

# THE BIBLE TEACHER

*Pleading for the Restoration of Pure New Testament Christianity*

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## Editorial

### What Does the Bible Teach?

#### HAVING BEEN JUSTIFIED BY FAITH, WE HAVE PEACE WITH GOD THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST



THE TRUE SCRIPURAL JUSTIFICATION “by faith” (Romans 5:1) has no reference at all to the faith of sinner, as is commonly understood, but to “THE FAITH OF JESUS CHRIST” by whose perfect faith the sinner is justified. Being justified means God’s reckoning the individual righteous who has no righteousness of his own. The person who believes in Christ and repents of all sins and is baptized for the remission of sins according to the Scriptures (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16), is justified, accounted righteous, while still a sinner, by the blood of Christ. The sinner’s faith, repentance, and baptism is not a meritorious work. It is simply giving God the credit of revealing the truth of His grace in the gospel of Christ. (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). It is Christ’s shed blood, and that alone, which is the procuring cause of God’s declaring an ungodly person righteous or justified. While God’s grace is the reason for it, man’s faith and obedience to God’s commands is simply the instrumental condition to receive the gift of His grace. Righteousness is not something that may be achieved by man himself in any manner, but is received by faith. This is how man is justified by the faith of Christ.

The ability to merit or earn salvation is simply not in mortal people. No man is ever saved in his own personal identity as possessing any true righteousness of his own. (Isaiah 64:6). It is the perfect faith of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, which constitutes the righteousness of

God, and it is that, “**the faith of Christ**”, which saves and justifies, and not the sinner’s own faith. This is in perfect harmony with an extensive body of teaching found in the New Testament as cited from the following Scriptures in the Authorized Version, commonly known as, “King James Version”, the edition of 1611.

“But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is **by faith of Jesus Christ** unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference; for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” (Romans 3:21-26).

“Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but *by the faith of Jesus Christ*, even we have believed in Jesus Christ that we might be justified **by the faith of Christ**, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified,” (Galatians 2:16).

“But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise **by faith of Jesus Christ** might be given to them that believe.” (Galatians 3:22).

“And be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is **through the faith of Christ**, the righteousness which is of God by faith.” (Philippians 3:9).

All of the above cited Scriptures from the King James Version, the Authorized Version of 1611, were unfortunately changed in the English Revised Version since 1885 to read, in each instance, “faith in Christ,” instead of “the faith of Christ,” to bolster the theory or the belief of justification by man’s “faith only.” The very notion that God could impute justification to a sinful man merely upon the basis of believing in Christ is a delusion. Justification in any true sense requires that the justified be accounted righteous and of undeserving of any penalty whatever, and no man’s faith is sufficient ground for such an imputation.

On the other hand, the faith of Jesus Christ, as revealed in the Bible is indeed a legitimate ground of man’s justification, because Christ’s faith was perfect. Speaking of Christ, Hebrews 5: 8, 9, says, “Though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered, and having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him.” The faith of Christ was the obedient perfect faith, lacking nothing whatever, and therefore the obedient faith of the Son of God, sinless and holy, is the only ground of justification. People are

saved “in Christ,” having been incorporated into Him by faith. To be “in Christ” is that device contrived by God Himself by which a man might truly and legitimately be justified by the faith of Jesus Christ. So the belief of many that God’s righteousness is some imputation accomplished by the sinner’s faith is totally unfounded.

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## HEARING

**J.C. Choate**



IF ONE HEARS A rumor, can he place much dependence in it? Can he say that it is the truth? The answer is no. The same is true also in the realm of spiritual matters. You may hear many things but unless they are based upon the word of God then they are of no value to you or to anyone else. As a matter of fact, believing error could cause you to be lost eternally.

To begin with, we should want to know the truth above everything. Error may tickle one’s ears but it will not save him. There may be many things that you would like to do, but unless you are guided by the truth, your deeds would be in vain. What is truth? Christ said, in speaking to God. “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.” (John 17:17). So, that which God has spoken is the truth and Christ adds. “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (John 8: 32).

You should not listen to man but to God, to Christ, to the scriptures. God said, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him,” (Matthew 17:5). Again we read, “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets. Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.” (Hebrews 1:1, 2). Now at one time God spoke through Moses and the prophets but in these last days he speaks to us through his Son. Are we living in the last days? (Acts 2:16, 17). Yes, and have been since the death of Christ. So we are to hear him. How are we to hear him? Through a wee small voice? By a vision? In reading the creeds of men? No, but by accepting those things that are written. John wrote, “And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in the book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.” (John 20:30, 31).

There are several methods of hearing the truth. One may hear by reading the scriptures. In other words, one may hear Paul, Peter, John,

and other preachers as they read the scriptures or have someone to read them to him. In the next place, one may hear the will of the Lord by listening to a faithful gospel preacher proclaim the word. But even then he should not accept the preacher's words just because he said them. He should always return to the scriptures to see if the truth is really being preached. And then again, one may hear the message of salvation as he reads a gospel tract, paper, sermon, etc.

Realizing the importance of hearing the truth, and the truth only, Christ said, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me." (John 5:39). Again, Paul said, "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). We read also that the people of Berea were more noble than those of Thessalonica because they searched the scriptures to see if those things they heard were the truth or not. (Acts 17:10, 11).

