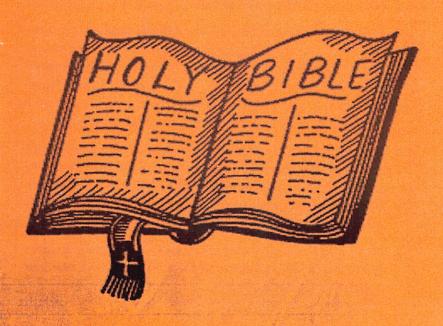
THE BIBLE TEACHER



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).

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What Does the Bible Teach?

The Wages Of Sin Is Death

THE BIBLE'S DEFINITION OF SIN IS: "Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness." (1 John 3:4). It is lawlessness or rebellion against God's revealed law or His will. There is not a just man on earth who has never sinned. "All have," the Bible says, "sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23). Sin separates



man from God, just as it did Adam and Eve in the beginning. (Genesis 3). Because of sin no man or woman can hope to see God's heaven. (John 3:3; Mark 9:43-48). The power of sin is such that it caused God, because of His love for the lost humanity, to allow His only begotten Son to leave heaven and come on earth to die on the cross and thus to become the propitiation for our sins. (1 John 4:9-10). Christ is the only hope for the sinner. (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Every sin begins in its smallest form. In fact, its beginning is made as an invisible seed in one's own heart, as Christ taught in Matthew 5:27-28. Slowly it grows in one's life, and then it takes control. Sin enslaves, taking possession and using the sinner to do its bidding. (Romans 6:16-18). Someone has rightly said, "Sow a thought, and reap an act. Sow an act, and reap a habit. Sow a habit, and reap a character. Sow a Character, and reap a destiny." Sin is taking people to only one place, and it is called hell, the lake which burns with fire and brimstone. (Revelation 21:8).

Sin changes the character of a person. He or she doesn't look

or sound the same as they did before. The entire personality gets covered over with sin. Sin enslaves people, so much so that even when they wish to get out of it, they find themselves unable to do so. Sin becomes the master. Jesus, therefore said, "Whoever commits sin is a slave of sin." (John 8:34). Sin is not without its wages. The Bible says, "For the wages of sin is death." (Romans 6:23). This death is spiritual death, separation and alienation from God. (Isaiah 59:1-2). While in sin, one may be living physically, but in the spiritual sense he or she is dead, has no spiritual life. What is the hope of a sinner? Where will the sinner go and live in eternity, after the life of this earth is over? In eternity there are only two realms or places, where everyone will enter to live eternally; one is called hell, where there is no God, and the other is called heaven. where there is God. In sin no man can hope to return to God to live in His heaven, because God is holy. And if one will not enter heaven. he will certainly enter hell. In sin man is hopeless.

At Romans 6:23, not only does the Bible say, "For the wages of sin is death," but it next says, "But the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." God has not left man in darkness. He has told man where he is, and where he is going? "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." (John 3:16). The only one purpose of Christ coming into the world was to make atonement, through His death, for man's sins. As the apostle Paul said, "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." (1 Timothy 1:15). Paul, or Saul as he was called before he became a Christian, considered himself foremost among sinners because of the particular historical position which his persecutions of the followers of Christ held in the very beginning of Christianity. He was a staunch Jew and was so much against Christians that he wanted to kill them all and eliminate Christianity before it spreads everywhere. Because his sin was against Christ Himself in the person of His spiritual body, the church, (Ephesians 1:22, 23), on earth, Paul called himself the chief of the sinners. But when Paul believed in Christ and repented of his sins, a preacher of the gospel of Christ told him, "And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord," and the scripture says, "and he arose and was baptized." (Acts 22:16; 9:18). Why? Because this is what Christ said every person should do to be saved from sin. (Mark 16:16).

WOMEN PREACHERS AND LEADERS

J.C. Choate

IN OUR DAY MORE and more women are becoming preachers. Many pulpits are now being filled by them, and they are often the speakers on religious TV programs. In a time



in which the women's lib movement is in full swing, the idea of "women preachers" fits right in with the idea of women taking the lead in many or all fields that were formerly reserved for men.

The question here, however, is not a matter of men suppressing women and forbidding them to preach, of not allowing them to enter a field of work where men have previously played a dominant role. The question is, does **the Lord**, Himself, authorize women to take the lead in doing this kind of public work in the church?

When we look at the ministry of Jesus, we find Him choosing 12 individuals to serve as His Apostles. Who were these Apostles? They were all men! Later when Judas betrayed Christ and another was selected to take his place, even though there were faithful women among His disciples, still it was a man that was chosen (Acts 1:26). Also, when one was appointed by God "out of due season" to become an Apostle to the Gentiles, Paul—a man—was the selection.

After the church had been established and had begun to grow and spread throughout the world, there was a need for leaders in each congregation. According to 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1, those Christians who were qualified were to be appointed as elders and deacons. In both cases, they were to be *men*, not women. In reply to those who believe that women can also serve as elders, someone said that, based on the requirements listed in the Scriptures, he did not know how a woman could be the husband of one wife!

After the Lord's death, burial, and resurrection, He appeared before the Apostles—*all men*—and commanded them to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15,16). Also, read Matthew 28:19,20.

