Ephesians 4:28).

Obviously, from these passages, and numerous others that could be given, God expects every person to be both industrious for himself and selfless toward those who are in need. This is the compassion of Christianity, not the socialist idea of taking from everybody so that some centralized power can disperse at will to those who have been made beggars by the system.

God's command to His people is to *"... Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature"* (Mark 16:15). Why did He not command us to go into all the world and give to the poor? Jesus, Himself, stated, *"... For you have the poor with you always..."* (Matthew 26:11). If Christians gave everything they had to help the needy, it would not solve the world's problems, and all of **the**

**resources of the church would be consumed in benevolent work, with nothing left for the preaching of the Gospel to the saving of souls.**

Man may be short-sighted, thinking that physical help is what is most important. But humans forget that God is part of the equation: As was promised by Jesus, *"Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you"* (Luke 6:38). As individual Christians give to God, He will bless them even physically as a result. As individual congregations engage in God's work of evangelizing their own communities, they are instructed: *"Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith"* (Galatians 6:10). It is the responsibility of local congregations to respond, as they are able, to the suffering of those around them. God, as a result, will bless those individuals and congregations, both spiritually and physically, *"...good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over..."*

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## JESUS—EXAMPLE TO ALL

**Peter Mostert**

*"I DO NOT SPEAK,"* said Jesus, *"on my own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me commandment, what to say and what to speak...Go therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you."* This commission was, at first, given to Christ's disciples. They, in turn, gave the directive to those who later became Christians.

Paul, writing to Timothy, said, *"And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also"* (2 Timothy 2:2). Paul was so emphatic about teaching the pure Gospel of Christ that he cautioned the church in Galatia, saying, *"Even though we (apostles) or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel other than or more than that which we preached to you, let him be accursed"* (Galatians 1:8).

Through the ages some people have taken it upon themselves, for one reason or another, to rewrite God's Word. Recent attempts

include a non-gender-based version of the Bible, a condensed version, and an elimination of major sections that are supposedly uninspired, including many of Jesus' sayings. This reminds me of a person who was told of an important teaching by Christ, and was shown the passage in the Bible. He immediately ripped out the page and said, "Now it is no longer there."

Our "self-help" culture insists on "going-it-alone" and, as a certain child once put it, "Do it mine self!" The same message may, by some, be directed toward God: "I don't want to be told what to do!"

Throughout the years the Gospel of Christ has not changed. God is still seeking and saving the lost. People may have distorted it; some have added to it, some have taken away from it, and some have wandered from it, but the pure Gospel remains constant, waiting to be discovered by any seeker who will listen and obey its message, and preached by any who would be a true standard-bearer for God.

In the constant attitude of our Lord, we have an example of how we should revere and obey God. Throughout His earthly ministry, He made such statements as these: *"...the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does the Son also does in like manner"* (John 5:19). *"For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me"* (John 6:38). *"My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me"* (John 7:18). *"And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him"* (John 8:29).

Jesus is our only Lord and Savior, and our example—listen to Him and obey Him.

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## ***The Advisability Of Autonomy***

**Tom Holland**

GOD'S WILL IS GOOD, acceptable, and perfect (Romans 12:3).

God has a will for His saved ones, the church, to be organized for maximum effectiveness in His service. God's will may be ascertained by a diligent study of the New Testament.

An examination of inspired Scripture shows that some modern types of church organization are conspicuous by their absence. One cannot read about popes in the New Testament. One does read that Christ is the head of the church (Colossians 1:18). Church government by a hierarchy is not a part of God's revealed plan but

has originated with man. Presiding Bishops, conferences, religious conventions, have come from human endeavors without Divine authority.

God's plan for church organization reveals the autonomy of the local congregation. The church at Philippi had bishops and deacons (Philippians 1:1). This congregation was a self-governing congregation under the authority of Christ.

Surely we appreciate the wisdom of God in His plan for church organization. If all the congregations in a given area go into apostasy, a particular congregation does not have to "follow the crowd."

Churches of Christ have no earthly headquarters. The congregations of God's people are not under a presiding bishop. Ecclesiastical organizations which overtly or subtly attempt to set policy of "renewal" or "restructure" for the Lord's church operate apart from the authority of Christ.

Let each congregation once more get involved in dedicated service to God so that sincere worship is given Him and the message of salvation is faithfully proclaimed. Then the church will grow again as it did during the era when God's people were content with congregational autonomy.

