

OF SHUTTLES AND CHRIST

Charles R. Rose

Our nation was once again brought to tears by the loss of the space shuttle Columbia some weeks ago. Let us never cease praying for those families who lost so much with their loved ones in that mishap.

When the news first aired of the disaster, I recalled the first flight of that fantastic machine. My family had just moved to Mexico, Missouri a few miles from the city of Columbia for which the shuttle was named. The talk of the area was more of the firebrick on the launching pad at Cape Canaveral being manufactured at A Refractory located at Mexico and Columbia than anything else. On April 14, 1981 when astronauts John Young and Robert Crippen sat that huge space ship "Columbia" down in the California desert history was made and there was a pride in people's voices because they felt a part of something great.

As we consider the first and last flight of Columbia I think also of the first and last scenes of God's only begotten Son as recorded in Scripture.

The first advent of Jesus in the city of Bethlehem changed the face of world history more than a thousand space ventures such as we have witnessed from all the nations involved in space travel. Jesus brought a hope of eternal proportions which no scientist nor program of man could even imagine. As Jeremiah said, "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23). Only the Son of God has the power to save humankind from complete annihilation in a fire more horrible than man has ever known.

During the lifetime of the space shuttle Columbia, great strides were made by man in science and research. Today three men are living in a space lab far off in outer space carrying on experiments which, in time, will be of great benefit to mankind. But Jesus, during his lifetime, carried mankind from the hopelessly lost state brought about by Adam's sin to a state of being "sons and daughters" to the most high God (2 Corinthians 6:17-18). Rather than being separated from the rest of humanity by miles and miles of space, Jesus asks us only to separate ourselves from the defilements of sin by obeying His gospel plan of salvation. He then asks us to continue living amongst men and teach them how to become a child of God through **faith** (John 8:24; Hebrews 11:6), **repentance** (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30),

confession of faith (Matthew 10:32; Romans 10:9-10), and **baptism** (Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16). This obedience makes us a part of something great. It makes us a part of His church for which He died (Acts 20:28). A living stone (1 Peter 2:5), "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone" (Ephesians 2:20).

As a nation we can all be proud of the progress made through the research and development brought about through our space program. We can raise our patriotic voices together in it. As Christians we have even more reason to be proud of being a part of Christ's body (Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18). Let us preach it with pride (Mark 16:15).

We have all seen the horrible pictures of Columbia's breakup. We have agonized with the families of the lost astronauts. This last flight of Columbia should remind us that our Lord will one-day "re-enter" the atmosphere of earth. This will also involve fire as "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thessalonians 1:7-8). At that time all the physical world will melt with fervent heat. Each and every one of us will then face the great judge (Romans 14:10; 2 Corinthians 5:10).

The venerable Tillit S. Teddlie pictured that final scene in these words:

Someday you'll stand at the bar on high, Someday your record you'll see; Someday you'll answer the question of life, What will your answer be? What will it be? What will it be? Where will you spend your eternity? What will it be? O, what will it be? What will your answer be?—PO Box 233, Lincoln, MO 65338

THINK ABOUT IT

*Some of us are like wheelbarrows—
only useful when pushed, and very easily upset.*

*Human nature seems to endow people with the
ability to size up everyone but themselves.*

THEOLOGY VERSUS THE GOSPEL

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obedience. But the devil introduced doubt into the mind of Eve. She began to doubt the goodness of God; she speculated as to how the eating of the fruit could possibly cause her death. She finally decided that she would be “the mistress of her own destiny;” she assumed for herself the control of her life. But God had reserved this control as His dominion. The more she speculated over God’s command, the more she became convinced that she ought to follow her own reasoning. Human reasoning was the cause of the downfall in Eden. This is truly the origin of “theology” into the world. Theology has from the very beginning been in the final analysis only an attempt on the part of man to reason himself out of doing what God commanded. The result of theology has been always to lead man away from obedience. The world has never had a speculative theologian in all its history who had much respect for the authority of God. It has never had one who believed, obeyed, and practiced the simple gospel of Christ.

Corinth was located in the midst of the most speculative nation in history. Human learning and human philosophy were at their height. Yet Paul tells the Corinthians that men “by their wisdom” knew not God. The spirit of philosophy and speculation found entrance into the Corinthian church, calling for some of Paul’s most scathing denunciation of the speculative spirit.

The gospel of Christ cannot be proved by resorting to the theologies of men. It rests solely upon the authority of Christ. Human speculations can find no merit in the crucifixion, in baptism, in the Lord’s Supper. The Christian does not speculate about these matters; he accepts them by faith, obeys the commandments, and trusts implicitly in the promises of God.

The best and greatest act of the human mind is for man to satisfy himself by all the evidence that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. That being settled, the noblest walk of life is to walk by faith in Christ. The greatest work of any gospel preaching is to tell men what to do to be saved, and persuade them to accept the authority of Christ. Paul sums up the whole Christian attitude thusly: “I have been

crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me; and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Galatians 2:20).—*Ancient Landmarks*, July 1948.

JESUS CHRIST: LIBERAL OR CONSERVATIVE?

Dalton Key

Was Christ a Liberal or a Conservative? Though these labels were not used during the days of his flesh, if they had been, he could have been considered both. Or neither.

The Pharisees would no doubt have branded Jesus a rank Liberal, for he refused to bend to their traditions and self-serving interpretations of Scripture. Though never deviating from the Father’s expressed will, Jesus was not content to continue the onerous “status quo” set by these self-appointed religious leaders. He refused to pay homage to their man-made, inconsistent legalisms, accusing the Pharisees of approaching God with the mouth and with the lips while keeping their heart far from the Father (Matthew 15:8).

On the other hand, the Sadducees would have surely singled Jesus out as a narrow-minded Conservative, for he held to a strict, legalistic view of such biblical matters as the spirit and the resurrection from the dead. When confronted with a hypothetical scenario concerning one wife, seven brothers, the resurrection and “whose wife shall she be?” the Lord insisted strict attention be paid to the absolute truth of God’s Word: “You do err,” he said, “not knowing the Scriptures” (Matthew 22:29).

We can be thankful that what mattered most to Jesus was not what others thought of Him, but what the Father thought. He sought to be seen in the eyes of his Father, not as a liberal, not as conservative, but as faithful-faithful in form, faithful in substance; faithful in practice, faithful in spirit.

And above all else and before all else, Christ was faithful (Hebrews 3:2).

As well we all should be.—801 NE 15th, Amarillo, TX 79107



A FRIEND SHARED A COPY

Would you please add our names to your mailing list. We are very much interested in receiving the publication. A preacher friend shared a copy with us and until that time we had not heard of the *Gospel Gleaner*. Enjoyed it and thanks so much. Ben & Joyce Ferrell, Shepherdsville, KY

LOOKS FORWARD TO GETTING IT

Received the *Gospel Gleaner* and am happy you put me on your mailing list. I look forward to getting it. You are doing a good work and I appreciate you. Take care and hang-in-there. May God Bless your good works. Enclosed is a small gift to help out and to say "thank you." Betty Johnson, Lauderdale, MS.

ENJOYED GG FOR SEVERAL YEARS

I have certainly enjoyed your *Gospel Gleaner* for several years, we started getting it when Ronnie Whittemore was at Heath, KY. Since then my husband has died and I have moved. I still get the paper at my old address. Thought that I would let you know so I would get only one, however, the other one has not been wasted I pass it to someone else. You have such good articles everyone enjoys reading them. Keep up the good work, May God bless you in bringing others to Christ. Dollie Paschall, Puryear, TN.

EDIFYING ARTICLES

I have been receiving the *Gospel Gleaner* since 1992 and have truly been edified by the many articles. Thanks very much and keep up the good work. James Powell, Wetumpka, AL.

GOOD MATERIAL

I continue to appreciate the good material being made available to many through the *Gospel Gleaner*. Byron Nichols, Springfield, MO.

PLEASURABLE & EDIFYING READING

It has been pleasurable and edifying to read your publication over this past year (2002, Vol 18). I especially enjoyed the "Restoration Reachbacks" section with the articles from the preachers of yesteryear. It is amazing, but not all that surprising, that their articles are as applicable and necessary as the date they were authored. I have only been able to get your paper during some rare visits to a neighboring congregation. Please add me to your mailing list so that I may get them regularly. Also, if you have any back issues that you could send I would definitely enjoy receiving them. I understand that the subscription is free, but I would like to make a small contribution to help with this good work. Also, since I am in my beginning years of preaching I would appreciate any information you could give in submitting manuscripts for publication. Jeff Kelley, Sanford, NC.

FINE PUBLICATION

I received the *Gospel Gleaner* today and have already read all of it, and certainly enjoy receiving this fine publication. Thank you for sending it to me. Walter Lumpkin, Paragould, AR.

SCRIPTURAL MAGAZINE

Thanks for putting an article of mine in your scriptural magazine! I am a 91 year old "has been," but the best is yet to be! Hugo McCord, Vancouver, WA.

A GOOD PAPER

Thank you for your good work you do with the *Gospel Gleaner*. I have enjoyed it for a long time and do use many of the sermons found inside. They are well written and easy to preach. Again, thank you for a good paper and the work put into it. May the Lord continue to bless you in this good work. Leonard Groves, Chester, WV.

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THE NAME OF JESUS

Wayne Jackson

Paul affirms regarding Christ: "Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:9-11).

directly to Jehovah. "By myself have I sworn, the word is gone forth from my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear."

Second, the phrase demonstrates the universal authority of Christ—"Every knee shall bow." Christ has been given "all authority" in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:18; John 17:2; Ephesians 1:20-22), the only exception to that being the Father himself (1 Corinthians 15:27).

Third, it ought to be noted that the expression "should bow" is in the subjunctive mood. Men may now, by their own choice, bow to the Lord Jesus. He was exalted to that end. If they rationally consider the evidence for his divine nature, and if they are of honest heart, surely they will do this. If men, however, choose not to bow before the savior, the time will come when they stand in judgment, so over-powered by his divine presence, that "every knee shall bow" (indicative mood—Romans 14:11). Carefully examine this latter passage and its context of the coming judgment. It is hardly necessary to point out that such bowing by the rebellious on the day of judgment will not be honored by Jehovah.

It should be noted in passing that "bowing the knee" is not a reference to a mechanical genuflection at the mention of Jesus' name; rather, the expression is simply a synecdoche (a figure of speech whereby the part stands for the whole) suggesting an attitude that wholly yields to

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Of special interest here, however, is the affirmation that at the name of Jesus "every knee should bow." It is full of wonderful implications.

First, it argues for the deity of Christ. Bowing the knee, in this context, is an obvious allusion to worship, thus demonstrating that Christ, as God, is worthy of worship (Matthew 8:2; John 20:28). Elsewhere, when Paul wrote of those who had not "bowed the knee to Baal" (Romans 11:4), he was clearly referring to those who had not capitulated to idol worship. Moreover, the language seems to be taken from Isaiah 45:23 where it is applied



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STAFF WRITERS

Bill Dillon
Guy F. Hester
M. W. Kiser
Grady Miller
John T. Polk, II
Allen Webster

EDITOR

Dennis Gullledge

MAILING ADDRESSES

Contributions

P. O. Box 345
Mabelvale, AR 72103

Manuscripts

P. O. Box 345
Mabelvale, AR 72103

Web Site

mabelvalechurchofchrist.org

Of all the expressions that Jesus used to refer to himself, none more clearly declares his divinity than "Son of God." Not only did Jesus acknowledge himself to be the Son of God, but that title of divinity is sustained by the power of various testimonials, which include friends and foes alike. What more formidable adversaries can one find than Satan and his allies?

It is true that not all of Jesus' enemies would acknowledge his divine relation to the Father. Jesus once asked the Pharisees, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is He?" (Matthew 22:42). In their reply, "The Son of David" the Pharisees were only partially correct. Jesus responded, "How then does David in the Spirit call Him 'Lord,' saying: 'The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool'? If David then calls Him 'Lord,' how is He his son?" (Vss. 43-45). The Pharisees refused to acknowledge that while Jesus was descended from David, he was also divine as Lord. The Messiah on earth was both fleshly and divine.

Mark opens his account of the life of Jesus with these words: "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (1:1). Jesus' claim to this relationship with God the Father was the principle charge against him by the Jewish authorities (Matthew 27:43).

To the modern student of the New Testament one of the most puzzling usages of this divine title is the consistent employment of it by representatives of the demonic world. It is not my purpose here to settle the lingering questions we have about demons and demon possession in the New Testament. Suffice it also to say that we are not talking about a realm of phantoms, ghosts and goblins. We are, however, talking about a frightening world of spiritual entities that stood as a challenge to the authority of God on earth. The defeat and destruction of the Devil and his works was an essential part of Jesus' Messianic work on earth (1 John 3:8). It will be the purpose of this study to briefly consider the impact of the demonic confessions that agree that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.



WHO OR WHAT WERE DEMONS?

The origin of demons is not stated in the Holy Scriptures. The Bible does, however, speak of their existence. There are at least five current theories concerning the origin of demons. Although legitimate questions and objections may be raised against each of the following theories, they should be carefully considered. They are as follows:

1. Demons were the offspring of angels and women who lived before the flood. So some interpret Genesis 6:1-6. The main problem with this view is that angels are revealed to us as asexual beings, thus making such a union impossible (Matthew 22:30).

2. Demons were the spirits of a pre-Adamic race of men on earth in the days

of the alleged “gap period” between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2. The main problem with this view is the Bible does not teach a “gap theory,” nor, does it speak of any humans before Adam. If Adam was the first man (1 Corinthians 15:45), and he was, then, there were none before him.

3. Demons were the evil spirits of those who died in the flood. The rationale for this theory is based on Matthew 12:42-45 and Luke 11:14-26. This is supposed to account for the demons’ fear of water [hydrophobia] in Matthew 12:43 and Luke 11:24.

4. Demons were fallen angels who followed Satan in his rebellion against God, and so became demons, or evil spirits. This theory is based upon 2 Peter 2:4 and Jude 6.

5. Demons were the spirits of wicked men whom God permitted to exit the Hadean realm in order to possess some people on earth. This theory seems to be the view generally accepted. Alexander Campbell, in his popular 1841 lecture on “Demonology,” said, “Thus, all the scriptural allusions to this subject authorize the conclusion that demons are wicked and unclean spirits of dead men” (*Popular Lectures and Addresses*, St. Louis, Missouri: Christian Publishing Company, 1861, p. 389).

The word “demon,” as used in some of the more modern translations is preferable to that of “devil,” as found in the King James Version. The Greek word for “demon” is used, in one form or another, about seventy-five times in the New Testament.

There is one devil, but many demons. The Greek word *daimon* (demon) signified, among pagan Greeks, an inferior deity whether good or bad. For example, Paul, addressing the Areopagus, said, “Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious” (Acts 17:22). The words “very religious” translate the single Greek word, *deisidaimonesterous*. Literally, it means, “very reverent to demons.” Here, however, the compounded Greek word *daimon*, has reverence to a deity, or pagan god. In other New Testament references the word denotes “a spirit” (Luke 9:39); “unclean spirits” (Matthew 10:1); “evil spirits” (Luke 7:21); and, “a spirit of an unclean devil” (Luke 4:33). In the majority of cases these terms are used in the plural form to indicate many demons.

As to the nature of demons we know that they are spirit entities: “When evening had come, they brought to

Him many who were demon-possessed: And he cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick” (Matthew 8:16). This passage shows that we not dealing with a mere unexplained physical, or mental illness, as is often suggested.

As to their character we know that they were evil spirits, the agents of Satan the “ruler of the demons” (Matthew 12:24). They differ in degrees of wickedness (Matthew 12:45). Whereas classical Greek writers used the word demon in both a good and bad sense, the English New Testament uses it only in an evil sense. There were good and bad angels (Matthew 25:31; 2 Peter 2:4), but, there were and are no good demons.

In the New Testament they are presented as intelligent beings, possessing true knowledge of Jesus Christ as the Son of God. They spoke from knowledge greater than man in being able to identify Jesus as “the Son of God,” when many men at that time had not reached that conclusion. The demons knew that his name was Jesus and that he was the “Son of the Most High God” who was their future judge (Luke 8:26-31). They feared Jesus’ power to cast them into the abyss, a place from which they could not return if once expelled there. This would account for the demons’ entreaty not to be thus banished (Luke 8:31). They knew that a time of torment was in store for them and that Christ had the power to commit them to this torment before the appointed time (Matthew 8:29).

JESUS CHRIST AND DEMONS

One of the Lord’s chief works on earth was to destroy the work of Satan. John wrote, “For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8). Christ demonstrated his authority over the spirit realm with absolute power over the demons. Along with Jesus, his twelve apostles, the seventy and some others exercised power over demons (Matthew 10:1; Mark 9:38; Luke 10:17). The demons were completely subject to Jesus and were compelled to yield to him in obedience (Mark 1:27). Jesus’ power over Satan and demons was a demonstration that all things were
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JESUS: THE MASTER TEACHER

Guy F. Hester



Most of us have had the experience and pleasure of learning under some very good teachers who stand out in our minds. I still have in my possession a letter (which I treasure) of commendation from the principal of my high school in Parrish, Alabama after I returned from Korea in the 1950's. Then there were my Bible class teachers in the church. Sister Bessie Lawrence "Miss Bessie" who taught the first class I can remember, and brother Frank Kinningham who taught a teenage boy's class and was such an encouragement to me in so many ways. The greatest and best teacher was my own father, S. F. (Sherlie) Hester, who, along with my godly mother, taught me to love God, the Bible, and the souls of men and instilled in me the desire to preach the Gospel. One of the greatest compliments I ever receive is when someone who can remember my dad says, "You sound just like your dad when you preach." Brethren Gus Nichols, G. K. Wallace, H. A. Dixon and Franklin Camp are but a few of the great teachers at whose feet I have had the privilege to learn. These men were all great Bible scholars.

Such famous teachers as Plato, Aristotle, and Socrates, though they have been dead for more than two thousand years, have left their mark in the world through their writings that have been preserved and are often referenced today. However the greatest teacher of all time, The Master Teacher, is none other than Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

"Teacher...From God"

"Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God" (John 3:2). This acknowledgement was from "a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews" (John 3:1). God had sent many teachers into the world before the coming of Jesus, i.e., prophets, angels. But the One whom He sent that would fulfill all of the prophecies

of the past and proclaim a message of hope and salvation as never before spoken was "His only begotten Son" (John 3:16). "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). Jesus was God manifest in the flesh (John 1:1, 14). The *Logos*, the eternal Word, was personified in human flesh. Being incarnate as a man, He knew both the hearts and the needs of man. He was, and still is, through the teaching of His Word able to reach the hearts of every individual who is "poor in spirit" and has a real and genuine interest in knowing God and being saved. Jesus, "a teacher come from God," who had a part in the creation of all things, "the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth," makes Him The Master Teacher of all ages.

Perfect Knowledge

Jesus is the Master teacher because He has perfect knowledge. No other teacher before nor after Him has had, or ever will have, perfect knowledge about everything there is to know. The story is told of a wise old man who had the reputation of being able to give a correct answer to any question asked him. One day a boy came up with a plan to trick the old man. The boy had a bird in his hand and asked, "Old man, is the bird I hold in my hand dead or alive?" If the man had said it was dead, the boy was going to release it and let it fly away. If he said it was alive, he would squeeze the life from it and drop it on the ground. But the old man surprised the boy when, without hesitation, he answered, "My son, it is exactly as you wish it to be."