Coming over to Acts 2, we are told that those same apostles all men—were in Jerusalem on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus Christ. They were baptized with the Holy Spirit and began to preach to the great crowd of people that gathered there. As a result, many believed and asked what else they should do. Peter told them to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins and they would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. About 3,000—both men and women—gladly received the word and were baptized, and the Lord added the saved to His church. Read Acts 2.

Later, seven good *men* with an honest report and full of the Holy Spirit were appointed to help the Apostles. These served the church in the capacity of deacons.

Reading through the book of Acts, you will note that it was always the men who publicly preached the gospel and took the lead in other public work.

The overwhelming conclusion, then, is that the Lord chose *men* to preach and to lead the church in all of its public activities. No where in the New Testament do you find women publicly preaching, leading in prayers, directing the singing, and waiting on the Lord's Table. God placed man in the leadership role, and we must respect His wisdom in doing that.

But is it only by the emphasis on the work of men that we would conclude that women are not to be public leaders in the church of Christ? No, the Scriptures very clearly say by inspiration, "Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression" (1 Timothy 2:14).

The reason given in this passage for the restriction concerning the work of women shows that the prohibition was not a *cultural* thing but a law made by God's direction.

"Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says" (1 Corinthians 14:34).

In the Old Testament, God spoke to the fathers by the prophets—all men—. He used men to write the Scriptures; men were the kings and priests, and with only one exception (Deborah), men were the judges. Why was there one woman judge? Because in all Israel, there was no man with the courage to lead the people! That fact should set off alarms in the ears of men who would relinquish their God-given responsibilities today. God created men to lead, and women to be the helpers. We have no authority to change His order of leadership.

When women left the home to take up work in the outside world, the home began to hurt. With the passing of time, many women have taken on the work of men, while their own work—for which they were especially designed by God—was neglected. In too many cases, now, men are not carrying their own responsibilities; they abandon their wives and families, and they live for themselves. With this change in roles, the home, the church, and the world are in trouble. It is critical that we go back to God's plan in which men assume their role as leaders and women devote themselves to their homes, families, and husbands.

Does the woman, then, have responsibility and work to do in the Lord's church? We read of Priscilla, with her husband, teaching Apollos privately (Acts 18:26); the church often met in the homes of women (Romans 16); women provided help and support in the preaching of the Gospel. In segregated classes in the church, as well as privately, women are to teach other women and children (Titus 2:3-5). Women are also entrusted (1 Timothy 5:14) with the most important work of keeping the home and children. God bless them as they obey!

THE GREATEST NAME

Bill Nicks

IN REVELATION 19:11-16, Jesus is called Faithful and True, a righteous judge, and "King of kings and Lord of lords." When Peter was asked by what name the lame man at the Beautiful gate was healed, he replied, "by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth...even by Him doth this man stand here before you whole" (Acts 4:10). He further said, "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Verse 12).

Paul said to the Philippian church regarding Jesus, "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:9-11).

A different verb tense is given in Romans 14:11,12, "every knee"

A different verb tense is given in Romans 14:11,12, "every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." The implication

is that we now have the *obligation* to bow in submission to Him, but it will be too late at the judgment when we will be *forced* to acknowledge Him as Lord and Christ. Now, we **should**; then, we **shall**.

Real Christians are shocked at the avalanche of obscenities heard in daily life and in the media. Profanity is lightly esteeming the name of Deity, even as Esau was profane in lightly esteeming his birthright (Hebrews 12:16). In Exodus 20:7 and Deuteronomy 5:11, God said, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain. For the Lord will not hold him guiltless who taketh his name in vain."

This means those who take the name of God in vain will be punished. God allows His people to be punished even as He did in the sentence of wandering for Israel in the wilderness (Numbers 14:29), and later the sentence of 70 years captivity in Babylon to Judah for their idolatry (Ezekiel 20:35-38; 22:1-22; Jeremiah 52:12f). Their lack of reverence for God and His Holy Name was the primary cause of their punishment. They had drifted far from the attitude of scribes of old who so reverenced His name that they would not pronounce the four letter Hebrew word that stood for Jehovah.

Our modern society also has wandered far from this spirit of reverence. Cursing is so common it seems that it is the normal reaction to frustration or anger. But there are three things that must be respected and reverenced if we are to return to God's way.

- 1. We must reverence His name; it stands for His character, His person, His Holiness (1 Peter 1:15,16).
- 2. We must reverence His word. "To that man will I look, even to him who is of a poor and contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word" (Isaiah 66:2). Job said, "I treasure his word more than my necessary food" (Job 23:12). His word is inspired of God (Godbreathed) (2 Timothy 3:16f). Our attitude must be that of the Bereans, who "with eagerness of mind searched the scriptures daily whether these things were so" (Acts 17:11).
- 3. We must reverence His church. Jesus built it and bought it with His own precious blood (Matthew 16:18; Acts 20:28). We must respect its oneness (Ephesians 4:4-6; Colossians 1:18). We must respect its pattern (2 Timothy 1:13) which gives us information about how to enter the church, then how to worship and serve in it (Romans 6:11-6; 1 17f; Ephesians 5:18f). God's plan for His people has been clearly revealed. It is our obligation to search for it. Begin with respect for His name, then for His word, then respect His church. We can restore the church in its ancient purity if we truly reverence the greatest name on earth.