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## *The Significance Of The Holy Spirit In The Obedient Believer In Jesus Christ*

**D. R. Gnanasundaram**

THE GIFT OF THE Holy Spirit is the free gift of God to all believers in Jesus Christ who obey the gospel of our Lord and are baptized as commanded by Him. **This gift is proof that a Christian is a child of God.**

The Jews, before the era of the New Covenant upon the death of Jesus Christ, were quite rightly the children of God as they were the only ones to whom God gave the Old Covenant. But when the New Testament came into effect all men in every nation, whether they be Jew or Gentile, are children of God by obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Apostle Paul stated this truth in Galatians 3:26-28, which reads, *"For ye are all children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor*

*free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.*" Herein we have it clearly stated that all men by being baptized into Christ Jesus become the children of God.

Paul further declared in Galatians 4:6, *"And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father."* Today man is a son of God not by the physical fatherhood of Abraham but by faith in Jesus Christ and by obedience to His commands. It is by the process of baptism, the new birth, commanded by our Lord in Mark 16:16, that man is born into the family of God. At that point, God acknowledges him as His son by giving him the Holy Spirit.

Thus it is that through obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ man knows for certain that he is a Christian and a child of God. Further, as a true child of God, the Christian calls God, *"Abba, Father,"* and by his continued obedience to the commands of our Lord, the Christian sustains a warm and close relationship with God, for we read in Revelation 3:20,21, *"Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."*

### **The Bible teaches that the gift of the Holy Spirit is the basis for Christian brotherhood.**

We all know that the children of one father are brothers and sisters. In the same way the children of God are brethren. They not only have a perpendicular relationship between themselves and God but they also have a horizontal relationship of brotherhood between one another. The same Holy Spirit who makes one a child of God also makes him a brother to every other child of God.

Paul explains this truth in 1 Corinthians 12:13: *"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."*

The Holy Spirit who dwells in one child of God also dwells in every other child of God in the world. This relationship is certainly closer and more binding than the fleshly ties of physical brothers and sisters. When our Lord Jesus was told that His mother and brethren wanted to speak to Him, He stretched forth His hand toward His disciples and declared in Matthew 12:49,50, *"For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister and mother."*



## **The temporary nature of physical ties between parents and children, and brothers and sisters.**

The scribes and the Pharisees, during the time of our Lord on this earth, were very fond of being greeted by men in public places. They loved to occupy prominent seats at feasts, and they would have broad borders on their long garments to draw attention to themselves as godly men. Their pride was puffed up when others called them Rabbi or father. Jesus condemned this vain attitude in no uncertain terms by repeatedly calling them hypocrites. In Matthew 23:8,9 He said, *"But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven."*

It will be observed that **when** Jesus said, *"Call no man your Father upon the earth,"* He was not referring to our physical parents, to whom we refer as father, but He was especially condemning the insincere people of His day who wanted other men to respect and honor them by giving them the title of father.

Further, the fleshly relationship which binds brothers and sisters will cease with the death of the physical body, but the spiritual relationship is eternal because the spiritual part of man never dies. Therefore the brotherhood in the Spirit is so very precious that it must be guarded, protected and developed, as stated by the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 4:3: *"Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."* When we sing the song, "Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love," we are singing about the tie of the Holy Spirit.

## **The gift of the Holy Spirit is an 'earnest' deposit.**

We read in 2 Corinthians 5:5, *"Now He that hath wrought us for the selfsame things is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit."*

We again read in Ephesians 1:13,14, *"In whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."* The word 'earnest' is not used as an adjective but as a noun which means a pledge or assurance that a promise will be kept. It also means money or substance given in advance, as a security that the full amount promised will be paid.

God has given us His word as clear proof of the fact that He will keep all of His promises. Also, when He confirmed the spoken word

of the apostles by signs and wonders of the Holy Spirit, this was a seal of confirmation and authentication.

We read in Mark 16:20, *"And they went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following."* Hebrews 2:3,4 states, *"How shall we escape so great salvation; which at first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and **gifts of the Holy Ghost**, according to His own will."*

Therefore God, by confirming the word with signs and wonders and miracles has attested or sworn or affirmed that He will keep all of His promises. The fact that God will never fail was stated by Joshua at the close of his life, in Joshua 23:14: *"And, behold this day I am going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof."*

Today we have God's promise of **salvation and forgiveness of sins** when we believe in Jesus Christ, repent of our sins, confess our faith in Jesus and are baptized. As proof that He has forgiven us, God gives us the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Further, this gift is God's guarantee or pledge that **He will raise us from the dead**. This fills us with joyous anticipation and gives us a glorious hope that we will be resurrected to live eternally with God.