Likewise the critics of Jesus were always trying to trap Him and would put questions to Him that they considered impossible to answer. Yet He always answered without hesitation or consultation. When the Pharisees and Herodians asked, "Is it lawful to give tribute unto

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JESUS: THE MIRACLE WORKER

Bill Dillon



In the 21st century, things are not always what they seem. Hollywood's trick photographic stunts make us see things and people that are not there. You just can't believe your eyes when it comes to the silver screen. Furthermore, the magicians of our time are capable of illusions and sleight of hand so as to make us think

they caused the Statue of Liberty or an entire modern aircraft to disappear before our very eyes! Such is just so much hogwash and smoke and mirrors. Entertaining as such feats may be, they are just tricks, demonstrating only how skilled individuals are in mastering the ability to fool people. We exclaim, "How did they do that?" or "No way!" and our curiosity is inflamed.

The deeds of Jesus Christ are intriguing also, only in a different kind of way and for a highly different purpose. The actions of Christ are not in the same classification as Siegfried and Roy or David Copperfield. His astonishments are real and genuine. Jesus' miracles are established by a Mt. Everest of evidence to be authentic supernatural accomplishments.

A magic trick is one thing, but a miracle is quite different. A miracle is "the exertion of God's power in a manner unexplainable by human wisdom in order to produce that which was beyond the powers of nature; a supernatural occurrence."

Critics today scream that "miracles contradict universal experience." This is not true, as in the Bible thousands of people witnessed the miracles of Christ and never questioned that a genuine supernatural event had occurred. For example, the only miracle recorded by all four gospel writers was the feeding of the 5,000 (Matthew 14:13-21; Mark 6:32-44; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-13).

Please understand when Jesus performed this divine deed He was establishing His identity. Not a soul knew who He really was. Herod supposed He was John the Baptizer, back from the dead. The crowds loved and sought Jesus but they were motivated by the "free-lunch mentality." Jesus could confess to be Santa Claus, and the crowd would feel no differently toward the Lord.

In the miracle of the feeding of the 5,000 Jesus will do

an undeniably clear action so all can understand who He really is. An identifying deed with thousands of witnesses will be done. To make sure of the count of the numbers, groups of fifties and hundreds are organized.

We can know God by His creative accomplishments; such as forming the sun, moon and stars. The Milky Way Galaxy is merely one of one trillion (more or less) other galaxies in the universe. Astronomers estimate the universe to be around forty billion light-years across and to contain roughly 100 billion trillion stars. Bear in mind, a light-year is the distance light travels in one earth year at the speed of 186,000 miles per second! This is truly mind-boggling. But trying to get our minds around this concept of immensity, why should we think it unbelievable for Deity to feed a few thousand people (about 15,000 with women and children included) with a minor amount of food?

In the feeding of the multitude, Jesus will act like who He truly is—the Creator God that the Holy Scriptures declare Him to be (John 1:14; Colossians 1:15-17). With a little boy's lunch, consisting of five barley loaves and two fish, this Creator Jesus will satisfy the hunger of the 15,000 and have twelve basketfuls left over! After such a feat, the people will rejoice because the bread of their souls has been manifest.

This Jesus is not a magician. He is the Living Lord; the God of Creation. Jesus is not Siegfried and Roy but the Son of Royalty!

Jesus performed miracles not merely to entertain or to amaze people, but to convince the world that He was who He said He was—the Truth of God. In Mark 2:5-12, He claimed to be able to forgive sins. Jesus pronounced a man to be forgiven, then followed His words up with a miracle to validate His claim. Now, that makes a point by proving the credibility of the very things He said. Another similar event took place in Luke 7:11-17 when the Lord raised the widow's son from the dead. In verse 16 it reads, "and there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, a great prophet has risen up among us; and, that God has visited His people." Reports of such deeds would have rapidly spread to all surrounding areas.

But regarding the feeding of the multitude, all four

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THE LORD'S SUPPER: THE WORLD'S GREATEST MONUMENT

Allen Webster



Statues are raised to honor great men; calendars date the world's important events; scenes of outstanding battles are forever marked. Colleges and hospitals name buildings in honor of benefactors; streets are called after the famous who travel them. Everybody who is anybody has a

biography lining a library shelf. How could one choose the greatest monument? Is it the tallest? Most read? Widest known? Most expensive?

The world's greatest monument neither originated in man's mind nor was designed by a renowned artist. It is not even recognized by most historians. Its picture is not regularly taken nor is it mentioned in travel magazines. It originated in the mind of God and was set up in honor of His crucified Son. For about ten minutes each first day of the week, Christians keep a feast in honor of the One who lived and died for them. They remember His life, lessons, and especially His death.

Consider what makes the Lord's Supper so unique.

IT IS INDESTRUCTIBLE THOUGH DESTROYED. Marble slowly crumbles, bronze defaces, dates drop from calendars, biographies go out-of-print; streets are renamed after new heroes. Men's monuments do not last, but God's memorial remains. It is two thousand years old now and will last until the Lord returns. At the same time, its component parts deteriorate within a few days. Left unattended, the grape juice soon ferments and the unleavened bread soon molds. Interestingly, it is indestructible precisely because it is destroyed. Saints destroy the bread and juice each Lord's Day; yet, it becomes a part of them. As one generation commits the truth to the next (2 Timothy 2:2), the Supper will remain until Jesus comes back. "For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come" (1 Corinthians 11:26).

IT IS UNIVERSAL WHILE LIMITED TO ONE PLACE. Stalin's monument has never enjoyed popularity in America. Robert E. Lee might be popular among some in the South, but above the Mason-Dixon his memory is not highly favored. Dr. King is loved by many, but not by all.

Hitler may receive honor in Germany, but the world frowns on him. There are few monuments that receive universal support. In cities nationwide and countries world-wide, the communion will be kept this Sunday. No other monument is in as many continents, countries, cities, and communities. It is not limited to one place like a statue or to one country like a Memorial Day. No eastern land nor western civilization can lay exclusive claim to it. It is, though, limited to one place—it must be eaten in the Lord's kingdom. Just hours before His death, Jesus said, "For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come... That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom..." (Luke 22:18, 30). Incidentally, those who do not believe the kingdom has come (e.g., premillennialists), are inconsistent when eating the Supper for Jesus said it would be "in the kingdom" (Matthew 26:29).

IT GIVES LIFE AND TAKES IT. The communion is life-giving. It provides nourishment for the physical body and strength for the soul. By remembering the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, commitments are renewed each week to live for the Savior (1 Peter 2:21). But it can be soul-condemning. Speaking of those who partook unworthily, Paul said, "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep" (1 Corinthians 11:28-29). Since the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23), and abusing the Lord's Supper is sin, then to take it unworthily brings spiritual death. Properly taken, the Lord's Supper gives life. Improperly taken, it destroys.

IT IS SIMPLE IN A COMPLEX WAY. A child understands that the bread represents the broken, punished, tortured body of Christ (Luke 22:19). A preschooler can see the likeness in the vine's cup and the Savior's blood (Luke 22:20). At the same time, the depths of truth that surround the Lord's Table challenge great minds. How does one comprehend love that dies for the unlovely? (Romans 5:8). Why did Jesus come to earth as a man (in a body) in the first place? (John 1:14; Luke 19:10). What is the significance of blood in the Bible? God has always required blood to seal a covenant (Deuteronomy 5:2;

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CHRIST AND THE CHURCH THAT CARRIES HIS NAME

Manual I. Arroyo



Dear Brothers and friends: The Church of Christ is the only church built by the Son of God; as he promised in Matthew 16:18, "and I say unto thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church: and the gates of hell will not prevail against it".

It is the only church founded in Jerusalem in the year 33 A.D. Acts chapter 2, especially verse 47 that says "...praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

It is the only church founded in the exact place mentioned by the prophets: Isaiah 2:1-3 and Micah 4:1-3 are parallel verses. Isaiah said "The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

It is the only church that carries, honorably, the name of Christ, as much in its members individually as in the church collectively: Acts 11:26 "and it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch." Romans 16:16 says, "Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you."

Now then, in addition to that said previously, it is of great importance that we insist on the singularity of the primitive church and the importance of our identifying it from among the sects, denominations and religious movements initiated by men that have parted from the truth (or never have been in it). In Ephesians 4:14 it says "that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in

wait to deceive."

THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AND THE IMPORTANCE OF ITS IDENTITY (Ephesians 1:22-23). It is noticed when studying the New Testament that it speaks of only one church, not many. Ephesians 1:22-23 "and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all."

Identity defined: The whole of circumstances that identify one person from the others. Example: the famous ID that is asked for everywhere in order to accomplish an official procedure, to cash a check and for many other things. We must, therefore, understand that:

1. Our duty then is to identify the church of Christ and be a part of it. In Matthew 15:13 Christ said "every plant which my heavenly father hath not planted, shall be rooted up."

2. Jews and Gentiles now are reconciled with God in the church built by Christ in the city of Jerusalem and that now is established in many nations around the world. Ephesians 2:14-16 "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances, for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby."

IT IS IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND THAT CHRIST HAS ONLY ONE CHURCH. That one church, that which the same Son of God planned, prophesied and established in the city of Jerusalem. Please, read the whole chapter two of Acts of the Apostles, paying particular attention to chapter 2 verses 43 through 47 where the church of Christ is presented as already established: "and fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart. Praising God, and

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THE VIRGIN BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST

John T. Polk II



If Jesus Christ did not come to earth in a fleshly body, then the New Testament is to be rejected. But if He did, then Judaism, Islam, and all other forms of religions and churches are to be rejected by God and mankind, for He taught, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John

14:6). Either Jesus is the greatest imposter of all time, or all other beliefs are false. This conflict is brought to bear in His virgin birth.

GOD MAKES THE FIRST STATEMENT ON THE SUBJECT TO THE SERPENT WHO BEGUILED EVE: "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed" (Genesis 3:15). [1] "Her seed" is physically impossible, for among humans, males produce the "seed" while females provide the "egg" for reproduction. This expression shows there would be no male involved in the production of the promised child. No one has ever surmised this child was one of Eve's own children, for "Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore" which is the procedure for "all living" humans since (Genesis 3:20; 1:26-28). Clearly it points to a "virgin" (one who has not had carnal relations with the opposite sex). [2] The name of the woman and child, time and place it was to occur were given in later prophecies, for God "gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did" (Romans 4:17). [3] When Jesus came, in "the fullness of the time," "God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law" (Galatians 4:4). "Born" here the Greek *ginomai*, meaning "to come into existence." The physical Earth was not "made [*ginomai*]" of visible material, but from nothing (Hebrews 11:3), just as Jesus' earthly body had no existence through natural means (involving a male "seed"), but only through a woman's "seed." However, Jesus had non-physical existence before the world (John 1:3, 10), Abraham (John 8:58), and John the Baptist (John 1:15).

THE ONLY PROPHECY IN SCRIPTURE OF THE "VIRGIN"

BIRTH IS: "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14). [1] "Sign" can be a miraculous event (e.g., Deuteronomy 11:2-7). This child did not live in Isaiah's day just as woman's "seed" in Genesis 3:15 had no reference to a child in Eve's day. This prophecy was intended to by-pass Ahaz, the stubborn king of Judah who refused to ask for a sign of deliverance from God (Isaiah 7:11-12), but to reassure the Israelites their lineage would be preserved until "Immanuel" would be born. [2] "The virgin" (Hebrew *ha almah*) means one, specific virgin. All females begin life as "virgins," but lose "virginity" by copulation and/or receiving male seed. (a) *Almah*, a feminine form, occurs six other times in the Old Testament: Genesis 24:43; Exodus 2:8; Psalm 68:25; Proverbs 30:19; Song of Solomon 1:3; 6:8. According to these other passages, it never refers to a married woman. (b) Matthew (1:22-23) quotes Isaiah 7:14 as fulfilled in Jesus' birth. (1) Matthew's Greek *ha parthenos* ("the virgin") is used for *ha almah*. *Parthenos* always means "chaste, virginal, unviolated" in New Testament use: Matthew 25:1, 7, 11; Luke 1:27; Acts 21:9; I Corinthians 7:25, 28, 34-36; 2 Corinthians 11:2. (2) Mary was "virgin" (Luke 1:27) because: [a] she conceived "before they came together" (Matthew 1:18); [b] Mary confessed "I do not know a man" (Luke 1:34); [c] Joseph "did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son" (Matthew 1:25); [d] "betrothed" (Matthew 1:18; Luke 1:27; 2:5) in Greek is *mnasteuo*. Interestingly the word for "fasting, abstinence" is *nasteuo*. The subtle word similarity is not lost. Betrothal (today called "engagement") was the period from a couple's commitment to each other till their wedding ceremony, and was (and still should be) a time of sexual abstinence. (3) Mary was "the virgin" because never before had: [a] the angel Gabriel designated whom it would be (Luke 1:26-38); [b] Isaiah 7:14, it been announced as "fulfilled" (Matthew 1:22-23); and [c] a "virgin" been "with child" (Matthew 1:18, 20), nor since! [3] "Immanuel" means "God with us" (Matthew 1:23).

God had been with His people in various ways before, but never like this. For the first time, "God was manifested in the flesh" in Jesus Christ (I Timothy 3:16); "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14); God sent "His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin" (Romans 8:3). Truly it was said, in Jesus "dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:9). [4] Without the virgin birth of Jesus, there was no virgin life to be the virgin sacrifice on the cross. The Bible boldly states, however, that Jesus was "put to death in the flesh" (I Peter 3:18) and, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself" (2 Corinthians 5:19-21).

JOSEPH WAS JESUS' LEGAL FATHER BECAUSE HE WAS MARRIED TO MARY, WHO WAS JESUS' PHYSICAL MOTHER. [1] Thus, Joseph was "the husband of Mary" (Matthew 1:16). Since Mary was "with child of the Holy Spirit" before she "came together" with Joseph (Matthew 1:18); and that conceived within her was "of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 1:20), and "the power of the Highest," not Joseph, that made the child (Luke 1:35); then Jesus is "the Son of God" (Luke 1:35) NOT man! For the fact that He is "the Son of God:" (a) He died (Luke 22:70-71); (b) He did numerous miracles (John 3:2; 5:36; 10:37-38; 21:25); (c) the Apostles confessed (Matthew 14:33; 16:16); (d) the Devil and unbelieving Jews questioned (Matthew 4:3, 6; 27:39-40); (e) demons, though, confessed (Matthew 8:29; Mark 3:11; 5:7; Luke 4:41); (f) the centurion admitted (Matthew 27:54). [2] At Jesus' birth, Joseph was only "betrothed" to Mary (Matthew 1:18; Luke 1:27; 2:5), and "did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son" named "Jesus" (Matthew 1:25). [3] After Jesus' birth, Joseph married Mary, and they had other children (Matthew 13:55-56; Mark 6:3). It was natural for people to wrongly assume ("suppose") that Jesus was Joseph's son (Luke 3:23; 4:22; John 1:45; 6:42). [4] After all testimony by God proved Mary's son was of God, Mary knew Joseph's real legal relationship to Jesus when she said to Him, "Your father and I have sought You anxiously" (Luke 2:48). It is in this sense only that Joseph and Mary are called "his parents" (Luke 2:27, 41), but distinction drawn as "Joseph and His mother" (Luke 2:43). At age 12, Jesus knew which "Father's business" He must do (Luke 2:49). [5] The genealogies record: (a) Jesus' physical lineage to

David (Matthew 1:1-16) through Joseph, who was "of the house of David" (Luke 1:27) but "the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus" (Matthew 1:16). "Of whom" in the Greek is feminine, indicating Mary received David's lineage through Joseph, but she gave birth to the "son of God," thus making Jesus "the seed of David" (John 7:42; Romans 1:3; 2 Timothy 2:8); (b) and Mary's lineage to God (Luke 3:23-38), making her NOT the mother of God, but of the body of "the Son of God."

IT IS "ANTICHRIST" TO DENY THE VIRGIN BIRTH FOR THERE IS NO OTHER METHOD DESCRIBED IN SCRIPTURE FOR JESUS TO "COME IN THE FLESH" (I John 4:2-3). No mythology involves a "virgin birth" or is factually consistent with a "God in the flesh" like Jesus.

God, the Holy Spirit, angels, John the Baptist, the Apostles, and Jesus Christ Himself all bear witness to the "virgin birth" of the Christ. "What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?" (Matthew 22:42).—125 The Trace, Dover, TN 37058

**MABELVALE CHURCH OF CHRIST
10820 MABELVALE WEST ROAD
P. O. BOX 345
MABELVALE, AR 72103**

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Sunday Morning Bible Class	9:30
Sunday Morning Worship	10:30
Sunday Evening Worship	5:00
Wednesday Evening Bible Study	7:00

Telephone (501) 455-2548

Office Fax (501) 407-0072

E-Mail: mabelval@cei.net

Web Site: www.mabelvalechurchofchrist.org

Dennis Gulledge, Evangelist
Scott Perry, Associate Minister
Wayne Brewer, Hispanic Minister

JESUS: DOES HE HAVE DIVINE AUTHORITY? (Matthew 21:23)

Jose' Perales



The question in our theme was asked 2000 years ago by the priests and elders of the Jewish people. They interrupted the teaching of Jesus to ask him, "by what authority do you do these things? And who gave you this authority?" (Matthew 21:23).

What they were thinking about Jesus was clear, for them Jesus was

only a mortal Galileo with airs of a prophet, a deceiver that in some manner had gained the attention of the people and his fame extended everywhere; it was necessary to stop him and they thought as religious authorities it was their responsibility.

Jesus did not respond to the question at that time, and they were indignant because of the attitude of Jesus the day before when with all authority he had thrown the merchants out of the temple and the people glorified him as the "Son of David" and he also had healed the blind and crippled. (Matthew 21:12-14).

For that reason the question: With what authority? Does he have divine authority? In this short space we will look at the biblical response to the question.

I. JESUS IN HIS DIVINE AUTHORITY IS WORTHY OF WORSHIP. While only God can be worshiped, since "God is a spirit and those that worship him must worship him in spirit and truth" (John 4:24), and "you will worship the Lord your God" (Matthew 4:10). In spite of these assertions we see also that Jesus received and accepted worship.

A. In his birth.

1. He was worshiped by the angels, "and again, when he brought in the first begotten into the world, he saith, and let all the angels of God worship him" (Hebrews 1:6).
2. He was worshiped by the shepherds, "and the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God" (Luke 2:20).
3. He was worshiped by the wise men, "And when they were come into the house they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down and worshiped him and when they had opened their treasures, they

presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh" (Matthew 2:11).

B. In his ministry.

1. The leper upon being healed, "There came a leper and worshiped him, saying, Lord if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean" (Matthew 8:2).
2. The man blind from birth after being healed, "I believe. And he worshiped him" (John 9:35-39).
3. The disciples, "came and worshiped him, saying of a truth thou art the Son of God" (Matthew 14:33).

C. In his resurrection.

1. The women outside the sepulcher, "and as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying; All hail. And they came and held him by the feet and worshiped him" (Matthew 28:9).
2. Thomas worshiped him, "Then saith he to Thomas, reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, my Lord and my God" (John 20:27-28).

