

Monthly

March 2022

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THE BIBLE TEACHER



Our Plea

Let the Truth Prevail

1. That there should be only one church today, as it was in the beginning—Church of Christ—Which Christ Himself built, and about which we all can read in the Bible (Matthew 16:18; Col. 1:18). That congregations of the one church of the Bible everywhere may be known as churches of Christ, as we read at Romans 16:16. That there should be no denominations or sects in the name of the Church. (1 Corinthians 1:10; John 20:20, 21).
2. That there should be only one plan or guideline of salvation, as is revealed and taught in the Bible, followed everywhere. All must believe in Christ, repent of wrong, confess Christ the Son of God, and be baptized for the forgiveness of sins. (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:36-38). Those who obey these commands to be saved are saved by the Lord and He Himself adds the saved ones to His church (Acts 2:47); which is His Spiritual body. (Ephesians 1:22, 23; 4:4).
3. That all followers of Christ, everywhere, should be known as Christians, and Christians only, after His name alone, with no Prefixes or Suffixes, as it was in the beginning. (Acts 4:12; Acts 11:26; 1 Peter 4:16). That all other names which exalt and glorify any other name of a man, or a doctrine, or a day or a movement, etc., must be forgotten.
4. That all man-made creed books must be put aside, with other books written by men which contain doctrines and commandments of men, and only the Bible which contains God's inspired message for man must be followed in all spiritual matters. (Matthew 7:21-23; John 12:48).
5. Let us accept the authority of Christ in all religious matters (Matthew 28:18), and strive to abide in the New Testament doctrine of Christ (2 John 9).

THE BIBLE TEACHER

Pleading for the Restoration of Pure New Testament Christianity

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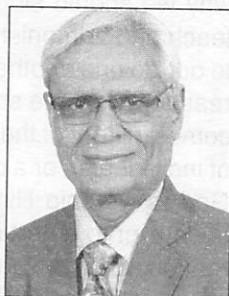
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No. 11

Editorial

What Does the Bible Teach?

Those Who Worship Him Must Worship In Spirit And Truth



THE TWO REQUIREMENTS IN ACCEPTABLE WORSHIP of God, Christ taught, are that it must be engaged in with utmost sincerity and as directed by the word of God, which is the truth (John 4:24; 17:17). God has revealed in the New Testament of the Bible, under which law of God we live today, the manner in which He should be worshipped, and therefore those who hope to have their worship accepted by Him should heed His instructions. God does not accept every kind of worship. There are many who worship God in vain, Christ said, "Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men." (Mark 7:7). Aren't there people who worship God through creed books or liturgical orders authored by men? Many worship ignorantly, though sincerely, not knowing how to worship God acceptably. (Acts 17:23-31).

As Christians we follow the New Testament pattern of worship, which is, we offer prayers to God through Christ, who is our mediator, (Acts 2: 42; 1 Timothy 2:5); observe the "Lord's Supper" to commemorate the supreme sacrifice of Christ, by coming together on every first day (Sunday) of the week (Acts 20:7); Give our offerings (1 Corinthians 16:2); study or learn from God's word (Acts 2:42; 20:7); and sing hymns, psalms and spiritual songs (Colossians 3:16).

When we, as Christians, come together on the first day of the

week to worship, we do not come as audience or spectators. But each one of us — every Christian man and woman — actively concentrates his/her thoughts and hearts on God, to whom the worship must be rendered.

Keeping these fundamentals in view, let us consider the importance of singing in the worship of God. The apostle Paul exhorted Christians at Ephesus, saying “Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.” To Christians at Colosse he wrote, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” (Colossians 3:16).

So according to the Bible, what is the purpose of our singing or why we should sing in worship? Certainly, to praise God and to teach and admonish one another. Not to entertain one another or to out-do one another with our singing abilities. This is precisely the reason why there should be no solo singing (where one individual comes in front of the congregation to sing; or for that matter a group of individuals); or a choir to perform. As Christians we come before God to worship Him; not to perform before Him or to show our talents, or to entertain one another or self. This also is the primary reason, why we cannot use or play the instruments of music while singing praises of God.

When Christ had established His church, as we read in Matthew 16:18; Acts 2, Christians sang psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs in the beginning without the accompaniment of any instruments of music. Several hundred years after the establishment of the church of Christ, when the Roman Catholic church began they too did not use mechanical instruments of music in their worship. But later one of the Popes introduced Organ into the Roman Catholic church. After the reformation movement of 16th century led by Martin Luther and others, when denominational churches were formed, their leaders opposed the use of instruments of music in the worship of God.

It is worthy of note what the initiators of various denominational churches, which began during the Protestant movement said about the use of musical instrument in the worship God. Evidently, none of them allowed the use of musical instruments in worship.