In 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 we read, *"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."*

The Holy Spirit is a partial payment on our eternal inheritance, even while we live in these physical bodies, for we read in Romans 8:16,17, *"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ: if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together."* What a wonderful and glorious thought that something bigger, better and greater than the present gift of the Holy Spirit awaits the faithful Christian in heaven! The life in Him that we experience now is the foretaste of all that is to come!

## Does this gift mean that Christians have miraculous powers today?

Does this gift mean that Christians have miraculous powers today, as was true of some in the first century? No! Surprisingly, the words 'Holy Spirit' are not synonymous with 'miracles'! A careful reading of the book of Acts will show that, while all baptized believers (Acts 2:38) received the gift of the Holy Spirit—*spiritual life in God* (John 6:63)—only those who were given special gifts by the laying on of the apostles' hands (Acts 5:12; 6:3,5,6,8) could do miraculous deeds.

Dear friends, you too will have access to all of these promises of God if you will only believe in Jesus Christ, repent of your sins, confess your faith in Jesus, and be baptized. Then God will forgive you and you will have that rich inheritance in heaven.

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## THE JOY OF THY SALVATION

**Owen Cosgrove**

PSALM 51 IS ONE OF THE songs that David wrote in the painful shame and disgrace that followed his sin with Bathsheba. His plaintive cries for forgiveness touch the heart. In verse 12, he pleads, "*Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation.*" Three great truths are embodied in that prayer:

**1. There is joy in salvation.** David had known the delight of walking with God. The piety and purity of his youth are reflected in Psalm 23. Joy is a basic part of the Christian life. Coleridge said, "To write good poetry, one must have inner joy." This is true of most things in life. To live Christianity well requires and produces inner joy. "*Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice*" (Philippians 4:4).

**2. Salvation's joy can be lost through sin.** "*The way of the transgressor is hard*" (Proverbs 13:15). "*Be sure, your sin will find you out*" (Numbers 32:23). Sin can cost you your health, your mind, your happiness, your joy, your family, your reputation, your peace, your hope—your very soul. The soul that sins will surely die. The wages of sin is death. No matter how many skulls and crossbones the Lord puts on the sin bottle, some still want to taste the poison that assassinates the soul. Repeatedly the Scriptures warn, "*Take heed lest ye fall.*"

**3. The joy of salvation can be restored and reclaimed.** The alien sinner can receive forgiveness for wrongs by repenting and being baptized into Christ (Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16). The wayward Christian can come home through repentance and prayer (Acts 8:22).

It is not too late. One who has lost the joy of his salvation can be washed and sanctified and justified (1 Corinthians 6:11). God wants His erring children to come home, and there is rejoicing in Heaven when they do.

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## ***GOD'S HOLY PEOPLE***

**Maxie B. Boren**

IT IS MY CONVICTION that we have not done nearly enough preaching and teaching on the fact that God's people are to be distinct and separate from those "of the world." Many members of the church, therefore, less than thoroughly informed, oftentimes think nothing at all of being as "the world is" and doing as "the world does."

The Bible is replete with instructions from God to His own about being holy. Let us note just one example ... Jehovah instructed Israel in this fashion: "*Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy; for I am the Lord your God... ye shall therefore keep all my statutes, and all my judgments, and do them ... and ye shall not walk in the manners of the nation which I cast out before you ... I am the Lord your God, which have separated you from other people*" (Leviticus 20:7; 22-24).

Thus, in the New Testament, guided by inspiration, the apostle Peter urged Christians, "*Like as he who called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living*" (1 Peter 1:15). And the apostle Paul admonished the followers of Christ in Corinth with these words, "*come ye out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord*" (2 Corinthians 6:17).

Christians are a "*holy nation*," a people belonging to God (read 1 Peter 2:9 and Titus 2:14). And as such, each one of us has an obligation to "*glorify God*" as long as we reside in our mortal bodies (read 1 Corinthians 6:19,20; Philippians 1:20,21, and Romans 14:7,8).