D. At the right hand of God.

1. God called him God, "But unto the Son he saith, thy throne, O God, is forever and ever, a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom" (Hebrews 1:8).
2. God proclaims him Lord and Creator, "And, thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands" (Hebrews 1:10).

II. JESUS IN HIS DIVINE AUTHORITY HAS POWER OVER EVERYTHING AND EVERYBODY.

A. He has power over angels.

1. Whereas he is "so much better than the angels" (Hebrews 1:4).
2. "And of the angels he saith, who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of

fire” (Hebrews 1:7).

B. He has authority over demons.

1. Many possessed with demons, “and when the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick” (Matthew 8:16).
2. Two possessed with demons, “and, behold, they cried out, saying, what have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? Art thou come hither to torment us before the time? And there was a good way off from them a herd of swine feeding. So the devils besought him, saying, if thou call us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine. And he said unto them, go. And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine; and, behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters” (Matthew 8:29-32).

C. He has authority over nature.

1. Because he is the creator, he has authority over the creation, so that “even the winds and the sea obey him” (Matthew 8:27), and is “upholding all things by the word of his power” (Hebrews 1:3).
2. He is the one who converted the water into wine (John 2:1-10) and dried up the fruitless fig tree (Matthew 21:19).

D. He has authority over the church.

1. “Christ is the head of the church; and he is the savior of the body” (Ephesians 5:23).
2. “And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell” (Colossians 1:18-19).

In short nothing escapes his power (except God). All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth (Matthew 28:18). While the prophets preached, saying, “so says Jehovah,” he taught in this manner “you have heard that it

was said by them of old time...but I say unto you” (Matthew 5:21-22, 27-28, 38-39, 43-44). He taught “...as one having authority and not as the scribes” (Matthew 7:29). Do you live under the divine authority of Jesus Christ? If not, why not kneel before him, worship him and obey him? Don’t you want to worship Jesus as God and live under his ordinances? Remember that he is the “true God, and eternal life” (1John 5:20).—PO Box 15, Green Forest, AR 72638

JESUS: EVEN THE DEMONS CONFESSED HIM

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under his authority. He demonstrated his command over nature (Mark 4:39), disease (Matthew 4:23), material things (John 2:9), death (John 11:43-44), and the spirit realm (Mark 1:27).

Many passages show how the demons recognized Jesus as being the Son of God (Matthew 8:28-32; Mark 1:21-27; 3:11; 5:1-13; Luke 4:33-36; 8:26-35). As James said, “You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble” (James 2:19).

The subject of demons comes to the attention of every student of the New Testament. It is proof of a spiritual system that yielded to the authority of Jesus Christ, and the apostles. The reality of such a spiritual realm is more than a refutation of materialism, it is a clear affirmation of the divinity of Jesus Christ.

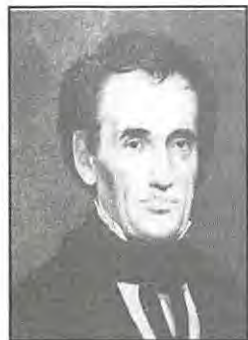
CONCLUSION

If men reject the evidences that show Jesus Christ to be the Son of God, then they are no more intelligent and perceptive than the Lord’s most devoted enemies. Demons believe in the one true God, but shudder at the thought of their own judgment. Their belief, however is a mental assent only, being far removed from trust and obedience to God. Those who exercise faith without works of obedience have the same kind of dead faith that is characteristic of the imps of Satan.—10822 Mabelvale West Road, Mabelvale, AR 72103



MESSIAH

Walter Scott



Sin is like a fount of fire sending forth a single stream which, afterwards disparting flows amain and scorches, or consumes every thing in its way; it is contemplated in the Holy Scripture under the threefold aspect of its guilt, its power, and its punishment, and may be seen in all its execrable results, as it lighted on the

Father of mankind.—He violated Law—this was incurring the guilt of sin.—afraid and ashamed he hid himself.—This was yielding to the power of sin.—Death ensued—this was the punishment of sin.

OF THE GUILT OF SIN. When guilt is incurred its degree is not to be measured by the seeming greatness or littleness of the act constituting the sin; for then, David guilty of murder should have been put to death, and Uzzah, who was put to death, merely for touching the Ark, should have been saved alive; but guilt is to be estimated relatively, and circumstantially, and therefore Adam's disobedience in eating the apple, thus violating God's express command, declared by him personally, may involve a greater criminality than the sin of inebriety in Noah, or that of uncleanness in Lot, as by human laws it is more fatal to an individual to counterfeit the signature, than to dislocate the clavicle of his fellow.

OF THE POWER OF SIN. All our doings that are moral or immoral, exert a moral or immoral power or influence over us accordingly. The politic Abitophal, David's minister, profoundly understood the influence, which evil actions swayed over the guilty, and accordingly counceled the ambitious but inexperienced Abaslom, to perpetrate a deed fitted beyond all others, at once to make him ever after the fool-hardy villain—to destroy all hope of reconciliation with his royal Father, and to embolden his fellow conspirators. He who voluntarily incurs guilt once, is greatly strengthened thereby, to repeat it; the circumstances of his case which is not always understood in all its relations, may involve him again and again

without end. And the less the sin apparently, the greater the danger. "He that is unfaithful in the least, is unfaithful also in that which is most." He that for a trifle would violate Law—his conscience—his religion and his sacred honor, could not be supposed easily to withstand the temptation of a larger sum. Judas abstracted paltry sums from the money with which he was intrusted, till yielding to the ascendance which his own evil actions had acquired over him, he finally sold his Master the Messiah, for thirty pieces of silver.

THE PUNISHMENT OF SIN. Death is a dreadful consummation, even in a physical point of view, and when considered morally, and religiously, it appears a still greater evil to such as are unprepared to meet its solemn results. But like birth it is a matter so common among the sons of men, that as there is but little general joy for the first, so there is but little public sorrow for the last. The human family, by estimate, consists of about one thousand millions of individuals who die off, and are renewed again every thirty years nearly—all this immense carnage goes on in comparative quietude, therefore it fails to surprise us, but could we behold on some boundless plain assembled the immense masses of flesh and blood that have lived since the world began, and all that shall live from this to the resurrection of the dead, with death stalking from rank to rank, and successively mowing down the Kings and Fathers of mankind—courtiers also and their slaves, withering the flowers and dashing to pieces the glory of Society, the high, the low, the rich, the poor, yea, all the inhabitants of the earth, and throwing them into the grave without distinction, at the rate of three thousand every hour, and fifty every minute, we should then perhaps obtain some adequate idea of the extensiveness of the human family as a divine institution, and of the dreadful evil of sin, in its guilt, its power and its punishment.

Now it is in relation to these three things, the guilt, the power, and the punishment of sin, that the entrance of Messiah into the human family, is most felt; because he dying for sin, we can now be forgiven, rising again he can

give us his Holy Spirit and finally raise us from the dead, so that by imparting remission to us (as he actually does) in, (not by) immersion, he takes away the guilt of sins past—giving to us afterwards the Holy Spirit, he enables us to overcome the power of sin, and in raising us from the dead he removes the punishment of sin—and thus the three great blessings of the gospel, Remission of sins—the Holy Spirit and the Resurrection respond to the three great curses that rest upon men, The Guilt—the Power, and the punishment of sin. The Gospel then is perfectly adapted to the wants of man, in regard to privilege. He that believeth and is baptized said the Redeemer, shall be saved, who is he that will here oppose? Not I.

The gospel then, delivering us from the guilt and power of sin; consequently from the love and practice of it—and in the end freeing us from its punishment; viz: the bondage of corruption, is here seen to contain a double salvation, a present and a future; one from sin, another from the grave, introducing us finally, into the family of God in heaven.

Now these, Reader, are the things that attach Christians to the person of Messiah, Son of God—that win their affections—induce their obedience—still their fears, comfort their hearts, awake their joys, and lift their hopes to heaven. But apart from all personal considerations, Jesus, of the ancient and religious family of David, according to the flesh, is withal, clothed with a nature wholly divine. Adorned with all royal offices, the King, the Priest and Prophet of Mankind, he sits on the throne of the Universe, the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person, waiting for the accomplishment of all that series of events, which is to issue in the change of universal nature, and the salvation of all who obey him. Now I appeal to all generous natures, whether it is not as honoring to man, as it is harmonious with the Constitution under which we exist, that, after passing from the government of our parents to that of the state, we should thence submit ourselves to the good government of God, and his Messiah. Messiah is just such a governor as the human family require, he is every way fitted to please, and to fill the mind's eye of all who look at him; great in goodness, and good in greatness; his fidelity, and his affection for us have been tested to the

utmost. How honorable the faith; how elevated the morals he inculcates; how deep the love; how high the hopes; how noble the fellowship he proposes to his faithful followers! Oh! how rejoicing to the soul of man the voice of Christ: "Oh! it is a noble music says one, which he maketh to the soul of man; sweet as the breathing sonnet of lovers, and spirit-stirring as the minstrelsy of glorious war; it rouseth to noble deeds like the Tyrtean song, sung on the eve of battle to noble Spartan youth, and it rejoiceth the heart of sin oppressed nature, as the voice of Liberty from Tulley's lips rejoiced the Senate House of Rome upon the famous Ides of March, when the God-like Brutus "shook his crimson steel, and bade the Father of his country hail."—*The Evangelist*, (January 2, 1832), p. 7-8. [Photo taken from, *Walter Scott: Voice of the Golden Oracle*, by Dwight E. Stevenson (Christian Board of Publication, St. Louis, Missouri, 1946)].

JESUS: THE MIRACLE WORKER

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gospel writers tell their story as fact. Why would they risk exposure and ridicule when so many people were around to contradict the writer's accounts? If the event was bogus, why didn't someone step forward to say, "Hey, I was there, and that's not the way it was at all"? The gospel writings were public records, and were circulated in the very land and time of the people who knew whether the reported deeds were true. It's a real mystery why someone, somewhere, didn't "blow the whistle" on these writers who reported so inaccurately!

Reader, the account of Christ's miracles will not force you to believe, but don't they make you think? Jesus performed miracles to validate His identity and the message of salvation He was bringing to humanity.

The miracles of Christ carry a tremendous amount of built-in evidence. Even to the point that the religious leaders of Christ's own day were not able to register a denial—ever! The miracles were too well known and documented. Please read John 20:30-31.—PO Box 232, Hickory Ridge, AR 72347



WILL JESUS COME AGAIN?

(2 Peter 3:3-4)

M. W. Kiser



God's way of saving men by Jesus Christ is not a doctrine accepted by all. Carnally minded people do not grasp the spirituality of this message, nor comprehend even the reason for its proclamation. These folks will actually scoff at such a message. Their devices and desires, not the dictates and directions of common sense and

Revelation are what they are following. They would even attempt to shake and unsettle us by throwing doubt upon great Bible themes.

The question now before us is not: Will He come? The orthodox Jew seems to have a problem here. He is still waiting for the Messiah's first advent (John 5:39). Nor is it when will He come? (Matthew 24:26; Luke 12:40; 1 Thessalonians 5:2). Date setters have all proved themselves to be false prophets! It is will He come again? A second time. What proof do we have that Jesus will come again?

I. JESUS HAS THE POWER TO COME AGAIN.

- A. What power was there behind his first coming?
 - 1. Indeed it was the power of God (John 3:17; Galatians 4:4).
 - 2. He was God in the flesh (John 1:1, 14; Colossians 2:9).
- B. That power was demonstrated in His earthly life.
 - 1. Over nature, disease, demons, and death! (John 20:30-31).
 - 2. In His own resurrection from the dead (Romans 1:4).
 - 3. In His ascension back into heaven (Acts 1:9-11).
- C. Jesus does not change (Hebrews 13:8).
 - 1. He is still all seeing, all knowing, and all powerful.

- 2. There is nothing impossible about this event for Him.

II. JESUS HAS PROMISED HE WILL COME AGAIN.

- A. This promise was clearly stated by Him (John 14:1-3).
 - 1. Jesus is God. This point has already been established.
 - 2. God cannot lie (Titus 1:2; Psalm 146:6).
 - 3. Therefore, how could we doubt this promise? Indeed it ranks among those "exceeding great and precious promises!" (2 Peter 1:4; 2 Corinthians 1:20).
- B. This promise was proclaimed by the Apostles. It was:
 - 1. A constant point in their preaching.
 - 2. A constant reminder in their exhortations.
 - 3. A constant hope in their own hearts (2 Timothy 4:6-8).
- C. This promise has always been believed by His disciples.
 - 1. We pray about it (Revelation 22:20).
 - 2. We sing about it.
 - a. "We'll Work Till Jesus Comes."
 - b. "When Jesus Comes To Reward His Servants."
 - c. "When He Comes In Glory By and By."
 - 3. We commune about it (1 Corinthians 11:26).
 - 4. We preach and write about it (This very sermon!).
 - 5. We live about it (Philippians 1:20-21; Titus 2:12-13).

III. JESUS HAS A PURPOSE FOR COMING AGAIN.

- A. Not as some suppose. They think He is coming to:
 - 1. Make atonement for us. This He did on the cross (Hebrews 9:28).
 - 2. Or to establish a kingdom on earth. This He did on the day of Pentecost (John 18:36; Romans 14:17; Mark 9:1; Colossians 1:13).
- B. But these events are associated with His coming:
 - 1. Resurrection of the dead (John 5:28-29).
 - 2. Judgment of mankind (Matthew 25:31-34; 2 Timothy 4:1).
 - 3. Destruction of the world (2 Peter 3:10-12).
 - 4. Heaven or Hell for you (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10).
- C. His work would be incomplete without His second coming.

IV. JESUS HAS A PROGRAM ASSIGNED TILL HE COMES AGAIN.

- A. For the church—the great commission (Matthew 28:18-20).
 - 1. “There is much to do, there is work on every hand...”
 - 2. Our responsibility now involves “stewardship”—taking care of that which belongs to our Lord. The doing of His work in this world (Luke 19:13).
 - 3. Our assignment is to the “end of the age”—not age 62.
- B. For the sinner—repentance (2 Peter 3:9).
 - 1. Don’t look upon Jesus’ delay as “slackness” on His part.
 - 2. Look rather upon it as the extension of His grace and mercy—especially to you as a lost sinner!
 - 3. What if He had come last hour—what would have happened to you? Would you have gone to be with him? Or, would you have heard him say “depart

from me,” and now be in the bottomless pit crying out with other lost souls?

- B. For the saint—patient watching and holy living (2 Peter 3:11).
 - 1. This hope leads to purity of life (1 Thessalonians 5:23; 1 John 3:2-3).
 - 2. We use this time for spiritual growth (2 Peter 3:15-18).
 - 3. Our obedience should be complete (1 Timothy 6:14).

I know of no reason to think that Jesus Christ will not come again! Now, I appeal to you to get ready—Jesus is coming again.—104 Calhoun Avenue, Sylacauga, AL 35150

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JESUS: HISTORICAL OR FICTIONAL?

Grady Miller



The gospel of Luke records the birth of John the Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth. The first two chapters survey the early years of those remarkable men. The third chapter documents the beginning of their ministry, with special attention devoted to the historical setting and background.

“Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, while Annas and Caiaphas were high priests, the word of God came to John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.”

No doubt you have read this passage many times and always understood it for what it appears to be—a simple, straightforward statement by a careful historian placing in historical context the beginning of Jesus’ and John’s ministry.

You and I share the same high view of Scripture. There is no question in our minds that Jesus was born of a virgin in the village of Bethlehem, grew to manhood in Nazareth, based His earthly ministry in Galilee, died on a cross outside Jerusalem, arose from the dead on the first day of the week and ascended to the Father from the Mount of Olives. He preached in parables, walked on water, fed the hungry and healed the helpless. He was a real man, flesh and blood. People saw Him, touched Him, heard Him, ate and drank with Him. We believe in Jesus because the Bible tells us all we need to know about our Lord and Savior.

You probably know that some people today question the very existence of Jesus Christ. These radical unbelievers dismiss Jesus as nothing more than a mythical Don Quixote or La Llorona, no more real or rooted in history than—they say—Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David or the man in the moon. They argue that Jesus is

only an invention by first century outcasts who wanted to popularize and personify an evolving new religion. Most people do not take such foolishness seriously.

There is another view of Jesus that is widely accepted. The “Jesus” preached from many pulpits, taught in seminaries and universities by learned scholars, the subject of many recent books, articles and documentaries, is a Jesus that has been redefined and remade. It is asserted that the New Testament is a loose collection of documents written and edited by the followers of Jesus, a record clouded by faulty memories and colored by a theological agenda later generations wanted to associate with a man they never knew or saw. They see the Bible, at best, as unreliable history. They will concede there was probably a preacher named Jesus who lived and died two thousand years ago, but we have no certain knowledge of who He really was, what He really said or what He really did. This quest for a “historical Jesus” seeks to peel away the legends and layers of the “Jesus myth” and discover the real man.

So, the scholar talks about the need to “demythologize” the New Testament and set Jesus free from the fantastic tales that have long been associated with Him. The “Jesus Seminar” offers a New Testament—color coded in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John—to delineate what Jesus never said, what He probably did not say, what He may have said and the very small number of things our Lord did say.

This new “Jesus of History” is not the Jesus revealed in the New Testament. Instead, He was a Jewish rabbi without credentials, popular among the rural, unsophisticated peasants of Galilee, deluded in His obsession to bring about spiritual reform, caught up in events He could not control and a martyr to His own convictions. Jesus was a worthy man, we are told, but He never claimed to be the Messiah, a Savior or the Son of God.

The believer objects to this infidel treatment of our Lord! He knows that Jesus’ life and death are well documented and, indeed, as much trustworthy evidence

supports the real Jesus of Nazaareth than any man or woman of ancient times. We know Jesus the same way we know others of His day and age—Herod the Great, Augustus, Cleopatra, Pontius Pilate, Agrippa, Josephus. There yet remains the imprint of His life upon human history!

We have no painting or sculpture of Jesus. There is no document that survives from His hand. He lived before the age of photography and video. But we do have the eyewitness testimony of men who saw Him, heard Him, lived with Him and died for Him.

“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life—the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us—that which we have seen and heard we declare to you” (1 John 1:1-3).

The skeptic rejects the Jesus revealed in Scripture because he has arbitrarily dismissed the witness of men who gladly gave their lives to declare the Savior to the world. What nonsense!

Billions of Bibles bear witness to the reality of Jesus of Nazareth. The church of Christ is His spiritual bride and proclaims to the world that Jesus is Lord (Ephesians 5:23; 3:10-11). Jesus lives within His disciples (Galatians 2:20). Their lives are monuments to His power and person (Romans 6:4). Every good deed done in His name by people who walk in His footsteps is an unanswerable argument that our Jesus is real and alive today.—745 Riverview Lane, Colorado Springs, CO 80916

JESUS: THE MASTER TEACHER
Continued from page 4

Caesar, or not?” Jesus replied, “Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? Show me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto him, Caesar’s. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore

unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s; and unto God the things that are God’s. When they had heard these words, they marvelled, and left him, and went their way” (Matthew 22:16-21). This is but one of many examples in the life and teaching of Jesus that could be given. “He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes” (Matthew 7:29).