Martin Luther, the distinguished reformer, after whose name the Lutherans are called, called the Organ, “an ensign of Baal.” Baal

being an idol of the heathens. (McClintock & Strong's Encyclopedia, Music, p 762). John Calvin, the founder of the Presbyterian church, in his commentary on the thirty-third Psalm wrote, "Musical instruments in celebrating the praises of God would be no more suitable than the burning of incense, the lighting of lamps and the restoration of other shadows of the law. The Papist, (*those who follow Pope or Roman Catholic church, SD*), therefore, have foolishly borrowed this, as well as many other things from the Jews." (John Calvin's Commentary, thirty-third Psalm). Now listen to Adam Clarke, the greatest commentator of all time, amongst the Methodists, in his, Clarke's commentary, Vol. IV, p.686, Adam Clarke said, "I am an old man, and an old minister, and I here declare that I never knew them productive of any good in the worship of God; and have reason to believe that they were productive of much evil. Music as a science I esteem and admire; but instruments of music in the house of God I abominate and abhor. This is the abuse of music; and here I register my protest against all such corruption in the worship of the author of Christianity." Likewise, John Wesley, the reputed founder of the Methodist church, quoted by Adam Clarke to have said, "I have no objection to instruments of music, in our chapels provided they are neither heard nor seen." (Clarke's commentary, Vol. IV p.686). Charles Spurgeon has been recognized as the greatest Baptist preacher that ever lived. Charles Spurgeon preached in the 1800s for the Metropolitan Baptist Tabernacle in London, England, to more than ten thousand people. He preached there for more than twenty years, but never allowed any mechanical instrument of music in his meetings. Charles Spurgeon has been quoted to have said, "I would as soon pray with the machinery as to sing with machinery." (M.C. Kurfees, Instrumental music in the worship, p.196).

The praise of the church in the beginning was vocal by which Christians could teach and admonish one another. There is no teaching or admonition in the tones of an instrument of music. People worship in vain who rely on the doctrines and commandment of men. (Matthew 15:8,9). If we would be like the original, the first century church established by Christ, we will sing and make melody (music) in our hearts (Eph.5:19), not with a mechanical instrument. Let us worship in spirit and truth, separate and apart from the doctrines and commandments of men.



WHERE WILL YOU BE IN ETERNITY?

J.C. Choate

LIFE IS SHORT AND one day before long we'll have to cross the chilly river of death. This is a reality that we must face sooner or later. Someone has said that death is the great equalizer, for all must depart from this world and go the way of the flesh. It matters not whether one is rich or poor, educated or uneducated, and so on, he must die. This is a truth which is impressed upon the heart of man every day that he lives. The inspired writer has affirmed, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." (Heb. 9:27).

Life is like a vapor

And soon will pass away;

Nought of works, but those of God

Will count that final day.

After this life has passed away, God shall gather us around him for the purpose of judging our works, whether they be good or bad. The apostle Paul explained this very truth to the Corinthians in the long ago. (2 Cor. 5:10). And way back before that, Solomon had said: "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil." (Eccl. 12:14). On this day man will be sentenced to life, or damnation.

But after death and judgment, then what? We'll be thrust out into a never ending eternity. If our works in the flesh were of a righteous nature we'll be eternally saved, but if our works were evil, we'll be cast into the lake of fire. How wonderful it will be to be able to live with the Lord forever and forever, but on the other hand, how terrible it would be to have to live eternity in a devil's hell. In that eternal city we'll have access to the tree of life, but hell is that place where the evil "shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." Rev. 22:14; 20:10).

What will heaven be like? It will be a place of beauty and splendor. John received a vision of it, but it was so glorious that he was not able to express what he saw in words that man could understand, and therefore was forced to compare it with those things that we are familiar with—a city with streets of gold, precious jewels, etc. God will dwell there along with his Son and the many, many angels.

Beautiful singing will be going on at all times, praising him who brought such to pass. Speaking of this holy city, the man of God says: "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." (Rev. 21:4). So all will be filled with joy and happiness; the tree of life will ever be present, and the righteous will dwell in the New Jerusalem.

What will hell be like? It will be a horrible place in which to live. The Devil and all of his angels will be there, along with all of the sinful and ungodly of all the ages. Each soul will be tortured and tormented continually. It is a place from which there will be no way to escape; a place of utter darkness, since the light of the world will not be there.

Every soul must live eternity somewhere—either in heaven or hell. There is no middle ground to take. Moreover, all may choose where they will live eternity. If one will obey the Lord's will, he may go home one day to be with God, but if one chooses to serve the Devil, he'll have to live with him in the world to come. So it is all up to the individual, but mind you, the Lord pleads with every soul to accept the way of truth and the promise of eternal bliss. (Matt. 11:28-30).

Eternity is a hard word to define. It is a place without end, and because of that the human mind cannot grasp the real meaning. We must simply think of it as a place which will go on for ever and ever and even then it is only started. With this in mind every soul should tremble in his tracks and consider his position in life. Friend, life is a serious business, especially considering the vast eternity ahead. Man cannot afford to make a mistake.