In every case of conversion in the New Testament you'll find that the people first of all had to hear the truth of God. On hearing the truth, faith was produced in their hearts. (Romans 10:17). This is the way it is done today.

Although it is important to hear let us be sure to keep in mind that it is equally important that one hear the right thing, the truth. Again, it is not enough just to hear. Many have heard the truth, but they are not saved. Why? Because if one is to be saved he must act upon that which he has heard. One might hear that he'll receive a new house if he'll go by a certain business office to claim it, but if he never goes then he'll never get it. One may hear of salvation through Christ but unless he applies what he has heard to his life then it will do him no good.

Be eager to hear but weigh carefully that which you hear. Don't accept a thing just because it sounds good. Ponder it, investigate it, and then if you find that it is the truth, accept it, treasure it, and obey it.

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## THE WISDOM OF MEN VERSUS THE WISDOM OF GOD

**Hollis Miller**

LONG BEFORE THE APOSTLE PAUL declared to the Corinthians that the world's wisdom is foolishness to God, the prophet Isaiah had proclaimed that God's thoughts are not men's thoughts, nor His ways

men's ways. *"For as the heavens are higher than the earth,"* said the prophet, *"so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts"* (Isaiah 55:8f). God's thoughts and ways are flawless, while man's thoughts and ways are filled with weakness and error. God's wisdom defies finite fallacies, for, as Paul informed Titus, God cannot lie (Titus 1:2). When the wisdom of men collides with the wisdom of God, God must always be found true, though every man be found false (Romans 3:4).

The context of 1 Corinthians 1:18-2:5, as well as the entire New Testament, reveals that the human wisdom Paul labels foolishness is man's efforts to govern his soul apart from the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. Therefore, the apostle declared that the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing (1 Corinthians 1:18). The philosophers of the world who have sought to lay aside the wisdom of God have never been successful in their efforts. The course of history is speckled with philosophies of all descriptions that have cast their momentary "light" across the path of mankind, only to have it flicker and die as another "light" replaced it. When men, and sometimes even Christians, are captured by their own wisdom, other words of Paul come to one's mind as the tragic sadness of the circumstances are contemplated. *"O, foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified ... are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now becoming perfected in the flesh?"* (Galatians 3:1,3).

Had Jesus never lived, none could debate the nature of His person. Had the bodily resurrection of Jesus from the grave not been the power of apostolic preaching, none would have sought to redefine it. Had the church never been established, none could wish for it a permanent resting place in the archives of forgotten events. Had the New Testament never been written, none could have attempted to demythologize it. Had heaven not been the hope of the first Christians, none would have spoken of eternal life as the hope of foolish and ignorant men. It is surely apparent to all that the great doctrines of Christian faith precede all efforts to discredit them.

The question has been asked before, and is worthy of repetition: "Why do men oppose Jesus Christ and the work He came into the world to accomplish?" None has provided a better reply to the question than Jesus Himself. *"And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed"* (John 3:19f). The cross of Jesus is itself a memorial to the ongoing conflict between

the wisdom of men and the wisdom of God.

Is there reason to abandon the wisdom of God in favor of the wisdom of men? It has been argued that with changing times must come new ways of viewing old traditions. But does that argument not depend on what traditions are under consideration? Shall truth become falsehood and falsehood become truth because times are changing? Why should changing times dictate that the truths of Christian faith be abandoned? The truths of Christian faith are firmly established in history, and they are no more the subject of change than any other historical event.

The wisdom of God does not fluctuate with the changing moods and values of men. Therefore, when God's wisdom is rejected, those who reject it are necessarily delivered to the wisdom of men. Of human wisdom, separated from God, Paul wrote: *"For although they knew God they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking and their senseless minds were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools ..."* (Romans 1:21f). For this reason the apostle warned Christians against falling prey to the vain speculations of men (see Colossians 2:8; 1 Timothy 6:20; James 4:4).

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## THE IMPOTENCY OF UNBELIEF

**Wayne Jackson**

IN GALATIANS 4:9 THE APOSTLE Paul describes the former unregenerate state of the Galatian Christians as *"weak and beggarly."* The meaning suggested is this—their pagan lives had been void of power and thus impoverished. Unbelief, whether of ancient or modern vintage, simply has no strength, and it is without that rich depository of treasures for which the human spirit throbs. Let us reflect upon the following.

### 1. ORIGIN

Man is inquisitive by nature. He is the only living creature on earth that is interested in where he came from. He is ever searching for his "roots." Unbelief, however, simply cannot provide any answer. It knows nothing of the origin of matter or the organized universe. It frustratingly attempts, without success, to explain the mystery of life. Its theories of the origin of man are hopelessly contradictory, and in conflict with known scientific data. Unbelief knows absolutely nothing of origins!

### 2. PURPOSE

Exactly what is man's purpose upon this planet? Unbelief argues that there is no purpose to human existence. Man's function is simply to

reproduce his species, and so, hopefully, for some unknown reason, to advance along the evolutionary scale. But why? What is the goal? There is none, humanists dismally reply. The Biblical record, however, reveals that mankind's ultimate goal is to serve the Creator (Isaiah 43:7; Ecclesiastes 12:13).

