

# THE BIBLE TEACHER

*Pleading for the Restoration of Pure New Testament Christianity*

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## Editorial

### What Does the Bible Teach?

#### WHERE DOES THE SPIRIT GO?

QUEEN ELIZABETH II DIED on September 8, 2022, and was buried on September 19, 2022, at King George VI memorial chapel. Conducting her funeral service David Conner, Dean of Windsor, in his opening words said, “we have come together to commit the soul of queen Elizabeth into the hands of God.” The Bible teaches the soul or the spirit of the dead returns to God at the point of death and not several days after the death of an individual. Ecclesiastes 12:7, speaking of death says, “Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it.”



Where does the spirit go? Sure, it returns to God, but it does not mean that the spirit or the soul after death goes to heaven, since God is in heaven. But it does mean that the spirit of every person who dies goes to live in the place God has appointed for the departed spirits, where they will continue to live until Christ comes back on the day of resurrection and judgment of all. (John 5:28, 29; Acts 17:30, 31; Hebrews 9:27). No one, therefore, after death, immediately enters into heaven or into hell. Where are the dead then?

In Luke chapter 16:19-31, Jesus told the story of two men who once lived. One of them was very rich and the other was very poor. In the course of time both men died. Christ in this narration taught that when the rich man died, his body was buried, but his spirit entered into the state of misery where he found himself in great torment. But

on the other hand, when the poor man died, he immediately entered into the state of blessedness where he was in great comfort. Both of them were in their conscious existence, as they knew what both of them were experiencing. The rich man was there, because he was wicked on earth, and the poor man was there where he was, because he was righteous on earth. Also, we learn from this story of rich man and Lazarus that both of them were in a place called "Hades." Luke 16:23 says, about the rich man, "And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom." Both men were in Hades, though in different compartments or sections. The word "Hades" is a Greek word, and was left untranslated in the English Bible (the New Testament of the Bible was originally written in Greek language). The word "Hades" means, the unseen or invisible world of the departed spirits.

Although, the rich man and Lazarus both were in Hades, they were not, however, in the same place or section. Because when the rich man had requested that Lazarus be sent over to him that he may dip the tip of his finger in water so that he may cool the rich man's tongue as he was tormented in the flames, his request was rejected promptly and he was told that there was a great gulf fixed between them, "so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us." (Luke 16:26). Hades, the unseen and the invisible abode of the departed souls, according to the Bible, is divided into two sections or compartments. One is called "Paradise" where the righteous are, and the other is "Tartarus" the abode of the wicked. "Paradise" primarily means "a place or state of bliss, or a pleasure garden." (Revelation 2:7). "Tartarus," on the other hand, means "a place of woe and punishment." (2 Peter 2:4).

We learn, when Christ had died on the cross, His body was buried in a tomb, but His spirit went into Paradise in Hades. To the penitent criminal, just before His death, Jesus had said, "today you will be with Me in Paradise." (Luke 23:43). Therefore, after death, Christ's spirit went into Paradise, and so did the spirit of the criminal. Three days later when the body of Christ was raised, His spirit came out of the Paradise or Hades to reunite with His raised body, and He lived again on earth for forty days before ascending back to the Father in heaven. Jesus' spirit did not stay in Hades, and neither did His body perish in the grave, because His body was raised. Later when the apostles began to preach the Gospel of Christ, Peter, therefore, told the large crowd of his Jewish audience, quoting from the book of Psalms concerning Christ, what the prophet had said about Him, "For you will

not leave my soul in Hades, nor will you allow your Holy One to see corruption.....he, foreseeing this spoke concerning the resurrection of Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption.” (Acts 2: 27, 31). Both Christ and the criminal had entered into Hades after their death. And as Christ had promised the criminal, they both were in Paradise in Hades. But only Christ’s spirit came out of the Hades and His body was raised. The spirit or the soul of the penitent criminal is still in Hades, and his body remains in dust, and the same is true of all others. Both the righteous and the wicked, who have died, their spirits remains in Hades, either in Paradise, if righteous, or in Tartarus, if wicked, and their bodies in dust, (Genesis 3:19), and will continue to be there until the day of resurrection and judgement of all. (John 5:28, 29).

According to the Bible, on the day Jesus Christ will come back, death and Hades will be cast into the lake of fire, that is, they will not exist anymore. (Revelation 20:14). On that day bodies of all the dead will be raised from the dust; the resurrected new bodies will be different, (1Corinthians 15: 35-38), they will be immortal and incorruptible, and all of this will take place in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. (1 Corinthians 15:50-54). After the resurrection and judgment the righteous will enter heaven and the wicked will enter hell to live there forever. (Matthew 25:46). The righteous will enter into the eternal life in heaven and the wicked will enter into the everlasting punishment in hell. Man is a spiritual eternal being, having been created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26, 27; 2:7), and therefore, like God man will exist forever. However, remember, no one is going to spend eternity in heaven or in hell, because eternity is not like a currency note or money that can be spent. Eternity is unending, forever. There is also a marked difference between Hades, and Heaven and Hell. Hades is temporary, and will last only until Christ comes back on the day of judgment, when it will be cast in the lake of fire as we have observed in Revelation 20:14. Heaven and Hell, on the other hand, are everlasting and eternal. (Matthew 25:46). In Hades only the spirits enter, but in Heaven and in Hell spirits and bodies both will enter. In Matthew 10:28 Christ said, “And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” Hell is the place where both the soul and the body will enter to live forever, and likewise Heaven is the place where both the soul and the body will enter to live with God eternally. Just as the joy of heaven will be eternal for the righteous, so will be the punishment of hell everlasting for the wicked.



# THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

**J.C. Choate**

THE WORD GOSPEL MEANS good news or glad tidings of Jesus Christ. (Romans 10:15). It was first preached in promise and then as fact. Christ was the giver and it has power to save all who will believe and obey it. Paul said, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." (Romans 1:16).

Lest another gospel be preached, the apostle Paul warned, "Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would Pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received let him be accursed." (Galatians 1:7-9). But it might be reasoned, "Surely a person would not dare preach another gospel." Well, many have and many continue to do so. There is the gospel of "faith only," the gospel of "many churches," the gospel of "worship as you please," the gospel of "grace only," the gospel of "sprinkling and pouring," etc. But all of these are false gospels. There is but one true gospel. (Mark 16:15, 16).

Later Paul warned that the Lord will eventually come and take vengeance on all of those who obey not the gospel. He said, "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9). But how can one obey the gospel? That is something we are going to be finding out.

**First**, let us consider the facts of the gospel. They are the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. We read, "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand: By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For, I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures." (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). Now everything else is based on these facts. This is the foundation of Christianity, of the church, and of hope. Naturally

these facts must be believed.

**Second**, there are commands of the gospel that must be obeyed. The Bible teaches that one must hear the truth. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Romans 10:17). On hearing the word as also suggested in Romans 10:17, one must believe it or have faith in it. We read further, "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (Hebrews 11:6). After faith, one must repent of his sins, or turn away from them. Christ said "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." (Luke 13:3). Again "And the times of this ignorance God winked at: but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent." (Acts 17:30) Then what? The confession that Jesus Christ is the Son of God is necessary. Christ himself said, "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 10:32). The eunuch of Acts 8 said that he believed that Jesus Christ was the Son of God and straightway Philip baptized him. (Acts 8:37, 38). The last command to be obeyed is the act of baptism. Peter told the people on the day of Pentecost, "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). And Christ said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:16). By obeying these simple commands, one obeys the gospel of Christ, is thereby saved, and added to the church. (Acts 2:47). But to some people this is too simple. They think the plan of salvation should be very difficult and so they write up a group of rules and regulations. Consequently, they would have people doing this and doing that and going through a long process before they can, supposedly, be saved. The Lord is displeased with this. There is just one way to be saved and that is the way Christ has ordained it in his word. (John 14:6; James 1:22).

**Third**, the gospel has promise. We receive salvation from our past sins (Acts 2:38), the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38; 3:19), the privilege to worship the Lord (John 4:23, 24), all spiritual blessings in Christ (Ephesians 1:3), and the hope of eternal life if we are faithful to him unto death. (Revelation 2:10; Matthew 25:46). Truly, without obedience and faithfulness, man has nothing.

So this is the gospel of Christ with facts to be believed, commands to be obeyed, and promises to be received. The Lord is gracious to those who love his will and who strive to obey it. He has invited all to come and obey him. It is now man's responsibility to take advantage of what the Lord has to offer.

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# A TEST OF SPIRITS

**Ray Hawk**

IN THE FIRST CENTURY, when miraculous gifts were found in the church, there were false teachers who claimed to have those gifts. Today there are people who say they have the same gifts and powers. In 1 John 4:1 God directed: "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world."

If the Holy Spirit gave a test by which to try a false teacher in the first century, that same test may be applied even today to try those who claim to have miraculous gifts. That test will prove whether the person is telling the truth or making false claims.

When some questioned Paul's apostleship, he told the Corinthian church that they knew he was an apostle because they were "the seal of (his) apostleship in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 9:2). The apostles were the only ones who could lay hands upon Christians and give them miraculous gifts (Acts 8:17, 18). Since Paul had preached in Corinth (Acts 18:1), some had received these gifts from him. Since they had those gifts, it proved he was an apostle of Jesus Christ.

Paul knew that some falsely claimed to have miraculous gifts. Here is the test the Holy Spirit gave to him to use, to discover whether or not those who boasted of having the power to do miracles were speaking the truth. He stated, *"But I will come to you very soon, if the Lord is willing, and then I will find out not only how these arrogant people are talking, but what power they have. For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power"* (1 Corinthians 4:19, 20).

A person may claim anything he desires. However, claims are not miracles. Those today who claim to have miraculous power refuse to submit to Paul's test! They spend their time trying to get out of proving that they have miraculous power, rather than confirming their claims through the performance of a miracle.

Paul said if a person had power, he would prove it. If he was making a false claim, he would not be able to do anything. I have personally challenged preacher after preacher, claiming to have miraculous signs, to prove it. Not one of them has done anything except chastise me for asking them to submit to Paul's test. The *Holy Spirit Himself* gave the test, and all of them have failed it.

If someone today says he has the baptism of the Holy Spirit and can perform miraculous signs, demand that he prove his claims with signs. What signs?

*"And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well.*

*After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God. Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied them."* (Mark 16:17-20).

If these signs do not follow the person who claims to have miraculous power, God isn't with him. By the absence of that power he is proved to be a false teacher.

I have never been able to get one of these preachers to allow a poisonous snake to bite him. I have never been able to get one of them to drink something poisonous which I have supplied. I have never been able to get one of them to go to the hospital and send everyone home in perfect health. I have never been able to get one of them to speak a language which he has not studied. The refusal of these men to take the Holy Spirit's test indicts them as false teachers. Their failure to perform the signs of Mark 16:17, 18 confirms that God is not with them, because God would not fail to support true disciples. If a person claims to have miraculous power, he should be willing and eager to prove it by performing these signs!