Where will you live in eternity? In heaven or in hell? If you want to go to heaven, you must obey the Lord in this life. Prepare to meet God—spend your life preparing for that future life. I beseech you to take no chances.

Evolution A Fact? Don't Believe It!

Max Patterson

THERE ARE MANY WHO talk in terms of evolution being a *fact*. Many want the public to think it *is* a fact. Organic evolution is not only *not a fact*, it *isn't even good theoretical science*. A recent AP

news story by science writer Paul Recer is all I need to prove my point.

The article referred to above is entitled, "*Researchers Trace Beginning of Animals.*" One would think, "Those fellows have discovered something the rest of us didn't know." Then you read the first sentence, and the story sounds concrete: "*A new study pushes back by hundreds of millions of years the start of the evolutionary process that led from tiny, squishy creatures in the ocean to the wide diversity of species, including humans, now in the animal kingdom.*"

Oh, my, bring on the facts! Tell us more! Show us the way!

Uh-oh! Big disappointment. No Facts. Only speculation. Listen to the following samples from a five-inch, two-column article:

1. "...when the variety of animals now living **may have** shared a common ancestry."
2. "The **theoretical start** of genetic change..."
3. "The early representatives of the animal groups were **probably** very small and soft bodied and not very preservable."
4. "It is **probable** that what existed were little squishy things..."
5. "Those changes **may have occurred** relatively rapidly, **perhaps** over eight million years."
6. "All the animals a billion years ago lived in the ocean, **probably** migrating up and down the water column."
7. "Life is **thought** to have started about 3.5 billion years ago..."
8. "Plants **probably** appeared next and the early primitive 'squishy' animals later."

Now those are **THE FACTS**. Some set of facts, isn't it? Look at all the *probablys* and *maybes*, and *thought-to-have-beens*. And this is what many call "science." Science has to do with facts and knowledge. The word "science" comes from a word that means, "to know."

But, in reference to the theory of evolution, nobody knows much of anything. If they did, they would do a better job of writing, and wouldn't have to use all those maybes, and probablys, etc.

One has to have more faith to believe the theory of evolution than the Bible. In addition, one must have a good imagination.

It is still true that "*the heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows his handiwork.*" Psalm 19:1. Indeed, "*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*" (Genesis 1:1).

Why “COMMON PEOPLE” Heard Jesus

Clem Thurman

DURING MOST OF HIS ministry on earth, Jesus was popular with the people. His “sermon on the mount” made a real impression on all those who heard that message, *“The multitudes were astonished at his teaching: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes”* (Matt. 7:28-29). As Jesus went about Galilee and Judea, preaching *“the good news”* of the coming kingdom, multitudes thronged to hear Him. Possibly no other comment on His popularity is so graphic as the statement found in Mark 12:37, *“And the common people heard him gladly.”*

The appeal Jesus had for the multitudes was not caused by oratory, promotions or gimmicks. The people were interested in hearing what He had to say! It was after a teaching session that the words of Mark 12:37 were written. The people who heard that sermon on the mount (Matt. 5,6,7) were *“astonished at his teaching.”* The message of Jesus was unique, and it appealed to the masses. The message of Jesus was different from what people were accustomed to hearing, and it had appeal for the common man. It still does. And the appeal remains the same. If we would *“follow in his steps”* (1 Pet. 2:21), we need to understand what the appeal of His gospel was — and is.

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST IS SIMPLE

The people who heard Jesus didn't misunderstand what He taught. Some of them didn't like it, and some didn't agree with it, but they understood it! It was simple. Jesus once prayed, *“I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes”* (Luke 10:21). Higher education gave no one an advantage in accepting the gospel of Christ. In fact, when people would trust in their wisdom and learning, it often was a deterrent to faith: *“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish, foolishness; but to us who are saved, it is the power of God... Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?”* (1 Cor. 1:18-20). Man, by his own wisdom, can never know God. Only through the gospel is God and His purpose for our lives revealed.

When the leaders of the Jews heard the apostles proclaiming the gospel of Christ, they *"perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men ... they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus"* (Acts 3:13). Those men didn't need a college degree to preach the gospel of Christ, and hearers didn't need a degree to understand it. The apostle Paul wrote later, *"But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve in his craftiness, your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity that is toward Christ"* (2 Cor. 11:3). The enemies of the gospel will try to complicate things, will try to confuse the hearers. That is always the plan of Satan (2 Cor. 2:11), and his ministers (2 Cor. 11:13-15). The common people heard Jesus, for they were able to understand His gospel.

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST IS FOR EVERYONE

Although the ministry of Jesus on earth was among the Jews, His gospel was not designed just for them. He told the apostles, after His death and resurrection, *"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.... Go ye and make disciples of all nations, teaching them"* (Mark 16:15; Matt. 28:19). No longer would they go only to the *"lost sheep of the house of Israel"* (Matt. 10:6). His gospel is not just for one nation or race of people; it is not just for the old, or for the young; not just for the rich, or for the poor; not just for educated, or for the unlearned. As Jesus had commanded, the early Christians *"went everywhere preaching the word"* (Acts 8:4). The apostle Paul wrote later that the gospel of Christ had been *"preached in all creation under heaven"* (Col. 1:23). His gospel was, and is, universal: for every person in every nation in every generation.