Respect For Parents

Charles E. Burch

WHEN GOD GAVE the Ten Commandments to Moses on Mount Sinai, the fifth one reads as follows: "Honor thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee" (Exodus 20:12). Not only did God command those under the Law of Moses to honor their parents, but also under the Law of Christ Paul wrote, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honor thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth" (Ephesians 6:1-3).

God also set forth capital punishment for the stubborn and rebellious son (Deuteronomy 21:18-21). Christ referred to this when He said, "... He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death" (Matthew 15:4). Solomon wrote, "Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old" (Proverbs 23:22).

God has placed a responsibility upon all to love, honor, respect, and help their parents. But the Scribes and Pharisees of Jesus' day came up with a way to get around this command. In rebuking them, Jesus said, "But ye say, whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, it is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; and honor not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ve made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition" (Matthew 15:5,6). Instead of helping their aged parents with the means at their command, they claimed that it had been offered to God. Mark wrote, "It is corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free" (Mark 7:11). "Corban" means a thing solemnly set apart by a formal vow to the sacred use of the service of God, hence it could not be used by or for any other person. Their traditions had invented a secret reserve beneath this form of words, which they could use for themselves. Jesus accused them of making "void the word of God because of your traditions" (Matthew 15:6).

What about today? There is probably more disrespect in our permissive society today than ever before. Yet, it is just as much a sin as it was when the law was given. We hear a lot about child abuse, and this is awful. But parent abuse doesn't make headlines

very often. We can be disrespectful to our parents by our language, by what we say, how we say it, and even by the way we live.

God demands that we respect authority and teach our children that respect.

IF A MAN HAS NOT HEARD THE GOSPEL, IS HE LOST?

Demar Elam

SOME PEOPLE SAY, "If a man has not heard the Gospel, he is not lost." This kind of thinking is why we have not evangelized the world in our day. Many say, "Surely, if God is a loving God, He would not hold one who has not even heard wat to do to be saved eternally responsible." Let us realize that God and man do not always view matters exactly alike.

One must palize that man is not lost because he has not heard the Gospel, but because he is a sinner. Paul said in Romans 3:10, "As it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one." "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). ALL men need the blood of Christ applied to their lives to be saved. "... without the shedding of blood there is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22). Peter stated, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things ... but with the precious blood of Christ ..." (1 Peter 1:18, 19). The blood of Christ was shed to save all men from their sins. However, it is not until all of God's requirements are met that a man receives the blessings of that atoning blood.

We have long taught, and rightly so, that one receives the benefits of the blood by believing (Hebrews 11:6), repenting (Luke 13:3), confessing (Matthew 10:32,33; Romans 10:9,10), and by being baptized into Christ's death, where His blood was shed (Romans 6:3-8). These are the essential steps which finalize the "New Birth" spoken of in John 3:1-13. Can the man who has not heard be saved in heaven without experiencing the "New Birth?" If Jesus was correct (and He was), then one **cannot** be saved without the new birth, because Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he **cannot** enter into the Kingdom of God." Did Jesus really mean this, or is the man saved who has not heard?

The saved are added to the church (Acts 2:47), and Christ is the

Savior of the body, the church (Ephesians 5:23). The one who has not heard the Gospel is not a part of the church, the saved.

Baptism is required if a man is to put on Christ. Galatians 3:27 says, "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."

Men should be careful about saying so readily that God is being unfair to punish people for their sins even though they have not heard. God has the divine prerogative and responsibility to deal with sinners as justice and righteousness demand.

Mankind imagines that sin is not bad enough for one to lose his soul over. Man views sin through human eyes, not through holy eyes, as God does. God is a righteous God (Psalm 89:14; Jeremiah 23:5-8). Righteousness and justice demand that sinners be punished. Because of His divinity, God could not overlook one unrequited sin without ceasing to be God.

The cure for man's sinful state is the gift of His only begotten Son on the cruel cross of Calvary. That cure has been provided by a loving and merciful God.

Let us try to illustrate, in this way, the condition of a man who has not heard of God's provision for his salvation: Suppose a man has a terrible disease, and a cure has been provided for this disease, but the man does not have access to the cure. He dies! Did he die because he did not have access to the cure, or because he had the disease? To draw a parallel, those who say that the man who has not heard the Gospel is *saved* would say that the diseased man actually did not die, or that he died solely because he did not have access to the cure. But that is not the case at all. He died because of the disease he had. If the people who have not heard the Gospel are lost, it will not be because they have not heard of the cure (the Gospel), but because of the disease (sin) they have.

Why did Jesus give the apostles a commission to preach the Gospel to every creature? If people are saved *because* they have never heard the Gospel, the Lord made a mistake in giving the commission because *many who do hear will reject the message, thus sealing their doomed state.* Dare we accuse God of sending out a message of damnation?

No, men are not lost because they have not heard, but because they are sinners. In that sinful state, they are not a part of that group which comprises the saved, the church (or body) of Christ. This is why the commission was given. Men are lost until they accept Christ and receive the benefit of His blood in their lives.

FIVE STEPS TO DESTRUCTION

Don Walker

Jeremiah 6:10-16

JEREMIAH HAD BEEN called at a very critical time in the history of Israel and Judah. The Northern Kingdom, Israel, had already been carried away. Isaiah, who prophesied some 700 years before Christ, had warned Israel repeatedly of her sins, yet she would not hear nor take heed.