# ***The Uniqueness Of The Lord's Church***

**W. Douglass Harris**

UNIQUE MEANS "one and only one, different from others; having no like equal" (Webster). Such is ' the church revealed in the New Testament. Inspired writers emphasized the uniqueness of the Lord's church so that it could be identified. Paul in Ephesians, a treatise on the church, emphasized the distinctiveness of the church as having no like or equal. He called it both "the body" and "the bride" of Christ. I would ask a question: is it ever proper and even possible for one individual to have more than one physical body, or more than one wife?

But, going further, neither the word "church" nor the expression "house of God" is unique. Wherein, then, does the uniqueness of the church rest?

## **Christ's church is an exhibit of God's wisdom to angels.**

The church was part of the mystery which for ages was hidden in the mind of God (Cf. Isaiah 64:4; Matthew 13:17; 1 Peter 1:10-12). In Ephesians 3:6, Paul explained what the mystery was: *that saved Jews and Gentiles are brought together in one body—His church* (Ephesians 2:11-18). Very simply stated, this truth had been a mystery in ages past because it had not yet been accomplished and, thus, had not yet been revealed (Ephesians 3:1-5). We know, however, from this passage that the church had been in the mind (plan) of God from the beginning; it is not an afterthought or contingency arrangement ;(Cf. Ephesians 3:11). No other church in existence is this exhibit of God's wisdom to angels, and the culmination in the development of God's eternal plan for man's salvation, "...unto him be glory **in the church** by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end" (Ephesians 3:21).

## **Christ's church is unique in the price that was paid to bring it into existence.**

The church was purchased with the precious blood of Christ (Cf. 1 Peter 1:18; Acts 20:28; Ephesians 5:25). It is the only blood-bought institution in existence. From the beginning of time this church was a part of God's plan for redeeming man from sin (Ephesians 3:10,11; 1 Peter 1:20). Could there have been any other plan of salvation? To answer in the affirmative is to say that Christ's death was unnecessary. If sinful man could be saved in any other way,

surely Christ's death *was* all in vain, but we know that without His sacrifice there could have been no salvation. Christ's church teaches the *plan of salvation* which is sealed and ratified by the blood of Christ—the *same blood which purchased His church*.

**Christ's church is unique because it is God's exclusive saved group.**

The saved are added to the church by the Lord (Acts 2:47). They are the body of which Christ is the Savior (Ephesians 5:23). All of the slurs which are directed against the Lord's church grow out of misconceptions and misunderstanding of God's word.

Simply put, the *saved are the church* and the *church is the saved*. There is no way to be saved and not be in the church, because the Lord **adds** one to the church the moment he is saved. Since the Lord adds the *saved* to the church, where are the saved? *In the church!* Since the Lord adds every saved person to the church, *could there be a saved person out of the church?*

And to which church does God add the saved? Since the church is the saved, some denominational questions in the light of Acts 2:47 do not make sense. For example, it is often asked, "Of what church are you?" Since the church is the saved, why not ask, "Of what salvation are you?" This is never asked, but the biblical meaning would be the same! Did you ever hear anyone argue that **one salvation is as good as another?** But those very words are used about the church, even though Acts 2:47 says the church and the saved are the same people!

**Christ's church is unique because it is nameless, as far as a proper name is concerned.**

This distinguishes it from denominational churches. A denomination is a religious body which has been given a proper name. That is the meaning of "denominate".

The Lord's church has no proper name. The words "church" and "house" are not proper names. The expressions "*churches of Christ*" (Romans 16:16) or "*churches of God*" (1 Corinthians 11:16) are not proper names, but expressions of ownership and relationship. To the contrary, *each member* of the church has a proper name—*Christian* (Acts 11:26), but not the church. Does this not show that it was in God's design to make His church distinctive?

**The Lord's church is unique because of its destiny.**

*"Unto Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all*

*generations forever and ever* (Ephesians 3:21). This is a pronouncement of praise to God for the great things His grace has already wrought, and the greater things for which that grace has destined Christians (heaven). Members have their citizenship in heaven (Philippians 3:20). They have their names enrolled in heaven (Hebrews 12:23). Christ's church is His spiritual bride (Cf. Romans 7:4; Ephesians 5:22,23), for which He will return (Ephesians 5:27).

## **Conclusion**

Can any church of human origin in any way compare with the distinctive features of Christ's church? Unto Him to be glory in *which* church, and for how long?

