

# THE BIBLE TEACHER

*Pleading for the Restoration of Pure New Testament Christianity*

**Vol. 55**

**August 2024**

**No. 4**

## Editorial

### **What Does the Bible Teach?**

#### ***God Is Not The Author Of Confusion But Of Peace***

THE APOSTLE PAUL WROTE to the Corinthians:

“For God is not the author of confusion but of peace.” The question is often asked: “Why are there so many kinds of Christians; some calling themselves “Roman Catholic” and others “Protestant” and by many other different names;

believing and observing many things differently; worshipping in different manners and are members of different churches, while all claiming to follow the same Bible? The simple answer is, none of those exist by the will of God, as revealed in the Bible, but are man-made. Men are the author of all such, and not God. For God is not the author of confusion. Jesus said, “And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.” (Matthew 15:9).



Through the centuries, after Christ, the author of Christianity, had established His one church, according to His promise (Matthew 16:18), and had authorized His chosen apostles to teach and write every doctrine His church should follow (Matthew 18:18; John 14:25, 26; 16:12,13), men in different ages began to change and add to God's written word, the Bible, as was predicted by the apostles of Christ ( Acts 20:28-30; 1 Timothy 4:1-4; 2 Timothy 4:1-4). In fact, so much has been changed and added to God's word through the years that today most people believe that those things are Bible's truth, while in fact they are teachings and commandments of men. And since all such things have been repeatedly taught and followed over and over and over again through

the many years worldwide, people everywhere have accepted them as God's truth of the Bible, so much so, that from time to time when the clear teaching and doctrines of God's word are brought to people's attention, they do not want to accept them because they have never heard about them before.

People are so much rooted and grounded in the lies of man-made teachings and doctrines that the true teachings of the Bible sounds to them to be lies because they have never heard them, while at the same time, false things taught in the name of the Bible have been accepted by most people as Bible's truth. In general, worldwide most people identify Christianity with "Christmas" and "Easter", while the truth is, none of them are mentioned or taught in the Bible. When people are told about the church of Christ, most believers in Christ would say, they have never heard about it. Yet the Bible speaks of only one church which Christ had built, His only one church. He clearly said, "I will build my church." (Matt.16:18). We do not read in the Bible about any other church. Of course, there are, on earth, many different kinds of churches, but they all have been built by men at different times in different ages, and therefore we do not read about any of them in the pages of God's word. Not only Christ built His church, but according to the Bible, He Himself adds all the saved ones to His church. (Acts 2:47). This means all the saved people are in the church of Christ. Christ would not save people and add them to different denominational churches which exist all over the world, without His authorization. This truth might sound bitter to many, just as it did to those who on the judgment day presented themselves before the Lord, to seek entrance into heaven. He said, "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!" (Matthew 7:22,23). They had not followed the rules and the laws laid down by the Lord in His New Testament. Hence they had practiced lawlessness. "He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words," the Lord said, "has that which judges him – the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day."

In Mark 16:16 Christ Himself taught, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned." Yet, most people today believe and teach that one is saved by faith alone, and that baptism is not necessary for salvation. Is this what Christ taught? Jesus taught that to be saved one must both believe and be baptized. To confuse people, they say, since Christ said, "he who does not believe will be condemned," therefore one must believe only not to be condemned, but there is no need to be baptized to be saved. Yet, when

a large number of people had asked the apostles of Christ, after they had believed the gospel that was preached to them, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” The apostle Peter said to them, “Repent, and let everyone of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.” (Acts 2:37, 38). According to the teaching of the Bible, one is baptized for the remission or forgiveness of sins. Ananias, therefore, had told Saul, “And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” (Acts 22:16). Saul’s sins were washed away when he was baptized, not before he was baptized.

Man has invented today for himself a new form of Christianity which is the cause of confusion. People have established diverse kinds of churches, ways of worship, doctrines, creed books, in direct contradiction of what the Bible teaches and the Lord desires. (John 17:20, 21). If all people everywhere who claim to be the followers of Christ, were to leave all man-made teachings and doctrines of men, and turn to the Bible alone and do only what it teaches, then there would be no confusion, no division. All would be Christians only, as they were in the beginning (Acts 11:26; 26:28); members of the church that Christ had established in the beginning (Romans 16:16), would worship alike, as Christ had taught (John 4:24). If people today do not understand the teaching of the Bible alike, then it is not God’s fault. He is not the author of confusion.

## FAITH

**J.C. Choate**

WHAT IS FAITH? The Hebrew writer says, “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1). Although the inspired author did not intend this to be a definition of faith, it certainly gives us some idea of what faith is. Faith is that which is produced in one’s heart as a result of hearing the word (Romans 10:17). That is, it brings one to the point of accepting without question the truths of God’s word, and upon that he builds, he obeys, and has the hope of that which is to come.

To illustrate this, let me say that I believe that there is a President of the United States, that there is a Tokyo, Japan, that there is a Mount Everest. I have never seen the President, or these places, but I believe they exist. Why? Because of the many evidences of their existence,



and because of the many testimonials from those who have seen them, and those who have written about them. Thus, I freely express my faith in them to others.

I have never seen God or Christ. I have never been to heaven. But I believe that God and Christ live and that one day the righteous will go to heaven. Why? Because of the many evidences of their existence and because of the witnesses of Christ and testimonies concerning him and because of those things written concerning them. Hence, I affirm these truths to others without hesitation.