Jeremiah had been called to be a prophet to the southern tribe of Judah, but he felt ill equipped for the task because of his age (Jeremiah 1:5,6). However, Jehovah had other plans indeed, "Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth. See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant" (Jeremiah 1:9,10). Even later in this book Jeremiah's apprehension would shine forth. Fortunately, the drive to preach was stronger than the fear he may have possessed. "Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I would not stay" (Jeremiah 20:9).

The times of Jeremiah were very much like our times. It was a period of wealth and prosperity, yet lacking in, and poor in, spirituality and godliness. In Jeremiah we find a picture of this hellish society as we follow the five steps of destruction outlined by this prophet.

The word of the Lord was a reproach (Jeremiah 6:10). In chapter 8:9 we see that "the wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken: lo, they have rejected the word of the Lord; and what, wisdom is in them?" They were a people who obeyed not the voice of the Lord, nor received correction (Jeremiah 7:28). It is no wonder they went backward and not forward (Jeremiah 7:24).

Everyone was given to covetousness (Jeremiah 6:13). Isaiah would describe the people as "greedy dogs which can never have enough" (Isaiah 56:11). We must realize that covetousness is idolatry, and we must beware of it (Colossians 3:5; Luke 12:15). Salvation cannot be purchased with silver or gold (Zephaniah 1:18), nor is Jehovah impressed with treasures we accumulate here on earth. We must lay up treasures in heaven as we walk contentedly here (Matthew 6:19-24; Hebrews 13:5).

They said, "Peace, peace; when there is no peace" (Jeremiah

6:14). They were a people who did not recognize the problems that surrounded them. Many today fail to recognize the problems the church faces. The Bible speaks of false teachers in every time frame. In fact, Peter said, "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction" (2 Peter 2:1). Though we live in a time of blessings, we must also realize that we must beware (Colossians 2:8).

They could not blush (Jeremiah 6:15). Zephaniah said, "The unjust knoweth no shame" (Zephaniah 3:5). The fine art of blushing is being lost. Immodesty is becoming the sign of the times, and there seems to be no shame. Wild, rebellious children, and sin going unopposed should be a shame to any people, and yet it is the order of the day for many. We need to get back to the purity of God's standard.

They refused to walk in the old paths (Jeremiah 6:16). There are those who are clamoring for change and for that which is new. However, we must realize that the Bible says now what it said in the beginning. In the area of New Testament Christianity, we must realize that the church and the message are more than 1900 years old. We need to seek the "old paths" of God's Word.

We can learn great lessons from the Old Testament if we will. May we keep these things in mind as we study our Bible much, much, more.

THE AUTHORITY OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

Hugo McCord

TWO CHRISTIANS OBSERVING the Lord's Supper together are a New Testament church. They rejoice in the divine assurance that "where two or three are gathered together in" the name of the Lord, that He is "in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20 NKJV).

The Lord's church in Nicholasville, Ky., began when a Christian lady, whose husband was not a Christian, invited a Christian lady in the town to her house for a Lord's Day worship service. The two sang together, prayed, read Scriptures, had the Lord's Supper, and saved their two offerings week by week. The devotion of those two

ladies was the beginning of a large, mission-minded congregation today in Nicholasville.

No New Testament church has any say so about what it teaches because its teaching is restricted to the apostles' doctrine (Acts 2:42). The apostles' doctrine originated in heaven, for which the 12 apostles were simply the mouthpieces, as Jesus told them: "Indeed I assure you that whatever you bind on the earth will have been bound *[estai dedemena, future passive]* in heaven, and whatever you release on the earth will have been released *[estai lelumena, future passive]* in heaven" (Matthew 18:18 MNT).

The apostles' speaking on God's behalf was so important they were called "ambassadors for Christ" (2 Corinthians 5:20 NKJV) and were even described as sitting on 12 thrones (Matthew 19:28).

The authority of the Twelve, beginning in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost, extends not merely to the deaths of the Twelve but "to the end of the world" (Matthew 28:20 MNT).

Regarding any doctrine, each Christian knows how to distinguish between the spirit of truth and the spirit of error by asking, "Is it from the apostles." "He who knows God, hears us," wrote an apostle, and "he who is not of God, does not hear us" (1 John 4:6).

In parallel, it is true that "as many as will walk by this standard (kanon, the 'canon' of apostolicity), peace be upon them, and mercy, and on the Israel of God" (Galatians 6:16). A congregation, with or without elders, is told to be on the alert lest nonapostolic doctrine be brought into the church: "there shall be among you false teachers" (2 Peter 2:1). For that reason, Paul wrote: "I beg you, brothers, watch out for those who are bringing about divisions and causes of stumbling contrary to the teaching which you have learned" (Romans 16:17).

Every congregation has apostolic authority to look after its own affairs, to be autonomous, to be' self-governing. The apostles recognized the self-governing principle in the Jerusalem church before it had elders. When an emergency arose, calling for a charity committee, although 12 evangelists were present (even 12 apostles), those evangelists did not consider themselves to be in charge of the church. They respected local autonomy.

Their inspired commandment to "the multitude of the disciples" was for them to "choose" *(episkeptomai,* "pick out") the men for that committee, after which the 12 evangelists would appoint *(kathistemi,* "put in charge") the chosen ones over this need (Acts 6:2-3).