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# **HAPPINESS**

**Allan E. Flaxman**

IT WOULD SEEM TO ME that the pursuit of happiness is the objective of most people. There are those, I feel sure, who by-pass Christianity for this very reason, wrongly believing that Christianity automatically means "long faces" and perpetual seriousness, with no room for a smile, let alone a hearty laugh.

Jesus, of course, is mostly portrayed as very serious, and, considering the seriousness of His great Message of Salvation, and the end He had in view, this seriousness is hardly surprising. However, Jesus was not without an undercurrent of humor. He almost became a "cartoonist-in-words" on at least two recorded occasions; (1) Where He referred to Herod as a "fox" and (2) where He spoke of a "log of wood" being in the eye of the hypocrite (Luke 13:32; Matthew 7:3-5). The modern cartoonist would have had some fun with the "fox" and the "log of wood".

While it is true that "happiness" is a state of mind over which, to a large extent, we have control, we should not lose sight of the fact that on occasions, it is perfectly in order to experience sadness. When Stephen was killed (Acts 8:2), Christians lamented. Jesus taught, "*Blessed are ye that weep now, for ye shall laugh*" (Luke 6:21). And, Jesus, Himself actually "*wept*" over Jerusalem (Matthew 23:37-39) and at the tomb of Lazarus (John 11:35).

Yet a "happy attitude" is achievable. Not an absence of all sadness—rather, a generally happy approach. How? Well, by deciding on real values. We soon find that the accumulation of

materialistic wealth seldom, if ever, provides lasting happiness. Observation of the materially wealthy and of those “chasing money or possessions”, seldom show us people who are really happy. Probably the reason for this is that the “rich” and the “would be rich” are never satisfied. The accumulation of the first one million dollars only sets in place a “comma” in pursuit of the second and so onward, ad infinitum.

The fact is that we humans, contrary these days to the belief of many, are not just an extension of the animal kingdom, but rather we are God’s special creation, into which He has breathed the “*breath of life*” making man a “*living soul*” (Genesis 2:7). This “*living soul*”, by nature, calls for “spiritual food”, and depending on whether or not it is supplied, we have a satisfied happiness, after which the soul craves. Reconciliation to God, as Paul points out (2 Corinthians 5:17-21), is essential to our happiness.

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## INDICTING IGNORANCE

Max Patterson

SOMEONE ONCE SAID, “It’s not a sin to be ignorant, it’s just a sin to stay that way.”

All of us are ignorant about something. However, something about which we cannot afford to be ignorant is God’s will for us in our lives. Most of us are familiar with Acts 17:30 which says that during the Old Testament times God winked at ignorance. Now, in this present time, He commands all of us to repent. However, even during the period of time when God winked at ignorance, the prophets of God minced no words in getting to the root of the problem that plagued men. Notice one such example in Hosea.

Hosea said the Lord had a *controversy* with the people, and the reason stated was that there was **no truth, no love, and no knowledge of God in the land** (Hosea 4:1-6). The second thing Hosea did was to *get specific*. He listed some of the sins that were the direct result of the lack of knowledge of God, and lack of respecting His will. Hosea said:

- There is swearing (oaths, or taking the name of the Lord in vain).
- There is lying (recklessness with the truth).
- There is killing (murder).
- There is stealing (not respecting the property rights of others).



- There is committing adultery (the openness of which is a shame).
- There is a breaking in or out (that is, for the purpose of robbing and murdering with one violent, bloody deed following another).

Does this sound like anything you have heard lately? Politicians seek answers to our problems in this regard in government. Sociologists and economists seek answers in more money and jobs. However, Bible students know why these problems plague society. *"There is no knowledge of God in the land."*

### **We Cannot**

- Fill our children's minds with pornography and expect them not to be immoral.
- Fill our minds with violence of the electronic media, and expect some of our people not to be criminals.
- Fill our bodies with alcohol and other drugs and not expect more people to be killed and maimed on the highways, and more murder and domestic violence to take place.
- Teach our children the theory of evolution—that we all came from animals—and not expect some of them to act like animals.

**But**, we can fill our minds, and our children's minds with the Bible, and expect Christians and Christian conduct.

Today, we need to be as forthright as Hosea in identifying the problems, and call for a return to the morals, ethics, and religion taught in the Word of God. It is the only answer!