This kind of faith is necessary on our part. Without faith we would be miserable people. We all believe in someone and in something, so the important matter is to be sure our faith is founded upon the truth and is channeled in the right direction, for the Bible says, "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). Please note that before one can come to God, first, he must believe that he is, and second, that he rewards or blesses those who seek him.

Naturally, then, faith is a condition of salvation. It is not the only condition, but it is a primary one because one could not obey the other commands of God unless he first had faith. With this in mind, let us notice a few passages of scripture that stress the importance of faith, or belief, in obeying the gospel. We read, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever **believeth** in him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). When the jailor asked Paul and Silas what to do to be saved, the scripture says, "And they said, **Believe** on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (Acts 16:31). Some automatically jump to the conclusion that all one has to do to be saved is to believe. Well, as mentioned earlier, one must first believe before he can obey, and reading further in Acts 16 you'll find that the word of God was preached to those people and then they were taken and baptized. But when does the Lord save one? Christ answers by saying, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). Faith, or belief, saves only as it leads one to do what the Bible teaches.

When it comes to faith only, James says that it damns one instead of saving him. Listen, "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone" (James 2:17). Again, "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified and not by faith only" (James 2:24). Christ says, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). So it is important that we understand the proper relationship of faith and works. Faith alone will not save, and neither will work alone save (Ephesians 2:8, 9). Put them

together and they spell salvation.

Faith will lead one to repent of his sins, to confess that Christ is the Son of God, and then to be baptized for the remission of sins. Faith will not only do this, but it will likewise lead one to live according to God's word all the days of his life, and then give him the hope of eternal life. Why? Because the things that are written have been written that we might believe, and then by following the truths therein the blessings of God are showered upon us (John 20:30, 31; Revelation 2:10).

Don't be afraid to believe. Turn your faith loose. Don't limit it. You'll be surprised to see what it will do for you. Remember, "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. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall **live by faith**" (Romans 1:16, 17). The Bible also declares that we walk by faith and not by sight.

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## ***Preach The Word***

**Avon Malone**

PAUL PLEADS "PREACH THE WORD." To do otherwise is to prostitute the pulpit. To do otherwise is to feed the heavy, hungry hearts with garbage. To do otherwise is to dishonor Christ and to betray the burdened world we would seek to serve.

The devil would divert us. If by diversionary devices he can keep us preoccupied with superficial side-issues, the great work of preaching the Word will go begging. A powerless pulpit with no real message will be but a prelude to profound and deserved oblivion.

Why preach the wonderful word? Hear the answer given by the Word itself:

*"Of his own will he brought us forth by word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures" (James 1:18). "For the word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart." (Hebrews 4:12). "Sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth ... and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 17:17; 8:32). "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God..." (Ephesians 6:17). "And now I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you the inheritance among all them that are sanctified" (Acts 20:32).*

Edmund Burke, the great English statesman, in defining the

responsibilities of a members of Parliament to his constituents said, *"He owes you not his industry only, but his judgment, and he betrays, rather than serves you, when he sacrifices it to your opinion."* The gospel preacher owes you the judgment of God and His Word, and he betrays you when he sacrifices it to your opinion.

How timeless the solemn charge, "Preach the word"!

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## *By What Standard Of Authority?*

Wendell Winkler

BY WHAT AUTHORITY DO YOU practice the things you do in religion? Let us observe the following questions:

**Is "the majority" the correct standard of authority?** Surely not. Through time the majority has been in the wrong. Where was the majority when the flood came? What about Sodom and Gomorrah? Jesus said many would go in the broad way that leads to destruction (Matthew 7:13,14). The majority is not the correct standard of authority.

**Are "kinsmen" the correct standard of authority?** Surely not. If they were, then every religion, even those that deny the divinity of Christ and reject the Bible as the infallible guide in matters of religion, would be all right if such was accepted by kinsmen. Kinsmen are not the standard of authority.

**Are "the creeds of men" the correct standard of authority?** Surely not. They are contradictory to the inspired and infallible Word of God. They contain the doctrines and commandments of men, concerning which Jesus said, *"But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men"* (Matthew 15:9). The creeds of men are not the correct standard of authority.

**Is "I think" the correct standard of authority?** Surely not. In Jeremiah 10:23 we read, *"O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps."* Also, observe Proverbs 14:12, *"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the 'ways of death.'"* "I think" is not the correct standard of authority.

**Christ and His testament is the correct standard of authority.** All authority in heaven and in earth has been given unto Christ (Matthew 28:18). His testament is complete, final and all-sufficient (John 16:13; Jude 3). Religious practices are to be based upon His word. Peter wrote, *"If any man speak, let him speak as of the oracles of God"* (1 Peter 4:11). In view of this, can you give book, chapter, and verse from the New Testament for what you practice in religion?

# TRUTH AND LOVE

Joe Malone

WE READ IN EPHESIANS 4:14-16 about “*speaking the truth in love*” God’s purpose is accomplished through “*speaking the truth in love.*” There is an intimate relationship between truth and love. Truth directs; love motivates.

Let us notice three things involved in “*speaking the truth in love*”:

(1) The truth is to be spoken. God’s Word is truth (John 17:17). Our eternal happiness depends upon our acceptance of it. Hence, it is hardly too much to say that the cruelest thing we can do to others is to withhold from them needful truth. Further, unity is not so dear nor peace so sweet as to be purchased at the expense of the truth (Matthew 10:34-38).