The lay members (as they are mistakenly called today) did the choosing. How they did the choosing is not recorded. If by voting, they were practicing the self-governing principle of a New Testament church.

Similarly, as regards the congregations in Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, two evangelists, Paul and Barnabas, "ordained" (KJV), or "appointed" (ASV), "elders in every church" (Acts 14:23). That the elders had not been selected by Paul and Barnabas but only appointed by them is clear from Luke's word, *cheirotoneo* (from *cheir*, "hand," and *teino*, "stretch"), which points to raising hands to indicate approval of someone's name, and so the selection was by church voting.

Luke's inspired word shows that Paul and Barnabas respected local self-government by having the members do the choosing, after which the two visiting evangelists appointed the selectees as elders.

Similarly, Titus, an evangelist visiting among the churches on the island of Crete, did not receive a commandment from Paul to "select" (episkeptomai) men for the eldership, but to "appoint" or "ordain" (kathistemi) them (Titus 1:5).

Paul used the same Greek word the apostles in Jerusalem had used in appointing men for the charity committee (Acts 6:2-3). If this pattern was followed, the local members in the Cretian churches selected the elders-to-be and Titus appointed them to their work. It makes more sense for the local members to do the selecting from among people they know rather than for a visitor, like Titus, to name them.

The above examples show the error in the teaching that a congregation without elders is to be under "evangelistic oversight." Biblically, evangelists have no authority. All they do is to repreach the apostles' doctrine.

Because Paul said that the preaching done by Titus on the island of Crete was "with all authority" (Titus 2:15), some assume that Titus was put in charge of all the churches on the island. The only way that an evangelist might have "all authority"—that is, to be an infallible teacher—would be as a result of an apostle's hands being laid on him (cf. Acts 8:18).

Because we know that Paul had laid his hands on the evangelist Timothy (2 Timothy 1:6), it is unreasonable to think that Paul left Titus among the Cretian churches without laying his hands on him. For Titus to have "all authority" without a miraculous laying on of hands from Paul would have been impossible.

Today no one except the Roman pope would claim that he has "all authority." All an evangelist can do now in appointing those the church has selected for elders is to give public recognition of their selection.

After elders are appointed, the authority originally vested in the local church is still in the local church. Likewise, the authority for the church to select its own elders carries with it the authority to depose unfaithful elders. It would not make sense to say that an unfaithful elder cannot be ejected.

Paul warned the Ephesian elders that "from your own number" men will arise who "will... distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:29-30 NIV). When an accusation against an elder was "brought by two or three witnesses," that elder was to be rebuked publicly (1 Timothy 5:19-20).

The self-government vested in each local congregation, whether or not elders have been appointed, allows the members to be gathered together to put away from among themselves a wicked person (1 Corinthians 5:4-13) and to withdraw from "every brother walking disorderly" (2 Thessalonians 3:6 MNT).

Likewise, the day-to-day affairs of a congregation, as long as they are in harmony with the apostles' doctrine, are decided only by the local church. The apostles' doctrine specifies an assembly (Hebrews 10:25), but whether in someone's living room, in a rented hall or in a church building, the local members decide the place.

The apostles' doctrine specifies Scripture reading (Colossians 4:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:27) and mutual edification (v. 11), but how much and for how long the local church decides.

The apostles' doctrine specifies an offering from each Christian as he "may prosper" on "the first day of the week" (1 Corinthians 16:1-2 NKJV), and, in addition, the apostles' doctrine gives an approved example of a special collection (Acts 11:27-30).

Those collections, according to the apostles' doctrine, were not for entertainment or for a gymnasium, but only for two purposes: charitable relief (Acts 24:17; Romans 15:25; 2 Corinthians 8:1-5; Galatians 2:10) and gospel preaching (1 Corinthians 9:14; Philippians 4:14-16).

The apostles' doctrine specifies the observance of the Lord's Supper but not its frequency. However, because there is an approved example, with an apostle present, of a congregation assembling on the first day of the week to break bread (Acts 20:7), wise Christians do the same today.

Loving Christians look forward to a joyful get together for adoring their Creator and Savior in worship and for mutual edification (John 4:24; 1 Thessalonians 5:11). A Christian adapts Psalm 122:1 to say: "I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go into the house of the Lord'." Inside he has a deep appreciation for what heaven has done for him, and he feels a need: "As the deer pants for the water brooks, So pants my soul for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God? ... When I remember these things, I pour out my soul within me. For I used to go with the multitude; I went with them to the house of God, With the voice of joy and praise, With a multitude that kept a pilgrim feast" (Psalm 42:1-4).

Living Together While Not Married

Robert Notgrass

THE FACT THAT THE world views living together while not married as normal does not mean Christians need to partake in such liberal lifestyles. Christians represent Christ and are also entrusted with the gospel (1 Thessalonians 2:4). As Christians go through this world, they represent the kingdom of the Lord. The Christian's responsibility is to reflect the King, His kingdom and what it stands for. Thus, a Christian's influence is very important.

In the Bible, Christians are called to be holy because God is holy (1 Peter 1:16), so they should never do anything to bring shame or reproach upon the church. Christians are also called the salt of the earth and the light of the world because the world is morally corrupt and needs Christians to be a light to the world of darkness so that the world will glorify God (Matthew 5:13-16).