The apostle Peter (a Jew) went to the home of Cornelius (a Gentile) to preach the gospel of Christ. Such was forbidden by the law God gave to Israel, but God showed Peter a vision designed to show him that the law given to Israel had ceased and to convince Him to go and preach to Gentiles. When Peter began to preach to Cornelius and his household, he said, *"God showed that I should not call any man common or unclean... Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him"* (Acts 10:28-35). In the so-called golden text of the Bible, Jesus said, *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life"* (John 3:16). That *"whosoever"* includes all sinners. The gospel of Jesus Christ is designed for all people, everywhere, for all time.

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST IS FREE

The Lord Jesus never put a price tag on hearing His gospel, nor on the blessings of the gospel. When John's disciple came inquiring whether or not He was the Christ, Jesus replied, "*Go and tell John the things which ye hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good tidings preached to them*" (Matt. 11:4-5). Jesus didn't live in luxury, He never displayed great wealth and pomp, His was a simple life. He said, "*The foxes have holes, and the birds of the heaven have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head*" (Matt. 8:20). His life was simple. His gospel, too, is without fancy outward trappings and expensive rites and ceremonies. How great it must have been for the people of His day to find one who wanted to do something for them and not demand money for doing it! Yes, "*the poor had good tidings preached to them.*"

When the apostles, Peter and John, were going up to the temple to preach the gospel, they were stopped by a lame beggar asking alms. Peter replied, "*Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk*" (Acts 3:6). He then walked, this man who for forty years had been infirmed. And there was no charge for this service! No wonder a gospel such as this would be popular. Paul wrote later, "*The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord*" (Rom. 6:23). The common people heard Jesus gladly because they could afford to! And, being sinners, they could not afford NOT hear Him.

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST IS POWERFUL

The gospel declares, "*The word of the Lord is quick and powerful*" (Heb. 4:12). His gospel is powerful in its condemnation of sin: "*Except ye repent, ye shall all in like manner perish... These shall go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life ... The works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, parties, envyings, drunkenness, revellings, and such like*" (Gal. 5:19-21). The demands are likewise clear: "*Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate... Let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God*" (2 Cor. 6:17 - 7:1). It is obvious that the gospel has no power to help those who are determined to remain in their sins: "*If ye die in your sins, where I*

go, ye cannot come" (John 8:21).

The appeal of the gospel of Christ is not just in showing sinners what they are, but in showing them a way out. *"All have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, in his blood"* (Rom. 3:23-25). The apostle Paul lists a catalog of sinners, *"Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, homosexuals, thieves, covetous, drunkards, extortioners"* (1 Cor. 6:9-10), then adds, *"Such were some of you: but ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God"* (v. 11). Those people had been terrible sinners, but were now Christians: forgiven and regenerated to live a new life in Christ. The common people heard gladly the gospel of Christ because it offered them opportunity to start over, erase the past, change the way they live and be right with God.

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST SAVES

Because *"all have sinned,"* the *"good news"* (which is what *"gospel"* means) was that Christ *"is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near to God through him"* (Heb. 7:25). So many are like Saul of Tarsus, who considered himself *"the chief of sinners"* (1 Tim. 1:15). They wonder if God will forgive their wicked past: "Is there any hope for such a sinner as I am?" The answer is "YES!" The gospel is *"the power of God unto salvation unto all them that believe"* (Rom. 1:16), and that gospel shows that Jesus is *"able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him"* (Heb. 7:25). No matter what you've done, how sinful you have been, if you will come to Christ, *"He is able to save."*

The central theme of the gospel is very simple: *"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation ... All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God... While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us ... So many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death ... For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek: for the same Lord is Lord of all, and is rich unto all that call upon him: for, Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved"* (Rom. 1:16; 3:23; 5:8; 6:3; 10:12-13). That is tremendously good news to sinners: that Christ died for us, to deliver us from the guilt of sin. We didn't deserve anything but death, for *"the wages of sin is death,"* but, *"He by the grace of God tasted death for every man"* (Heb. 2:9). He took our place, He paid our penalty. No wonder the common people heard Him gladly!

Yes, the common people heard Jesus gladly. Those who realize their real needs will hear Him gladly today. He still asks, "What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matt. 16:26). People heard Him gladly because He spoke to the most basic need of all mankind: salvation. His gospel still offers free salvation in a simple message which all can understand and which is powerful enough to save even the worst of sinners.

Blessings That Count

Johnny Ramsey

IN THE BEAUTY OF Christianity there are so many vibrant hues on the horizon that we could never list all of the benefits of serving Jesus. Blessings, in abundance, flow constantly into our daily walk with God. We have peace under pressure, guidance for our homes, strength for the unseen future, the power of prayer and friends in the Lord. These are the things that count as the years go marching by. As servants of Jehovah, we need to convey to the world about us the joy of Christianity, the way of salvation and hope of heaven.