### **3. HUMAN CONDUCT**

What is the motivating factor for moral conduct in those who know not God? There is no rational motive! If there is no God, why shouldn't men live lives that are devoted strictly to their own selfish interests? In His parable of the unjust judge, the Lord noted the connection between those who have no fear of God, and hence, no regard for man (Luke 18:2,4). Moreover, after describing the wickedness characteristic of the ancient world, Paul focuses upon the real problem when he writes: "*There is no fear of God before their eyes*" (Romans 3:18). If there is no God, and so no judgment reckoning at which all men will ultimately give an account of their conduct, then there is no final value to choosing a good life over a bad one!

### **4. MENTAL TRANQUILITY**

What mental satisfaction does the man have who considers his existence to be nothing more than a meaningless moment in an endless panorama of passing history? The infidel philosopher David Hume expressed the feeling of many an unbeliever when he depressingly wrote: "Where am I, or what? From what causes do I derive my existence, and to what condition do I return?... I am confounded with all these quotations, and begin to fancy myself in the most deplorable condition imaginable, environed with the deepest darkness, and utterly deprived of the use of every member and faculty." Perhaps the unbeliever John Stuart Mill said it most pointedly when he selected these words as the epitaph for his tombstone, "Most Unhappy."

### **5. FUTURE HOPE**

What is the hope of those who are without knowledge of the Creator? There is no hope in a mere grave! I am reminded of the conversation that Alexander Campbell once had with the skeptic Robert Owen. As they walked past the family cemetery on Campbell's farm one day, Owen remarked: "There is one advantage I have over the Christian; I am not afraid to die." Campbell responded: "Have you any hope in death?" After a solemn pause, Owen replied, "No." "Then," rejoined Mr. Campbell (pointing to an ox standing near), "you are on a level with that brute ... he has neither fear nor hope in death!" Owen smiled and evinced some confusion, but there was no denying the force of Campbell's inference.

# WHICH FAITH WILL YOU CHOOSE?

**Ancil Jenkins**

No time in history has benefited more from scientific knowledge than ours. Huge advances have been made in just the past few years in electronics, medicine, and even cookware. This progress has led some to regard science as all-powerful and all-knowing.

This reliance and reverence of scientific learning has led some to assume that our faith in God is mistaken and even unnecessary. Yet science has not and cannot demonstrate the nonexistence of God. Both science and the Bible teach the origin of man. Since neither view can be verified by experimentation and observation, they both can only be accepted on the basis of faith.

One factor that affects belief is the reliability and credibility of both parties. Does science or the Bible present the better case? Does science or the Bible have the credentials that promote the most believability? To the honest searcher God and the Bible will appear more reliable and credible. This is not to say that scientists are frauds or charlatans. Yet, the record of science is inconsistent and raises some questions.

As stated, science has by no means answered all the questions of our world. Scientists, for example, long ago discovered that lightning is caused by clouds becoming electrically charged. Today, however, they still cannot agree how the charges are generated. Although evolution is assumed by most scientists to be true, there are many difficulties with it. For example, there is no fossil evidence to link insects to anything else in an evolutionary process.

Too often, science has gone beyond proposing theories based on observable facts. Instead, it demands belief based on a system that claims that only the known and tested can be true and rational. This is self-contradicting, since this statement itself cannot meet this criteria. Often this produces an attitude similar to the fisherman who stated there was nothing in the ocean less than two inches long. This came from his use of a certain net over a period of time. Someone pointed out there were many creatures less than two inches and they were simply escaping his net. He haughtily replied, "What my net can't catch, isn't fish." Many truths cannot be scientifically verified. This, does not mean they are not true.

Science has not yet produced a consistent theory for the origin of either the earth or mankind. Instead, we are asked to accept the theories on the basis of faith. Such theories often become an orthodoxy that allows no deviation. Forrest Mims III, for example, claims he was denied



a writing position with the esteemed *Scientific American* magazine. Mims believes this was because of his stated belief that God created the heavens and the earth,

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## THE PEACE THAT PASSES ALL UNDERSTANDING

**Ray Hawk**

***“AND THE PEACE OF GOD, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:7).***

What **is** this *“Peace ... which passeth all understanding”*? If it is impossible to understand, how will we know whether we have it or not? If we do not know what it is, how can something we do not know or understand *“keep”* or *“guard”* our hearts and minds?

The first time the word *“peace”* is found with reference to this is in Luke 2:14. Here the angels proclaimed, *“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”*

God did not announce that the birth of His Son would bring about an end to all wars. In fact, thirty-three years later, Jesus said, *“You will hear of wars and rumors of wars”* (Matthew 24:6). The kind of peace Paul and the angels spoke of comes through Jesus Christ. Jesus told His disciples, *“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace”* (John 16:33). When man sinned, he lost his standing before God. He needed to be reconciled to God. Without that reconciliation, he was *“... without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world”* (Ephesians 2:12).

When Peter spoke to the house of Cornelius, he said, *“You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through Jesus Christ ...”* (Acts 10:36). When an individual obeys the Gospel of Christ, Paul states, *“...we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ”* (Romans 5:1). Again, Ephesians 2:14-15 says that Jesus Himself is our peace.

When a person becomes a Christian, he has a peace that those who are outside the body of Christ do not have.

*“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since, as members of one body, you were called to peace”* (Colossians 3:15).

I made my peace with God when I obeyed the Gospel many years ago. Everyone who would like to have that peace must obey the Gospel of Christ.