(2) The truth is to be spoken in love. The more painful the impression which truth is expected to impart, the more urgent the need of dealing with it in love. When truth is set forth, it is to be with evident desire to do good and because of a genuine love for the hearer. When it admonishes one of his faults, it does so in the spirit of meekness, bearing in mind that all are susceptible to error.

(3) “*Speaking the truth in love*” implies **being true** as well as **speaking truth**. Loyalty to truth is the backbone of Christianity. “*Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth*” (1 Corinthians 13:4-8). Christians live that way—and their message is heard!

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## “I WON’T TAKE THAT MEDICINE UNLESS IT TASTES GOOD!”

Garell L. Forehand

I HOPE THIS WILL BE taken in the spirit in which it is intended. We ought to be always getting better. Growth and improvement are the hallmarks of the Christian life. We recognize, of course, that attitudes characteristic of immaturity should be forever laid aside as we begin to actually develop in the Lord. “*When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but now that I am become a man...*” (1 Corinthians 13:11). Growing up involves our coming to



appreciate those things that we know are best for us, whether or not they are what we feel like embracing. With these thoughts in mind, let me suggest that there is a growing problem in the church today that, in reality, should be outgrown.

We have so emphasized that truth is to be spoken *“in love”* (Ephesians 4:15) that we have somehow developed an attitude which in essence asserts, “I won’t seriously consider the truth until it is spoken *like I desire it to be spoken.*” How often we hear fellow Christians bitterly decry the tone used in delivering the truth to them as being strident, overpowering, or unloving. How often we see them feel justified in totally ignoring the truth itself when their perception is that it was couched in “unloving” communication. There is something dreadfully wrong with this viewpoint.

First, let me make it clear that we should always deliver the precious message, as well as specific rebuke or correction, in as loving a manner as we know how. That, in itself, is a part of growing up. And without it the speaker is not in the right, nor is his message as readily accepted by its intended recipient. But please understand that Ephesians 4:14,15 is written for the would-be speaker, not the hearer. And though we may speak extensively, we must all participate as hearers from time to time. It is to those occasions that we address this reminder.

Let me suggest something that may sound radical to some. Truth can be taught, Christ can be proclaimed, and the Gospel may be delivered to the eternal saving of souls without loving communication or a loving speaker. Notice what Paul described to the Philippian brethren. *“Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: the one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: but the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defense of the gospel. What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretense, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice”* (Philippians 1:15-18).

Just granting for the sake of discussion that some today are actually proclaiming the truth out of jealousy, a contentious spirit, hypocrisy, and even intended torment for faithful Christians, it still becomes rather obvious that many don’t rejoice that truth is being disseminated. In fact, it is apparent that many of us simply *refuse to consider the message at all if we feel it has been delivered in an unsatisfactory manner.*

How can we ever let truth become so *unimportant* to us as to *discount* it when our feelings are not edified? We, of all people on earth, should understand that men are to “buy the truth” regardless of its price or their feelings. We, of all people, should be objective enough to leave the rest of the world a bright example of what truth-seeking is all about.



God's saving Word can operate independently — separate and apart from love, sincerity, or gentleness in the one who delivers it. Hear Jesus discuss the responsibility of truth-seeking hearers when such teaching prevails. *"The scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: all therefore whatsoever they bid you to observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not"* (Matthew 23:2,3).

Truth delivered should be obeyed. But bad attitudes and sinful lifestyles on the part of the teachers should of course be avoided. The seed of the kingdom can be sown by spiritual blackbirds or careless and lazy farmers, and yet produce much fruit for the Lord. The Word of God is the living and powerful *"sword of the Spirit"*, whether or not a true Christian soldier is wielding it. Therefore, let us fully understand that it is the message, and not the type of messenger, that is essential for salvation.

I think I would be remiss if I failed to suggest that what we often consider to be unloving or excessively harsh preaching and correction is sometimes (though not always) merely methodology that is abrasive to our own personalities. It may not actually be unloving at all as offered by another person. The apostles even disagreed with the manner in which Jesus offered some strong teaching to the erring religious leaders of His day. *"Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying?"* (Matthew 15:12). Would the Jews of the first century have been justified in refusing the truth delivered to them by Jesus and John after it had been prefaced with a reference to their being *"sons of snakes"*?

Let's really think about this one. And let us do our best to always speak the truth in love. I am certainly not trying to make excuses for those people in the church who fail in their duty to deliver the message properly. But, on the other hand, may we never demand to be spoon-fed with sugar before we will eat what is good for us.

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## WHY JESUS CAME

O.P. Baird

MANY SCRIPTURES TELL US WHY Jesus came. He came so that those who believe on Him should not perish, but have eternal life (John 3:16). He came to seek and save those who are lost (Luke 19:10). He came that we might have life abundantly (John 10:10). He came to serve and give His life as a ransom for many (Matthew 20:28). He came to save His people from their sins (Matthew 1:21).

The scripture to which we shall give special attention here is from

the first epistle of John: *"For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil"* (1 John 3:8).

God created the world and the living creatures, including human beings. When He had finished creating it all, He said it was all very good. But then the devil came with his temptations and brought sin into the world. The devil has always tried to destroy the work of God, and Jesus came to destroy the work of the devil. He destroys the work of the devil now in the lives of those who believe in Him as the Son of God and follow Him. He will completely destroy the work of the devil when the devil and his followers are cast away from God into everlasting punishment.