Jesus spoke upon the most lofty and profound subjects, yet with simplicity in the language of the common people. He used common everyday objects like grass, flowers, shepherds, sheep, water, bread, fishermen, etc., to teach great eternal truths. His parables were designed so that any who wanted to understand, could. But the point could be completely missed by those who did not want to understand. “Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand” (Matthew 13:13).

“Words of Eternal Life”

“Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life” (John 6:68). Only the Master Teacher Himself could give us words whereby we can have eternal life in the world to come. Study His word and obey His commands and eternal life will be yours.—g.hester@juno.com

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Wednesday Evening Bible Study	7:00

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JESUS: A PROPHET, AND FAR MORE THAN A PROPHET

Ronald D. Bryant



The majesty and the incomparable greatness of Jesus the Christ is the constant theme of the Scriptures. The greatness, the majesty, and the perfection of Jesus are set forth in the vast portraits in the books by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. One of the largest portraits has to do with His purpose in coming to earth. He came to give His life as a sacrifice for the sins of man, in order to secure salvation for mankind. His greatness is bound up with His death, burial and resurrection. His death was for an incomparable purpose—the purchase of forgiveness. His resurrection is the incomparable and unanswerable argument of the Christian faith. In His resurrection, He broke the bonds of death and the grave. He purchased redemption. He is far more than a mere moralist or martyr. He is no mere teacher or prophet. He is far more.

The first sermon of the Christian age, the first sermon in the book of Acts, sets forth the unsurpassable greatness of Jesus. He is presented as crucified, risen, and reigning. His place in time and eternity is declared: “God has made Him both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36). In the second recorded sermon, in Acts chapter three, Jesus is spoken of as the “servant of God,” “God...hath glorified His Servant Jesus” (Acts 3:13). He is the “Holy and Righteous one” who was rejected and crucified. He is declared to be far more; “He is the Prince of life, the one whom God raised up” (Acts 3:15). In that account, it is recorded that the apostle Peter preached all that happened to Jesus was “announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets” and was the fulfillment of “all that the prophets had said” (Acts 3:18). Peter also declared that Jesus is the one God spoken of by “the mouth of the prophets from ancient time. “For Moses truly said to the fathers, The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you. And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people” (Acts 3:22-23). Peter then asserted, “Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days” (Acts 3:24).

The last part of Peter’s sermon is a summing up of Scripture and the facts of history. Promise, prophecy, and

their fulfillment connect revelation and history. Jesus came to the earth, was born of a virgin, on a day in history. He lived out His earthly mission in the land of Israel for a period of approximately 33 years. He was crucified on a day in history. He arose from the dead—His resurrection was on a day in history. And, all of this, all that He said and did was by heaven’s design, and had been foretold by the prophets of God. Further, all that transpired was to the end of declaring God—“making God manifest” (cf. John 1:18; 14:9-11). It was also for the purpose of establishing the fact of His Deity (John 20:30-31). The person and work of Jesus reveal Him to be more than a mere mortal, more than merely a teacher, and more than merely a prophet.

Yes, in Acts 3:22ff., the apostle Peter declares that Jesus is “that prophet” spoken of by Moses. He is “the prophet like unto Moses.” He is the prophet that was spoken of by all of the “prophets from Samuel” downwards. Last of all, Peter rehearses the promise God made to Abraham, and asserts that God, in raising up His Servant, for the purpose of turing men from sin, had fulfilled this promise. God’s redemptive plan was unfolded in Jesus the Christ in a historical context.

Yet, it is appropriate, and necessary, to inquire as to how Jesus is a prophet like unto Moses. It is a matter of history that the Jews of the first century were extremely fond of comparing the promised Messiah with their great prophet and lawgiver, Moses. Peter quotes the words of Moses. “The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear” (Deuteronomy 18:15).

HOW IS JESUS A PROPHET LIKE UNTO MOSES? This prophet was to be “of the brethren.” Jesus was born of the Jewish people. He was born of “the seed of David according to the flesh” (Romans 1:3). He was “made to be born of a woman” and to be “born under the law” (cf. Galatians 4:4-6). He was “made like His brethren in all things” (Hebrews 2:17). The fact of Jesus’ actual humanity is unimpeachable. Therefore, He is one with the Jews in their humanity, being of them. He is one with us in our humanity being one with us. He is of the Jewish people, yet He is far more—He is the promised Savior, the Son of God.

This prophet is to be a deliverer. Like Moses, He was to bring a people out of bondage. Moses led the people of Israel out of Egypt, through Canaan, and to the Promised Land.

Jesus is the deliverer of mankind. He delivers those who follow Him out of sin, through life, and into heaven.

The typology has long been recognized. Egypt is a type of sin, Canaan is a type of life, the Jordan River is a type of death, and Canaan is a type of heaven. Jesus, unlike Moses, will lead His followers into the Promised Land. He is the great deliverer, yet, He is far more, He is the only way out of sin and into heaven (cf. Acts 4:12).

This prophet is to be a lawgiver. The great work of Moses was in the reception of the Law and in presenting it to the people of Israel. He is so connected with this work that the Law of God, to the people of Israel, is referred to as the Law of Moses. The people of Israel were ruled by the Law of Moses in every aspect of their conduct, relationships, ritual, and devotions. The Law of Moses has been set aside and abrogated (Ephesians 2:11-19; Colossians 2:14ff; Romans 7:1-4; Hebrews 8:6ff). Further, the Law of Moses has been superseded by the Law of Christ—the New Covenant purchased by His blood (Romans 7:1-4; Hebrews 8:6ff; 9:15-17). Devotion to Christ is devotion to the “author of eternal salvation” (Hebrews 5:8-9). Jesus now demands the right to our faith and loyalty, our love and devotion. He is our great lawgiver, yet, He is more—He is our Lord and Savior. He longs to do more than rule us, He desires to save us.

This prophet is to be a teacher. The permanent idea of the term “prophet” is one who comes between God and man, speaking forth the will of God. Moses taught the people of Israel as to their relationship with God and as their conduct before God. Jesus now teaches mankind as to their relationship with God. In Scripture He is declared to be God’s spokesman for the Christian age (cf. Hebrews 1:1-3). In Scripture it is stressed that there is great danger of not giving proper regard to the words of the Master (Hebrews 2:1-3). His words are to be accepted, honored and obeyed (cf. John 12:48). He is the teacher beyond compare. Yet, He is more—He is the author of eternal salvation (Hebrews 5:8-9).

This prophet is to be a judge. Moses was the presiding judge of Israel. Now, God has “committed all judgment to the Son” (John 5:22). It is decreed that “He will judge the quick and the dead” (2 Timothy 4:1). In fact it is declared that “we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ,

to answer for the things done in this body” (2 Corinthians 5:10). The Hebrews were reminded of the fact that those that “despised Moses’ Law died without mercy under two or three witnesses.” Then they are asked, “Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden underfoot the Son of God?” (Hebrews 10:28-29). Jesus is the incomparable judge—the final judge of all mankind. Yet, He is more. It is He who now calls us to life and who longs to save us.

Jesus is “the prophet like unto Moses.” None compare to Him. Consider the vast divide between Jesus and the man called the prophet Mohammed. Consider the vast divide between Jesus and the man called the prophet Joseph Smith. These men failed as prophets. Jesus did not. These men cannot save anyone. Jesus can. Consider the vast difference in character, conduct, pronouncements, and the hope they each declare. To compare Jesus to these or to anyone is to be led to respond as did Peter, “Lord, to whom shall we go, thou has the words of eternal life” (John 6:68).—PO Box 1441, 1560 S. Highway V, Hollister, MO 65673

OPTIMISTS

Are seldom surprised by trouble.
Look for partial solutions even if an entire solution can't be found.
Believe God has control over their future.
Allow for regular renewal.
Derail their negative trains of thought.
Heighten their powers of appreciation.
Use imagination to rehearse success.
Are cheerful even when they can't be happy.
Think they have an almost unlimited capacity for stretching.
Build lots of love into their lives.
Like swapping good news.
Accept what cannot be changed.

Adapted from Alan McGinnis

JESUS: HIS RESURRECTION

Gerald Cowan



Thank God for the fifteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians! We turn to these words to validate our hope of eternal life in Jesus Christ. His death, burial, and resurrection are the central message, the core of Christian doctrine, the essential truth upon which our faith is based (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). Scripture identifies Jesus as the Son of God, God in human flesh (John 1:1-14), the one who came to be redeemer and savior of mankind (John 1:29-36). The way he was to accomplish it was a matter of prophecy. Peter made this point on the day of Pentecost to prove the identity of the risen Jesus (Acts 2:22-32). Both his death and resurrection were required to accomplish his purpose. But why were these things necessary, and how do they validate our faith?

A reminder is in order here about the importance of his death. The blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ was an absolute requirement for remission of sins. It did what animal blood could not do, perfecting forever those who were sanctified under the previous law and covenant of God with the Jews and providing perfect cleansing for everybody under the new covenant (Hebrews 9:22, 28; 10:1-4, 12-14). "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins" (Ephesians 1:7). Since his death accomplished redemption and forgiveness why is his resurrection important? Because a dead Savior cannot give us hope of life after our own death.

In some ways our faith in God himself depends upon the reality of the resurrection. The Bible claims that Jesus was literally and physically raised from the dead. Jesus himself told the Jews that if they killed him he would rise again after three days, a promise understood by the apostles only after his resurrection (John 2:19-22). To the Jews Peter said, "But you...killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses" (Acts 3:14-15). Paul listed Peter and other apostles, James, and himself as witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus. He claimed that five hundred and more saw him at one time, most of whom were still alive and could verify it (1 Corinthians 15:5-9). Jesus presented himself in the flesh with his crucifixion wounds still evident and palpable and

invited some to put their fingers into his wounds - proof that he was not a spirit or apparition, proof that it was indeed he, with the same body they had seen dead and buried (John 20:27, Luke 24:36-39).

The manifest presence of that same physical body was irrefutable proof to the disciples, and to all others, that Jesus had been raised. The tomb in which he had been laid was carefully guarded by the Jewish authorities but they could not keep Jesus in it. When it was found empty they lied about the absence of the body because they knew people would believe he had kept his word and risen from the dead (Matthew 27:62-66). When he ascended from earth to heaven his body disappeared from sight and attending angels promised that he would come again (Acts 1:9-11). If his body could ever be found and identified it would disprove the resurrection.

If the resurrection of Jesus did not happen as the Bible says, there are devastating consequences. Faith in Christ would be vain and preaching the gospel of Christ would be vain. We would have no valid and dependable doctrine to share. The apostles would be condemned as false witnesses. How could they be trusted in anything if they lied about this? God himself would seem to be a deceiver and Jesus would be a fraud. Here is a paradox: if Christ was not raised then one of the greatest lies of all time has had the greatest influence for good in all of human history. If Christ was not raised our own expectations are limited to earthly existence, with no hope for any who die. All of this is stated in 1 Corinthians, chapter fifteen. But there is more. The ongoing works claimed for Jesus are impossible if he is dead. A dead man cannot mediate between God and men (1 Timothy 2:5). Because he continues forever he has an unchangeable priesthood, and he always lives to make intercession for us (Hebrews 7:24-25). By his death he redeemed us and secured our forgiveness, but by his continuing life he keeps us saved (Romans 5:9-10).

There are many positive effects if the resurrection is true, if it happened as scripture says. First, the resurrection is one of the proofs of the deity of Jesus. He was "declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Romans 1:4). It vindicates the life and ministry of Jesus,

especially his death on the cross. It proves the accuracy and reliability of the scripture, the prophecies before Christ, the promises made by Christ, and the preaching of the apostles. It is convincing proof that we too shall outlive our bodies, that we too shall be raised from the dead.

A great change took place in the apostles and disciples once they were convinced that Jesus had been raised from the dead and exalted to heaven. The same change takes place in us. Without the resurrection death must be perceived as final. It would indicate the final failure of Christ and his great plans and purposes. When he died Peter and the others lost hope. The women went to his grave to embalm a dead body, not to meet a living Lord. The resurrection changed all of that. Disciples were "begotten again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Peter 1:3). His resurrection gave his disciples the courage to fill Jerusalem and the world with a gospel that shook the Roman Empire to its foundations, a faith that has enabled disciples since that day to face death and destruction without fear. The resurrection of Jesus and our own expected resurrection have changed our concept of death. It is not a one-way dead-end street. Death can be seen as a mere interlude in one's existence, a short stopover on the way to heaven (1 Corinthians 15:42-43). The resurrection of Jesus secures and supports our hope of eternal life in the heavenly kingdom for which God designed us and to which He lovingly leads us.—Church of Christ, PO Box 52, Marion, IL 62959

CHRIST AND THE CHURCH THAT CARRIES HIS NAME Continued from page 7

having favor with all the people. and the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

AFTER HIS RESURRECTION AND BEFORE ASCENDING TO HEAVEN, OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST COMMANDED THAT THE GOSPEL MESSAGE OF SALVATION WAS TO BE PROCLAIMED IN ALL NATIONS BEGINNING IN JERUSALEM. The great commission of our Lord Jesus Christ is recorded in the synoptic gospels. To note Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-16, and Luke 24:44-49. Now then, for the New Testament

to come into effect, and also the plan of salvation, first the death, burial and resurrection of the Son of God were necessary. Hebrews 9:15-17, "and for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth."

Today, under the new pact or testament of our Lord Jesus Christ, we are cleansed of our faults and sins through the perfect sacrifice of the Son of God made one time on the cross of Calvary (Hebrews 9:24-28, 10:1:10).

The sacrifice of animals under the old testament clearly pointed toward the perfect sacrifice of the Son of God, done one time on the cross, "as a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:18-19).

Christ came to give a perfect fulfillment of all those symbols and shades of the old testament about the Messiah that were indicated in Moses law, in the prophets and in the psalms (Luke 24:44, Acts 13:28-39).

Once fulfilled to completeness the old covenant was abolished, repealed, taken away and nailed to the cross of Christ (2 Corinthians 3:12-14, Galatians 3:11-29 and Colossians 2:14-17). By all previously said in this lesson, Paul, writing to the Galatians in chapter 3, affirms that we the Gentiles have come to be participants of the promise that God made to Abraham by way of faith in Christ Jesus. Therefore, we, along with the Jews, have come to be "the seed of Abraham, one people, and heirs according to the promise."—2373 Wooster Circle Apt 4, Las Vegas, NV 89108

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CHRIST AS OUR EXAMPLE

T. Pierce Brown



Probably almost everyone who claims to believe in Christianity would at least pay lip service to the idea expressed in 1 Peter 2:21 that Christ left us “an example, that we should follow in his steps.” Yet, many in the religious world, and even some in the fellowship of the churches of Christ, do not understand what that

means.

For example, one religious group teaches their members that they are to be baptized (immersed in water) to follow the example of Jesus. Furthermore, since Jesus was not baptized for the remission of his sins, then our baptism cannot be for the remission of our sins. They miss the point on at least two or three counts.

First, to follow the example of Jesus does not mean that we are to do the specific things he did, but by doing as he did—whatever God wanted him to do. For example, he probably walked 40 miles or so to be baptized. He was baptized in the River Jordan. We are not required to do either. I have talked with those who felt they should be baptized “in running water” to follow the example of Jesus. I told them I would be happy to open the faucet and drain the baptistry if it would help their feelings any! When one protested that it needed to be a river, I told her that to be consistent, it would have to be the Jordan!

He took the Lord’s Supper in an upper room. Many years ago I was told that in a town near where I was preaching there was a group of Christians who thought they had to meet in an upper room. They never grew too large to meet in a room above the garage. We know of groups who think they have to take the fruit of the vine from one container. What kind of cup they would have for the 10,000 or more members in Jerusalem we have never discovered! Of course, these groups are not expected to grow that large in numbers! At any rate, we can see that this misunderstanding of what it means to “follow His example” is not confined to some denominational group.

Those who claim we cannot be baptized for the remission of sins, since we must “follow the example of Jesus,” also miss the point by failing to realize that neither was he baptized thinking his sins were already forgiven!

Nor was he baptized so he could be voted into some church! He was not baptized into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We are to be. There are many other things, which Jesus did, such as washing the feet of his disciples, which were not done for us to do the specific thing he did, but to follow his example by practicing the principle he taught.

So our point now is that the way to follow the example of Jesus is to act on the principles he did. He was determined to obey God in all respects at whatever the cost! He died on the cross for his enemies. We follow his example, not by dying on a cross, but by loving our enemies (Matthew 5:44) and thus being perfect, “even as our Father in heaven is perfect” (Matthew 5:48).

I do not know how to develop this aspect of the mind of Christ except in these ways: 1. Teach persons the necessity of doing that. That is, determine to obey God in all respects. 2. Encourage them to do it by example and by exhortation. 3. Start practicing it on “little” things—that is, things you can do with little effort—so you can develop strength when the big ones come. You do not have to find a den of lions or a furnace of fire to go into, nor try walking on water! Just do what you can, where you are, with what you have, and you will be following the example of Jesus. By that process you will develop the strength to go to the cross, if necessary, and do what you could not, where you are not, with what you do not have. The lad with the loaves and fishes did that. He could not feed 5,000 with a few loaves and fishes, but he did! Peter couldn’t walk on water either, but he did! And he did because he was willing to obey Jesus although it did not appeal to his senses.—1068 Mitchell Avenue, Cookeville, TN 38501

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THE NAME OF JESUS

Continued from front page

the divine authority of Christ.

In speaking of those who should bow before Christ, the apostle says: "of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth." The adjectives can be either neuter gender, thus "things" (a figure for the whole creation; Revelation 5:13), or masculine gender, "those," referring to all created rational beings—angels, men, demons; or perhaps the realms of heaven, earth and Hades. However, we must observe that there is not the slightest hint in this passage that Paul endorsed the pagan concept of a three-tiered universe, as some modernists have alleged.

Another result of Christ's exaltation is that "every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." The word "confess" is from the Greek term *exomologeō*, meaning to "confess forth freely." It derives from three roots: *ex*, out of; *homos*, the same; and, *logeō*, to speak, reason. Here it suggests the idea of man speaking forth the same concept of Christ as God himself has affirmed of his Son (Matthew 3:17; 17:5).

In view of this rich passage, and numerous others of similar import, may every single disciple of the Lord Jesus strive to honor him as divine Master.—PO Box 55265, Stockton, CA 95205

THE WORLD'S GREATEST MONUMENT

Continued from page 6

Genesis 8:20; 15:9-10; Matthew 26:28). When the covenant at Sinai was given, Moses sprinkled blood on the people (Exodus 24:8; cf. 24:3-12). John MacArthur writes:

When God brought reconciliation with Himself, the price was always blood, because "without shedding of blood there is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22; cf. 1 Peter 1:2). A sacrificial animal not only had to be killed but its blood had to be shed (cf. Leviticus 17:14)...for a life to truly be sacrificed, its

blood had to be shed...Although Jesus did not bleed to death, He bled both before He died and as He died—from the wounds of the crown of thorns, from the lacerations of the scourging, and from the nail holes in His hands and feet. After He was dead, a great volume of blood poured out from the spear thrust in His side. The blood...symbolized...the giving of His unblemished, pure, and wholly righteous life for the corrupt...sinful lives of unregenerate men... (*New Testament Commentary*, Matthew 24-28, Moody Press, p. 152-153).