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## ***MAKING A DIFFERENCE***

**Byron Nichols**

CHRISTIANS ARE DIFFERENT. Those of us who are in the church and belong to God, who have been purchased by the blood of Christ (Acts 20:28), are different. We are not the same as people who do not have that relationship with God — we are *"His own special people"* (1 Peter 2:9); we are different. God and His Son both expect and intend for us to be different from the world.

Because we **are** different, we ought also to **make a difference**. If that is true, it becomes important that we know what kind of difference the Lord expects us to make. We must also somehow figure out how we can go about making this difference that is our responsibility to make.

We should make a difference in the quality of the world in which we live by the way that we live. Because of us, there should be more love displayed. 1 John 4:8 says that *"God is love."* As His children, we are to be like Him; thus, we also must exhibit love.



We must be serious about making a difference in the morality of the world. The Bible is the Christian's standard, our guide through life. The standard of morality found in the Bible will make a tremendous difference in our world if it is ever practiced by a very significant part of the world. But for that to ever come about, Christians are going to have to first live by that standard, and then teach others to do the same. The church, as God's special people, can and must show that we are different because of our high standard of honesty and integrity. The world can be influenced by our being known for always being truthful and reliable in all our transactions and activities. We will make a difference for some if we will demonstrate to them that purity of life is not an impossibility, and that it most definitely has its rewards, even in this life.

You and I, as Christians, must set the example the world needs in showing compassion for our fellow man. Jesus taught us and showed us the need for and the blessings of compassion; now He expects us to do the same for the rest of mankind.

Then there is the matter of hope. Christians are the only people in the whole world who can reveal the one realistic hope for eternity. With that capability comes responsibility—the responsibility to make a difference in the world by proclaiming our hope, Jesus Christ, to the lost. Multitudes all around us are struggling along with hardly any hope in this life, and certainly with no reason for any hope beyond this life. You and I can make a difference by giving them reason to hope now, but more importantly, reason to hope in the prospect of eternity.

In order for us to really make a difference, we Christians must be people of conviction. We must be willing to study the Bible diligently in order to know and understand what the will of God is. After learning God's will through His Word, we then must commit ourselves to living according to those instructions and principles. Those who are outside the church, even when they disagree with us, should be made to respect us because of the kind of people we are and the fact that we stand for what is good and right, to the best of our knowledge.

As an individual Christian, I can make a difference, not only in the world, but I can do the same in the church. I can encourage my fellow Christians to live more faithfully and zealously for Christ. I can very specifically encourage them by my words of admonition and praise. I can also strengthen their commitment to the Lord by the way that I live. But I have to be consistent in how I live: they don't always let me know when they are watching me.

It is very true that we Christians do not all have the same abilities. We cannot serve the Lord in exactly the same ways. But, if we are going to change the world or the church for the better, we will not succeed



in doing it passively. We can and will make a difference only through actively serving the Lord with whatever abilities we have, and not through living the philosophy of “Live, and let live.” We certainly cannot force people to change their way of life or their convictions, but that does not mean that we should not be active, even aggressive, and even militant at times. The church can make a difference by actively, aggressively, and militantly promoting what is right and opposing what is wrong. Please remember, though, that all of our words and actions must be motivated by love and compassion, and must be accompanied by the same.

If my life comes to a close without having influenced others for good, without having improved the world, and without having helped the church to be stronger, then I will not have made a difference. If I have not made a difference, my life will have been lived in vain.

May God help both you and me **to truly make a difference.**

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## *THE HEART, SOUL, AND ESSENCE OF CHRISTIANITY*

**David W. Chadwell**

IN THEIR EVANGELISTIC CONCERN, Christians can easily assume too much. It is simple to assume that “everyone” knows right from wrong, distinguishes good from evil, and understands basic morality. Such dangerous assumptions quickly betray the Christian teacher.

Christians’ answers to these two questions are predictable: (1) What is the central truth of Christianity? (2) What is the foundation of Christianity? Informed Christians respond, “The central truth of Christianity is this: Jesus was raised from the dead to be Christ and Lord (Acts 2:36). Jesus Christ is the foundation of Christianity” (1 Corinthians 3:11). No truths are as fundamental to Christianity as these.

From these answers, Christians can make dangerous assumptions. Many assume that anyone who acknowledges these facts understands the meaning and message of the facts. Many assume the mere acceptance of these facts is sufficient knowledge of Jesus.

Because of these assumptions, many Christians make three critical mistakes as they seek to convert others. (1) They spend their energy and time trying to convert people to a religious system instead of converting them to the Savior. (2) They teach the unconverted more about the structure of the church than the content of Christianity. (3) They work hard to persuade a person to change religions, but do little to teach him about Jesus.

The whole of Christianity is based on a man named Jesus. He was no ordinary man. Before His birth as a human infant, He shared the full deity and divinity of God the Father (John 1:1-4, Philippians 2:1-11). Though this divine One was God's instrument of creation, He became completely human. He hungered, thirsted, suffered, and experienced every form of human trial and temptation (Hebrews 4:14-16). He humbly endured the worst Satan could do to Him: betrayal, denial, desertion, gross injustice, abuse, indignity, humiliation, and the most degrading and cruel death one could die.

In what appeared to be the absolute defeat of Jesus and the total victory of Satan, God sealed the doom of Satan and all evil. Through Jesus' innocent blood poured out in death, God made perfect atonement for every sin that has been or will be committed (Romans 3:21-26). Through the blood offering of the sinless Jesus, the just God paid for all sin. He thereby obtained the right to extend perfect, complete forgiveness to everyone who places his faith in Jesus. The death of the sinless Jesus freed God's grace — God could extend mercy to everyone who placed his faith in the crucified Jesus.