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# ATTITUDE IN BIBLE STUDY

**Don W. Walker**

“SON OF MAN, THESE MEN have set up their idols in their hearts and put the stumbling block of iniquity before their face: should I be enquired of at all by them?” (Ezekiel 14:3).

Motive, emphasis, and attitude are three of the key words of New Testament Christianity. When we consider Bible study we must realize that our attitude plays a very important role in our understanding of God’s Word. Jesus said, “Take heed therefore how ye hear” (Luke 8:11). We will get out of Bible study exactly what we want to get out of it.

In Ezekiel’s day the people approached the prophet to hear God’s counsel. However, they had their minds made up already. Their attitude was all wrong. Rather than seeking the truth so that they might be set free (John 8:32), they were seeking justification for that which they had already determined.

Now, how does this apply to us today? We have noted that God has provided His Word, and expects man to respect it. That is, man is to believe it and follow it, but is to be very careful not to alter it in any way. This principle is known as the “Silence of the Scriptures.” Yet, there are other points to consider.

Notice James 1:21,22. *“...receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.”* Our attitude must be one of respect and also of action. A simple intellectual knowledge of Scripture is of no value. We must also determine to fulfill what God reveals through His Word. This is what is meant when Jesus said, *“If ye abide in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed”* (John 8:31).

**Conclusion:** The Word of God is profitable for all men and women if they follow through with a proper attitude. To alter or ignore it is folly indeed. With this in mind, let’s maintain proper attitudes as we each study our Bibles much, much more.

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## “GOD SAID IT, I BELIEVE IT, THAT SETTLES IT”

**David Wade**

PERHAPS YOU HAVE SEEN OR heard this declaration of faith in God’s Word. As good as it may sound, it falls short of what ought to be said. **“God said it. That settles it, whether I believe it or not”** more accurately describes the true nature of God’s Word and the faith

we are to have in it.

The Psalmist declared, *“Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven ... Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever.... My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments are righteousness”* (Psalm 119:89,160,172).

Each time we study the Bible we should realize that we have access to *“the mind of Christ”* through *“words ... which the Holy Ghost teacheth”* (1 Corinthians 2:13,16). *“For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost”* (2 Peter 1:21). Since God inspired the speakers and writers of His Word, Peter could affirm that *“We have also a more sure word of prophecy: where unto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn ...”* (2 Peter 1:19).

When we are inclined to disagree with any part of God’s Word, we need to remember that *“the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his own steps”* (Jeremiah 10:23). When Saul resisted the Word and railed against the church, he was hurting himself (Acts 9:5; 1 Timothy 1:13). To resist the truth is folly (2 Timothy 3:8-9). If we refuse to do the will of the Father, Jesus will say in judgment, *“I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity”* (Matthew 7:21-23).

God’s spiritual blessings are pronounced only upon those who hear, believe, and obey His Word (Matthew 7:21). **God said it, and that settles it. Period.**

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## BAPTISM AND ITS RELATIONSHIPS

**Roy Beasley, Jr.**

IT IS TRUE THAT MANY GOOD people do not believe that baptism is necessary for salvation, but the final word on any religious matter is the Holy Bible. Baptism is a New Testament ordinance. In understanding baptism we need to see its relationship to other things. In English, the part of speech that shows that relationship is a preposition. A preposition “denotes the relation of an object to an action or things.” In this article we wish to study the various prepositions that are used in connection with baptism.

First, there is the preposition “in.” John the Baptizer said, *“I indeed baptize you **in water**”* (Matthew 3:11). In Acts 8 the Ethiopian nobleman was baptized in water. In Acts 10:47-48 we find Peter saying, *“Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized ...”* In the New Testament we read of various baptisms, such as the baptism of the

Holy Spirit, the baptism of fire, etc., but today there is only “*one baptism*” (Ephesians 4:5). That one baptism is the baptism of the Great Commission. Jesus said, “*Go ... teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit ...*” (Matthew 28:19-20). This baptism was to be practiced “*even to the end of the world*” and was to be performed by men. This was the baptism **in water**.

Baptism is also **in the name of Christ** (Acts 2:38). To be baptized in the name of Christ means to be baptized by His authority. It also suggests that we are doing it for His glory and honor. Furthermore, there is the idea of obeying Christ and depending upon His merit, depending upon Him for the results, and realizing that we have no merit of our own.

Then, there is the preposition “by.” 1 Corinthians 12:13 says, “*For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body ...*” What is the meaning of the expression, “*by one Spirit*”? Is this expression used elsewhere in Paul’s writings? If so, in what sense is it used? This should give us a clue as to its meaning in this passage. Back up to verse three of the same chapter and read: “*Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.*” Here the meaning is plain. It means **in accordance with the teachings** of the Holy Ghost. In verse 13 the expression means the same. To be baptized by the Spirit means to be baptized in accordance with the teaching of the Holy Spirit.

Just before His death Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to guide and direct the apostles and other inspired men in their preaching and teaching. These men spoke and wrote as they were guided and directed by the Holy Spirit. We no longer have inspired men, but we do have an inspired book, the Bible. It is through this written Word that the Holy Spirit teaches us today, and this Word tells us to be baptized. When we follow the teaching of the New Testament concerning baptism, we are doing it by the Holy Spirit.