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## ***THE ILLOGIC OF THEISTIC EVOLUTION***

**Hershel Dyer**

THEISTIC EVOLUTION, *the theory of God creating all living beings through an evolutionary process over millions of years of mutations and alterations between the now-recognized biological orders*, has a popular acceptance among many religious people. With this view they content themselves that they can hold faith in the God of the Bible (though ignoring the specifics of what the Bible reveals about that God and His creation) while accepting the conclusions of "science" at the same time.

Of course, this means that the creation story in Genesis must be mythologized and written off as historically untrue. Also, that Jesus, Paul, and other teachers simply did not get their facts straight about Adam and Eve (cf Job 31:33; Matthew 19:4,5; 1 Timothy 2:13,14; Jude 14). If God did not create that original pair from whom we have all descended, then the whole of Scripture is thrown into confusion. To hold to the deity of Jesus and to the inspired message of the apostles while giving credence to theistic evolution is utterly illogical!

Furthermore, if God made man *"in His own image,"* in any sense of the word, what is that image? That it belongs to man and not to the other creatures is clear, even if the Genesis story is made a romantic myth. But if God guided the evolutionary process through multitudinous alterations in the animal orders so as to bring homo sapiens (sensible man) into being, why is the human creature or his life of any more value than the lower orders? At what point in these numberless creature-changes did the God of theistic evolution stamp His image upon one of them? Have proponents of the evolutionary theory ever thought of prosecuting a man for killing a fish, a bird, a reptile, etc? To historically reject the Genesis account and still believe that the life of a human is more sacred and to be respected than that of a lower creature is a case of the purest illogic.

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## WORSHIP AND YOU

**Bill McFarland**

ALL OF US NEED THE strength which comes from worshipping God together. There is something about it which moves us in His direction and urges us on in love and good works.

But we also long for our meetings together to be occasions of true and spiritual worship. Dull and empty ceremonies neither honor God nor encourage His children. We need the experience of offering up spiritual sacrifices to Him.

What can a person do to help make our worship together be what it needs to be?

**Prepare before you go.** Appearing before God to offer Him glory and honor and praise is not something which can be done without thought and effort. The heart cannot express what it does not contain. Fill it ahead of time with gratitude and humility and

praise. Set your priorities and plan to be alert enough to pour out your heart to God.

**Participate while you are there.** Worship is an active word. No one else can do it for you. Examine your heart. Offer yourself to God. Pray fervently. Lift up your voice in praise. Meditate upon the Word. Follow the line of thought. Draw near to God. There is no way to do any of this without being actively engaged in worship.

**Practice when you leave.** Let what you have done in worship make a difference in your life. Bridle your tongue. Keep yourself unspotted from the world. Act with compassion for the helpless and downtrodden. In so doing you will prove that your faith is not in vain. And you will discover that worship prepares you for life as life prepares you for worship.

When it comes to making worship more meaningful, you are a key ingredient. May each one of us accept his or her responsibility in this matter.

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## *Worship In Communion*

**David W. Chadwell**

WHEN A PERSON becomes a Christian, he is literally born anew. There is great similarity between spiritual birth and physical birth. At the moment of physical birth, the baby instantly is a person and a member of a family. At the moment of spiritual birth, the spiritual infant immediately is a new person and a member of God's family, the church.

From the moment of spiritual birth through baptism, the Christian establishes a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Every spiritual blessing he received and will receive is through Jesus (Ephesians 1:3). From that moment, Jesus is his Lord, the literal Ruler of his life (1 Timothy 6:13-16). Jesus is also that Christian's Savior (Acts 4:12), Redeemer (Ephesians 1:7), and personal Intercessor before God (Hebrews 7:25). Jesus sanctifies and justifies him (1 Corinthians 1:30).

Only because of Jesus, one is God's son or daughter. Only because of Jesus, he or she can be saved. The Christian exists because of Jesus. Were it not for Jesus, one could not be a Christian, and one could not be a part of God's family. Therefore, every Christian must ceaselessly be aware of his or her personal dependence on Jesus. Every Christian must ceaselessly be grateful

for all Jesus did and is doing for him or her.

Jesus designated the specific means for the Christian to continually remember his dependence upon the Lord and Christ. That reminder is the worship memorial called the Lord's Supper, or Communion.

### **Form and Purpose**

All who are dedicated to being simply Christians are committed to understanding the New Testament's teachings about the **form** for the Lord's Supper. Dedication to being simply a Christian requires one to consider carefully the instructions about observing Communion.