Through Jesus' death, sin was defeated. Through Jesus' resurrection, eternal life became reality. God's power, which resurrected Jesus, is the enduring proof that He has the power to keep every promise. Resurrection power declares God can redeem, justify, and sanctify any person who enters Jesus Christ.

Jesus lived in the flesh, experienced physical life, and died — just as do we — so that He might destroy sin's slavery and Satan's power (Hebrews 2:14-18). By sharing our full human experience, He qualified Himself to be the Christian's perfect High Priest as He serves before God in heaven (Hebrews 8:1, 2). Having been a temptable human, He perfectly understands us. Having been and being divine, He perfectly understands God. With perfect understanding and insight, He represents us before the God of mercy. In our weakest moments, we can come with confidence to God's throne of grace, knowing that we will receive mercy. That confidence is never founded in our merit; it is always founded in our perfect High Priest. In Jesus is the certain hope of the reserved, indestructible, eternal inheritance belonging to those who live in Him by faith under God's protective power (1 Peter 1:3-5). Jesus' resurrection makes that living hope a trustworthy reality.

Christianity is not built on the church, or an elaborate code of religious regulations, or a detailed system of theology. It is built on Jesus Christ, who was crucified for our sins and was raised from the dead. Only knowledge and understanding of Jesus give the church, commandments, and theology substance and significance.

Jesus built His church, but He is the Savior. The saved are placed by Him in His church, but the church cannot save. Jesus gave us many teachings to follow, but He is the Savior. In love and faith, the saved follow these teachings, but rote obedience cannot save. Through Jesus, God reveals theological truth, but Jesus is the Savior. The saved ceaselessly search for a clearer understanding of spiritual truth, but the theological correctness cannot save.

One cannot be a Christian without understanding Jesus. A Christian must know Jesus, listen to Jesus, and be transformed by Jesus. Faith must begin with an understanding of Jesus' identity, teachings, death, and resurrection. Otherwise, it is not Christian faith, and it will not produce a Christian.

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## NAPOLEON'S VIEW OF CHRIST

**Joe Malone**

NAPOLEON BONAPARTE (1769-1821) served as emperor of France as Napoleon I. His government was marked by such things as the proclamation of complete freedom of religious worship, the reconstruction of the school system, and by the famous group of laws known as the *Code Napoleon*.

Napoleon led the French forces in several wars, and usually won. On June 18, 1815, he attacked the British forces under Wellington at Waterloo, and the result was a total defeat for the French. Napoleon gave up his throne to his son and tried to escape from France, but failing, he surrendered. He was taken to the island of Saint Helena, where he was confined for the rest of his life.

Reportedly the following was said by Napoleon to General Bertrand on the island of Saint Helena as Napoleon had been rebuking the general for entertaining doubts related to certain human thoughts on eternal things:

*I know men, and I tell you that Jesus Christ is not a man. Superficial minds see a resemblance between Christ and the founders of empires, and other religions. That resemblance does not exist. There is between Christianity and whatever other religions the distance of infinity. We can say to the authors of every other religion, "You are neither God nor the agents of Deity. You are but missionaries of falsehood, molded from the same clay with the rest of mortals. You are made with all the passions and vices inseparable from them. Your temples and your priests proclaim your origin! Such*

*will be the judgment, the cry of conscience, of whoever examines the gods and the temples of paganism."*

*It is not so with Christ. Everything in him astonishes me. His spirit overawes me, and his will confounds me. Between him and whoever else in the world there is no possible term of comparison. He is truly a being by himself. His ideas and sentiments, the truths which he announces, his manner of convincing, are not explained either by human organization or by the nature of things.*

*Can you conceive of Caesar as the eternal emperor of the Roman senate, and from the depths of his mausoleum governing the empire, watching over the destinies of Rome? Such is the history of the invasion of the world by Christianity. Such is the power of the God of the Christians; and such is the perpetual miracle of the progress of faith and the government of his church. His arm has for eighteen hundred years defended the church against the storms that have threatened to engulf it.*

*Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and myself founded empires. But upon what did we rest the creation of our genius? Upon force! Jesus Christ alone founded his empire upon love, and at this hour millions of men would die for him! What proof of the divinity of Christ! With an empire so absolute, he has but one simple end, the spiritual melioration of individuals, the purity of conscience, the union of that which is true, the holiness of the soul.*

How wonderful it would be if all the people in this world held that same view of Jesus Christ and His church!

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## ***The LAST Prophet?***

**Bill Keele**

MARK 12:1-12 CONTAINS A parable that Jesus told. The point? God had sent prophet after prophet, and they had been abused, even killed. Finally, God sent His Son. The attitude toward the Son—they would plot to kill Him, too! However, there is an interesting point that Jesus makes in Mark 12:6, *"He had one left to send, a son, whom he loved. He sent him last of all, saying, 'They will respect my son.'"* The point? Jesus is it, He is the Son, He is the last.

If Jesus is the last, how could there still be men inspired to write the Scriptures after Jesus returned to heaven? How could Philip have four daughters who prophesied (Acts 21:9) after Jesus had ascended? How could Paul urge the Corinthians to be *"eager to prophesy"*

(1 Corinthians 14:39)?

The answer lies partly in Jesus' statements in John 17:8, "*I gave them the words you gave me,*" and in Matthew 28:20, "*teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.*" The continuing content of the apostles' message through the Holy Spirit was the teachings of Jesus. Mark 16:20 identifies their preaching and the confirmation of that Word by signs. Further, Hebrews 2:3-4 tells us that the "*great salvation*" was first preached by Jesus, and God confirmed it with miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit. 2 Peter 1:3-4 affirms that He has given everything needed for life and godliness. Jude speaks of the faith "*once for all*" delivered to the saints (Jude 3), and Paul warns about preaching any gospel other than the one received (Galatians 1:8). These were temporary gifts (1 Corinthians 13).