*In the midst of everything,
Take time to love and laugh and pray,
Then life will be worth living,
Each and every day.*

Our lives should demonstrate what those outside the Savior are missing. The strength that comes from Bible study and the tranquil atmosphere of prayer should bolster our resolve to be less carnal and shallow as we pursue the sojourn of devoted saints in a wicked world.

Nothing can help parents more to rear children properly than a double-dose of godly principles (Psa. 127:1). If we really want our boys and girls to go to heaven, we must saturate them with Holy Scripture: "Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). The gospel gives us the power to instill the love of God and respect for things divine and eternal. So many children grow up in an environment devoid of the dynamic of holiness. What a tragedy! When we allow a generation to exist without an appreciation for the life and death and teachings of our Redeemer, we invite absolute ruin. The pathos and genuine compassion we observe in the Lamb of God will surely make us better people.

In our age of confusion and anarchy, manifested in lack of respect for authority in every realm, devoted followers of the Savior maintain a peaceful lifestyle that baffles the world and its environs. The Roman persecutors of first-century saints often puzzled over the inward peace of those being persecuted for righteousness sake. But Christians have always known that God's tomorrow is brighter than the world's today! Blessings that count provide strength for the unseen future. Whatever awaits us down the stream of time, our heavenly Father has promised to be there to provide the way of escape (1 Cor. 10:13). Knowing that Christ will never forsake us (Heb. 13:5) gives us a citadel of safety regardless of earthly woes. The privilege and power of prayer gives us an extra dividend that the world cannot comprehend.

One of the richest blessings of serving the Lord can be seen in our friends in Christ. The caliber of this fellowship transcends earthly ties. When the bond of love Christianity bestows floods our souls, we truly have a foretaste of glory divine. Long before we walk "*the golden street*" of heaven, followers of the Master bask in the joys of earthly camaraderie in the sweetest arrangement men could possibly realize on earth. Conversely, to go through eternity in the presence of evil and uncouth humanity is too horrible to imagine. Blessings that count overwhelmingly over-shadow the trivial problems Satan can erect in our path in this mundane sphere.

The gospel grants us purpose in life, something to raise a family by, help in time of need, our dearest Friend and hope for the future. Where could we find better insurance? These tremendous words of "the psalmist show our response to blessings that count: "*I will glorify thy name forever*" (Psa. 86:12). May we ever count our blessings and rejoice in the magnificent splendor of godliness.

THE NAME WE WEAR

Gary C. Hampton

NAMES ARE GIVEN GREAT significance in the Bible. Abram meant "high father." God changed that name to Abraham, which means "father of a multitude." Jacob was renamed Israel, which means "having power with God," on the night he wrestled with an angel. The greatest names were reserved for our Lord. The angel told Joseph to call the baby Jesus, because he would save his people from their sins. Isaiah called him Emmanuel, meaning "God with us." He is called Christ because he is God's anointed and Lord

because he should have supreme authority in our lives. Most in the religious world would not be willing to call Jesus by a name other than those used for him in God's word.

Isaiah looked forward to a day when Jerusalem would send forth the Lord's righteousness and salvation. (62:1-2) At that time, the Gentiles, or nations, would also see the Lord's righteousness and his people would be called by a new name. Antioch was the first church with Jews and Greeks in it. How significant that they were the first called Christians. (Acts 1:26) Later, Paul would try to persuade Agrippa to be a Christian and Peter would urge disciples who suffered as Christians to glorify God in that name. (Acts 26:28; 1 Peter 4:16 A.S.V.) We all agree the name Christian is acceptable. Why not be Christians only and drop all man-made names?

Why should anyone accept a name other than a God-given one for Christ's church? Remember, the church is Christ's body and he is its head. It is absurd to imagine a body that wants to be called by a name that is different from its head. Likewise, we should recall that the church is Christ's bride. Most husbands could not be happy with a wife who wanted to wear another man's name.

The Father and Christ, through Holy Spirit inspired penmen, left us some acceptable names for the church to wear. It is simply called the "church." (Acts 2:47) It is also called the "Church of God" and the "Church of Christ." (Acts 20:28; 1 Corinthians 1:2; Romans 16:16.) In Colossians 1:13, it is called "the kingdom" of God's dear Son.

could religious division be, in part, produced by the wearing of man-made names? Let us SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES for a name clearly endorsed by God that we can all wear in unity.

Are We Saved By Faith Only?

GYNNATH FORD

PEOPLE BELIEVE ANY AND everything in the name of religion. Though the words of Christ and his apostles ring out with warnings of the untrue, false, and corrupted teachings of religious men, they continually do this. Hear our Saviour as he speaks the words of the heavenly Father:

"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matt. 7:15).