*"The wages of sin is death"* (Romans 6:23). Jesus came in a body of flesh, *"that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil"* (Hebrews 2:14). It is in His death that we find deliverance from the wages or result of sin. It is important to know how a sinner gets into Christ's death. The Bible gives the answer. The apostle Paul asked the Christians at Rome, *"Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?"* (Romans 6:3). To the Galatians he wrote, *"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ"* (Galatians 3:26,27). This shows that a sinner does not get into Christ and into His death before the sinner is baptized. That does not mean that a sinner is baptized into Christ if he is not prepared for baptism. The preparation for baptism is believing in Christ and repenting of being a sinner. When Peter told the people in Jerusalem that they had crucified the Son of God and that God had raised Him from the dead, the people believed that Jesus was Lord and Christ. Because they believed this, they cried out and asked what they should do. *"Then Peter said unto them, 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 2:37,38). *"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). Salvation is by faith in Christ, and it must be faith that trusts Him and receives Him by receiving His Word. How do we receive the Word of Christ? We must receive it the way the people received it to whom Peter preached. Peter was speaking the Word of Christ, and the people *"received his word"* by doing what He told them to do. They certainly would not have been receiving His Word if they had not done what He told them to do. Christ is destroying the work of the devil when He shows sinners His love and moves them to receive His Word.

## GOD TAKES CARE

“LOOK AT THE BIRDS OF THE AIR: for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? ...

“Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or, ‘What shall we drink?’ or, ‘What shall we wear?’ ... for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (Matthew 6:25-34).

As we live our lives day to day, let us not forget the awesome power of God and His tremendous love for us!

The Bible is filled with wonderful things He has done for His children, including giving His Son on our behalf. We can place our trust in Him. We must study His word, learn His will, and apply it to our lives — and in that state of loving obedience as a child to his father, we can know that God will take care of His children.

— Author Unknown

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## NO ONE IS TOO GUILTY!

David W. Chadwell

“GOD CANNOT FORGIVE ME! Jesus’ could never save me! My sins are unforgivable!” When a person combines such guiltiness with self-contempt, he easily can conclude that God cannot save one so evil. The wicked person who allows his guilt to keep him from acting on his knowledge of God and faith in Jesus creates the ultimate spiritual tragedy.

Jesus stated simply in John 3:16-18 that divine love moved God to send His Son to this world. God’s objective is not to *condemn* humanity through Jesus — humanity stands condemned through its own sinfulness. God’s objective is to *save* humanity through Jesus. The willingness to act on the faith one places in Jesus removes any person from condemnation.

The person overwhelmed by the realization of his or her sinfulness often thinks this is too good to be true! But it *is* true! When Jesus surrendered His life to atone for sin, He atoned for every sin. Every sin from the rebellion of Adam and Eve (Genesis 3) to the last sin prior to the eternal judgment is paid for by Jesus’ blood (Romans 3:25,26). If every person of every generation accepted God’s forgiveness in Jesus, this could not exhaust God’s redemption, grace, or mercy.

No person capable of faith and repentance is beyond God's forgiveness. Jesus verified this repeatedly during His ministry. He extended the opportunity to "*drink the living water*" to an outcast Samaritan woman who had been married to five husbands and was living with a man to whom she was not married (John 4:10-18).

He said, "*Your faith has saved you; go in peace,*" to a penitent woman whose sexual immorality was known throughout her community (Luke 7:36-50).

He appointed a tax collector as one of His twelve disciples (Matthew 9:9-13). Tax collectors were notorious for greed and dishonesty. Any Jew collecting Roman taxes was classified among the worst of sinners. Jesus was strongly condemned by the "acceptable religious leaders" of His day because He associated and ate with tax collectors and sinners. To those charges He replied, "*The sick, not the healthy, need the doctor. I came to call sinners, not the righteous.*"

Severe condemnation resulted from Jesus' practice of teaching, healing, and associating with religious and social outcasts. He delivered such people from every form of evil — including demon possession. In the eyes of the "religiously acceptable," Jesus' work with such people could not be justified.

The greatest evidence that God and Jesus can save the most ungodly person is Saul of Tarsus, who became the Apostle Paul. This man's evil cannot be exaggerated. In the name of God, he tried to destroy Christianity! With full consent, he held the clothing of the men who stoned the Christian, Stephen, to death (Acts 7:58-8:1). He committed himself totally to the destruction of Christianity in Jerusalem by conducting house to house searches for Christians (Acts 8:3). When he found them, he dragged them out of their houses and put them in prison.

He harassed Christians by making threats and declaring his intentions to murder them (Acts 9:1). In this hatred he obtained permission from the Jewish high priest to enter a Damascus synagogue in Syria to arrest, place in chains, and return to Jerusalem any Christians he found (Acts 9:2).

Years later, under arrest himself for belonging to Christ, he freely acknowledged his former wickedness. He declared that in those days he had persecuted Christians to death and imprisoned both men and women (Acts 22:4,5). In those days he did many things in opposition to the name of Jesus. He voted for the execution of Christians he placed in prison. In synagogues he used force in efforts to make them blaspheme. He was obsessed with his hate for Christians (Acts 26:9-11).

On his journey to Damascus he met the resurrected Jesus face to

face and spoke directly to Him (Acts 9:1-9; 26:12-18). In one flashing instant, Paul knew Jesus was God's Son. **He had been opposing and fighting God!** When Jesus sent Ananias to instruct Paul, Paul — in his new faith and knowledge — was baptized. Every sin he had committed was washed away (Acts 22:16).