Jesus mentions His blood in connection with the Lord's Supper (Matthew 26:28; cf. 1 Corinthians 11:25). The cup reminds of the horror of sin—it caused the "Passover Lamb" to be killed (John 1:29; 1 Corinthians 5:6-8). The juice speaks of the price paid for the church (Acts 20:28). It reminds the partaker of his baptism when he was washed in the blood (Romans 6:3-4; John 19:34; Revelation 1:5; Acts 22:16). It impresses with the need to walk in the light, so the blood will continually cleanse (1 John 1:7).

You don't have to go on vacation to see the world's greatest monument. It'll come by you in your pew Sunday morning.—PO Box 520, Jacksonville, AL 36265

BE NEGATIVE

Learn to say No! The world's in need of men
who know a good from evil deed.
Learn to say No! And then stick to it,
Unmoved when men say, "Everybody's doing it."
Learn to say No! And don't delay it;
Fence-straddling fails; then stand and say it.
Learn to say No! Nor fear derision;
Stick bravely with your bold decision.
Learn to say No! We've waited long
For souls God-fearing, who hate the wrong.
Learn to say No! And in double measure
Christ's joy will be your constant treasure.

—via Fairmont, WV



SHARING WITH A FRIEND

I currently receive *Gospel Gleaner* and find it very informative. I am now requesting your publication for a dear friend and brother in Christ as he has expressed a desire to receive it. Please mail *Gospel Gleaner* to the address below. Thank you very much. Lula Oliver, Lake Charles, LA.

FCC READERS SUSCRIBE

Very pleased to receive my first issue of the *Gospel Gleaner* after *1st Century Christian* for years. Also was good to read brother T. Pierce Brown's article "Work Of Law" he being an old high school buddy of mine in the early forty years. He was a very smart and articulate boy of yester-days I must say. Enclosing find a check for more *Gospel Gleaner's* and to help in publishing. Would be glad to pass out a bundle at church if you have any. Wife (of 60 years) and I attend Oak Grove Church of Christ. Your brother in Christ. W. T. Green, Sparta, TN.

As per your ad in the *First Century Christian*, please put me on your subscription list for the *Gospel Gleaner*. I was very sorry to hear that the FCC is no longer to be published. I have enjoyed it for several years. Carl W. Brown, Jackson, TN.

INFORMATIVE ARTICLES

I receive the *Gospel Gleaner* through the church at Drumright, Oklahoma. It has such informative articles to help us lead a Christian life. In volume 19 you have an article of *21st Century Sermon Outlines*. I would like you to send me 2 volumes. I have a son and a grandson that preach some. My son goes to Guyana every year. Thanks so much. Wilma R. Lewis, Agra, OK.

TO SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

We have been receiving bundles of papers from some 15 publications like yours. Copies of your paper are

being mailed to church leaders in developing countries all over the world. We appreciate very much your sending them. This letter is to let you know that we are still active and want you to keep sending them to the address above.

On a limited budget, we are trying to aid in keeping the third world congregations sound in the faith and practice. We average sending five to seven four pound packages of class materials each per week to the enrollees of a leadership correspondence course. Those who successfully complete the course will continue to receive a few mailings of the ten-ounce packages of these papers.

A few of us here in California are very concerned with the approach to doctrine, such as the "new" hermeneutics. Some congregations are concerned with it, but they are generally small and weak financially, and mostly do not want to do battle. We appreciate so very much your publications sent for this effort. Please, send as many as you can donate...50 to 100 copies each time you go to press...perhaps more if you print just a few times a year. We started this program with the papers about fourteen years ago along with the help of Curtis Cates and Garland Elkins who gave us a start with the addresses of selected publications.

We are making this effort in these countries while they are so receptive to the idea of learning to read the English language. They will read and re-read everything that is sent and then pass it around to others. We send to mostly preachers and teachers who are taking our elders and deacons course. They use these well-prepared articles to make into sermons and lessons as they preach the material again in their congregations. May God bless you as you continue to aid in this kind of work. James D. Cox, Tustin, CA.

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PRAYER — THE “LEAST” I CAN DO

Robert L. Moss



When someone is in a crisis, burdened with sorrow, afflicted with pain, sickness or injury we often hear others make the statement, “I will keep you in my prayers; that’s the least I can do.” Maybe we need to sit back and reconsider the matter. At times there may not be anything that we can do of a physical nature to help someone, yet this does not

mean that prayer is the least that we can do for them.

Prayer, as taught in God’s word, is a most powerful tool. The Scriptures teach, “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” This passage informs us that this prayer of a righteous man working or operating has much force, strength and power. Thus a good man has great power in prayer. Does that sound like it is the “least” that one can do? In fact, in reality prayer may indeed accomplish more than some physical or material things that can be done for an individual in need. For instance, consider the account of Simon of Samaria. Simon had obeyed the gospel and was a Christian, yet he sinned in that he “thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money” (Acts 8:20). Peter then informed him that prayer was needed that he might be forgiven. There is no amount of money or material things that can help forgive sins. Yet for the

child of God like Simon who repents, prayer is a most powerful force.

If prayer is the “least” thing we can do for one another, why then is there so much emphasis in scripture on prayer? We are told to pray for the harvest of souls (Matthew 9:38). Prayer is taught as something that is to be continual in our life (Luke 18:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:17). We are to pray for one another in the Lord’s work (2 Thessalonians 3:1; Hebrews 13:18). Jesus our greatest example was an individual of prayer. He took time alone to pray (Matthew 14:23). At times Jesus would spend all night in prayer (Luke 6:12). Jesus spent a great deal of time and effort praying for those who would follow him (John 17:1ff). In his time of great agony just prior to the cross Jesus went out to the mount of Olives and prayed fervently (Luke 22:39ff). Even on the cross when his very life was coming to an end, a time when only the greatest of concerns would be on one’s mind, Jesus prayed for those who were carrying out that wicked deed against him (Luke 23:34).

In light of these few thoughts, could anyone really believe that prayer is the “least” that could be done? A sign along the road recently had the following words, “Prayer should be our first resort, not our last.” Let us be thankful for the power of prayer and make good use of it.—1037 West South Street, Neosho, MO 64850-2092

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The *GOSPEL GLEANER* is dedicated to restoring New Testament Christianity. We welcome your comments and questions regarding any article found herein.

STAFF WRITERS

Bill Dillon
Guy F. Hester
M. W. Kiser
Grady Miller
John T. Polk, II
Allen Webster

EDITOR

Dennis Gulledge

MAILING ADDRESSES

Contributions

P. O. Box 345
Mabelvale, AR 72103

Manuscripts

P. O. Box 345
Mabelvale, AR 72103

Web Site

mabelvalechurchofchrist.org

It is perhaps safe to say that most people have some familiarity with the Ten Commandments. You learned them as a child. No doubt you have seen the movie. They are typically in the news when the ACLU brings litigation against anyone who dares to display them in a public facility such as a public school classroom or courtroom.

The Ten Commandments have always been highly charged with interest and controversy. The Law was of such interest that "it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator" [Moses] (Galatians 3:19). The Law was of such controversy that a lawyer in Jesus' day felt that the question of the greatest commandment would make for a good debate (Matthew 22:36). Controversy still swirls around the Ten Commandments as the cultural war rages in this country. We will long remember the judicial removal of a large marble monument of the Decalogue from public view in the Alabama Judicial Building in Montgomery recently.

We are told that the presence of the Ten Commandments in a courtroom violates the principle of "separation of church and state." This wearied metaphor, so revered by the ACLU, is not found in the First Amendment, or anywhere else in the U. S. Constitution. The expression had its origin in a letter written by Thomas Jefferson in 1801. Jefferson was merely agreeing with the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment to the Constitution, which says that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibit the free exercise thereof." The U. S. Supreme Court wrote the expression "wall of separation between church and state" into a religion-in-school ruling [Everson v. Board of Education] on February 10, 1947. Jefferson's phrase has, with the help of the humanistic power base of the ACLU and the Supreme Court, been misinterpreted and misapplied ever since to limit any expression of faith in the public arena.

We should strongly resent the growing secularist religion that is trying to erase God from public view. It is distressing that pornography is protected under the First Amendment, but the same right does not protect any allusion to God. Yet, does the display of the Ten Commandments actually make us a better nation? The effectiveness of God's word is seen, not in the number of public places where it is viewed, but in how hearts are shaped and lives are changed thereby (Joel 2:13; Romans 2:28-29).

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS WERE NEVER INTENDED TO BE A UNIVERSAL LAW

Are we still bound by the Ten Commandments today? The Ten Commandments were limited to whom they were given and in duration. They were given nationally, not internationally - to Israel alone. They were the introductory words to the "statutes and judgment" God gave to "all Israel" in the days of Moses (Deuteronomy 5:1-3). This covenant was made in Horeb [Mt.



Sinai]. This covenant was not made "with our [Jew's of Moses' day] fathers" [Abraham, Isaac and Jacob]. With the patriarchs God made the covenant of circumcision (Acts 7:8), not the Ten Commandments.

Many people see no distinction between the Law and the gospel, and thus miss the fact that the Ten Commandments terminated at the cross of Christ. What does the Bible say? We today, have a new covenant in Christ (Hebrews 8:8-13). This new covenant supersedes the old covenant [the Law of Moses]. In contrast to the old covenant the new is universally applicable (Mark 16:15; Romans 1:16). Fundamentalist zealots all around the country who are arguing that the Ten Commandments are the law of God today are defending a law that has been fulfilled and removed (Matthew 5:17; Romans 7:4-7; 2 Corinthians 3:3-11; Galatians 3:23-26; 5:1-4; Ephesians 2:13-18; Colossians 2:14-15).

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS HAVE NOTHING OF JESUS CHRIST IN THEM

The name of Christ is not mentioned in them (Acts 4:12; Philippians 2:9-10). The blood of Christ is not mentioned in them (Hebrews 9:22; 1 Peter 1:18-19). The church of Christ is not mentioned in them (Matthew 16:18; Acts 20:28). The plan of Christ to save man is not mentioned in them (Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:20). Those who insist that the Ten Commandments save us must then believe that we are saved without Jesus Christ and the gospel. There is no hearing the gospel in the Ten Commandments (Romans 10:12-17). There is no believing the gospel in the Ten Commandments (Acts 14:1). There is no repentance of sins in the Ten Commandments (2 Corinthians 7:10). There is no confessing Christ in the Ten Commandments (Romans 10:9). There is no immersion in Christ for the remission of sins in the Ten Commandments (Acts 2:37-38).

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS ARE NOT ENOUGH

How often do people say, "If I only keep the Ten Commandments I'll be saved"? In view of Matthew 19:16-22 it is obvious that the Ten Commandments were never intended to be a perfect code of moral conduct.

Jesus quotes commandments number 6, 7, 8, 9 and 5. He also quotes Leviticus 19:18, which is not a part of the Decalogue. Jesus did not quote the tenth commandment on covetousness. The Lord was leading the rich young ruler to his real problem - selfishness.

This suggests that one can keep the Ten Commandments and still commit many immoralities that are not prohibited under that law, such as hating another (1 John 3:15), cursing and swearing without using God's name (James 5:12), and beating someone nearly to death (Romans 13:10). Let no one think that the Ten Commandments alone constitute a moral guide. Jesus and the apostles have not been silent on morality!

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS ARE NOT AMONG THE GREATEST COMMANDMENTS

On one occasion a lawyer tried to put Jesus on the spot by asking, "Master, which is the great commandment in the law?" (Matthew 22:36). The Lord answered, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matthew 22:37-40). You will notice that the Ten Commandments are here conspicuous by their absence. The greatest law is quoted from Deuteronomy 6:5. The second is quoted from Leviticus 19:18. Since "all the law and the prophets" were suspended on these two commandments they were not suspended on the Ten Commandments. I put this in the past tense because this was spoke by Jesus at a time when the Mosaic Law was in force (Matthew 5:17; 19:17).

Since the new covenant has come into effect the Old Testament is for our learning (Romans 15:14; 1 Corinthians 10:1-11). The truths stated in the Ten Commandments are likewise stated in the gospel, with the exception of the Sabbath command (Matthew 4:10; 5:21-28; 6:9; 15:19; 19:16-22; Romans 13:9; Galatians 5:20; Ephesians 6:1-4). We will be judged by the law of Jesus Christ (the gospel), and not by Moses' law (John 12:48).—
10822 Mabelvale West Road, Mabelvale, AR 72103



AMAZING GRACE

Guy F. Hester



the home.

Before my father died, it was amazing to many that he had the entire New Testament committed to memory. After he lost his eyesight he continued to preach and use the Scriptures as freely as he did before he lost his sight.

I see and hear things every day that simply amaze me! But the most amazing thing ever to exist is *the amazing grace of God!* The loving kindness, favor, goodwill and graciousness of the Almighty!

Life itself, the beauty and working of nature, is made possible by the graciousness of God. He gives us everything we have. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17). But the grandest, most glorious gift of the riches of His favor is salvation from sin. John Newton wrote, "Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, That saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but now I'm found, Was blind, but now I see." The apostle Paul said, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Why is the goodwill and loving kindness of God so amazing? Of course there are many reasons, too numerous to mention, but there are a few that make us wonder why anyone would refuse to accept it.

AMAZING BECAUSE IT IS SO PLAINLY TAUGHT YET SO WIDELY MISUNDERSTOOD. Perhaps there is nothing more misunderstood than saving grace but few things are as uncomplicated. Space will not permit us to mention all the misunderstandings concerning grace, but we can

understand saving grace. All that one absolutely has to know about the saving grace of God is recorded in 2 Timothy 1:9-10, "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." By grace we are "saved and called with an holy calling." It is not given on account of our righteousness. When we committed our first sin, our door to heaven on our own goodness was closed.

God planned to give it to us in Christ before the world began. He fulfilled His plan. It has been manifested in the coming of Jesus, His victory over death, communicated through the gospel.

Salvation by grace is the gift of God—He gave it to us in Christ. One must be in Christ to receive salvation by grace and we get into Christ by being baptized into Him (Galatians 3:27).

Let us illustrate it like this: Before Christ died He promised the Holy Spirit to His apostles. After His resurrection He told them where they would receive it. He said, "And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49). Where? In Jerusalem! Suppose they had waited in Jericho or Nazareth, would they have received it? No!

In like manner, God purposed that salvation by grace would be located in Christ. Should anyone expect to receive it outside of Christ? The Bible says, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Again, "Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 2:1).

AMAZING BECAUSE IT COST HEAVEN SO MUCH TO MAKE IT AVAILABLE. All of us are cost conscious. We are confronted daily with the high cost of living. But have we ever considered the amazingly high cost of the grace of God? In order to make saving grace available to us it cost

both God and Christ tremendously.

Just think about what it cost God. He gave his only begotten Son for our salvation (John 3:16). Jesus Christ gave up untold riches for our salvation (2 Corinthians 8:9; Hebrews 1:1-3).

Jesus gave up heavenly glory and majesty (Philippians 2:5-11). Christ gave His life and gave up His life.

What is so amazingly amazing about the cost that God and Christ were willing to pay is the fact that it was all for wicked, filthy, hateful sinners like you and me (Romans 5:8)!

AMAZING BECAUSE IT GIVES MEN THE OPPOSITE OF WHAT THEY DESERVE. When a man who has raped, tortured, brutalized and killed is given the death sentence, what do we usually think? Do we not say, "He got just what he deserved!" When the murdering, torturing, sons of Saddam Hussein were killed in the raid a few months ago, did we not say, "they got what they deserved!"? That is human nature: "Give him what he deserves!"

Look at what sinful man deserves. Paul tells us, "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23). That is what everyone of us deserved "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). How amazing that God is not like me and how glad and thankful we are that He is not.

It is amazing to consider that when man deserved death, God gave him life. When man deserves punishment, God gives him justification. When man deserves justice, God gives him mercy. How can this be? Because Christ took our place (Hebrews 2:9; 2 Corinthians 5:21). That is truly amazing!

AMAZING BECAUSE IT OFFERS SO MUCH IN EXCHANGE FOR SO LITTLE. This is so amazing that many have a hard time understanding and dealing with it. Like Naaman (2 Kings 5:13) they expect to have to do something great in order to obtain "so great salvation." When God tells puny man what he must do, he rejects it. It disappoints him.

All that is necessary to obtain the favor of God is to accept it by faith and obedience (Ephesians 2:8; Hebrews 5:8-9). Yet the majority of people reject it! Now isn't that

amazing!

How can one begin to compare obedience to Christ with the tremendous price of salvation? Or, all the wondrous blessings given to us by God?

Compare the act of coming to Christ with the rest He gives (Matthew 11:28-30).

Compare the effort of faith with the peace of God (Romans 5:1).

Compare the effort of repentance with the escape from peril it provides (2 Peter 3:9). Jesus said, "I tell you; Nay; but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3).

Compare the effort of confessing Christ before men with the joy of His confessing you before the Heavenly Father some day (Matthew 10:32).

Compare the effort of being baptized with the salvation from sin, the good conscience and all spiritual blessings that are yours as the result (1 Peter 3:21; Ephesians 1:3).

Compare the effort of living the faithful Christian life with heaven and the crown of righteousness (2 Timothy 4:8; Revelation 2:10).

Friends, there is no comparison! How amazing that God by His grace offers so much in exchange for so little. Yet, it is even more amazing that the majority reject God's mercy.

Have you ever stopped to seriously consider what it will be like to face God on judgment day without His grace to your credit because you refused to accept it? If you reject the grace of God, you will receive nothing save justice. There will be no pardon for you, no mercy, only condemnation (Revelation 14:10).

My friend, you need mercy, you need grace, and you need it right now!—g.hester@juno.com

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MY PREACHER SAYS

Allen Webster



I love preachers. For one reason, as the country gentleman said, "...because I are one!" Preachers are generally cordial, outgoing, and likeable. Despite some fallen televangelists, most ministers are good, honest men who possess high morals. Likely, a preacher knows something of the Scriptures and wants to help others understand them. Paul said, "...How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" (Romans 10:15).

I do not trust preachers...at least not with my soul's salvation. Though most of them are trustworthy, when it comes to what to believe about the Bible I have not met a man who can make up my mind for me. They might help in understanding the Bible, but the final decision is reserved for me because God will judge me by what He has said, not what my preacher says He says (John 12:48). Paul said, "...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12).

Preachers have led others astray (Matthew 7:15; 2 Corinthians 11:13-14), and many are presently doing so. Maybe they were taught wrong and are just perpetuating error. Perhaps they have compromised to please others (2 Timothy 4:3-4). In any case, we need to be careful that we do not let any person make up our minds against the truth. Let us look at some common statements heard from preachers and compare them to God's Word. Then let us make up our own minds which we should believe.

MY PREACHER SAYS... "THE BIBLE CANNOT BE TAKEN LITERALLY." "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Timothy 3:16-17). "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began" (Titus 1:2).

MY PREACHER SAYS... "I SHOULD CALL HIM 'FATHER' OR 'REVEREND.'" "And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven...but he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And

whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted" (Matthew 23:9, 11-12). "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28).

MY PREACHER SAYS... "SPRINKLING IS JUST AS GOOD AS IMMERSION." "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4; compare 6:17).

MY PREACHERS SAYS... "BAPTISM IS NOT NECESSARY FOR SALVATION." "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). "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 2:38). "And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 3:21).