"But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men... . Every plant which my heavenly Father

hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch" (Matt. 15:9, 13, 14).

"For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders ..." (Matt. 24:24).

The apostles, Peter, Paul, and John spoke frequently of the false teachers and their doctrines. Hear their warnings: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (Rom. 16:17, 18).

"For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works" (II Cor. 11:13-15).

"... That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the slight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive ..." (Eph. 4:14).

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats ..." (I Tim. 4:1-3).

"... 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. And many shall follow their pernicious ways ..." (II Pet. 2:1,2).

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (John 4:1).

Regardless of these many warnings and scores of others, one who wears a clerical robe and has a doctor's degree in theology gains a following. Others have thousands of followers because of their great persuasive power and dynamic publicity-filled campaigns. Some say that snake-handling is a sign today. Some say heaven is merely a state of mind. Perhaps the height of false teaching will be reached when some preacher begins preaching the doctrine of salvation by baptism only.

Salvation by Baptism Only

Certainly one who reads this article is now beginning to wonder when the subject written is going to be considered. Please read carefully these false arguments which will have a great bearing on the answer to the question of salvation by faith only.

If a man were to begin preaching the doctrine of salvation by baptism only, he would be preaching a perverted gospel, one that is not correct. Nevertheless this doctrine might come into existence and scriptures would be mishandled in this manner.

“Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?” (Acts 8:35, 36).

From these scriptures the reasoning might be like this:

1. Philip, a gospel preacher, preached Christ.
2. The eunuch heard him and wanted to be baptized.
3. Therefore, preaching Christ is preaching baptism.

The fallacy in this reasoning lies in the fact that baptism was not all that was preached to the eunuch by Philip. The following scripture states:

“And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God” (Acts 8:37).

This shows that belief must come before baptism and is essential to this salvation also. Thus our false teacher moves to another scripture to prove that baptism alone saves.

“For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Galatians 3:27).

From this scripture the reasoning might be like this:

1. We put on Christ by being baptized into him.
2. We become a new creature in Christ (II Corinthians 5:17).
3. Therefore, we become a new creature by being baptized into Christ.

The error in this doctrine is a failure to note the context of the scripture reading which says:

“For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:26).

Again faith is coupled with baptism, thus destroying the idea that man is saved by baptism only. He then moves on to pervert another scripture.

“... when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight

souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ ..." (1 Pet. 3:20, 21).

He then states that Peter said, "baptism doth also now save us." He says this is all the scripture he needs. He says he has been baptized. This is all he needs to do in order to be saved, he states.

The error in this teaching lies in the fact that the preacher only accepts this one scripture as far as salvation is concerned. Other scriptures teach that man must be obedient in more than water baptism. This same Peter taught that repentance must come before salvation in the first gospel sermon preached to men.

"... Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38).

From this our false preacher goes to his last argument, which is one that is used by multitudes of religious people today to justify unscriptural practices. He says, where does it say in the Bible that we are not saved by baptism only? His reasoning would be:

1. The Bible does not forbid this teaching.
2. Therefore, it is acceptable to God if it is not expressly forbidden.

What would you think of a man who preached such a doctrine? He would be pronounced a heretic and a false teacher! Yet, by this same reasoning, doctrines are being taught that are false and foreign to the holy scriptures. The silence of the Bible is misused by such reasoning. This would introduce any practice that is not expressly forbidden in God's Word. Who would submit to such reasoning?

Salvation by Faith Only?

Many churches in the world believe that we are saved by faith only. By this, the majority teach that Christ washes away our sins the very minute we say in our hearts that Jesus is Christ. In most cases it is a faith that does not lead one to be baptized into the Lord Jesus Christ in order to reach the salvation of God. Many are told to lay hands on the radio and believe in Christ (pray to Christ), and be saved without any further instruction. Let us notice the way in which this doctrine is presented.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (Acts 16:31).

These scriptures are quoted from thousands of pulpits to teach

that man is saved by faith only. Yet there is a failure on the part of those who preach this to note the context of the scriptures quoted. As we have noticed before in the case of the preacher of salvation by baptism only, the same error is committed. He could find scriptures that teach salvation by baptism; yet in the same context faith was coupled with baptism before it had anything to do with salvation. Now let us notice the context of the last scripture quoted above.

“And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened and every one’s bands were loosed. And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. But Paul cried with a loud voice, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here. Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house” (Acts 16:25-34).

Read carefully the steps that were taken: 1. He was asked to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. 2. He had to be taught first before he could believe. 3. He showed repentance by washing their stripes. 4. He and his family were then baptized. Then it is said that he believed in God with all his house. Repentance and baptism are essential to salvation (Acts 3:19, 1 Peter 3:21). The saving belief embraced both of these. To say that he was saved by faith only in the sense that it has been defined by many preachers today is to speak without God’s authority.

Perhaps this failure to understand salvation by faith is due to the fact that the Bible uses the word believe in two senses. We read: “Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him: but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God” (John 12: 42,43).