Years later Paul wrote that his salvation was the unshakable proof that Christ Jesus came to save sinners, for he was the foremost sinner of this world. As the world's foremost sinner, he received mercy in order that Jesus Christ might prove His perfect patience. Paul is the undeniable proof that Jesus can save anyone who believes in the resurrected Son of God (1 Timothy 1:12-17).

Any person capable of placing faith in the resurrected Jesus and repenting can be forgiven of any evil. When any evil person acts on his faith and repentance by being baptized into Christ, he will be cleansed as perfectly from every sin as was Saul of Tarsus. No one is too guilty for salvation in Jesus Christ!

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## The WHY Of Our Faith

David Deffenbaugh

FAITH IS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY. Much emphasis is given to what faith is, **but** no less important than the **what** of our faith is the **why** of our faith. Peter explains, *"But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence"* (1 Peter 3:15). Not only must Christians know **what** they believe, but also **why** they believe it.

The Bible speaks of only one valid source for faith, and that is the Word of God itself. *"So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ"* (Romans 10:17). Any other source is insufficient. There may be several reasons why people believe what they believe. For many people, their faith started with their parents and grandparents. This certainly is a valid means of transmitting faith. God commands the teaching of children by parents (Deuteronomy 6:7; Ephesians 6:4). Timothy's faith was begun by this very means (2 Timothy 1:5). However, the *why* of his faith could not be explained solely on this basis. Paul also tells that *"from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus"* (2 Timothy 3:15). Timothy's faith, like any valid faith, had to have as its source the Word of God.

Obviously there is a place in God's plan for preaching and teaching

in the spread and development of faith (Romans 10:13-15). However, God never intended for these proclaimers of the Gospel ever to become the foundation of anyone's faith. That role can be filled only by the Word. The Berean Jews stand for all time as testimony to the necessity of measuring the message by the Word (Acts 17:11). They were not willing to accept even the message of Paul at his word alone.

Examples of inadequate faith abound. All children of God must evaluate themselves carefully, not only as to **what** they believe, but also as to **why** they believe it. Paul admonished, "*Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves!*" (2 Corinthians 13:5). Only then can we say, "*This is the victory that has overcome the world — our faith*" (1 John 5:4).

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## JESUS CHRIST IS COMING AGAIN

David Pharr

AMONG THE THINGS WHICH Christians believe is that Jesus is coming again. The Bible tells us that as the apostles watched Jesus ascend, "*two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven*" (Acts 1:10,11).

Christians happily embrace the sweet promise of Jesus, who said, "*And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also*" (John 14:3). Thus, we are "*looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ*" (Titus 2:13), because "*we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is*" (1 John 3:2).

The greatness of Jesus' return will be more than human imagination can grasp. It would be folly to suppose that we could understand all that is involved. The splendor and power of His coming will be more than earth's languages can explain and more than human minds can understand. Yet God has told us some things about what will happen when Jesus comes. From the Bible we can be sure of certain doctrines about the Lord's return and about the end of the world.

1. The Bible plainly promises that Jesus is coming (Acts 1:10-11; Philippians 3:20; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 4:16, Hebrews 9:28; Revelation 1:7). Many do not believe what the Bible says about the certainty of

Christ's coming (2 Peter 3:3,4), but Peter shows that what seems to be a long day is only because of the long-suffering of God, and that the day of the Lord indeed **will** come (2 Peter 3:8-10).

2. No one knows when Jesus is coming, not even angels, not even Jesus Himself (at least during His earthly ministry), only God the Father (Matthew 24:42-44; Mark 13:32,33; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3). It is strange that people have attempted to foretell the date. All such efforts have been foolish and vain. Only God knows the day He has appointed (Acts 17:31).

3. All of the dead will be raised. *"There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust"* (Acts 24:15). This shows that there will be one resurrection day for all men, including good and bad people. Jesus made this absolutely plain in John 5:28,29. When Jesus comes, the dead in Christ will be raised. At the same time, the righteous who are alive will be changed. Then the righteous who are raised from death and the righteous who are changed will be taken up to meet the Lord (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:51-54). At the same time sinners will face Christ for judgment (2 Thessalonians 1:7-10). All the dead will come before the *"great white throne"* (Revelation 20:11-13), and there will be a judgment of all people (Matthew 25:31-46). Because they will be judged, the wicked will cry because of His coming (Revelation 1:7), but the people of God will be glad with *"exceeding joy"* (1 Peter 4:13).

4. The universe will be destroyed (2 Peter 3:10-14; Revelation 21:1). There will be a *"new heaven and a new earth"* but it will not be here. Instead, the new dwelling place of God's people will be the place Jesus went to prepare (John 14:1-3). Then we will be in heaven where Jesus is now.

5. The rule of Christ over His kingdom on earth will come to an end. Christ established His kingdom, which is sometimes called the kingdom of heaven, or the kingdom of God, on the day of Pentecost. He had foretold that the kingdom would come within that generation (Mark 9:1). In the same text He said it would come with power. The power was to come when the Holy Spirit came on the apostles (Acts 1:8), and that happened on the day of Pentecost, according to Acts 2. At that time Peter explained that Jesus was raised *"to sit on his throne,"* where He will reign until all His enemies are His footstool (Acts 2:31,34,35). Paul shows the significance of this in 1 Corinthians 15:23-26. The last enemy to be destroyed is death, which will be accomplished in the resurrection. *"Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God"* (1 Corinthians 15:24).