MY PREACHER SAYS... "SALVATION IS BY FAITH ALONE." "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only" (James 2:24). "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Hebrews 5:8-9).

MY PREACHER SAYS... "ONE CANNOT FALL FROM GRACE." "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace" (Galatians 5:4). "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Corinthians 10:12). "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them" (2 Peter 2:20-21).

MY PREACHER SAYS... "INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IS ACCEPTABLE TO GOD." "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book" (Revelation 22:18). Where did God command its use under the New Testament, the law for men living today? (Colossians 2:14; 3:17).

MY PREACHER SAYS... "A WOMAN CAN PREACH, PRAY, AND LEAD IN WORSHIP." "I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works. Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety" (1 Timothy 2:8-15).

MY PREACHER SAYS... "ONE CHURCH IS AS GOOD AS ANOTHER." "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18). "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all... There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling" (Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4).

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1).—PO Box 520, Jacksonville, AL 36265

**DON'T USE TIME OR WORDS
CARELESSLY...
NEITHER CAN BE RETRIEVED!**

WHAT WE NEED IN THE CHURCH TODAY

Leroy Brownlow (1914-2002)

More knocking on doors and less knocking on each other. The great commission demands that we busy ourselves in taking the gospel to others (Mark 16:15). The Bible says, "speak not evil one of another" (James 4:11). It is so much better to be busy doing good rather than evil.

More sound heads and fewer sourheads. Perhaps there has never been a time in the history of the church in which we have had a greater need for men sound in the faith and wise in judgment. Sometimes the voice of the wise goes unheeded and the voice of the foolish takes over (cf. 1 Kings 12:6-8).

More open hearts and fewer open mouths. All conduct proceeds from the heart. Prejudice closes the heart to a true consideration of the facts. If the heart was made right before the mouth was opened, most church problems locally and universally would cease to exist (James 3:5-6; Proverbs 26:20).

More seed-slinging and less mud-slinging. The task of sowing the seed of the kingdom is so great that it should leave no time for the slinging of mud at a brother. The fact that we have the whole world as our foes should draw us closer together (Proverbs 18:24). There should be no division in the Lord's camp (1 Corinthians 1:10). One can never whitewash himself by slinging mud at another. He who tries gets his own hands dirty.

More sacrifice of self and less sacrifice of others. There are plenty of members of the church who are willing to sacrifice the other fellow—his talent, his time, his money, and even perhaps his reputation. Sacrifice should begin at home (Luke 9:23).

More concern over direction than speed. This is the jet and missile age. Speed is being enthroned and multitudes bow before it. But in the Lord's work, the greater question is not: "How fast are we traveling?" but rather, "Which way are we going?" (John 14:6; Matthew 7:13-14). All speed is not progress. On the other hand, neither is standing still.—*The Lakeside Messenger*, Church of Christ, Higden, AR



JESUS IS NOT "THE REASON FOR THE SEASON"

John T. Polk, II



"Why do you not emphasize the religious nature of Christmas? Don't you see that Jesus is the reason for the season?"

What the Bible teaches about the birth of the Son of God and the pagan travesty that passes for "Christmas" are NOT the same, unfortunately.

"THE REASON" WITHOUT "THE SEASON." The Bible teaches that: Jesus was born of a virgin (Matthew 1:18-25); in Bethlehem (Luke 2:1-7); shepherds saw the babe in a manger (Luke 2:7, 12, 16); wise men saw a young child (Matthew 2:10-11); Herod killed all sons 2 years old and under "according to the time which he had determined from the wise men" (Matthew 2:16). There were no: wise men at the manger; names for the wise men; backgrounds of the wise men; talking animals; shepherds and wise men together at the manger; little drummer boys; or worship of Mary, the mother of Jesus! Fiction and Scripture, or haphazardly-mixed Bible truths, concoct man-made "myths," are uninspired by God and unnatural to truth. Peter warned of things "hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures" (2 Peter 3:16).

No Scripture gives command or example that Christians are to celebrate Christ's birth with rite & ceremony. Sinners are saved by faith in His death and resurrection through water immersion (Acts 10:47-48; Romans 6:1-5; Galatians 3:26-29); and Christians observe the Lord's Supper (Matthew 26:26-29; Acts 20:7). Other than "the first day of the week" (1 Corinthians 16:2), New Testament Christians did not have a religious calendar of days or events (Galatians 4:10-11).

PAGANS HAD "THE SEASON" WITHOUT "THE REASON." Before Jesus was born, there were the: Scandinavians' Yuletide season and Yule log; the Phrygian sun-god, Attis', and the Persian sun-god, Mithras' birthday on December 25; Romans' Saturnalia festival (with flowers, candles, and gift exchange) on December 17-24 for the god, Saturn;

Persians' and Babylonians' Sacaea in December; Greeks' festival to Kronos. "The season" held sway among pagans to celebrate a change of season or year but without Jesus Christ! Festive practices, apart from their idolatrous intent, might be insignificant to Christians (1 Corinthians 10:23-11:1); but, in 137 A.D. the Catholic Bishop of Rome ordered the birthday of the Christ Child celebrated as a solemn feast. In 354 A.D. another Bishop of Rome, Julius I, chose December 25th as the observance of Christmas, replacing January 6.

This manufacturing of truth is exactly what Peter said the apostles did NOT do: "For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty" (2 Peter 1:16-19).

"Cunningly devised fables" are "pagan stories woven together with Scriptural facts," the very thing that Catholicism has done! The apostles witnessed what they had seen and touched and heard, as revealed by God. They did not adapt the Gospel to culture folklore, nor adopt cultural myths into the Gospel. For instance, in Lystra at Paul's command, a man lame from birth walked (Acts 14:8-10). The idolaters placed their pagan interpretation on the deed (Acts 14:11-13), which Paul promptly refused and refuted (Acts 14:14-18). Their pagan belief blending with Scriptural truth was blasphemous and diluted the faith. Paul rejected pagan worship, but Catholicism and denominations have mixed "oxen and garlands" (Acts 14:13) into the account of Jesus' birth.

THE "REAL REASON FOR THE SEASON." Perhaps the real "reason for the season" has been to establish the superiority of Mary over the Christ-child. Many cultures and religions have the concept of a "Mother of God," or even a "Mother God:" Semiramis and Tammuz (Babylon); Nutria and child (Etruscan); Virgo-Patitura and child (Druid); Isis and Horus (Egypt); Devaki and Krishna (India); Venus/Fortuna and Jupiter (Roman); and the Ephesians' Diana (Acts 19:35). An Israelite stumblingblock was the Sidonians' goddess Ashtoreth (Judges 2:13; 1 Kings 11:33), which displeased God

(2 Kings 23:8; Jeremiah 44:16-30). A commentary on Jeremiah 44:17 points out that the sun was worshiped as “Baal” a.k.a. “Lord of heaven” or “Molech” a.k.a. “King”; and the Moon was probably “The Queen of heaven.” It adds: “In Epiphanius, we find some women of Arabia, towards the end of the fourth century, had set up another queen of heaven, the Virgin Mary...whom they likewise worshipped as a goddess, by holding stated assemblies every year to her honour...” (*The Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*). Since God promised a son through a woman’s “seed” (Genesis 3:15), the Devil has been hard at work creating false fulfillments in paganism. Moses did not “adapt” this statement from paganism, but vice versa.

Termed “Catholic scholar and apologist” on the dust jacket, Scott Hahn says, “As we pray the Hail Mary, we echo one of the most ancient titles Christians have given to Mary: Mother of God (in Greek, *Theotokos*, literally, ‘God-bearer’)...With such scriptural precedent, the title ‘Mother of God’ went uncontested in the first centuries of the church.” (Page 99, *Hail, Holy Queen: The Mother of God in the Word of God*, Doubleday, New York, 2001). The “scriptural precedent” Hahn defined as the Egyptian Church, “Early Fathers” (e.g. Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Alexander) and then he only cites Luke 1:43 as “Elizabeth’s inspired greeting of Mary” (loc.cit.). Hahn says “Celestine convoked the Council of Ephesus (A.D. 431) in order to settle the ‘Mother of God’ controversy” (page 101, *ibid.*).

1. Scripture refers to Mary as “the mother of my Lord” and NOT “God” as Hahn claimed.

2. He calls the practices of church “Fathers” “scriptural precedent,” which they are not. The Scriptures and 1st century apostles did NOT use the phrase “Mother of God” for Mary, or anyone else, for that matter.

3. Hahn’s claim that the title for Mary “went uncontested” is not what encyclopedias nor Catholic history say.

a. “...during the first centuries of the church, no emphasis was placed on Mary whatsoever.” - *Encyclopedia Britannica*, vol. 14, p. 309.

b. “Devotion to Our Blessed Lady...is not contained, at least explicitly, in the earlier forms of the Apostles’ Creed, there is perhaps no ground for surprise if we do not

meet with any clear traces of the cultus of the Blessed Virgin in the first Christian centuries.” - *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Volume 15, page 459. (This underscores the lack of history for Hahn’s claim, but the lack of Scriptures to support the practice devastates it!)

c. The “Mary Doctrine” has been gradually added to by “Popes” [sic, JTPII]: in 1854, Pius IX pronounced the Immaculate Conception (Mary was born without sin) and it has been added that she never sinned; in 1923, Pius XI sanctioned Benedict XV’s pronouncement that Mary suffered with Christ, and with Him, redeemed the human race; Pius XII officially designated Mary the “Queen of Heaven” and “Queen of the World,” and in 1950, declared the bodily Assumption of Mary into Heaven. The effect is that Catholics who recite the Rosary say 10 prayers to Mary for every single prayer to God!

4. The *Catholic Encyclopedia* says: “Epiphanius, died 403 A.D., denounced certain ones of Trace, Arabia, and elsewhere, for worshipping Mary as a goddess and offering cakes at her shrine. She should be held in honour, he said, “but let no one adore Mary” (Volume 15, page 460).

IS IT BABY’S MANGER SCENE OR MOTHER’S SHRINE?
The elevation of Mary to the “Mother of God” is exactly the kind of thing that Jude condemned: “These are grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts; and they mouth great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage. But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ: how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts. These are sensual persons, who cause divisions, not having the Spirit” (Jude 16-19). Such people are: driven by their “own lusts” and not God’s Will; users of “swelling words” that are empty of truth; respecters of persons (such as Mary) “to gain advantage” for their own personal/commercial gain; and “mockers” who abuse Scripture. One must always “remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Jude 17), certainly those in Matthew and Luke.

(Continued on page 19)

TALKING ABOUT MY GENERATION

Neal Pollard



It depends on whose material you consult to determine exactly what my generation is. I've thought that it was Generation "X" or the "Baby Busters," but at least one recent source would place me at the tail end of the "Baby Boomer" generation. When I talk about my generation, I really mean those from the young

married group or those who are post-college through those whose children are teenagers—essentially those from their 20's to those into their 40's.

Being in the middle of that age group, I have a great interest in how it is characterized. I do not refer to those who are non-Christians. I am interested in those who are Christians and who are of my generation. There is so much, positively, to say about my generation in the church. Generally, we are bright, serious about our secular jobs, interested in home and family, upfront and open about our feelings, concerned about the future, and possessed of many and varied talents.

Yet, there are a few things about "my generation" that disturb me. Please think about these and let it challenge us, as a generation, to honestly evaluate them.

(1) *We can tend toward rebelliousness.* Because we pride ourselves on our independence and thinking for ourselves (which is often a very positive trait), we can insist upon our perceived right to dress how we want, attend when we want, entertain ourselves with whatever we want, give only as much as we want, and basically do what we want. This is an extension of the world's attitude of, "You cannot tell me what to do!" This ignores the importance of our personal influence (Luke 17:1ff), Christ's teaching that we consider others and not only ourselves (Luke 6:31; Philippians 2:3-4), and the repetitious, biblical call for us to be humbly obedient (Psalm 51:17; 1 Peter 5:6; see Judah's attitude in Jeremiah 7:23ff). We can get so caught up in what we see as our rights, that we lose sight of making absolutely sure that we are right.

(2) *We can tend toward unreliability.* I do not say this lightly. However, when I look, generally, at who supports our workdays, who more reliably cleans the building, who

mans our evangelistic studies, and who more readily volunteers for tasks, we are proportionately woefully underrepresented. I know we are trying to raise our children, and that is a priority. I know we are carrying them from one activity to another. I know we are trying to establish ourselves in our careers. Yet, we still have Christ's command to "seek first the kingdom" (Matthew 6:33). In a time when people generally did not live as long as we do, surely Jesus' target audience included many people of the age of "my generation." In our effort to gain the whole world, we can neglect our spiritual responsibilities and even our souls (Matthew 16:26). Especially in a congregation with such a high percentage of folks in "my generation," we need to be sure to pull our weight.

(3) *We can tend toward not being sacrificial.* I understand that the economy is bad. I know our children can drain our resources. Yet, we are at the apex of our earning power—i.e., God is blessing us as freely at this stage of life as at any other. While mortgages and car payments loom over us, we are prompted throughout scripture to be free givers. God has freely given to us (Romans 8:32). He once told His disciples to freely give (Matthew 10:8). He commands us to give freely, too, as He did at Corinth (2 Corinthians 9:6—"bountifully"). He promises that we will never go backwards or lose out, no matter how much we give (Luke 6:38). There is no definition of the word "sacrificial" or the word "cheerful" that is fulfilled when, making \$50,000, \$75,000, \$100,000 a year, we give \$5, \$10, or \$20 a week. If God loves a cheerful, liberal giver, what does that imply about His attitude toward the stingy?

My generation can be such a force for good! Let us draw on our positive traits and work to overcome our seeming, collective struggles. It is often said that apostasy is only a generation away. So can renewal and revival be. Let it be!—6856 Cold Harbor Road, Mechanicsville, VA 23111

**SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM
OF GOD...
BE IN BIBLE CLASS AND WORSHIP
THIS SUNDAY!**

PERSONALITY OR PRINCIPLE?

Stephen D. Rook



One of Jesus' closest friends was Simon Peter. But when Peter was wrong Jesus rebuked him (Matthew 16:21-23). Jesus chose principle over personality. One of Paul's best friends was also Peter. But when Peter erred Paul confronted Peter with his error (Galatians 2:11). Paul chose principle over personality.

Unfortunately, the examples of Paul and our Lord are not always followed today. There are those who sometimes compromise principle to protect a favorite person. Some are willing to rebuke and talk about a far away college president or preacher (who may very well need rebuke) but are as silent as the tomb with respect to the sins of a crony or pal. There are those who seem to have different standards of judgment: one for themselves and their friends and another for others. I'm all for "soundness" but is it "sound to wink at the error of a buddy while writing and lecturing on the errors of that preacher in that big city church? To ask the question is to answer it. Isn't Matthew 18:15-17 part of sound doctrine?

Egos and personal interests are often a priority. Many years ago a brother commented: "It is a sad state of affairs that at the present time the majority of the preachers are more anxious for their personal aggrandizement than for honoring Christ and saving men" (David Lipscomb and J. W. Shepherd, *Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians, A Commentary on the New Testament Epistles*, Vol. 4 (Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate Company, 1929), p. 192).

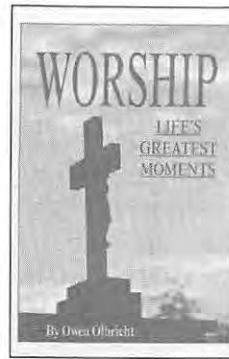
Unfortunately, such attitudes have continued. Without doubt this was a factor in the division among the churches that took place in the 1950's over the matters of church cooperation and the support of children's homes.

And the politics of cronyism and "personal aggrandizement" remain with us today.—Box 452, Lebanon, MO 65536

BOOK REVIEW:

WORSHIP, LIFE'S GREATEST MOMENTS

Roy H. Lanier, Jr.



Worship, Life's Greatest Moments is the latest book by the prolific author, Owen D. Olbricht in Searcy, Arkansas. Published by *Gospel Light Publishing Company* of Delight, Arkansas, this is Olbricht's ninth book, along with numerous workbooks and tracts.

This study of worship is based on four principles noted in the Preface: (1) the most important relationship is with God; (2) worship is one's communication with God; (3) worship is a privilege and honor; and (4) the Bible is the only true guide one can consult.

Based on such principles of research, the book has thirteen chapters in its 211 pages covering a study of the meaning of worship, Old Testament worship, pagan worship, and the true worship of Jesus Christ. A special chapter is included on David's contributions to worship, as well as that of the prophets.

Chapter eight is worth the price of the book by itself. It is entitled "True Worship," and it searches the boundaries of worship, along with a comprehensive study of John 4:24.

Prayer, music, the Lord's Supper, and one's contribution are all covered in depth. An unusual scholarly study of music worship is included with new insights into current questions.

The book is up to date by covering all the issues of worship that seem to trouble brethren today, and the practical suggestions for each item of worship are invaluable for one's meditation. Olbricht has given us a deep study, yet one that deals with our practical questions as men strive to communicate properly and accurately with Jehovah God. **EDITOR'S NOTE:** Order from Owen D. Olbricht, 305 W. Maryland Avenue, Sherwood, AR 72120, or email at odolbricht@juno.com. Cost is \$7.00 per copy, post paid. \$6.00, if more than one copy is ordered.

WHO ARE THE SOUND?

Robertson L. Whiteside (1869-1951)



"The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine" (2 Timothy 4:3). To be sound is to be healthy. In the Greek New Testament there are two words, an adjective and a verb, translated "sound," that refer primarily to bodily health or a sound body. The Greeks also applied the idea to the mind—a sound mind.

Metaphorically, it refers to the condition of man's moral or religious character, or to his teaching. The verb means, *to be healthy, or sound, or to become healthy, or sound*. An understanding of its literal use will help us to see more clearly its figurative use. In its primary, or literal sense, the verb is found in these passages. "They that are in health have no use of a physician, but they that are sick" (Luke 5:31). "And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole" (Luke 7:10). The servant had been restored to health. "Beloved, I pray that in all things thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth" (3 John 2). The adjective is used in its primary, or literal, sense in Matthew 12:13; 15:31; Mark 3:5; John 5:6,9,11,14,15; 7:23; Acts 4:10.

When is a person's body sound? It does not take a doctor to give a general answer to that question. It is sound when every part is acting, or is able to act, in harmony with the laws of its being; there must be no abnormal growths. Some people think they are sound physically when they are not. To say you are sound does not make it so. The law governing our physical being are God-given laws and must be respected, else we shall not long have a sound body.

It should be easy for us to see the significance of the word *sound* when applied to our moral and spiritual nature. In this realm the Bible is the law we must respect; our whole being must be brought into harmony with God's will, if we would be sound morally and spiritually. There will then be symmetry of development, and there will be no abnormal growths, which are always an indication of

unsoundness somewhere. If one of my arms were to develop in strength so that I could at one blow crush the skull of an elephant, the other arm perishing all the while, there would be a lack of soundness somewhere. Some brethren gain the name of being very sound because they have developed great strength along certain lines, while much of their character remains undeveloped. It is not soundness; it is an abnormal growth.