These men were believers, yet they were lost because they would not obey Christ. The other sense in which the word is used is in the

above example where it is said that the jailor believed in God with all his house. This faith included obedience to the Lord's command to "repent and be baptized ... for remission of sins" (Acts 2:38).

Many who believe that one is saved by faith only use this scripture to teach the doctrine.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

Then they will say: This is all the information I need, this scripture is enough on the question of salvation. In saying this they have fallen into the course of the preacher who preached salvation by baptism only. He took only the scriptures on baptism and salvation and neglected to take into consideration the other scriptures that have to do with salvation. This argument will not stand because it is based upon the idea that I will take just the scriptures I want to take and reject all others on the same subject. Let us never be guilty of scriptural narrowness.

We Are Not Saved by Faith Only

The man who said that we are saved by baptism only raised the question: Where does it say that we are not saved by baptism only? The Bible never says: We are not saved by baptism only. The silence of the scriptures must be respected. The Bible states that other requirements are given to man in order to be saved; thus we know that we are not saved by baptism only. The one who takes the position that we are saved by faith only not only rejects other scriptures on the subject; but he also goes contrary to a direct statement in God's Word. The Bible says we are not justified by faith only. (James 2:24)

"What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? if a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed

God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only" (James 2:14-24).

The lesson is found in the fact that faith is not an acceptable faith if it does not obey god's commands.

1. Man says we are justified by faith only.
 2. God says we are not justified by faith only (James 2:24).
- Which will you believe and accept?

The Will of the Lord

Read of the faith that is pleasing to the Lord.

"... And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship. Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net. And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes..." (Luke 6:3-6).

Peter did not understand the will of the Lord completely because they had fished all night to no avail. Yet he said, "... nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net." This is the true faith. You may not understand why, you may not reason why but will you not let down the net at the Lord's word? Hear his word:

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). "Repent ye therefore, and he converted, that your sins may be blotted out ..." (Acts 3-19).

INFANT BAPTISM

Nat Kissi

WHEN WE SEARCH THROUGH the scriptures there is not even one verse where we see or find a child baptized into Christ. Since the scriptures have been given by inspiration of God, we must follow the doctrines of the scriptures rather than the doctrines of men; for only in this way can man be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

Why Baptism At All?

One must be baptized by immersion for the remission of sins, or to wash away sins. Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21. Our submission to the commandment of baptism is the means by which we devote ourselves to doing the work of God. What sin has an infant

committed so that it needs baptism for remission of sins? How can an infant, which has little or no control over its own body, devote itself to the work of God?

Children are blameless or faultless. "You were perfect in your ways from the day that you were created, till iniquity was found in thee." Ezekiel 28:15. "Whosoever committed sin transgresseth also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law." I John 3:4. "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." James 4:17.

Infants know no law to abide, and do not know good or evil, and since they do not know they should do good works, they do not sin by not doing such deeds. Our Lord Jesus Christ taught that those who will inherit the kingdom of heaven should be like children. "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 18: 1-5; 19:14; Luke 18:15-17; Mark 10:13-14. Christ taught that "of such belongs the kingdom of God" because if one is converted and baptized for remission of sins, then one is born again spiritually and has become as a little child. Read John 3:3-5.

Some religious groups teach that infants must be regenerated through baptism because man is born in sin through the sin of Adam; but the inspired book of God says that "The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, nor shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin." Deuteronomy 24: 16.

"The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son, the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." Ezekiel 18:1-4, 20.

Therefore, according to the inspired word of God, we have no share in Adam's sin, and neither do infants. While Adam's sin brought sin and death into the world, the good and bad deeds of a father are upon him but not on his children. Nobody is required to give an account of another's actions to God, but rather "Each and every one shall give account of himself to God." Rom. 14:12.

What Is Needed Before Baptism?

Before baptism by immersion takes place, one must: Believe the gospel of Christ before baptism, Mark 16:15-16; Repent (change of mind) before baptism, Luke 13:3; 24:47; Confess his faith before baptism, Romans 10:9-10; Acts 8:35-38; Matthew 10:32. Infants cannot be taught, believe, or confess before baptism for the remission of sins.

Conclusion

Infant baptism does not save, since baptism by immersion is for remission of sins, and infants have no sin. No person who truly desires salvation for his soul in Jesus Christ will trust in infant baptism, which is the teaching of men rather than of God.

Is It Wrong To Change?

Wallace Alexander

OF WHAT CHURCH ARE you a member? you ever seriously thought about why you are a member of it?

“Do I have a reason based on the Word of God for the religious beliefs that I hold?”

“Perhaps I just inherited my religion from my parents and have never seriously considered my beliefs in the light of God’s Word.”

“Could it be that I am affiliated with a religious group because of its position of respect in the community or because of its elaborate rituals and beautiful structures?”

These thoughts naturally come into the minds of people when seriously considering reasons for their beliefs. And many, even though realizing these are true, try to justify themselves by the Word of God — they turn to the Bible to justify themselves instead of letting God plainly speak to them. One’s attitude in studying the Bible should be, “Speak, Lord, thy servant heareth.”