# Baptized For The Dead

Sunny David

I CORINTHIANS 15 HAS BEEN rightly called “The Resurrection chapter.” One of the most prominent and great doctrines of the Bible has been the resurrection of all people who have ever lived or will live until Christ comes back on the day of judgment to reward the just and the unjust. Hear what the apostle says in 1 Corinthians 15:12-19.

*“Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is vain and your faith is also vain. Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise. For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.”*

In essence, the apostle was teaching that Christ’s resurrection was the greatest proof of our own resurrection, which will occur at His coming to judge the world in righteousness (Acts 17:31). The God of heaven who raised Christ, the Man, from the dead, will also by His power, make us alive, as He did Christ, after His death. In this context, the apostle, in 1 Corinthians 15:29, asked the Corinthians: *“Otherwise what will they do who are baptized for the dead, if the dead do not rise at all? Why then are they baptized for the dead?”*

Some have held that there was a custom then of baptizing people, living persons, for the benefit of persons who had died without baptism. It is thought by some that in 1 Corinthians 15:29 Paul was using an argumentum-ad-hominem, that is, an argument based upon what some people were doing at Corinth. However, had such a custom existed there or at any other place then certainly the apostle Paul would have rebuked it, as he did in every other case, instead of using it as an example to teach the most important truth of resurrection. The apostle rebuked the Corinthians when some of them were causing division in the church (1 Corinthians 1:10-13, 3:1-4). He also rebuked them for their immorality that was defiling the church (1 Corinthians 5). In another instance, the apostle reprimanded the Corinthians for their corrupting the institution of the Lord’s Supper (1 Corinthians 11:17-34). And now

as they were denying the resurrection.

Paul the apostle, in 1 Corinthians 15, was specifically dealing with the doctrine of resurrection, which certain false teachers were denying. He argued that since Christ rose from the dead, so in the same manner all will rise from the dead. And, it was in the hope of the resurrection of the dead that they were baptized. The Corinthians were baptized (Acts 18:8), but before going through the act of baptism one must repent or *die to sin* (Acts 2:38), and that is precisely what the Corinthians had done. Before their baptism—their burial in the water-grave of baptism—they had died to sin. They were put in the grave of water as dead men and women. A living person is not buried, but a dead person is. Their baptism was a “planting” in the likeness of the burial of Christ, and was a raising in the likeness of His resurrection from the dead. They had gone in the grave of water, through their baptism, as dead men and women, and were raised from the tomb of water to walk in the newness of life (Romans 6:3-5). The inference is, their baptism was in the very likeness of the death and burial and resurrection of Christ. But if Christ had not risen, and the dead rise not, then their emblematic burial in water and coming out of the watery tomb of baptism had no meaning. Why were they baptized for the dead? What must they do if the dead rise not? How vain a thing had their baptism been if there will be no resurrection? Must they stand by it or renounce it? Yes, the Corinthians were baptized for the dead, with the view of their own death to sin, through repentance, they were buried in the tomb of water and had come out of it, declaring their own death and burial and resurrection to walk in the new Christian walk.

The same apostle wrote the Colossians and said, *“Buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead”* (Colossians 2:12). Continuing, he told them, *“If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God”* (Colossians 3:1-3). The Colossians were living indeed. But the apostle told them: *“For you died.”* When did they die? Of course, before their baptism! They too were baptized for the dead, like the Corinthians, as all others are. Don’t baptize a living person! A living being cannot be baptized scripturally. One must repent, die to the old man of sin, before going down into the tomb of baptism and coming out of it a new creation.

# MAN'S NEED FOR GOD

Ancil Jenkins

HOW TRAGIC TO HAVE A false knowledge of God. A friend of mine recounted a conversation he had with an acquaintance. My friend said that in the middle of their discussion she suddenly spoke of spiritual matters. She startled him by saying, "There probably isn't a God, and if there is, He might be a she."

What has brought man to this and other false pictures of God? It is not that God has failed to adequately reveal Himself to man. Nature is man's beginning textbook about God (Psalm 19:1; Romans 1:19,20). The Bible is our written source of knowledge of Him. He gave His final, fullest revelation in the person of Jesus (John 5:39; 20:30,31). Jesus told His disciples, "*Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father?'*" (John 14:9; see also Colossians 1:19; 2:3, 9; Hebrews 1:3).

It seems there are two factors that keep man from knowing God as he should. One is man's intentional ignorance. Although God has provided man with the opportunity to know Him, many see little need or use of knowing Him.

The pride of man hinders his awareness of God. Man's only proper response to God is to praise and honor Him for what He is. This is done by worship in song and prayer. It is characterized by a sacrificial lifestyle. It is even done in the way we eat and drink (1 Corinthians 10:31).

What is the inevitable result of man's refusal to know God and glorify Him? Romans 1 presents two disastrous results. Man degenerates deeper and deeper into sin. His worship becomes idolatry, and his lifestyle becomes sensual. The result is acts that are perverse and are worthy of death (Romans 1:28-32).

Even more horrifying is God's response. Paul speaks of God giving up on such individuals (Romans 1:24,26,28). The inevitable and eventual result of a failure to know God is damnation. When a person deliberately refuses to know God, God reacts the same way.