“**For**” is another preposition we find in connection with Bible teaching concerning baptism. In Acts 2:38 we read that we are to be baptized **for the remission of sins**. There is much confusion in the religious world concerning the meaning of the word “for.” Some contend that it means “because of or “on account of the remission of sins, and that we are to be baptized because we have already received the remission of sins and have been saved. It is true that the English preposition “for” does sometimes mean “because of in the English language, but the New Testament was originally written in Greek, not English. The Greek preposition is **EIS**, and it did not have that meaning.

The American Standard Version of the Bible has rendered this word “**unto**” instead of “for,” showing that these translators recognized that these people were being commanded to be baptized in order to receive the remission of sins. This same expression is found in Matthew 26:28, where Jesus was instituting the Lord’s Supper. He took the cup and said, “*Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many **for the remission of sins.***” Surely He was not saying that He shed His blood because of remission of sins, but in order for them to receive the remission of sins. And that is the meaning of this expression in Acts 2:38. The word “for” means “unto.” We are to be baptized in order to receive the remission of past sins. This also harmonizes with what the preacher told Saul to do in Acts 22:16, when he said, “*And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.*”

“**Into**” is also used several times in connection with baptism. We are considering this preposition separately, although it is the same Greek word **EIS**. In 1 Corinthians 12:13 we are told that we are baptized **into the one body**. The one body is the church (Ephesians 1:22). Baptism is necessary in order to get **into the body of Christ, the church**.

Furthermore, baptism is also **into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19)**. Here we have the three persons of the Godhead named. We are baptized into a saving relationship with the Sacred Three.

In Romans 6:3 we are told that we are baptized **into the death of Christ**. Paul makes the point that those who are dead to sins should not continue to live therein. Then he tells us that we died to sin when we were baptized **into the death of Christ**. Again, in Galatians 3:27 we learn that we are baptized **into Christ**.

Every responsible soul should ask himself/herself these questions: Have I been baptized in water? in the name of Christ? **by** the one Spirit **for** or **unto** the remission of sins? **into** the one body? **into** the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit? **into** the death of Christ? and **into** Christ? If your answer is no, why do you wait to do so?

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## “I CANNOT SEE THE PURPOSE IN BAPTISM”

**Demar Elam**

MULTITUDES OF PEOPLE ARE HONEST and sincere when they make this statement, “I cannot see the purpose in baptism!” Some have said, “I’d be happy to be baptized, if I could see some significance or true purpose in baptism.” The purpose of this article

is to allow God, through His Word, to show us the purpose of baptism.

Space will not allow us to deal with all the verses on baptism, but in this article we will consider enough verses to establish what the purpose of baptism is to man.

Romans 6:3 says that baptism puts one **into** Christ. We are baptized **into** Christ. The purpose of baptism is to get **into** Christ. Have you done that?

Baptism provides a newness of life. Romans 6:4 states that “... *we also should walk in newness of life.*” The purpose of baptism is to provide newness of life. Do you want newness of life? Without baptism, it is impossible to have newness of life!

Baptism is in the likeness of His death. The assurance is given that if we are baptized in the likeness of His death, we will be in the likeness of His resurrection!

Finally, the purpose of baptism is so clearly stated in 1 Peter 3:21, “*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.*” Please notice that the significance placed on baptism in this verse is salvation. Baptism saves! If God were going to tell you that the purpose of baptism is to save you, how would He state it any differently than, “*The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us ...*”?

Please let us know if we can assist you in your obedience to Christ.

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## WHAT GOD WANTS

**Kenneth Davis**

IF MOST OF US WERE asked, we would say that we want to do what God wants us to do. Perhaps, though, it would be good to ask ourselves if we really do want what God wants. A Christian is one who desires to do what God wants him to do. If we aren't doing what God wants us to do, how may we say that we are truly Christians?

What does God want in the church? Christ wants a church that is truly dedicated to Him, one that is preaching the Word, edifying the saved, and providing for those who are in need. A church which stands for the truth under all circumstances is a church that pleases God.

What does the Lord want for my home? The Lord wants a home where His name is magnified and where He is given first place in their hearts. He wants parents to train their children to love and obey Him.

What does the Lord want from your life? He wants a truly converted person who loves the lost and is willing to do something to help them to be saved. The Lord wants a steadfast and faithful person, not just one who is dedicated today and then becomes friends with the world tomorrow.

## WHO IS JESUS?

Was Jesus Christ only 'a good man'? Was He only a prophet? Was He one of the many so-called 'incarnations' of God?

The **voice of God** from heaven proclaimed Him, "This is *My beloved Son...*" (Matthew 3:17)

Jesus asked, "Do you believe in the Son of God?... You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you." (John 9:35,37) He also said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. *No one comes to the Father except through Me.*" (John 14:6)

Was Jesus a liar? If so, He was not a *good* man. But if He spoke the *truth*, he was not merely a prophet, nor did He share His Lordship with others, for He declared in plain terms that our only avenue to the Father in heaven is through Himself.

Jesus' empty tomb speaks of Him alone: "...I know you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for *He is risen...*" (Matthew 28:5,6) No other human has conquered death.

## THE LORD'S *ARDENT* DESIRE FOR THE CHURCH

**Gary C. Hampton**

JESUS PURCHASED THE CHURCH with His shed blood (Acts 20:28). The church is also the bride of Christ (Ephesians 5:24). It is, therefore, logical that the church should seek to learn the Lord's will.