This is why Paul wrote, "So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31 Esv). This is also why Christians are told by Peter to keep their conduct honorable before all so that when evildoers speak against them, "they may see your good deeds and glorify God" (1 Peter 2:12).

Avoid the Appearance of Evil

Many who are not Christians know adult males and females should not live together unless they are related or married. Why are there some Christians of the opposite sex who think they can live together and not bring the church under the community's

reproach?

They are putting the church's reputation and its future effectiveness in doubt. Most neighbors assume that when two people of the opposite sex are living together, they are having sex with each other. What's worse here is that the neighbors know that they call themselves Christians. How are they influencing others for good? Furthermore, living together as man and woman appears to allow everyone the right to live together as man and woman, for whatever reason. Is this living godly (1 Peter 1:7)?

Consider that "the LORD God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.' ... Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh" (Genesis 2:18,24). God's first institution was marriage, not cohabitation. God has only one plan for man and woman living together and that is marriage. He gives no indications that a man and a woman who are not related can live together under any other circumstances. In the Bible, the Jews throughout history understood this as well as Jesus and His apostles.

One may ask, "Does the Bible say it is wrong for unmarried, unrelated men and women to live together?" This is not the right question. The right question to ask is, "What is God's will concerning a male and female living together?" His will is fulfilled only with husbands and wives (Genesis 2:24).

Why does God say this? Living together is an intimate, bonding experience. Living in the same home where men and women share the same kitchen, bathroom, etc., and where they see each other early in the morning and late at night creates intimacy, and bonding naturally develops. We learn from these verses that living together as a man and a woman does not reflect the commitment God instituted and ordained via marriage. It is something else.

Christians are commanded to abstain from every appearance of evil (1 Thessalonians 5:22). How can a man and woman live together and have people thinking nothing is happening? They can't. The result is that these individuals bring shame on the church and on Christ. Christians need to remember they are to live holy lives, which includes being above reproach. Just because some do not see living together as a problem, Christians should know better than to promote anything that would appear evil or sinful. As Paul warned Christians, they should not give Satan (the adversary) any occasion to slander the name of Christ (1 Timothy 5:14).

Financial Considerations

As we consider appearances, Christians know God designed us to desire companionship. Living together puts natural temptations in front of us. Still, men and women may attempt to rationalize or justify living together. They think God would not care and would understand. Some may co-habitate while unmarried because of perceived financial challenges. Where some attempt to excuse themselves from making a public and legal commitment to one another for budgetary reasons, others will excuse themselves for other reasons. By such conduct, Christians become a stumbling block to others, which is sin (Romans 14:13; Matthew 16:23; 1 Corinthians 8:9).

It is also worrisome that Christians living together like this say they believe in God. The God who created the universe and everything in it from nothing and who raised Christ from the dead deserves to be trusted enough to take care of financial needs if they marry while on a fixed income. Does this display their seeking first their own agenda or seeking first the kingdom of God (Matthew 6:33)? Why are Christians more worried about making it financially than in obeying God and trusting in Him to provide?

God promised to meet our needs. Paul wrote, "My God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19). Trusting the Lord and following His will are what we are all about as Christians. Christians should never allow financial problems to determine their morality.

Rationalizing Sin

All in all, God is angered when we attempt to justify our sins by rationalizing them. Christians must remember that circumstance never determines what is right and what is wrong; God does. As Christians, We should follow whatever glorifies God. The Bible seems to be clear that for a man and a woman to live together outside the bonds of marriage is sin, even if there is no sex. A Christian should know that.

Living together outside of marriage causes all sorts of problems and is against God's pattern. It creates the appearance of evil, which is sin; it causes others to stumble, which is also sin; and will cause some people to lose their souls if they think it is acceptable for Christians to live together without a marriage covenant. Christians, be careful of your influence because we are expressly told that we are not to live like the world (Romans 12:2).

Striving to be the Church

Jimmy Jividen

HOW DOES THE CHURCH of Christ exist without institutional machinery and names by which human denominations find their identity? The church of Christ has no human creed, publishes no official paper, possesses no national or international headquarters, and acknowledges no clergy. Its identity is not derived from a historical person or some cultural circumstances but in the person and teachings of its founder, Jesus Christ. The basis for what one believes and practices is to be found in the Scriptures inspired by the Holy Spirit. The Scriptures are to be understood by the common sense hermeneutical principle of "speaking where the Scriptures speak and being silent where the Scriptures are silent."

The Scriptures are the basis of believing in Jesus Christ as the one Lord. They are the basis for accepting the one faith. They are the basis of becoming a part of the one body. They are the basis for holding fast to the one hope.

Every generation is responsible for searching the Scriptures to discover the identity and function of the church Jesus built in the first century. The next step is to use this understanding to restore the church as it was before the corrupting influence of the culture caused it to compromise and finally totally apostatize.

The church is not a mere historical movement of the ancient past but a dynamic, fluid movement of the contemporary present—always becoming. The goal is not to restore the church at Corinth with all of her problems. Restoration means to learn what the Holy Spirit guided Paul to write to correct their problems. It is the "ideal church" reflected in the Scriptures that is to be restored.