How these thoughts should cause us to look to God's Word to see if we really know Him as He is! If we do not, let us seek to know Him, for only in Him is life that is life indeed.

# ***God's Family Values***

**Jack Harriman**

EVERYONE IS TALKING ABOUT family values and everyone claims to be in favor of them. But, of course, we do not all mean the same thing when we speak of family values.

## **THE STANDARD FOR FAMILY VALUES**

For those who do not believe in God, the standard is whatever they want it to be, and it varies greatly from person to person. But for the believer, the standard is set by God and is revealed in the New Testament. So the family values of God become the family values of God's people.

## **SOME OF THOSE VALUES**

- One man and one woman married to each other as long as both shall live (Matthew 19:3-9).
- Sexual faithfulness each to the other (1 Corinthians 7:2).
- The love of the husband for his wife is patterned after the sincerity and depth of Christ's love for the church (Ephesians 5:25-29).
- The wife loves, respects and submits to her husband as she does to the Lord (Ephesians 5:22; Titus 2:4).
- The husband leads his family both physically and spiritually (Ephesians 5:23).
- Father and mother rear children in the training and instruction of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4; Titus 2:4).
- Children obey and honor parents when they are young and care for them when they are old (Ephesians 6:1; 1 Timothy 5:8).

The *greatest threat* to the family in our community is not actually the family values of unbelievers, but the "lip service" that is paid to God's family values *by half-converted "believers."*

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# **THE GOSPEL IS FOR ALL**

**Earl Edwards**

WHILE HERE ON THE EARTH, Jesus once said to His disciples, "Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, and then comes the harvest?' Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes, and look upon the fields, that they are white for harvest" (John 4:35).

I am convinced that if Jesus were to speak directly to those of us in the church today He would tell us first of all to *"lift up"* our eyes to see the sad spiritual plight of many in our world. He would say that it should be evident that they need the Gospel. Second, He would tell us to *"lift up"* our eyes to re-evaluate the spiritual "help" available in our great God (Psalm 27:9,10; 131:1-3,8). But perhaps, above all, He would tell us, as He did those first century disciples, to *"lift up"* our eyes to the *"fields"* that are *"white for harvest."* He would remind us that He desires that we *"make disciples of all the nations"* (Matthew 28:19), for *"the gospel is for all."*

Those who have spiritual needs and the God who can fill their needs must be brought together, and that is the job of Christians who have gained spiritual vision from Christ. Returning to our text in John chapter four, notice that Jesus disdains material food, because He sees people streaming out from the village of Sychar (verse 30). He sees fields that are *"white for harvest"* (verse 35).

Today there are urgent spiritual needs, and the church that has vision and is really *"of Christ"* will recognize the urgency of the work which needs to be done. Likewise, the person that is really a person of vision, a mature Christian, will feel that urgency.

### **WHITE FIELDS AROUND THE WORLD**

The Lord said, *"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations"* (Matthew 28:19). Mature Christian individuals and obedient churches will never be satisfied with going to only one nation when the Lord said *"all nations."* We must therefore, *"lift up"* our eyes to the *"white fields"* of the rest of the world. We must, as Paul did, endeavor to *"preach the Gospel"* where Christ has not already been *"named"* so that those who *"had no news of Him"* shall *"see"* and *"understand"* (Romans 15:20,21). It is true that churches of Christ have made some progress in reaching such nations in the last few years. In fact, in 1939, when World War II broke out, we had only a few struggling churches of Christ in all of Europe, and all of these were in Great Britain. By 1977 we had about 195 churches of Christ in 20 of Europe's 35 countries, so we have made some progress, but much is yet to be done.

### **WE NEED TO TAKE THE GOSPEL TO ALL**

We must remember that Jesus said to *"make disciples of all the nations."* Somehow we are not as committed to that task as we should be. J.M. McCaleb was a missionary for churches of Christ

in Japan in the period from 1891 until approximately 1941. After he had worked in Japan for numerous years, one of his several supporting churches wrote him saying that it had decided to cut its support to him and redirect it to the “heathen” people of the U.S.A. McCaleb was so dedicated that he secured a secular job to be able to continue teaching the Japanese that he loved. However, it was on that occasion that he also wrote the great hymn that we often sing — ‘The Gospel is for All.’ Do you remember the words?

*Of one the Lord has made the race,  
Thro’ one has come the fall;  
Where sin has gone must go His grace:  
The gospel is for all.*

*Say not the heathen are at home.  
Beyond we have no call,  
For why should we be blessed alone?  
The gospel is for all.*

Brethren, our God is a great God, and a languishing world needs to hear of His love and mercy. And, if we really decide to give of ourselves to reach these “*white fields*,” we will learn by experience that it really is “*more blessed to give than to receive*” (Acts 20:35).

### **WE MUST FOCUS ON OTHERS**

But let me remind us that if we are going to be the kind of people that “get the job done” for the Lord we must be people with wisdom who “*lift up*” our eyes to the fields. We must quit focusing on ourselves and think of others. God help us all to think of others, and, when we do, we will become people with vision who will indeed “*lift up*” their eyes to the “*white fields*,” because they know that the Gospel is indeed for all men.