However, communing with Jesus Christ through the Lord's Supper requires much more than following correct procedures. Communing with Jesus Christ must also achieve its proper purpose in the hearts and minds of individual Christians. Even when the Communion is observed in its technically correct form, it is meaningless and void of blessing if it does not achieve Jesus' purposes in the heart and mind. The Lord's Supper is not a ritual to be observed. This deeply worshipful act declares the Christian's faith in, and expresses his gratitude for, the crucified Savior.

What are the proper purposes of the Lord's Supper?

**(1) The Lord's Supper moves the Christian to remember that Jesus gave His physical body and blood in a sacrificial death** (Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:14-20; 1 Corinthians 11:24,25). Eating the bread reminds the Christian that Jesus surrendered His sinless body. Drinking grape juice reminds the Christian that Jesus poured out His sinless blood.

1 Corinthians 11:23,24 provides excellent insight into the purposes of Communion. The Corinthian Christians so abused and misdirected the Lord's Supper that it promoted and sustained congregational division (1 Corinthians 11:18-22). Because they abused its form and purpose, Paul stated how it was to be taken and for what purposes.

**(2) In observing the Lord's Supper, the Christian declares his faith in Jesus' death** (verse 26). Communion states his faith in the fact that the Son of God came in the flesh and sacrificed His physical life. It happened!

In that act of worship, **(3) the Christian declares his faith in the fact that the crucified Jesus lives and is coming again** (verse 26). God raised Him from the dead! He shall certainly return! Through the Communion the Christian confidently looks back to

Jesus' death and looks ahead to Jesus' return.

By taking Communion, **(4) the Christian affirms that he shares a family bond with fellow Christians** (verse 33). In worship through Communion, he affirms his special relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and with all other men and women who also have entered Christ. The Lord's Supper is a personal act of worship as the Christian communes with Christ. It is a congregational act of worship as all the Christians confirm their relationship with each other in Christ.

Paul also stressed the seriousness of worship through Communion. If a Christian takes Communion in violation of its purposes, he or she acquires the guilt of a participant in Jesus' death (verse 27). In sober awareness of the significance of Communion, the partaker should make a self-examination. He should examine his heart, his attitudes, his spiritual focus, and his reasons for eating the bread and drinking the grape juice (verse 28). The failure to take Communion in a worthy manner results in spiritual weakness, spiritual sickness, and spiritual death (verse 30).

The Lord's Supper must never be taken habitually. It is not a meaningless formality that occurs as a ritual in public worship. It is an intensely meaningful expression of worship. Proper observance of the Lord's Supper requires the Christian to take it correctly in form and in purpose. Even if a congregation gives great attention to the Communion's correct form, Christ is still offended if the members do not take it for correct purposes. Christians must never forget that Communion is equally the worship of the congregation and the worship of the individual. If the individuals present do not personally commune with Christ, congregational worship through Communion does not occur.

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## *Dinosaurs And The Global Flood*

**Bruce Stewart**

BIBLICALLY, WE KNOW THAT dinosaurs were on the ark since two kinds of every animal were taken aboard. In fact, these creatures not only survived the year-long ordeal of the flood but lived for hundreds of years afterwards before they became extinct.

According to Genesis 6:14-17, the ark was approximately 450 feet long, 45 feet high, 75 feet wide and had a space capacity of

1,400,000 cubic feet (the equivalent of more than 500 box cars on a train). It was not built to go from point A to point B, but to simply be a floating box. The ark had no rudder, mast, or sail. No boat was built larger than the ark until the 1850's.

Noah was not commanded to take two of every species into the ark, only two of every kind. Kind appears to be a more general term than species. Certainly, there were fewer species in Noah's day than today. Instead of hundreds of species of dogs and cats there were probably just a few (many of the different species of dogs and cats in the world today are the result of breeding). There was adequate room for all the kinds of animals, along with extra space for food and supplies.

What about those gigantic thirty-ton dinosaurs that reached heights of three stories? How did they fit on the ark? God probably did not send to Noah full-grown adult dinosaurs but smaller "teenagers" which would have taken up less space and yet were capable of reproducing.

God brought the animals to Noah so he did not have to go out and "round them up" (Genesis 7:9). Since God brought the animals to the boat in a miraculous way, He may have also provided them with some means of hibernation so that feeding and cleanup would have been kept to a minimum. The dark, rocking environment of the ark may have contributed to the animals' slower activity.