The church of Christ in the present time is fraught by problems similar to those that existed in the church in the first century. Inspired men revealed the will of God to churches then on how to solve their problems. The same solutions apply to church problems today. The church then faced persecution, discouragement and division. The same is true today. The church then was tempted to assimilate with pagan culture and compromise with materialistic morality. The same is true today. These things will always be a part of the human predicament. They do not nullify the ideal for which Christians strive but instead are challenges for them to become all that God desires His church to be.

The church of Christ is a divine institution. It was planned by God before the foundation of the world. It was purchased by Christ's blood in His death on the cross. The Holy Spirit of God dwells in it. All who have been saved are in it. It comprises God's family, Christ's body and the temple of the Holy Spirit. The church is God's unshakable kingdom. Jesus loved the church so much that He died for it. The church is the holy temple of God's Spirit and must not be corrupted with the errors of men or be desecrated by sins of men.

There will never be a time when the devil will cease to lead the church away from what God intended it to be. There will never be a time for those who believe to cease with the restoration of the church of Jesus Christ.

I like the response that someone gave to the question, "What church are you a member of?" He said, "I am striving to be a member of the ideal church of Christ as revealed in the Scripture." In this statement there is no self-centered arrogance that implies that one knows all and practices all things in a perfect way. He must constantly search to see if what he believes is the same as the Scriptures teach. It is a perpetual restoration. The door is not closed to a better understanding of God's Word. Truth is still truth even if it differs from what one has believed. The Restoration Movement is not merely a historical movement of the recent past; it is a perpetual yearning of everyone who is serious about being a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Are Unbaptized Believers LOST?

Phil Sanders

GRACE CENTERED MAGAZINE, an online e-zine, recently published an article asking, "Are Unbaptized Believers Lost?" The anonymous author, "A Student of the Word," regards the view that God grants salvation only when one's faith reaches the point of leading him to complete properly administered and understood baptism as wrong, heretically wrong. In this article we want only to examine what Student (so we will call him) describes as his fundamental principle.

Student argues that any question having to do with the fate of an unbaptized believer is an abiblical question (A Student of the Word 1). He says that no Scripture "speaks about the fate of a person that believes in Jesus but hasn't been baptized." He admits Scripture speaks of obedience and baptism but believes this question is left unanswered. Consequently, he feels it is wrong even to ask the

question. It might be helpful here to ask why Scripture does not address this question. Perhaps it is because Scripture nowhere ever contemplates an unbaptized believer.

The belief that one is saved prior to baptism is actually a rather late notion. Until the days of Huldreich Zwingli and John Calvin, Christians everywhere believed that baptism was necessary to salvation. Any doctrine first promulgated 1,500 years later than the Savior must propose abiblical circumstances. Scripture does distinguish between the active believer and the inactive believer. Inactive faith is clearly described as unable to save, useless, by itself, dead and imperfect. In contradiction to Student, teaching the necessity of baptism to salvation does not violate the principle of salvation by grace through faith. Baptism, far from being a work of merit or a commandment of the Hebrew Law, is an act of faith through which the grace of God is applied to the souls of men.

The Obedience of Faith

The Scriptures clearly teach that our righteousness comes by faith and not by works. Romans 3:28 says, "For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law" (NASB). When Student speaks of a righteousness that is derived from faith, he argues that it is faith alone without obedience. He argues, "Demanding our obedience is quite different than granting us righteousness through our obedience." He concludes that because obedience includes works, and because we are made righteous "apart from (any) law," and because baptism is a work of the law of Christ, our righteousness cannot come through baptism. Student says, "God grants righteousness to those who have faith in Jesus. He uses the criteria of faith to credit believers before they can obey so that they can never claim that they earned their righteousness by their obedience."

In making such a statement, Student appears to show little attention to the "obedience of faith" Paul preaches. In Romans 1:5, Paul argues that he "received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles." His task was not merely to bring about faith but obedient faith. In the closing doxology of Romans, Paul again says, "Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past, but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith; to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen" (16:25-27).

The points of similarity between this passage and Romans 3:21

are notable. The righteousness from God that is "apart from law" and has been manifested through the Law and the Prophets is a righteousness by faith, but it is an obedient faith. Paul's preaching leads to the obedience of faith.

In Romans 6:16-18 Paul himself links this obedience of faith to righteousness. In fact, Paul says that obedience results in righteousness: "Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness? But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness."

Believers who obeyed from the heart that form of teaching to which they were committed became slaves of righteousness. It is clear from this passage that freedom from sin and the change from sin to righteousness came when they obeyed from the heart—not before. Heartfelt obedience in baptism is an act of faith, not a work of merit. No one earns heaven by being baptized; instead one receives grace in being baptized.

That faith, baptism and righteousness are linked in the writings of Paul is undeniable. In fact, Paul makes it clear that baptism is not a deed-based righteous act but the means by which God saves us. Notice Galatians 3:24-27, where the faith that justifies assumes one is baptized: "Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ."

Here Paul's message of justification by faith assumes that believers have been baptized into Christ. Indeed, anyone who has not yet been baptized is not "in" Christ or "clothed with" Christ. They were baptized to put on Christ and thus become a child of God. The epistle to the Galatians (A.D. 48 or 49) was written about seven or eight years before the epistle to the Romans (A.D. 56-57). Paul is surely not suggesting one gospel to the Galatians and another to the Romans.