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## **OUR MISSION : IS IT IMPOSSIBLE?**

### **Wayne Barrier**

THE NEW TESTAMENT CLEARLY defines the mission of the church in Matthew 28:19,20 and Mark 16: 15,16. To implement and carry out the mission requires an understanding of many other passages of Scripture, but none other captures the overall mission better than these verses in Matthew and Mark. Every year scores of millions are launched into eternity as they are overtaken by death. Each will stand before God

in judgment, where a sentence will be given regarding the individual's eternal destiny—either a home in Heaven or eternal punishment in Hell and torment.

Are we successful in our mission to provide each of these souls an opportunity to obey the Gospel of Christ? The answer is that most who die every day have not been taught the truth that can set one free (John 8:32). We have only a small number who are trying to reach most of the world's population. Every day we lose ground in this war with Satan because we have such a small army, which is often poorly equipped for the battle.

**Is the mission impossible?** I do not believe it is impossible. I do not believe God would command us to do something that He knows would be impossible for us to accomplish. I believe the problem is our *failure to seriously approach the task*.

If we suddenly discovered that we had a serious life-threatening illness requiring treatment immediately, we would approach the mission of finding and receiving treatment in a most urgent manner. If we knew our life was at stake, we would spare nothing to be cured. Our time, money, intellect, personal energy, and every other resource would be used, if needed. We would not hesitate to call upon others for help. We would certainly have many serious and extensive talks with God about this matter. We would not hesitate, or be the least bit embarrassed, to mobilize everyone and everything possible to achieve our mission to be healed in order to live longer.

We are all familiar with this process, having seen friends and family members in a struggle with serious illness. Most of us know that Jesus taught that saving one's soul is more important than anything in the world (Matthew 16:26). We also know that in order to find eternal life, we must lose (or give up) our carnal desires in this life for the sake of Christ (Matthew 16:25).

What about our mission to reach every soul with the Gospel? Souls are at stake! How do we describe our overall evangelism effort? What about my personal effort for this great cause? I believe we could complete the mission if we were all to approach the task in the same way we would deal with a life-threatening health problem.

Our first century brethren completed the mission, with most people in the world having an opportunity to hear the truth (Colossians 1:6). We have the resources and tools to do the same today. We simply need to be committed to the task. *The mission is not impossible!* God will help us achieve total success if we will only do our part (Ephesians 3:20).



# BAPTISM IS FOR THE DEAD!

Francis David

ALL OVER THE WORLD baptism is a very controversial subject. People are confused about this command. Since baptism *is* a command of God, and part of the great commission of Christ, it should not be taken lightly. Yet the majority of people are convinced that it is not necessary for salvation. Most religious groups preach and teach that One can be saved without baptism.

In order to understand the truth on this important subject, we must rightly divide the Scriptures (2 Timothy 2:15). How sad it is that people do not divide the word of God rightly, so they ignore verses that seem to contradict other verses, or that disagree with what they have been taught by their preachers. But the Bible does not contradict itself; whatever it says on one subject in one place must harmonize with what it says on the same subject in other places. *The Bible does not teach different ways of salvation or different doctrines about baptism.*

As we turn to the word of God, we see that Paul wrote, “*All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*” (Romans 3:23). John says, “*Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness*” (1 John 3:4). Because man has sinned, God cannot have fellowship with him. Sins separate us from God.

The Scriptures tell us that in order to have the forgiveness of sins, one *must* be baptized (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). But the important thing we want to see is that *baptism is for dead people!*

***Yes, baptism is for those who are dead in their tresspasses (sins).*** When a sinner confesses his faith in Jesus and repents of his sins and is buried in the watery grave of baptism, he dies to his sins;. The old man who was *dead in sin* has now become *dead to sin*. Paul says again, “*Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life*” (Romans 6:4-6). In baptism the body of sin is done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.

We go further and read in the same chapter, verses 7 and 8, that **when a person has died he has been freed from sins.** He has died with Christ, but he shall also live with Him in the resurrection.

We come to verse 11 and here we see that Paul explains that we

are to consider ourselves **dead indeed to sin** but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

In 1 Corinthians 15:29, Paul is talking to the brethren at Corinth regarding the resurrection, and he asks a question: *“What will they do who are baptized for the dead, if the dead do not rise at all? Why then are they baptized for the dead?”* A **dead person—a person who is dead in sins—is the subject for baptism**. When this dead person obeys the command of baptism, he comes forth from the watery grave as a **new living person**. His old man or old manner of life is buried now. He or she is a new creature in Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:17).

To humans, **spiritual death** is not as *real and dreaded* as **physical death**, but if we could see dead souls as God sees them, we would have no problem understanding the graphic wording of “dead” in 1 Corinthians 15:29.

Friend, have you been baptized? If not, then you must study what the Scriptures say and act accordingly. You need to die to your old sinful life, and you can be sure that in Jesus your sins are washed away.

*“And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord”* (Acts 22:16).

## PRESIDENT GARFIELD’S APPOINTMENT

JAMES A. GARFIELD WAS A Gospel preacher, Civil War general, and President of the United States. History will never be able to judge what kind of leader he might have been because he was shot by a crazed office-seeker and died after only six months in office.

Early one Sunday morning a group of party leaders came by the White House to see him to discuss a bill they thought should be passed by Congress. They were surprised when he said he had a very important appointment and would talk to them that afternoon.

“But Mr. President,” one man asked, “What could be more important than this?” Garfield arose and walked to the door, turned to the party leaders and said, “Gentlemen, I have an appointment at the Lord’s table.” He then left with Mrs. Garfield and went to Sunday morning worship.