No modern day new prophets. No new revelations. No further prophecy. The Word Jesus came to bring ... the last. The message of those who were inspired after Jesus had gone back into heaven ... Jesus'.

The writer of Hebrews put it this way: "*In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe.*" (Hebrews 1:1-2).

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## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

**William Woodson**

THE LORD'S SUPPER IS OBSERVED with an awareness, among other reasons, that thereby we "*show the Lord's death till he come*" (1 Corinthians 11:26). How very significant is this realization that we look backward to the body and blood of the Lord and that we also look forward to His coming again.

It is remarkable that the second coming of Christ has been the occasion of confusion and uncertainty. As one listens to or reads from some advocates of views concerning this event, there are numerous confusing words and ideas which are presented. Consider for a moment the following: *The Rapture*, *The Tribulation*, *The Time of Jacob's Trouble*, *The Two Resurrections*, *The Time Clock of the Lord*, etc. Such terms as the rapture, the time clock of the Lord, and the two resurrections are not found in the Bible; the *theory* which gives meaning to these terms is not taught in Scripture. There is little wonder that such views produce confusion.

The Bible, though, does not confuse us concerning the Lord's return. Note these brief statements concerning this vital theme:

1. **Jesus promised that He will come again** (John 14:3). This promise was echoed at the time of the Lord's ascent (Acts 1:11); at this return *"every eye will see him"* (Revelation 1:7).
2. **The time of the second coming is not revealed.** No signs of it have been recorded for us to use in seeking to set its date, whether soon or late. Jesus said, *"But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only"* (Matthew 24:36). He repeated that no one knows the hour of the coming of the Lord (Matthew 24:42, 44; 25:13). Assured of its reality, we wait in patience and hope for this fulfillment of Christ's word.
3. **The resurrection of the dead will be at the time of the Lord's return**, stated in several verses to occur at the *"last day."* Jesus said He will raise the dead on *"the last day"* (John 6:39,40,44,54). This will be the time of what Paul calls the *"last trump"* (1 Corinthians 15:52). Also, the judgment, said Jesus, will be at *"the last day"* (John 12:48).
4. **At the Lord's return, all will be gathered before Him for the judgment** (Matthew 25:31ff). Paul stated that at the Lord's return *"Then cometh the end"* (1 Corinthians 15:24). The destiny of those who hear the voice of Christ calling the dead from the graves will be determined by whether they have been righteous or unrighteous in this life. Of this, Jesus spoke concerning *"the hour that is coming"* (John 5:28-29).

These clear words concerning the coming of Christ, the last day, and the hour of the resurrection do not provide or allow for an elaborate scheme of human device concerning a supposed rapture, two resurrections of the dead, a thousand-year reign on earth, or a host of other purported teachings concerning His return. Better by far to rest content with the clear truth of the revealed Word.

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## THE ORIGIN AND NATURE OF THE SOUL

**Wayne Jackson**

DOES MAN HAVE A SOUL? Atheistic materialism asserts that he does not. Religious materialists contend that man is a soul, but they argue that man "does not possess a soul separate and distinct from the body." Others admit that man has a soul, but they deny its eternal nature. They

believe that the souls of the wicked will be annihilated. None of these ideas is correct.

### **THE EXISTENCE OF THE SOUL**

The word “soul” is employed in various ways in the Scriptures. It may denote the whole person (1 Peter 3:20), or merely the life principle that animates a biological body (Genesis 1:30). On the other hand, it may be used of an intelligent, conscious entity that dwells within the human person. The Bible clearly teaches that the human being has within him/her an entity that is created “in the image of God” (Genesis 1:26-27). That entity within the person may be called “soul” (Matthew 10:28), or “spirit” (James 2:26). This component of man is both intellectual (1 Cor. 2:11), and emotional (Dan. 7:15).

### **THE ORIGIN OF THE SOUL**

What is the explanation for the origin of the human soul? Different answers to this question have been suggested.

First, some of the ancient Jewish rabbis apparently believed in the pre-existence of the soul. Some other religionists allege that souls pre-exist prior to the formation of the body (Pearl of Great Price, Moses 3:5), so that when a body is conceived God dispatches a soul for that body.

The disciples once asked Christ a question regarding a man who had been born blind. “Who sinned, this man, or his parents, that he should be born blind?” (John 9:2). Though Calvin asserted that this suggested the doctrine of soul transmigration, such a view is not necessary. Some Jewish rabbis did argue, however, that infants could sin in the womb; they alleged that Esau attempted to kill Jacob before birth. There is, of course, no justification for such views and there is no biblical support for the theory that souls exist prior to the formation of the body.

Second, some suggest that the soul, like the body, is inherited from one’s parents. It is thus alleged that the contamination of Adam’s original sin, via the inheritance of the soul, has been transmitted to all men. Again, the Bible simply does not contain the evidence proving this notion. Moreover, this theory suggests some great difficulties. For instance, did Jesus inherit a tainted soul from Mary? And, if soul-sin is inherited, how could one be held personally accountable for his conduct?

The Bible actually teaches that the soul is formed by God and placed within the body; and the most reasonable inference is that this occurs at the time the body is conceived. Consider the following evidence. Jehovah is identified as “the God of the spirits of all flesh” (Numbers 16:22). Solomon declared that it is God who gives the human spirit



(Ecclesiastes 12:7). The prophet Zechariah affirmed that Jehovah “forms the spirit of man within him” (Zechariah 12:1). Finally, an inspired writer argues that God is “the Father of spirits” (Hebrews 12:7). Clearly, the soul is from God, not from one’s parents.