### A WORLD VISION

Jesus ardently desired that the church have a world vision. "*And Jesus came and spake unto them saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.*"

*Amen*" (Matthew 28:18-20).

It should be observed that He expected them to begin where they were. They were then to go out to the surrounding area. Finally, they were to reach the whole world with the saving Gospel (Luke 24:46-47; Acts 1:8).

### **OVERFLOWING WITH BROTHERLY LOVE**

The Lord ardently desired the church to be a body overflowing with brotherly love. Near the end of His life on earth Jesus clearly stated this desire. *"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love for one another"* (John 13:34-35).

Peter stressed the need for such love. *"And above all things have fervent charity [love] among yourselves: for charity [love] shall cover the multitude of sins"* (1 Peter 4:8). James explained how that could happen. *"Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins"* (James 5:19-20).

### **A BRIDE HE CAN TAKE HOME**

In Ephesians 5 Paul uses the relationship of husband and wife to explain the church's relationship to Christ. *"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it: That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word. That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish"* (verses 25-27). Clearly, he wants her prepared to take home to meet God.

He urged the church at Smyrna to remain faithful, even if it meant death. Then, He would give them a crown of life (Revelation 2:10). Paul said the Lord has a crown of righteousness awaiting all those who love His appearing (2 Timothy 4:6-8).

### **CONCLUSION**

Our greatest desire, as members of the Lord's church, should be to fulfill His desire. Thus, we should cultivate a world vision. We ought to stoke the fires of brotherly love. Ultimately, we should do all in our power to be the type of people He can take home to the Father, as His loving, faithful, prepared bride.



# Why The Early Church Was Successful

Jerry Jenkins

Even prejudiced historians are amazed with the marvelous spread of the first century church. Luke records this phenomenal growth: "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about **three thousand souls**" (Acts 2:41). "Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was **about** five thousand" (Acts 4:4). Luke later states, "**multitudes** both of men and women" (Acts 5:14), "the disciples were **multiplied**" (Acts 6:1), "the number of disciples **multiplied** in Jerusalem greatly" (Acts 6:7). The lowest estimate of Christians this writer has ever seen, just prior to their dispersion, was 25,000. What was the secret for their success? Why did a small band of 120 fearful disciples launch such a successful evangelistic thrust? Perhaps there are many reasons, but certainly the following would be included:

## THEY STOOD IN THE SHADOW OF THE CROSS

It had been less than two months since they had seen their close friend and leader executed. From a distance and in disbelief they had watched as He received wound after wound, insult after insult, and finally yielded up His spirit from the cross. With such commitment, devotion, and affection fresh on their hearts, they aggressively and unashamedly told the story of His life.

## THEY WERE STEADFAST IN WORSHIP

As the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 6:1-8), these first century Christians were fully aware of the uplifting, inspiring experience of worshipping God in His appointed way. With great enthusiasm they sang, prayed, gave of their money, studied, and communed with God. Those who may have been spasmodic, irregular, indifferent to the "*assembling of themselves together,*" just as today, did not stay when persecution loomed on the horizon. The text simply states: "*And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers*" (Acts 2:42).

## THEY WERE PURE IN THEIR LIVES

The disciplinary action which befell Ananias and Sapphira caused reverential respect on the disciples (Acts 5:11) and "*multitudes of men and women*" from outside the fellowship were "*added to the Lord.*" While

some today tend to minimize the power of godly living and give emphasis to doctrinal soundness, these early Christians believed the two qualities should walk hand in hand. Purity of life was one of the outstanding attributes of the early church.

### THEY RESPECTED THE POWER OF THE WORD

None believed it was their own effort that made this growth possible. They came from persecution with joy and spoke, not of their personal sacrifices, but the **Word of God** with great boldness (Acts 4:31, 5:41). Indeed, it appears that the flame of determination glowed brightest when the opposition mounted their most intensive efforts. The men and women had a **dream**. They knew the fields were white, and *they envisioned themselves as co-laborers with God! What an example for Christians of this century to follow!*

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## RESTORING NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTIANITY

**Frank Chesser**

WHEN JESUS FIRST MADE HIS entrance into the world of humanity, He found it divided into various factions and religious parties. These various groups were more concerned with their traditions, peculiarities, and man-made laws than they were the commands of God. Jesus knew if His followers divided into parties, sects, and factions, they would be doomed from the start.

Therefore, throughout the New Testament one finds such warnings as, *“Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand”* (Matthew 12:25). *“Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up”* (Matthew 15:13). According to this passage, the destiny of every religious institution founded in humanity rather than divinity is “destruction.”

However, in spite of these and other warnings, denominationalism is one of the major problems of our day. It stands in opposition to every basic principle in Christianity. It is the devil’s tool, utilized effectively in blinding the minds of men to the simplicity of God’s way and the one church of the Bible.

One of the many biblical terms used to designate the church is the term “kingdom.” In Matthew 16:18-19 Jesus uses the terms “church” and “kingdom” interchangeably. Having obeyed the Gospel, the Christians in Colossae had been *“translated into the kingdom”* or church (Colossians 1:13).

The Word of God is the “seed” of the kingdom (Luke 8:10-11). God’s law of reproduction demands that every seed bring forth after its kind (Genesis 1:11). No one expects apple seeds to produce pears, or human seed to produce apes. This same law of reproduction is also applicable to the spiritual kingdom. When the pure seed, God’s Word, is planted in the fertile soil of honest hearts, the results are Christians only and only Christians, members of Christ’s one New Testament church. This divine truth is aptly illustrated by the status of Christianity in the first century.