THE SOLUTION

The honest person will, of course, go to the Bible and let it speak to him. Now, suppose he finds that he has been wrong in his religion: what should he do? It is easy to see that all conflicting groups cannot be right unless the Bible is a book of confusions and confusion.

The Bible tells of many who were in the same position of people today who are sincere, yet mistaken. There have been people like that, perhaps, since the time sin entered into the world. Notice two examples of such people and what they did.

The apostle Paul formerly was an honest murderer and persecutor of Christians. He plainly stated that he had lived this kind of life with a good conscience before God. On the road to Damascus, the Lord appeared to him convincing him he was wrong. He gave up power, fame, popularity, and the favor of his own people in order that he could serve the true God (Phil. 3:4-8). Paul changed

his life; he changed his religion.

Notice also the example of Cornelius (Acts 10). Cornelius was a good man — a man with whom very few could favorably compare today. But he was wrong religiously. He changed. He believed in Christ and was baptized.

Paul and Cornelius learned they were wrong and they changed. They did not believe they could be pleasing to God while continuing in their former ways. They had the courage to change.

WHY DO PEOPLE NOT CHANGE TODAY?

People today must be just as noble if they please God. God placed His Book in men's hands for them to study, to learn His will, and to pattern their lives after what He says. One cannot please God and continue in a religion that cannot be supported by God's Word.

But changing religion in the 20th century is not usually looked upon as an act of nobility. Indeed, it is not good, if the change is from one error to another. However, the wisest step a person could take would be to forsake a religion unauthorized by God and accept pure New Testament Christianity.

Suppose you change your religion in order to live closer to the Word of God: You may be scorned in many circles. You will be considered a traitor, perhaps, by many of your former associates. The one who taught you the truth may be considered a "sheep-stealer" or be accused of trying to "build up his church by tearing down another." But regardless of this, follow after truth!

Will you not study the will of God — not to justify your belief, but letting the Lord speak to you? Then accept what you learn, free from the ideas and opinions of men, and obey it immediately. God will be pleased. Your soul will be saved — that is all that really matters!

God Has A Pattern

Jerry L. Davidson

THE BIBLE HAS BEEN given as man's pattern so that he may know how to relate to God without confusion or equivocation, "*for God is not the author of confusion*" (1 Corinthians 14:33).

A seamstress makes a dress according to the pattern. A contractor builds a house according to the blueprint. An artist paints

a portrait according to the subject before him. It is no less important in the spiritual realm to follow God's pattern for our lives. His pattern is shown in several respects.

The Tabernacle

The descriptions of the Old Testament tabernacle are found in Exodus chapters 25-31 and 35-40. God instructed Moses to construct the tabernacle and provide its furnishings according to "the pattern" which He had given him (Exodus 24:8-10).

The writer of the book of Hebrews shows that the Levitical priesthood was to "*serve the copy and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, 'See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain'*" (Hebrews 8:5). Just as God gave a pattern for the tabernacle, according to the Law of Moses, He has given us a pattern for service and worship according to the new covenant (see Hebrews 8:6-13; 10:1-7ff.). Thank God that He has given us a pattern for the cleansing of our sins (Titus 2:3-7), for Christian conduct (Titus 2:11-14), and for honoring Him (John 4:24; 1 Timothy 2:8; 1 Corinthians 11: 23-26)!

The Bronze Serpent

According to Numbers 21:4-9, the Israelites sinned against God and Moses during their wanderings in the wilderness. Their sinful murmurings, and even idolatry, provoked God into sending fiery serpents among them, bringing death to many. The people cried out, confessing their sins and imploring the Lord to remove the serpents. God then instructed Moses to make a bronze serpent and set it upon a pole. Those who had been bitten who looked at the bronze serpent lived.

Jesus used this Old Testament event to demonstrate the necessity of His death on the cross. He said, "*As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life*" (John 3:14,15). His being "lifted up" included His crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. Men and women are poisoned by sin, but the remedy for sin is in looking upon Jesus who has been "lifted up" (see John 12:32,33; Hebrews 12:1,2).

Death, Burial and Resurrection of Christ

According to Romans 6:17,18, Paul shows that our salvation

depends on our obedience to the "form" or "pattern" given in the Gospel. A proclamation of the Gospel must include the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). Acceptance of the Gospel is obedience to the Gospel's pattern — the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Paul clearly shows in Romans 6:3-4 how such obedience takes place. Through faith in God, we die to our sins in repentance. In baptism we are plunged into Christ's death (verse 3), where His blood was shed. In baptism we are buried with Him (verse 4), even as Christ was buried. *"As Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life"* (verse 4). Therefore, it is through our faith leading us to repentance and then to burial in baptism that the "pattern" of doctrine is obeyed and freedom from sin is realized. Again, thank God that He has given us His pattern!

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