Friends, Christians should have no problem accepting the reality of dinosaurs many years ago. Neither should we reject the idea of the existence of these huge animals on Noah's ark.

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## ***God Named Them Man***

**J. Randal Matheny**

**LANGUAGE IS CULTURE.** Words and their arrangement reflect a society's view of the world. Attempts at sculpting language, describe our view of reality and may also determine how we look at things.

George Orwell's novel, *1984*, pointed out how language manipulation serves as a power tool of authoritative governments. Today's political correctness craze manifests yet another attempt to recraft beliefs through the purposeful shaping of our terms.

As soon as one opens the Bible, however, God's words run counter to such efforts. For example, Genesis 5:2 establishes God's determination of the world: "He created them male and female,

and He blessed them and named them Man in the day when they were created" (NASB).

### **Divine Paternity**

This verse appears in an extended genealogy of Adam. It reminds us of our origin (Genesis 5:1), made in God's likeness. If Adam became the father of Seth and other sons and daughters, God became the father of Adam. Luke reflects this truth in Jesus' genealogy, reaching finally to "Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God" (Luke 3:38).

The story of Genesis soon reveals how Man rejects the likeness of God, turns his back on divine paternity, and dives deeply into evil. Man has ceased to be God's son, for he made the devil his father (John 8:44). The filial relationship must now be recreated in Christ, so that John may say, "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name" (1:12). Creation's sonship has been lost; now one can be a child only through the choice of faith in Christ.

### **Divine Sovereignty**

Naming in ancient times was considered a sign of dominion. Man, given rule over all creatures, names the animals. Adam calls his wife Woman and Eve. God demonstrates His eternal sovereignty by giving His most precious creation a name.

The Hebrew word *adam* is both the first man's name and the name of all Man. In an attempt to satisfy the feminist agenda, translators of the New Revised Standard Version translate "Man" in Genesis 5:2 "Humankind." But the connection between Adam as one man's name and Man as the name of the human race given by God cannot be so easily dismissed. Denial of God's order attacks His sovereignty.

When people reshuffle what God has ordered, dire consequences result. God said to populate the earth; Man decided to build a city-kingdom. The Lord guaranteed that His order would be obeyed by confusing their single language (Genesis 11:1-9). Political-correctness, therefore, is yet another tower-building attempt that will face ultimate frustration.

### **Divine Priority**

God created Man male and female. The female is also called Man. This reflects God's divine priority. Scripture establishes the authority of the male in the home and the church. Attempts to attribute this fact of creation to cultural values unduly dismiss divine priority.

The principle of beginnings, however, is well established in Scripture. When something goes wrong, the appeal is to how the principle or practice was begun. So Jesus, in correcting teaching about divorce, cites Man's creation (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:4-6). To ensure that men take leadership in the church's meetings, rather than women assuming direction or teaching positions, Paul says, "For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve" (1 Timothy 2:13).

God's calling the human race Man and our use of His divinely-given name ensure that we respect the divine priority (1 Corinthians 11:3). If we are afraid to call humanity Man, we may be shying away from God's established order.

### **Divine Complementarity**

Both male and female are called Man. God "named them Man." It is not good that Man be alone. The full likeness of God is seen in the unity of man and woman. Man's authority is clear, but it is the loving, kind leadership akin to Christ's giving of Himself, rather than a dictator's whimsical power.

Complementarity is "necessary interrelationship or correspondence," says *Webster's New World College Dictionary*. It expresses the concept of the suitable helper of Genesis 2:20. Without it, authority becomes harsh and selfish. The Lord sponsored the first parade—animals marching past Adam to see what he would call them (Genesis 2:19-20). This act was to heighten awareness of his need, for the conclusion was that "for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him" (v. 20b). God engaged in a special act of creation to complete Adam that he might become Man, for Genesis 5:2 states that God "named them Man in the day when they were created."

Man is fundamentally different from the animals. His difference can be attributed to being created in God's image (paternity), receiving His name directly (sovereignty), being given special position (priority), and enjoying as male and female a special unity (complementarity). Accepting God's name for the human race and His word concerning our nature, need and destiny will correct political correctness gone amok.

Let us call them Man. God did so, and the name remains one of our great blessings. What God has named, let no man call otherwise.

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