On the first Pentecost following the resurrection of Christ, a huge crowd assembled in Jerusalem to hear the first gospel sermon to be preached under the worldwide commission (Acts 2). The apostles endeavored to plant the pure seed of the Gospel in the hearts of those present. About three thousand hearts proved to be fertile soil, resulting in the beginning of New Testament Christianity. The prayer of Christ for uniformity in religion (John 17) was certainly answered in this instance, for they were united in faith and practice (Acts 2:41-47).

The following chapter (Acts 3) records another great sermon by the apostle Peter, resulting in the obedience of a great multitude (Acts 4:4). The same gospel seed was planted, the same obedience required, and the same result was forthcoming. In striking terms the inspired penman describes their unity as being of “*one heart and of one soul*” (Acts 4:32). Acts 8 records the first proclamation of the Gospel outside Jerusalem. Though the location had changed, the same gospel seed was planted with no change in results.

Contrary to the thinking of many, it **does** make a difference as to what religion one embraces. This truth is verified in the conversion of Saul. Though a very devout Jew and a faithful member of the Pharisaic religion, he found it necessary to obey the same Gospel as was required of all others desiring to be Christians (Acts 9).

Soon after his conversion, the apostle Paul (formerly Saul) became one of the central figures in the establishment of New Testament Christianity. As a result of his work, congregations of the Lord’s church were established in Perga, Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, Philippi, Ephesus, Thessalonica, Corinth, and many other places.

Did these congregations constitute different denominational groups, divided in name, doctrine, and practice? God forbid! One just as well claim that Paul changed gospels every time he changed locations. In every instance the same gospel seed was planted, and every seed brings forth after its kind. Speaking of these congregations, united in faith and practice, the inspired text says, “*the churches of Christ salute you*” (Romans 16:16).

What the world needs is a **restoration** of New Testament Christianity. Let us return to the divine blueprint of the church Jesus *promised* to build (Matthew 16:18), *did* build (Acts 2), and for which He *died* (Ephesians 5:25). Let us speak where the Bible speaks and remain silent where the Bible is silent. Let us do Bible things in Bible ways and call Bible things by Bible names. *This is non-denominational, New Testament Christianity.*

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## ***Some Clarification About Church Membership***

**Mack Lyon**

ONE OF OUR TELEVISION VIEWERS has written me saying, “One thing I know, God is not going to ask us if we were members of ‘such and such denomination’ when we stand before Him. He is going to look to see if the Image of His dear Son is dwelling in us by means of the spiritual rebirth.”

Of course, he’s right. But that doesn’t mean that God is not going to be concerned about our being in His church, because all the saved are in His church (Acts 2:47).

One of the problems we have in our generation with church membership as it relates to salvation is our confusion of the words “church” and “denomination.” “Church” appears 112 times in the King James Version of the New Testament. Therefore, it is not a bad word, but a biblical one.

Seventy-six times it appears in the singular form, the singular number (church), as in Matthew 16:18 and Acts 20:28. Christ built and purchased only one church. Twenty-six times it is plural (churches), as in Galatians 1:2 and 22, where reference is made to congregations of the Lord’s people in the regions of Galatia and Judea respectively. Never in the Scriptures, whether in the singular or plural form, does it refer to a “denomination,” but the called, redeemed, saved people of the Lord (Acts 2:47; 20:28).

“Denomination” does not appear in the New Testament at all; not even once. To be denominational is “to divide and name.” Our Lord does not want us to divide into warring sects and wear different names to distinguish one group from the other. He prayed that His people would all be one (John 17:20-23). He died that we might all be reconciled to God in one body, whether Jew or Greek, American, Asian, or African, bond or free, male or female. What a grand concept—the unity of all

believers in Jesus in one body, church (Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:1-4).

When we say Jesus built but one church (Matthew 16:18), we are not referring to any denominational group. We are simply using the word “church” the way the Bible uses it. If, when we use it that way, someone thinks we are speaking of a denomination, he is sure to be confused and very often becomes angry.

Before we can be undenominational, we must clear our minds of these denominational perceptions, and it isn’t easy in a world filled with denominations. That is good reason for striving diligently not to be a denomination, but in fact the church of Jesus Christ.

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## ON BECOMING A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH

**Maxie B. Boren**

The church is “the called out” of Christ. That is what the Greek word translated by the English word “church” means—“the called out.” The Bible teaches us that people are “called” by the Gospel (2 Thessalonians 2:14). Thus, when one hears the Gospel, believes it, and renders an obedient response to the commands contained therein, he indeed has been “called” by it.

The Gospel means “good news.” The good news is the message of God’s wonderful love, mercy, and grace offered to humankind through His Son Jesus Christ and the GREAT sacrifice that Christ made for us on the cross. The apostle Paul defines it quite clearly in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4. This message is God’s designated power to save those who believe it, and who will obey the Christ. Read Romans 1:16, 1 Corinthians 1:18-23, and Hebrews 5:8-9.