Some develop courage and boldness, but neglect meekness and kindness. Another is very earnest in contending for the faith, but is very deficient in forbearance. He becomes dogmatic and troublesome in the congregation. We forget that these opposing characteristics must be developed in the Christian. He must be brave and firm, yet meek and forbearing; uncompromising with reference to the truth, but yielding all his opinions or preferences for the sake of peace; otherwise, he is not sound.

More than fifty years ago a persistent effort was begun to lead churches away from the New Testament way of work and worship, and much harm was done. Those who fell in love with the move—instrumental music in worship, the various societies, etc.,—called themselves Progressives. Many brethren opposed them on the ground that they had departed from sound doctrine; and so we began to hear such expressions as "sound brethren," "sound preachers," "sound churches." Too many took it for granted that opposition to innovations constituted soundness. To be sound you must oppose many things, but you may oppose all innovations and still be unsound. You do not have to run a high fever to be unsound physically—you may have a chill. While those who called themselves Progressives ran such a high fever that they, as a negro said of a drunkard, talked like a man with "delirium tremendous," a lot of the rest of us had a chill. Most of us recovered from the chills, but with our Progressives the "delirium tremendous" has become permanent, so much so that there is no hope of a cure. It is a sad sight to see a man with "delirium tremendous."

I would like to impress upon all that the requirement to be sound in faith and doctrine is not fulfilled by simply opposing. A man may oppose every departure from the truth and still be unsound, simply because he fails to come up to the standard of his duty. The requirement covers the whole of life. "But we may know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully, as knowing this, that law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and unruly, for the ungodly and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for man slayers, for fornicators, for abusers of themselves with men, for men stealers, for liars, for false swearers, and if there be any other thing contrary to the sound doctrine" (1 Timothy 1:8-10). Notice the long list of criminals for whom the law was made, and the significant expression, "and if there be any other thing contrary to sound doctrine." This shows that every form of sin is contrary to sound teaching. Do you practice sin? Is there any irregularity in your life? Then you are unsound. Verse 11 is directly connected with what had been said, and shows that the gospel is the final standard by which a thing is to be tested as to whether or not it is sound. Sound doctrine—teaching—is gospel teaching. Is it important that we hold on faithfully to this sound teaching? "If any man teacheth a different doctrine, and consenteth not to sound words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; he is puffed up, knowing nothing but doting about questionings and disputes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, wranglings of men corrupted in mind and bereft of the truth, supposing that godliness is a way of gain" (1 Timothy 6:3-5). Notice especially what Paul here says of the man who teaches a different doctrine and consents not to sound words. And this charge to the preacher: "Hold the pattern of sound words, which thou hast heard from me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 1:13). The words delivered to us by inspired men is our pattern, and we must hold to it in faith and love. "But speak thou the things which befit the sound doctrine: that aged men be temperate, grave, sober-minded, sound in faith, in love, in patience: that aged women likewise be reverent in demeanor, not slanderers nor enslaved to much wine, teachers of that which is good; that they may train the young women to love their

husbands, to love their children, to be sober-minded, chaste, workers at home, kind, being in subjection to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed: the younger men likewise exhort to be sober-minded: in all things showing thyself an ensample of good works; in thy doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of us" (Titus 2:1-8). Sound doctrine here covers the whole range of human conduct, including our duties in our every-day affairs at home. Some otherwise good preachers fail to be sober-minded, grave, etc. We are to be sound in faith, love and patience. Has not many a man boasted of his soundness, when, as a matter of fact, he was very unsound? Study those verses carefully, and see if you feel like saying, "I am a perfectly sound Christian." Can any man or church afford to boast about being sound? We should strive to be sound, even though we do not attain to perfect soundness. Let us not forget that the word sound is a descriptive adjective, not a part of a party name.

How is soundness promoted? Much attention these days is given to the development and maintenance of bodily health. Let us notice three essentials to health:

1. Wholesome food. A person cannot eat or drink just anything and keep a sound body; neither can a Christian feed on just any kind of doctrine, and remain sound. Filthy jokes are poison; and the most of the moral and spiritual food you get out of the movies is destructive to Christian health. The Christian's food is the word of God (Matthew 4:4). Cultivate a taste for the word of God, till you can say with David that it is sweeter than honey (Psalm 19:10; 119:103).

2. Love for God. If we do not love God we will not feed upon his word. "He that loveth me not, keepeth not my words." Such people refuse to have God in their knowledge (Romans 1:28). "If a man love me he will keep my word." "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me" (See John 14:21-24). Without this love there is no soundness in us—"The whole head is sick and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and fresh stripes: they have not been

(Continued on page 23)



THE GOOD OLD WAY

(Jeremiah 6:16)

M. W. Kiser



We are all travelers. Life is the way. Eternity is the destination. Some are only concerned about the way; but not the destination. That is foolish indeed! I know it is my business to inform you about them both. Our text helps us understand.

I. THE *FACTS* ABOUT THE GOOD OLD WAY.

A. Identification.

1. Some ways we know cannot be this way.
 - a. "Of the ungodly" (Psalm 1:1, 6).
 - b. "Of the transgressor" (Proverbs 13:15).
 - c. "Broad way" (Mathew 7:13).
 - d. "Own way" (Isaiah 53:6; Jeremiah 10:23).
2. It is certainly designated as being:
 - a. The way of Christ (John 14:6).
 - b. The way of repentance and self-denial (Matthew 7:14).
 - c. Certainly leads to a pious life by those who live it (Ephesians 5:6).

B. Description:

1. Antiquity - "old paths" (Isaiah 55:6-9).
2. Excellence - "good way" (1 Timothy 4:8).

C. Destination:

1. It leads to eternal life (Matthew 7:14).
2. It is certain to do so (Romans 2:7).
3. It is the only way that does (Hebrews 12:14; Mathew 7:21; Acts 4:12).

II. THE *COMMANDS* OF THE GOOD OLD WAY.

A. Consideration: "stand, see."

1. Is your way one of outward or secret sin;

irreligion; self-confidence; formality; or apostasy?

2. Examine yourself! (2 Corinthians 13:5).

B. Inquiry: "ask."

1. By searching (John 5:39).
2. By asking (Acts 2:37; 8:34-36; 9:6).

C. Obedience: "walk."

1. This command requires you to get into the way (Acts 2:38; Galatians 3:26-27).
2. This command hastens us to act upon it now (2 Corinthians 6:2).
3. This command requires you to keep it by being steadfast against temptation (1 Peter 5:8-9; Luke 21:36).
4. This command requires you to go forward in spiritual growth (2 Corinthians 7:1; 2 Peter 1:5-11).

III. THE *PROMISES* OF THE GOOD OLD WAY.

A. They are meaningful: "rest."

1. We have rest in this world from:
 - a. The anguish of guilt (Isaiah 53:4-6).
 - b. Oppression of satan (Matthew 11:28).
 - c. Tormenting fears (Psalm 34:4).
 - d. Defilement (John 15:2; 1 John 1:9).
2. We shall have glorious rest in heaven.
 - a. From all temptation and troublers (Job 3:17; 2 Thessalonians 1:7).
 - b. From all our sufferings and danger (Revelation 21:4; Matthew 6:20).

B. They are most certain: "shall."

1. God is all-sufficient, He has it to give (Genesis 14:22).
2. God is truthful, we shall have it

(1 Thessalonians 5:24; Isaiah 45:19).

3. God is kind, He wants us to have it (John 3:16-17; 10:10; 14:1-3).

C. They are everlasting: "souls."

1. It remains ahead of us (Hebrews 4:9).
2. Some are resting now (Revelation 7:13-14).
3. It will be eternal (2 Peter 1:4).

This is the "good old way." Satan's way is the new way designed to lead men to hell. There is no injury or eternal loss to one who walks in the good old way. I call you to it.—104 Calhoun Avenue, Sylacauga, AL 35150

WE STILL NEED THE BIBLE

Dalton Key

"The earth is degenerating these days. Bribery and corruption abound. Children no longer mind their parents. Every man wants to write a book, and it is evident that the end of the world is fast approaching." Sound familiar? Read on.

"Our youth love luxury. They have bad manners, contempt for authority; they show disrespect for their elders, and love to chatter in place of exercise. Children are now tyrants. They contradict their parents, chatter before company, gobble their food, and tyrannize their teachers." Is this an apt description of today's situation?

You may be surprised to learn that neither of the foregoing observations was made with our time in mind. The first is taken from an ancient Assyrian Tablet, dated 2800 B.C., and the second was written by Socrates nearly four hundred years before the days of Christ's flesh.

Have things really changed all that much in the years, the generations, since? Styles of dress and living have changed. Science and technology are always advancing. But people, and the problems they face, remain the same, regardless when, regardless where.

Thankfully, the "living and active" word of God (Hebrews 4:12, ASV), is still as relevant to our needs today as it was when first written. "The word of the Lord endures forever" (1 Peter 1:25). Have you read your Bible today?—801 NE 15th, Amarillo, TX 97107

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PRELUDE TO REFORMATION (2)

Grady Miller



Something else happened a few months before Martin Luther changed the world by nailing his ninety-five theses to the door of the Castle Church, something usually overlooked or forgotten. On March 19, 1517 the Roman Catholic Church officially prohibited the printing of any book - including the Bible -

without the express permission of the papacy.

Here are two conflicting, irreconcilable attitudes toward the Bible. The reformers championed the concept of *sola scriptura* - the Bible is the supreme authority in religious matters. But the religious establishment of the 16th century - the Roman church and the civil authorities it dominated - sought to limit the influence of the Bible and keep the Word of God from the common man.

The first "pillar post" of the Protestant Reformation is the absolute priority of the Bible as the divine standard of religious authority. The Reformation would never have gotten off the ground without the firm resolution and conviction that everyone and everything is to be governed by the authority of the Word. Both peasant and pope, and everyone in between, has a right to read and interpret the Bible for himself. Neither peasant nor pope has the right to set aside the teachings of the Word.

This conviction did not begin with Martin Luther in 1517. The centuries leading up to the Reformation Era bear witness to the courageous stand of many great men who preached the Bible to the people. They exalted the Word of God over church dogma, papal decrees, creeds produced by church councils and the traditions of men.

Peter Waldo (1150-1218) was a wealthy businessman of Lyons, France who gave away his fortune and began to preach. Quoting long passages he had memorized from a French translation provided by a sympathetic priest, Waldo rejected the official Latin Bible and preached to his audience in their own language. He cared nothing for Catholic dogma and church politics, preferring to tell his followers what Jesus had taught. His Bible preaching won

a wide following and disturbed the priests of his day. When he and his disciples were forbidden to preach by Rome, they became outspoken in their criticism of the wealthy, corrupt church. For preaching the Word without regard for Roman Catholic dogma, the "Waldenses" were excommunicated and persecuted by church authorities.

Marsilius of Padua (1275-1342) has been hailed as standing "head and shoulders and three-fourths of his body" above all other critics of the established church in the period leading up to the Reformation. He resented the Roman church's claim to temporal or civil authority. He abhorred the church's corruption and preoccupation with wealth and political power. Using the Bible as his chief weapon, Marsilius declared the Pope ruled without scriptural warrant, usurping the authority Jesus invested in all the apostles. He argued Jesus never intended for His church to dominate the governments of men. Did He not say, "My kingdom is not of this world?" He advocated the heretical notion that even the church is subject to the authority of Scripture.

John Wycliffe (1328-1384) of England, the "Morning Star of the Reformation," is the best-known and most celebrated advocate of the Bible's supreme authority in the centuries before Martin Luther. His stand was truly revolutionary. Wycliffe questioned papal authority, attacked the chief Roman fundraiser (the sale of indulgences), and denied the doctrine of transubstantiation (the changing of the bread and wine into Jesus' literal flesh and blood during the Lord's Supper). Denounced by the Pope as a heretic, Wycliffe was able to continue his work at Oxford University because he enjoyed the support of powerful English authorities.

Wycliffe believed his arguments could be sustained by an appeal to the Bible. He knew the corruption and apostasy of the Roman church would be recognized by anyone who could read the Bible. The problem, as he saw it, was that the people did not have a Bible they could read for themselves! To that end, he and his followers translated the Latin Bible into English, the New Testament first in 1380 and the Old Testament in 1382. He sent out

his followers, the Lollards, to read God's Word to the people in their own language.

Forty-five years following Wycliffe's death the Catholic clergy dug up and burned his body, throwing his ashes into the River Swift. But his pioneering labors could not be undone. Men such as John Hus and others followed his lead and gave their lives to placing the Scriptures into the hands of the people. And as people began to read and study the Bible for themselves, they began to protest the corruption and abuses of the Roman Catholic Church.

The Bible made the Protestant Reformation!—745 Riverview Lane, Colorado Springs, CO 80916

EDITOR'S NOTE: Please see Grady Miller's "Prelude To Reformation (I)" in the April-June 2003 issue of *Gospel Gleaner*.—Dennis Gullledge

THE GLASS MAN

Lawrence A. Sanders



There is a man in Northeast Arkansas who owns a glass repair business. He probably travels as much as a hundred miles away from his home base to repair windshields for people. How did his business get that much coverage? How does he get so much business? The answer is...he goes looking for it. He goes to

places where there are lot of vehicles, walks around, finds all of the pecks on the windshields, goes in and says, "Would you like that windshield fixed?" Most people are thrilled that he'll come by every so often and fix their windshield. You don't have to drive anywhere to get it fixed. He'll take care of everything.

Many of our churches are sitting here, never growing, wondering why we don't have more people come in. Why don't the people come? Because we are not conducting business like the "glass man." We are not out looking for people to come in. He's working his business. Are we working ours?

What did the apostles do to get the word out? Acts

5:42 says, Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ. Surely they didn't just go to peoples houses. That is what it says.

When Jesus gave the "great commission" to the apostles, "He said to them, Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation" (Mark 16:15). The key word here is "go." Jesus said go out and tell them. He didn't say sit down and wait for them to come in.

Mark 16:20 shows their response. "Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it."

Look at those verses. Jesus said, "go." The disciples went.

We want our building to be full, but have we become complacent? Are we just waiting for people to come in, or are we trying to bring them in? Have we "went" out looking for them? Surely there is one that each of us can invite and encourage to attend worship this week.—

EDITOR'S NOTE: Brother Sanders is one of the elders of the Hickory Ridge Church of Christ, Hickory Ridge, AR—Dennis Gullledge

**MOUNTAIN HOME CHURCH OF CHRIST
COLLEGE & NORTH STREETS
P. O. BOX 880
MOUNTAIN HOME, AR 72654-0880**

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Sunday Morning Worship	10:30
Sunday Evening Worship	6:00
Wednesday Evening Bible Study	7:00

Telephone (870) 425-4330
Office Fax (870) 425-8118
E-Mail: church@centurytel.net

Ken Burton, Minister
Philip Medlin, Associate Minister
Michael Lance, Youth Minister
Jane Maynard, Women's Counselor

WHERE HAVE ALL THE PREACHERS GONE?

Bill Dillon



Information from various sources continues to flow in telling us that the number of preachers in the U.S., especially among churches of Christ, is declining. Some figures are extremely alarming, such as the revelation that the Lord's church is losing some 600 preachers per year, due to death, retirement and career

changes, and all our schools combined produce a meager 300 replacements annually. It does not take a brilliant accountant to quickly surmise where this sad road shall end.

It's my personal belief that most of our preachers are just plain quitting the full time ministry due to bad treatment from brethren or unrealistic expectations placed upon them or for other similar reasons. There are no doubt some who have regrettably fallen in love with the world and have done a "Demas number," leaving behind all hope of eternal salvation. We pray for them that their senibilities shall be reclaimed.

However, the dismal fact remains that there is a preacher shortfall and that puts the spotlight of inquiry on such questions as, "Will the church of Christ survive?" "How can any religious movement be optimistic regarding its future if it does not attract those of the younger age brackets?" "How can any religious group exist without a solid core of professional men who have devoted themselves to countless hours of the study of God's Word and are ready to meet the neo-paganistic world on any terms or topics it names?"

Bill McDonough states the critical issue as follows:

"Today there is no higher calling than preaching or greater crisis than the lack of preachers. We and our children can stop the church from dying in America, but we are the only ones who can." (*Gospel Advocate*, April, 2002).

These words are ever so true. Is it possible to treat our preachers better? (This is not to say some men in the pulpits did not deserve exactly what they received!). Rudeness, unjust treatment and discourtesy are incompatible with Christian character wherever they are

found, however.

Beloved, let us extol the glory and greatness of preaching and encourage our young men to want to be proclaimers of the Word of Life. Let us emphasize anew Jehovah's dynamic call as in the days of old: "So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found none" (Ezekiel 22:30).

Who will be God's man? What will your congregation do to encourage young men to fill the empty pulpits? Can we do some heart searching that will lead to some life changing to show how absolutely vital our preachers are to the ongoing of all that is good in the earth? One thing is for certain; wherever our preachers are going, the church is soon to follow! God give us preachers. God save the church.—PO Box 232, Hickory Ridge, AR 72347

MABELVALE CHURCH OF CHRIST
10820 MABELVALE WEST ROAD
P. O. BOX 345
MABELVALE, AR 72103

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Sunday Morning Bible Class	9:30
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Telephone (501) 455-2548
Office Fax (501) 407-0072
E-Mail: mabelval@cei.net
Web Site: www.mabelvalechurchofchrist.org

Dennis Gullledge, Evangelist
Scott Perry, Associate Minister
Wayne Brewer, Hispanic Minister

WERE THE TEN COMMANDMENTS THE ONLY MORAL LAW?

Dennis Gulledge

Anytime you make the case, from the New Testament, that we today are not legally bound to keep the Ten Commandments there is a typical response. It goes something like this, "Then you are saying that we can worship idols, take God's name in vain, dishonor parents, murder, commit adultery, steal, lie and covet."

In response we would ask, "Have Jesus Christ, and the apostles, been silent on morality in the New Covenant?" Jesus taught allegiance to God and God alone (Matthew 4:10). Paul warned against idolatry (Galatians 5:20; Ephesians 5:5; Colossians 3:5). Jesus taught that we should sanctify (keep holy, the opposite of common) the name of God (Matthew 6:9). Neither Jesus nor his apostles ever sanctioned Sabbath keeping in the New Covenant. Both Jesus and Paul enjoined love and respect for parents (Mark 7:10-13; Ephesians 6:1-4). Jesus condemned murder and adultery by identifying their points or origin—a hateful mind and lust-filled heart (Matthew 5:21-28). The Lord likewise legislated against stealing and lying, along with numerous other sins (Matthew 15:19). Jesus condemned covetousness (Matthew 19:16-22). The apostle Paul did likewise (Ephesians 5:5; Colossians 3:5).

Was Moses the only moral power that ever lived? Do we have such little regard for the Lord as to think that only Moses can motivate morality and enforce ethics? This common quibble raises Moses above the Messiah.—10822 Mabelvale West Road, Mabelvale, AR 72103

JESUS IS NOT THE REASON FOR THE SEASON
Continued from page 9

JESUS IS "THE REASON" FOR THE REST OF OUR LIFE. Many idolaters who learn the differences between God and their present practices, obey the Gospel. Devout Thessalonian Greeks "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God" (1 Thessalonians 1:9-10; Acts 17:1-4). We urge all to re-examine their Scripture and souls, and give Jesus their life's "season" (2 Timothy 4:1-

5). Our "season" begins when we believe and are baptized to be saved (Mark 16:15-16), and Jesus is the "reason" for it.—125 The Trace, Dover, TN 37058

MARRIAGE AND SPEECH

It's no secret that half of all couples who marry now find the wedding knot to be a slip knot. It's no secret that half of those couples launching onto the sea of matrimony now end up sailing into one another. It's no secret that many married couples who need to see a marriage counselor, choose, instead, a marriage canceller. It's no secret that many a woman who once perceived her husband as "Mr. Right" now sees him only as "Mr. Right Now." It's no secret that in many marriages the difference in courtship and marriage has been like the difference between the pictures in a seed catalog and what eventually comes up.