James affirms that the body apart from the spirit is dead (James 2:26). That would suggest that the body, united with the spirit, is alive. Since the body — tiny though it may be — is alive from the moment of conception, it would appear to follow that the human spirit is fused with the body at the time of conception, and leaves the body at death.

### **THE NATURE OF THE SOUL**

Does man possess an enduring soul, or an incorruptible spirit, that will exist forever? Yes. There is a soul that survives the death of the body, both for the righteous and the wicked (Revelation 6:9; Matthew 10:28).

The disobedient are to be subjected to eternal punishment (Matthew 25:46), which will consist of suffering (2 Thessalonians 1:9). There is, however, no punishment, or suffering, apart from consciousness. And yet, consciousness (knowledge, awareness) is a characteristic of the spirit (1 Corinthians 2:11). One must necessarily infer, therefore, that the spirit (or soul) of man will exist in an eternal conscious state.

Jesus once said regarding the traitor Judas that it would have been better for that man had he never been born (Mark 14:21). If Judas did not exist before his earthly life, and yet he was to be annihilated eventually, how does the Lord’s statement make sense? How is non-existence better than non-existence?

The soul is our most valuable possession; it is worth more than the whole world (Matthew 16:26). Let us, therefore, adorn the spirit with incorruptible apparel (1 Peter 3:4), befitting its nature.

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## **BIBLE STUDY IS IMPORTANT!**

**H. Joe Spangler**

### **WE WILL BE JUDGED BY THE BIBLE**

EVERY MAN THAT EVER lived will one day appear before Jesus in judgment. The appointment has been set, and no one shall escape it (Acts 17:30, 31; Romans 2:1-16; 14:11, 12). It is the Word of Christ (John 12:48), the Gospel (Romans 2:16), and the Bible that will be used as the standard for judging. Thus, we see the great importance of Bible study. Without it one ignorantly and swiftly pursues a course ending in eternal punishment. *“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a*

*workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth*" (2 Timothy 2:15).

### **SALVATION DEPENDS ON IT**

Without knowledge of the Gospel, one is yet hopelessly lost in sin. We must study God's Word to know God's will for forgiveness and eternal life. *"Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life ...,"* said Jesus in John 5:39. *"... The gospel of Christ. .. is the power of God unto salvation ..."* (Romans 1:16). Salvation is in Christ (2 Timothy 2:10), and one can only come to Jesus and that salvation who has first learned of Him (John 6:44, 45).

### **FAITH IS PRODUCED BY IT**

The importance of Bible study is seen in the importance of faith. *"Without faith it is impossible to please Him ..."* (Hebrews 11:6). *"... Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God"* (Romans 10:17). Who would think of salvation without faith? Even so, there is no salvation without knowledge of God's saving faith!

### **GROWTH COMES BY IT**

Growth in all things spiritual demands Bible study. The context of Ephesians 4:15 (the preceding verses) reveals that maturity in Christ comes by knowledge of the Son of God. That His children may thus grow, God gave prophets and teachers to reveal His Word. In this 20th century we are the beneficiaries of their first century writings inspired writings (2 Timothy 3:16, 17; 2 Peter 3:15, 16). Real growth comes only by receiving the milk and meat of God's Word, and then exercising oneself therein (Hebrews 5:13, 14). *"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby"* (1 Peter 2:2).

### **HAPPINESS IS A FRUIT OF IT**

Among the fruits of the Spirit are joy and peace (Galatians 5:22). This peace is of the greatest kind (Philippians 4:7), such as no other joy or peace can surpass. The medium by which the Spirit imparts this joy and peace is *"the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God"* (Ephesians 6:17). The truth is that mortal man is unable to produce any lasting, true happiness. Only the Eternal God, Creator of all that exists, is able to provide lasting fulfillment for His creatures. *"O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps"* (Jeremiah 10:23). *"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path"* (Psalm 119:105). *"Blessed is the man that ... his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth he meditate day and night...."* (Psalm 1:1-2).

In view of the importance of Bible study, will you not make the coming months and years much more profitable by making the Bible your meditation day and night? *"The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver"* (Psalm 119:72).

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## WHAT IS THE STANDARD BY WHICH MEN JUDGE?

**Earl D. Edwards**

THE NEW TESTAMENT IS, among other things, the most precious document we have regarding the origin of Christianity. And among the New Testament books which contain the greatest amount of historical data regarding the founding and development of the church, the book of Acts is undoubtedly in "first place."

Acts of the Apostles was written around 60 A.D. by a medical doctor named Luke who traveled a great deal with the Apostle Paul (see Acts 16:16-21 and Colossians 4:14). Though his work had previously been attacked by critics of the Bible, it is now recognized by almost everyone that Luke was a first rate historian. In fact, the famous English historian and archeologist, Sir William Ramsey, in his book called **St. Paul the Traveler**, which was published in London in 1897, tells (pp. 4-10) how he doubted the value of Luke's historical data until he did several archeological digs (especially in Asia Minor) and found Luke's information to be unusually precise.

It is in this book of Acts, composed by Luke, that we find the apostle Paul being accused by non-Christian Hebrews as being "a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes" (24:5, New American Standard Bible). Of course the only real leader (in the sense of head) of the New Testament church is Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:18), but what we want to note here is that the young church is called "the sect of the Nazarenes." It is understandable that the disciples would be called Nazarenes because Nazareth was Jesus' home town (Matthew 2:23), but why are they thought of as a *sect*?