The New Testament teaches that the process by which a person is saved from sin is the same process by which that person becomes a member of the Lord’s church. Acts 2:22-41, 47 is very Clear on this. Those people in Jerusalem on the Jewish feast day called Pentecost, who believed the Gospel that they heard, inquired what they must do. They were told, “... *Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins ...*” The record then tells us, “*They then that received his word were baptized ...*” And these were “added” to God’s family. Thus, verse 47 informs us that “*the Lord added to the church daily*” those that were being saved.

Baptism (which is immersion in water of a penitent believer, unto the remission of sins) is the culminating act of obedience that puts a person **into** Christ Jesus. Galatians 3:26-27 and Romans 6:3-5,17-18 make this very plain. The Bible also teaches us that baptism is “*into one body*”

(1 Corinthians 12:13). The “*one body*” is the church (Ephesians 1:20-23; 4:4; Colossians 1:18,24). Thus, entrance “*into Christ*” is the same as entrance into “*the one body*,” which is the church. **The church is the spiritual body of Christ!**

To be “in Christ” is the same as being “a member of His church,” which is the same as being “a Christian.”

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## RECOGNIZING THE CHILDREN OF GOD

**Bill McFarland**

John knew that the Father has bestowed an unearthly love upon us in calling us His children (1 John 3:1). But he also knew that our lives must be the evidence that we have been “begotten of God.” How are children of God to be known?

- 1. They do righteousness.** *“If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one also that doeth righteousness is begotten of him”* (1 John 2:29).
- 2. They do not live in sin.** *“Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin, because his seed abideth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God”* (1 John 3:9). A child of God will not make sin a way of life.
- 3. They love each other.** *“Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God; and every one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God”* (1 John 4:7). God is love, and His children must love each other.
- 4. They are committed to Christ.** *“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is begotten of God: and whosoever loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him”* (1 John 5:1). They believe that Jesus is worthy of trust and obedience.
- 5. They overcome evil.** *“For whosoever is begotten of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith”* (1 John 5:4).
- 6. They keep themselves true to God.** *“We know that whosoever is begotten of God sinneth not; but he that was begotten of God keepeth himself, and the evil one toucheth him not”* (1 John 5:18).

John didn’t write to tell us how to become God’s children. That happens when we are begotten by the Word and thus obey the truth (1 Peter 1:22,23). But what John wrote does remind us that when we have been born of God our lives must show it.

# THE CHURCH AND SALVATION

**Ron Bryant**

The salvation of the souls of men is the vital subject of the Scriptures. The question that flows from the thoughtful person is voiced by the psalmist: “*What is man that thou art mindful of him?*” (Psalm 8:4). Dealing honestly and faithfully with this question is one of continual challenge. But that the God of heaven is mindful of man is the centerpiece in the matter of salvation. Being mindful of man, God has provided a Savior, a Gospel, and a Church. The Savior is His Son, the Gospel belongs exclusively to Jesus the Christ, and the Church is also His.

The salvation of the souls of men stands firmly established in the love and the eternal purpose of God. And the church of Jesus the Christ also stands firmly established in the love and purpose of God. The pivotal role the church plays in God’s scheme of things is set forth most eloquently in the book of Ephesians. There we are told that through the church the manifold wisdom of God is made known. It is in the church, the body of the redeemed over which Christ is head, that God and His purpose are glorified (Ephesians 3:10-11; 3:21). The love of Christ and the death of Christ are revealed as being for the church (Ephesians 5:25). It is the body to which all the saved — the reconciled—are added (Ephesians 2:15ff). One cannot properly understand the past or the present work of Jesus without a clear understanding of the church, for the church is the body of Christ, and He is head over all things to it (Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:23ff). To attempt to separate Christ from the concept of the church would be to *dismember* Him, to separate the Head—Himself—from His body—the church.

The challenge we face is in seeing the church in all of its biblical simplicity and beauty. In it believers have communion with God. In it believers share life and hope, love and peace. In it are vested the plans of God in the proclamation of the Gospel. To it He adds all the redeemed, and through it He calls all men to be reconciled to heaven (1 Corinthians 10:16-17; Acts 2:47; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21). Salvation and the church are impossible to separate.

Christianity is viewed variously. It is viewed religiously and it is viewed philosophically. The biblical view presents not “Christianity,” but “the church.” The way of Christ is community-oriented. The believers, added together, are the church. The disciples of the first century were added

to the church, and they are the church. They are members of the body, the church.

All the Christians belonged to the body of Christ. They lived and moved and had their being through the blood of Christ and the grace of God. They all walked by the same rule and lived as brothers and sisters in the household of God, the church of the living God (1 Timothy 3:15). Christianity is the people that belong to God through Christ, and these people are the church.

## PORTRAIT OF ONE WINNING OTHERS TO CHRIST

**Their Ears** are open to the cries for help from a lost and dying world.

**Their Eyes** are ever searching for a receptive heart in which to plant the word of God.

**Their Lips** are always ready and willing to proclaim the glory of God.

**Their Hands** are always turning the pages of God's word, seeking His will.

**Their Feet** are on the move to carry out the words of Christ in preaching the gospel to every creature.

**Their Hearts** are breaking with the urgency to reach the lost before it is too late.

**Their Heads** are bowed in prayer to the Father in heaven, seeking wisdom.

**Their Faces** glow with the hope that lives in them.

**Their Lives** are like the light of a city set upon a hill that cannot be hid.

**They are the Light** of the world. In Christ they live and move and have their being.

—Selected