But it should also be no secret that God intends a marriage to be something better than what it has become for many. In the words of Genesis and Jesus, husband and wife are to become "one flesh" (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:5). What God has joined with a yoke, man must not divide with a chasm (19:6).

God has not left the necessary maintenance for marriage a secret. It requires a mutual submission of self to the interests of the other (Ephesians 5:21)—the wife to her husband in her God-appointed way (5:22-24) and the husband to his wife in his God-directed manner (5:25-29). The motivation for this maintenance must come ultimately not from subjective viewpoints but from sacred vows. This is why Jesus links His teaching on marriage and divorce (Matthew 5:31-32) to His teaching on the necessity of carrying out sacred oaths made to and before God (5:33-37).

We long have counseled, "Put your money where your mouth is." We would do well to put our marriages where our mouths once were on the day we made vows and called upon God to witness.

But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes'"(Matthew 5:37).—From *HOUSE TO HOUSE/HEART TO HEART* (March 21, 2002)

"PRAYER TO JESUS"

Scott Perry



The Biblical texts of Acts 7:59, Revelation 22:20, and 2 Corinthians 12:7-9 all have godly men (Stephen, John and Paul respectively) making requests or comments directly to the person of Jesus Christ. Their actions pose a question to the truth seeker of today, "May I pray to Jesus?"¹

There are numerous false doctrines regarding prayer such as: 1) prayer without any actions of obedience will result in salvation; 2) there are no conditions connected with prayer (anyone may pray to God); 3) prayer for the operation of the Holy Spirit apart from the word of God; and 4) praying for miraculous, spiritual gifts, et. al.² Is praying to Jesus a false doctrine? Does God forbid this practice? In order to know we will examine: How do we correctly interpret commands from God? What did Jesus command in regard to prayer? Do the actions of prayer to Jesus previously mentioned provide authority for us? Also, closely related to the subject of praying to Jesus is singing to Jesus. If it is wrong to pray to Jesus, then is it wrong to sing to Jesus?

1) *How do we correctly interpret commands from God, which are the Christian's final authority for belief and practice?* The question is pertinent to Christians, because Paul commanded us to "prove all things" and hold fast to that which is good (1 Thessalonians 5:21). Christians must give a "defense" for what we believe and practice (1 Peter 3:15). Our faith is not based on a leap in the dark, rather our "faith must not extend beyond the evidence." We must diligently and honestly search for and find all relevant evidence (Acts 17:11) then draw only such conclusions as are warranted by that evidence (1 Thessalonians 5:21).³ Two principles of correctly interpreting commands from God that must never be violated are respecting the silence of the Scriptures and understanding specific and generic authority.

First, the Silence of the Scriptures must be respected. While "silence of the Scriptures" is not found verbatim in the Bible, the principle is taught (Deuteronomy 4:2; Revelation 22:18-19). To respect the silence of the Scriptures, one must not add to or subtract from anything

God has specifically stated. Many recognize not diminishing from God's word, but fail in the area of adding to God's word (Proverbs 30:6). Presuming to take liberties with God's revelation, however, brings undesirable consequences (Revelation 22:18-19); for example, in Numbers 20:8, God did not specifically tell Moses not to strike the rock. The three things God specifically told him to do automatically excluded everything else (silence of the Scriptures). Therefore, when Moses struck the rock, he violated God's will by adding to a specific command and was punished (Numbers 20:11-12).

Second, it is necessary for us to understand specific and generic authority inherent in the commands from God. Every command includes both specific and generic authority. The specific part of a command is always obligatory and never optional. And in the absence of additional authority these specific commands are binding on you and me. The generic, or general part of a command always involves options as to how to do it. Additional authority would include miraculous circumstances or further instructions from God in addition to the Bible. Without this additional authority present we must rely on the authority of the commands of God (supported by apostolic example) recorded in the Bible for our practice. Not everything the apostles did provides an example for us; only that which is accompanied by a command of God (note Peter's sin, Galatians 2:11-14).

Respecting the silence of the Scriptures and understanding specific and generic authority causes us to interpret correctly commands from God just as we would correctly interpret any law or instruction in the present day. And only in this way can we hope to understand correctly Biblical instructions about prayer.

2) *What did Jesus command in regard to prayer?* Jesus specifically said we are to pray to the Father through Him (Matthew 6:9; Luke 11:2; John 16:23-24). Jesus is our Mediator (1 Timothy 2:5). Jesus occupies the position of Advocate for Christians (1 John 2:1) not the position of the One to whom the prayer is addressed. A mediator is a "go between" or one used in making an approach to another (God, the Father). The Father is set forth as the One we are to petition in the act of prayer. Can one be so bold as not to respect these specifically and clearly defined roles? Above

all else we must respect the commands from God about the roles taken by the Father and the Christ.

3) *Do the actions of prayer to Jesus by Stephen, John and Paul provide authority for us?* Sometimes the argument is presented that since Stephen addressed the Lord (Acts 7:59) so may we. However, note the miraculous circumstance of Jesus being manifested (Acts 7:56). Earlier we stated that in the absence of any additional authority we must respect the authority of the commands from God involving the silence of the Scriptures and specific and generic authority. Jesus' presence constitutes additional authority! Please note that this additional authority is not superior to the Bible, but equal. The commands of God are authority and we (today) have only those recorded in the Bible by which to know (1 John 2:3-5) what is pleasing to God (denominational doctrines withstanding).

Another account used is John's request in Revelation 22:20, "Even so, come Lord Jesus." Again it must be noted that John was "in the Spirit" (1:10) providing additional authority. By the way, does John speaking to an elder (7:13-14) authorize us to pray to elders? John also made a request to an angel (10:9); does this mean we can pray to angels?²⁴ Suggesting that we may pray to Jesus not backed up by a command from God could lead one only to conclude we could!

Paul's request of the Lord (2 Corinthians 12:8-9) was when he came to "visions and revelations" of the Lord (verse 1). May it first be noted that the name of Jesus is not mentioned, but simply "Lord," a title also attributed to the Father at times (Acts 4:24, 26). The fallacy involved in all three accounts mentioned is that Stephen, John and Paul are used as the authority not supported by commands from God! The apostles are our examples to follow, but only when supported by commands from God. The commands from God are our final authority. There is no command authorizing us to pray to anyone other than the Father. The Apostle Paul, himself, prayed to the Father and commanded the church to pray to the Father (Colossians 1:3, 12; 3:17). Therefore, these incidences do not constitute authority for you and me.

4) *How does praying to Jesus relate to singing to Jesus?* Sometimes one will ask, "Why can we sing to Jesus, but not pray to Him?" This is a valid question. The first and

most important thing to be kept in mind is that prayer and singing are two different acts of worship; therefore, God has given separate instructions for each. We have specific commands from Jesus to pray only to the Father (Luke 11:1; et. al.). In regards to singing, however, there are no specific commands limiting us beyond the generic command of singing to the Godhead (Ephesians 5:19-20; Colossians 3:16-17).⁵ Jesus is God, and therefore worthy of worship (Revelation 5:12). How do we worship Him? According to His word, of course. What does His word say about singing? Generically (with which we may take liberty) it says we may sing to (the) God(head). What does Jesus command about praying? Specifically (with which we may not take liberty), we are to pray to the Father. These are the questions which must be asked and upon which our conclusions must be drawn.

All speaking to Jesus is not prayer to Jesus. It is not a sin to speak to Jesus. Then, "What makes it a sin to pray to Jesus?" one may ask. The fact that Jesus specifically said pray to the Father! For example, take the words from Matthew 6:11, "give us this day our daily bread." Now, one could read aloud this passage and he would be speaking; one could sing it and he would be speaking, or one could pray it and he would be speaking. Speaking, therefore, is a generic term encompassing reading aloud, singing or praying; hence, praying is a specific form of speaking. Therefore, speaking and praying are not equal. Speaking is generic with which we may take liberty (read, sing, pray), but praying is a specific form of speaking for which there are commands how specifically to do it. We are not at liberty to modify those instructions on praying by adding to them and saying we may pray to Jesus. One may say, "Speaking, praying, singing—it's all the same." Would Nadab and Abihu now say that all fire is the same? (Leviticus 10:1-2).

If we are consistent, then we must maintain correct principles of Bible interpretation involving the silence of the Scriptures and generic and specific authority. Christians everywhere must never approach the Scriptures with the question of "Where does it say we can't do a particular thing?" We must first notice what is excluded by what has been specifically stated. Then, if something is not forbidden

(Continued on page 23)

HATE SIN, BUT NOT THE SINNER

Owen D. Olbright



Some view God as a being who is all love, who hates nothing and nobody. This is not the God the Bible reveals. He is both good (Romans 2:4), severe (Romans 11:22), and wrathful (John 3:36; Romans 1:18; 2:8; 5:9; Ephesians 5:6; Colossians 3:6; Revelation. 14:10). He does not look kindly on evil practices.

GOD HATES SIN. God hates sinful practices. He hates “every abomination” practiced in idolatrous worship (Deuteronomy 12:31). There are seven things He hates, things that are an abomination to Him: a proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet swift to do evil, a false witness, and one who sows discord among brethren (Proverbs. 6:16-19). He hates “robbery for incense” (Isaiah 61:8); sacrifice to idols (Jeremiah 44:3-4); evil in a person’s heart toward his neighbor and a false oath (Zechariah 8:17); “divorce” (Malachi 2:16); and the deeds of the Nicolaitans (Revelation 2:6). A prophecy concerning Jesus stated, “You love righteousness and hate wickedness” (Psalm 45:7; quoted in Hebrews 1:9).

God also hates the worship of the wicked. Isaiah wrote that God hated Israel’s worship because they were sinful, “Your New Moons and your appointed feasts My soul hates; They are a trouble to Me. I am weary of bearing them” (Isaiah 1:14, NKJV). Amos echoed the same, “I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not savor your sacred assemblies” (Amos 5:21).

HATE SIN, BUT LOVE SINNERS. Does God also hate sinners? The saying, “God hates sin but loves sinners,” is familiar to almost everyone, but is it true? Does God hate sinners? He so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son to die for their sins. He loves sinners, but does He love all sinners, those who defiantly turn their backs on Him because they do not love the truth and refuse to do His will?

God must hate wicked people who will not believe the truth. He will send strong delusions to cause them to believe a lie so that they will be damned (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12). If He loved them, He would not seek their damnation. The Lord hates evil doers. “The boastful shall not stand in Your sight; You hate all workers of iniquity”

(Psalm 5:5). “The Lord tests the righteous, But the wicked and the one who loves violence His soul hates” (Psalm 11:5).

Solomon listed seven things “the Lord hates...(which) are an abomination to Him” (Proverbs 6:16) Two in the list that He hates are people who do evil: “A false witness who speaks lies, And one who sows discord among brethren” (Proverbs 6:19). “My heritage is to Me like a lion in the forest; It cries out against Me; Therefore I have hated it” (Jeremiah 12:8).

LOVE NO MORE. Will God ever cease to love those who are wicked? Some preach that after God sends evil people to hell, He will continue to love them. Is this true? Notice what God said (Hosea 9:13) to Ephraim (used in reference to the northern tribes of Israel, Hosea 7:1). “All their wickedness is in Gilgal, for there I hated them. Because of the evil of their deeds I will drive them from My house; I will love them no more” (Hosea 9:15b).

Did you catch that? God will hate them and love them no more? People can become so rebellious to the will of God that He will cease loving them. This will be the result of defiant disobedience. In order to understand the wickedness of Israel that led God to hate them, read Hosea chapters 4-9.

The love of God is conditional. He continues to love everyone unless and until they become hardened to Him. In order to remain in God’s love, people must continue to obey Jesus. “If you keep my commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love” (John 15:10). If we do not continue to keep His commandments, we will not remain in His love.

CONCLUSION. Even though God loves all people, they must obey Him in order to continue in His love. He will cease to love those who defiantly rebel against Him. He will love them no more. The lesson for us is that we must continue to have obedient hearts that are receptive to God’s Word. Living obedient lives is the basis of our hope of eternal life (John 12:49-50).—305 W. Maryland Avenue, Sherwood, AR 72120

***IF YOU MOVE PLEASE SEND US
YOUR CHANGE OF ADDRESS***

WHO ARE THE SOUND

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closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with oil" (Isaiah 1:5-6).

3. Proper exercise. Not all exercise is healthful. Even the right kind of exercise may be carried to a hurtful extreme. And not all religious exercise promotes soundness. Some of it is hurtful. It does not prove a man's worth and soundness to say that he is a great worker, for the devil is a great worker. Many in the last day will claim a right to heaven on the grounds that they were great workers, and meet bitter disappointment. (See Matthew 7:22-23). A man may do the works the Lord approves, and yet be not sound. Such was the case with the church at Ephesus (Revelation 2:1-7). They opposed, and even hated false teaching—the Lord approved that; but they were at the point of being rejected, for they had left their first love. It was a working church, had no fellowship with false pretenders, and held fast to the name of the Lord; but it seems that they did all this as party measures, not out of love to God. They were unsound at heart.

4. Pure air to breathe. No man can develop or maintain a sound body if the air he breathes is heavily charged with poisonous gasses, poisonous dust, or smoke. The company you keep makes up your moral and spiritual atmosphere. "Be not deceived: Evil companions corrupt good morals." But one says, "What am I to do, for I am constantly in contact with people of corrupt speech?" You do not have to listen to such speech—you do not have to breathe such atmosphere. The deep-sea divers do not breathe the briny substance surrounding them: by a mechanical device they breathe the pure air above. And so can the Christian do. He can associate with the patriarchs and prophets of old, and with the Lord's apostles; yes, with the Lord himself as he walked among men.

With reference to work, there are three classes of horses: the runaway, the steady puller and the balky one. There are just three classes of professed Christians. The progressives and other sectarians have run away with everything, and some have balked because others have run away. There is no use to run away or balk, either; let us have a good, steady, faithful pull.—*Doctrinal Discourses*, pp. 272-278.

PRAYER TO JESUS

Continued from page 21

through what is specifically stated it must be a generic command and we are at liberty to specify how we may do it.⁶ Prayer to Jesus is forbidden through the specific command to pray to the Father.

ENDNOTES

¹A similar question was used among brethren Bill Jackson, Gary Workman, Eddie Whitten and Ray Hawk in bulletin articles I researched.

²Noah A. Hackworth, "The Truth Regarding Prayer," in *Building the Christian Arsenal II: 21st Annual Speaking As the Oracles of God Lectureship*, ed. Monte L. Evans (Muskogee, OK: Eastside Church of Christ, 1999), pp. 15-16.

³Thomas B. Warren, "Chapter 1: The Problem of This Book and Its Importance," in *When Is an "Example" Binding?* (National Christian Press: Moore, OK, reprint 1999) p. 14.

⁴Gary Workman, "May We Pray to Jesus, Too?," *The Restorer*, Rowlett Church of Christ, Rowlett, TX, no date.

⁵The word found in these verses is *kurios*, or "Lord." I believe the context (Colossians 3:1-17) indicates "Lord" represents Jesus here, but as earlier noted, at times it applies to the Father (Acts 4:24, 26). There are variant readings which have *theo* instead of *kurios* for Colossians 3:16, but not for Ephesians 5:19.

⁶Workman, "Silence of the Scriptures," p. 8.—PO Box 8, Mabelvale, AR 72103

BILL DILLON TO RETURN AS CO-EDITOR

In the April-June 2001 issue of *Gospel Gleaner* I announced that Bill Dillon had asked me to assume sole editing responsibilities due to his strenuous work load. Since then his situation has changed, and at my invitation he has agreed to return as co-editor with the first quarter issue of 2004. I know that our readers will welcome the return of his editorials, as will I.—Dennis Gullledge, Editor



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I printed a copy of your literature from the internet and it looks like something I would like to receive monthly. Please add my name to your subscription list. Also please let me know what the annual rate is to subscribe. I am interested in good sound Bible based literature. I am a member of the church who is very concerned about the liberal attitude that is creeping into the church. Wayne Crum, Caledonia, OH.

A STUDENT FROM WBS

I am a young preacher and student from WBS with Ruth Orr as my teacher. I graduated from the West Coast School of Preaching in September 2003. I would love to get your paper. Please send if possible. Simeon Ashalley, Ghana, W. Africa. *A NOTE FROM HIS TEACHER:* Simeon is one of the most deserving young men I know of. He has overcome so much poverty and heartache. He has been my student for 13 years. He is 26 years old. I highly recommend him. Ruth Orr, WBS teacher.

SHARING GG WITH A FRIEND

A sister in the Puryear, Tennessee congregation brought me a copy of the *Gospel Gleaner*. She wanted me to read the article about demons, which I did. Very good! I did not stop there, I read all the articles. Everyone of them was very good. We have about 50 families attending at Puryear. Do you send out the *Gospel Gleaner* in bundles? If so, what would be the cost? Mackie Gallimore, Puryear, TN.

FATHER & SON READ GG

On October 19, 2003, my wife and I attended Bible class and worship at the Mountain Home church of Christ at College and North Streets. We enjoyed the Bible class taught by Brother Doyle Davis, and heard two excellent lessons from Brother Ken Burton. After services I picked

up Volume 18 No. 4, Volume 19, Numbers 1, 2 and 3 of the *Gospel Gleaner*. I found these to contain excellent, scriptural articles. In Volume 19, No 1, I saw the reference to the book containing 23 sermon outlines. Our son, Clint Davison, is currently in his second year at the Bear Valley Bible Institute in Denver, Colorado. If this book is still available, I would appreciate your sending him a copy. Also, I would like to have Clint and myself put on the mailing list for the *Gospel Gleaner*. I am enclosing a small contribution to show our appreciation. It is encouraging to find doctrinally sound publications, and it is our prayer that Christians continue to be edified, and that those outside the body of Christ might be reached through the Word spread in the *Gospel Gleaner*. Lyle Davison, Stillwater, OK.

ADD TO YOUR HOME LIBRARY

We would like to be added to your mailing list for the *Gospel Gleaner*. We understand from our preacher, Paul Sain, at the East Hill Church of Christ in Pulaski, TN that your publication has many good articles by various writers and is free upon request. We are endeavoring to add to our home library and further our knowledge of the Word. Thank you. May God continue to bless you in all your good works. Jimmy & Nancy Allsup, Pulaski, TN.

LEARNED OF GG FROM A FRIEND

I had never heard of the *Gospel Gleaner* until a friend gave the April-June 2003 copy to me. I am reading it and enjoy it so much. I am on a fixed income so I am not financially able to send a donation this month but would appreciate it if you would send me a bundle and put me on your mailing list. I have no idea where Mabelvale is. This issue doesn't have a name on it. Thank you so very much. Mrs. Nina Bottoms, Pocahontas, AR.

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