The Greek word from which we translate "sect" is "(H)AIREISIS" (=heresy), and one of its definitions is "heretical sect" (Baur, Arndt and Gingrich, **Greek-English of the New Testament**, P. 23)! But if Paul, as most of the Christian world maintains, was one of the most authoritative representatives of Christianity in the first century, why is he here practically accused of being a heretic?

The proper response to this question is to be found in the fact that the leaders of the Israelite people at that time, though they called themselves "God's elect people," were really in disobedience to God to

the point of calling Paul and others who rendered *true obedience* “heretics.” So, for those religious leaders, God’s *real* children were considered heretics! In fact, a bit later in that same chapter (24:14), Paul, in making defense for himself, says, “... but this I admit to you, that according to the way which they call a sect I do serve the God of our Fathers ... .” Paul doesn’t admit that he *is* a part of a sect, but he does admit to being a part of what those religious leaders *called* a sect.

All of this is said in order to underline a significant truth: The true standard by which we ought to judge any group or doctrine is not the consensus of the religious leaders of the particular time or country. If you accept the thinking of men as the authority, you must accept that Paul was a heretic!

Then *what* is the true standard by which we must judge a particular doctrine or set of doctrines? There is only one such standard, the truth. Jesus prayed to the Father saying, “Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth” (John 17:17).

God help us to understand that the only way to test any doctrine is not its popularity, but rather its correspondence (or lack of it) to the truth, the word of God.

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## ***Loving God Means Loving His Word***

**Kenneth McClain**

THERE IS NO GREATER WAY we can show our love for God and His Son than to love His Word. 2 John 1:6 says, “... *this is love that we walk after his commandments* ....” Jesus also said, “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15). God’s Word contains all things that man needs in order to live a life that pleases God. It contains all things necessary to prepare us to live eternally with God and all the redeemed in heaven. How can we show that we love His Word?

**We show that we love God’s Word by accepting it as inspired, rather than the words of men.** Paul declares that “*all Scripture is given by inspiration of God*” (2 Timothy 3:16). Therefore, when we deny the inspiration of the Scripture, we not only show a lack of honor and respect for it, but we make God a liar, because His Word says it is inspired.

**We show that we love God’s Word by obeying what it says.** The Hebrew writer describes God’s Word as “... *quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword...*” (Hebrews 4:12). In Hebrews 5:8, 9 we learn that Christ is the author of eternal salvation to everyone who obeys Him.

**We show that we love God’s Word when we attend the services**

**of the church.** God's Word teaches us not to forsake the assembling of the saints (Hebrews 10:25) When we fail to assemble, we violate this command and must make it right in God's sight. If we have the right attitude toward God's Word, attending services will be a blessing, not an obligation. It will not be a "Do I have to?" situation. The services will be an opportunity to be inspired to do greater things in the service of God, and we will look forward to the next service.

**We show that we love God's Word when we tell others about it.** When we tell others about God's Word, we are telling the wonderful story of Jesus and His love for sinful man. Through obedience we have been set free from sin, and as Christians, we enjoy a new life in God's Son. No greater deed can be done for sinful man than to introduce him to the Savior of the world, Jesus Christ, and to help him understand the salvation He offers.

**We show that we love God's Word as parents when we teach our children to have proper respect for the Scripture.** Parents, God has placed a tremendous responsibility upon you to bring up your children in the way of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4). Let us give our children a good foundation to build on, so that when they are adults, they will have the proper attitude toward God, His Word, His church, and going to heaven.

**We show that we love God's Word when we are faithful to it.** Have you been faithful to obey every commandment of God? David said, "*Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path*" (Psalm 119:105). Will you let God's Word be a lamp unto your feet and a light unto your path? If you have not been faithful to the things mentioned above, why not begin now to show your love for God and His Word?

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## *Would A Woman Have The Right To Teach Or Lead In The Assembly If The Elders Gave Her Permission To Do So?*

### **Dalton Key**

FIRST, OBSERVE THIS RUDIMENTARY principle from Scripture: "*But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God*" (1 Corinthians 11:3). Paul does not limit these words to the home — to husbands and wives only — but rather broadens his base of application to men and women in a general sense. With respect to leadership, "*the head of the woman is the man,*" just as certainly as "*the head of Christ is God.*"

Next, Paul applies this divine principle to Christian gatherings by writing, *“I will that the men pray in every place ... Let the woman learn in quietness in all subjection. I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in quietness”* (1 Timothy 2:8, 11, 12). From heaven’s perspective, and thus from the vantage point of truth, the matter is forever settled: in assemblies of saints, men are to lead. And to establish that Paul was not merely answering a cultural situation of his day with a temporary solution, as some commentators have suggested, notice that he bases this doctrine on truths which have been firmly in place since the beginning of time: *“For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression”* (1 Timothy 2:13, 14).

Finally, in view of the foregoing, elders have neither license nor liberty to loose that which God has bound. In Christian assemblies the men are to take the lead—period. This may not be popular with everyone, everywhere, but it is scriptural and right.

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## CAN A CHILD OF GOD BE LOST?

**David Tarbet**

WHEN PAUL WROTE THE letter to the Galatians he was *“perplexed”* about their spiritual condition (Galatians 4:20). On the one hand, they had heard the Gospel message and received the Holy Spirit (Galatians 3:3). On the other hand, they were now placing their souls in jeopardy. Note the following:

1. Some brothers in Christ were *“false brethren”* (Galatians 2:4).
2. Some believers were relying on works of the law to save them, and those who rely on the works of the law are *“under a curse”* (Galatians 3:10).
3. Paul expressed his fear that he had labored over them *“in vain”* (Galatians 4:11).
4. The heart of their problem was that Christ was not in them (Galatians 4:19).
5. They had *“fallen away from grace”* (Galatians 5:4).
6. Only believers who did not *“grow weary”* or *“lose heart”* were assured of reaping eternal life (Galatians 6:8-9).