In A.D. 64 Paul wrote to Titus (3:4-7) about how God saves us. He reveals that the means through which mercy and grace flow is the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit. We are justified, not on the basis of deeds we have done in righteousness, but by means of the washing that regenerates (the baptism of the new birth) and the Holy Spirit's renewal. Here again, the righteousness of faith includes the medium of baptism, "But when the kindness of

God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that being justified by His grace we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

The emphasis in this passage is on what God has done by the washing and the renewing. God is the active participant in baptism, and the one baptized is the passive receiver of God's grace. In Colossians 2:12-13 Paul reminds us, "having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. And when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions."

Baptism is the means by which God works, to bury and raise us up with Christ, to wash away our sins, and to make us alive together with Him. Baptism is a response of obedient faith and trust in God to forgive us and unite us with Christ. God is the active one; we receive salvation by baptism. Baptism is a thankful, believing response to what God graciously has done for us in the sacrifice of Jesus upon the cross. Refusing to accept the necessity of baptism is actually blocking God from His work. Believing Christ means trusting God to give us new life through the means He has chosen—baptism! Student ignores the implications of these additional passages dealing with our iustification. He has chosen rather to focus on a faulty interpretation of "apart from law," as if that dismissed all the other things Paul says on justification. God gave new life to Jesus when He raised Him up; and God gives us new life (Romans 6:3-6) when the old man of sin is buried and the new man is raised. As to the timing of the new life, it is never before God raises us up. This is why baptism is necessary. There is no new life until one is buried and raised with Christ.

"Thou Shalt Not Covet" (Romans 13:9)

W. Edwin Kearley

THE ADVERTISING IN THE print, radio, and television tends to feed the covetous mind. Many feel that luxuries of the day are a right by citizenship. Such realization is impossible because our blessings depend to a very large extent on our individual initiative and preparation. This comes through diligent learning and

experience. Inheritance, and being at the right place at the right time, has some bearing on the extent of the temporal blessings we enjoy.

Looking realistically, how much can one enjoy at a time? Recently, the news media carried a story about the wife of the former Philippine president: She had left behind 3,000 pairs of shoes! It is evident she over-compensated for the poverty she had earlier experienced.

In the ten commandments God gave to Moses on Mt. Sinai, God said: "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's" (Exodus 20:17).

"The whole world has the same trouble. A story is told of Abraham Lincoln, the great president. A Springfield neighbor was drawn to his door one day by the crying of children. When he got there, he saw Lincoln passing by with his two sons crying lustily. 'What is the matter with the boys?' asked the man 'Just what is the matter with the whole world!' answered Lincoln. 'I have three walnuts and each boy wants two.' Surely this spirit is abroad still today. We all need to learn more earnestly that coveteousness and greed are sins that bring only trouble and pain" (Christian Herald, London).

Paul stated, "Put to death therefore your members which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and coveteousness which is idolatry" (Colossians 3:5). COVETEOUSNESS is longing for something not one's own to the point it becomes an all-consuming desire. It becomes an idol. It pushes God off the throne so far as the heart is concerned, COVETEOUSNESS is another act which will prevent one from enjoying the eternal joys of heaven (I Corinthians 6:9-10).

C. Leslie Miller wrote: "A famous millionaire died of cancer. For weeks he suffered intolerable agony. Although surrounded by every luxury and receiving every possible care, he died as wretchedly as a pauper. There was the usual publicity, flowers, telegrams, an expensive casket, and towering beautifully carved tombstone. After the funeral a relative turned to another and said, 'How much do you suppose Harry left.' Back came the reply, 'He left everything he had!' Yes, Harry could not take one thing with him. He worked harder than a slave. He grasped, saved, cheated, lied and where legally possible, he stole as he amassed his great fortune. He lived for self. He left all he had. He faced God without hope or plea. Harry was a poor fool. 'What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the

whole world, and lose his own soul?' (Matthew 16:26).

Coveteousness is a prevalent sin. It seems to involve people who in most respects are highly moral. However, their desire to have more, bigger, and better, causes the interests of others to be trodden under foot.

May we do as our text says, "...thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Romans 13:9).

Thanks, Noah!

Ronnie A. Missildine

THE APOSTLE PAUL SAYS in Romans 15:4, "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning..." The biblical account of Noah and the flood certainly meets that criteria. Many lessons are available to us from it—lessons on faith, trust in God, obedience, faith and works, etc., etc.

But two lessons that perhaps we have not examined so closely have to do with standing up for what is right. For instance:

We can thank Noah for proving that it is possible to live right in the midst of great wickedness. We think things are bad now, and they are; but listen to what the scriptures say about Noah's day: "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Genesis 6:5). Keep in mind that there were probably several million people on the earth at that time. That's pretty bad! Noah and his family were the only righteous alive. But Noah proved that he could still live right and could train his family to do so too. Thank you, Noah!

We can thank Noah's sons and their wives too for proving that the younger generation can have enough moral strength not to go along with the crowd. They obviously did not subscribe to the philosophy that "everybody's doing it," so that makes it all right. They understood that this was a false and very dangerous standard of conduct. They remind us that before we go along with the crowd, we should determine where the crowd is going.

I know the whole Noah family was sad as the flood waters rose and destroyed all on the earth. But don't you know they were happy that they had done the will of God! Thanks, Noah, for the lessons! We will try to read and heed!

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