If the apostle was so concerned for these Christians, should you not be concerned about your own soul? Faithfulness is very important, for eternal security is based upon the condition that one remains true to the end (Revelation 2:10). *“Once saved—always saved”* is not a Bible teaching.

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# *Should We Baptize Our Baby?*

**Jimmy Jividen**

INFANT BAPTISM HAS TREMENDOUS emotional appeal. The family comes together and remembers traditions. The baptism serves to celebrate the birth of a child—how can a father or mother refuse this opportunity? Why not mark the occasion with a religious ceremony?

Of the many emotional reasons for infant baptism, none come from God. There is no Scriptural authority. The Bible tells how Jews circumcised their babies, but there is no command or example of Christians baptizing their infants. The New Testament records only believers being baptized. Infant baptism came much later and was a human innovation based on false teaching. Such innovations are condemned by Jesus. He said:

*“But in vain do they worship Me, teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men”* (Matthew 15:9).

Historically, the theological basis used to justify infant baptism has been that “babies were born in sin.” Men falsely taught that Adam’s sin tainted the whole human race, including babies, so it was necessary to baptize babies to remove Adamic sin. They thought babies would be damned if they were not baptized. In modern times this doctrine of original sin has been modified by some and denied by others.

In recent times another theological basis has been advocated. It is suggested that infant baptism is a sacrament in which God’s grace is conveyed at a point in time when no subjective response is possible. It is totally the initiative of God without concern for any human response. Such does not fit the Scriptural evidence. In the New Testament baptism was commanded and it required an individual response (Acts 2:38;10:48;22:16). The evidence points out that baptism was for believers (Mark 16:16; Acts 16:31-33).

Reason tells one that a newborn baby is not a damned sinner. He cannot sin, for he knows neither right nor wrong. Jesus said:

*“Let the children alone, and do not hinder them from coming to Me; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these”* (Matthew 19:14).

The Scriptures do not authorize infant baptism, and common sense shows that its theological basis is erroneous.



# HAVE YOU MET YOUR GOD?

**Jack W. Carter**

THE BOOK OF AMOS PROVIDES a curious statement. A portion of the book is directed to Israel in the form of a rebuke. If any people on earth should have been well acquainted with God, it should have been Judah and Israel. Yet, to Israel God spoke, *“Prepare to meet your God, O Israel”* (Amos 4:12).

An examination of the contents of the book of Amos clearly shows that Israel did not truly understand who God is. In fact, though it was He who made them a nation and delivered them again and again from their enemies, he had been pushed so far back in the recesses of their extravagances He rarely was a part of their thoughts at all.

When the book of Amos was written the people of Israel were enjoying great prosperity. Yet, within thirty-three years Assyria would attack and destroy them.

The shallowness of their perception of God led them to shallow ritualism in their worship. Evidently assuming that He either did not see or did not care, they oppressed the poor with a kind of cruelty that only expressed callousness. They openly practiced idolatry, and arrogantly and wilfully disobeyed the statutes of God as though He really didn't count.

Whatever they might have thought of God, whatever their conceptions of His attributes and His interest in their activities might have been, God had something specific in mind for them.

Essentially He said to them, “You think you have an understanding of who and what I am. Allow Me to introduce Myself for what I really am.”

In all of your notions about who and what God really is, **is it possible that you have never really truly met Him?**

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## ON THE CROSS

**Gary Moore**

I'M PERSUADED THAT IF you want to see the terrible nature of sin and God's attitude toward it, you'll not find it in His judgment upon the wicked, but in His judgment upon the innocent.

God's hatred for sin is not so much seen at Sodom and Gomorrah or a thousand Sodoms and Gomorrah's, as it is seen at Calvary. And

this is actually the “glory” of the cross: that God hated sin so much that He allowed His “only begotten” Son to come and be crucified in order to deal with sin once and for all.

I am persuaded that you’ll see the matchless love of God, not so much in His daily provisions for us, as you’ll see it at Calvary where the Innocent died for the guilty.

On the cross, the prayer that Jesus offered three times in the Garden of Gethsemane was answered in the negative—He would have to drink the cup. But His prayer was also answered in the positive, for it was the will of God that He drink the cup and, therefore, He was given by God the ability to drink the cup.

So, in the garden Jesus made peace with the cup. He made peace with the burden He was to bear; and, in the angels ministering to Him, He found the strength to bear it.

The most glorious scene from the cross, the most glorious point of time in the history of the world, is when Jesus, in all of His agony and pain, looked down upon an ungodly and unbelieving mob and cried, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

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## *HUMAN CREEDS SHOULD BE ABANDONED*

**G. F. Raines**

MANY YEARS AGO I CAME to the conviction that all man-devised human religious creeds and confessions of faith should be abandoned as tests of fellowship, and that overhead ecclesiastical organizations are inadequate guarantees of Christian unity, and are totally unscriptural.

I advocate a complete acceptance of the Holy Scriptures and the teaching of the simple Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in our pulpits and wherever the Christian religion is professedly taught.

I intend to remain free from all human ecclesiastical laws and unscriptural organizations, and thus “standfast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free ...” (Galatians 5:1).

I plead for the unity of all God’s people on the simple basis of “the Bible alone as an all-sufficient rule of faith and practice.”

John Wesley said: “Would God that all party names and unscriptural phrases and forms which have divided the Christian world were forgotten, and that we, as humble, loving disciples, might sit down at the Master’s feet, read His Holy Word, imbibe His Spirit and transcribe His life into our own.”

