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Christ Was Tempted In All Points As We Are

J.C. Choate

The Hebrew writer said, "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help us in time of need." (Hebrews 4:14-16).

Many great truths are brought out in these verses, but please notice in particular that the point is made that Jesus was tempted in all points as we are, yet he sinned not. Some find this hard to understand. They reason that surely Jesus did not face all of the temptations that they are confronted with. They say that had he been, that perhaps he too would have sinned. They also argue that since he didn't have to deal with the many modern day problems and sins, then how could he understand what they have to go through in this life?

It is true that there are many sins in the world today that Christ and the Apostles did not have to deal with. In other words, with the passing of time man has invented and found many new ways to sin. For instance, they did not have smoking in those

days, neither pornographic movies, modern day drugs, and all kinds of new weapons with which to kill, and thousands of other things. Does that mean that Jesus was not aware of these things coming, and had he been living during the time of their existence that he could not have coped with them?

The point is not that Jesus had to personally be tempted with every sin of his day, not to mention all of the sins that have come along since that time, but that he was tempted in all points as we are, yet he did not give in to them and sin. We ourselves have not been confronted with all of the individual sins of the world, yet we have been confronted with the different categories of sin that all sins fall into. For instance, John said, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world, If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever". (1 John 2:15-17).

There are therefore three major categories of sin in the world. There are the sins of the flesh, sins of the eyes, and sins of the pride of life. Regardless of what sin one is guilty of or what temptation one may confront, all of them fall into one of these groups of sin. Christ therefore faced these three divisions of sins, and therefore he can understand what we must go through in the various temptations that come before us. Knowing our problems and temptations, then he is ever there with a sympathetic heart and a desire to help us.

Not all are tempted in the same way or even by the same thing. Some are weaker than others. Jesus himself, although the Son of God, was in the flesh when he was tempted by Satan. So with the weakness of the flesh, with pain, hunger, thirst, etc., he had to find the strength to overcome those temptations that came his way. Imagine being betrayed by one of his own disciples, having to face the religious and civil leaders of his day only to hear their condemning and sarcastic remarks. Then there was the pain and death of the cross. How many could have endured all of that?

Of course he had God the Father to look to for strength, and so do we when we are tempted and we have to deal with problems, heartaches, and the pains of this life. That's the point. Jesus knows us, knows what we have to face, is concerned about us, and wants to help us with all of these things, provided we will let him help us.

Please notice some passages of scripture that have to do with temptation: "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it". (1 Corinthians 10:13). "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished". (2 Peter 2:9). "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth". (Revelation 3:10). "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him". (James 1:12).

From the foregoing scriptures, we should be greatly encouraged. Yes, there is help if we need it or want it. If we go on stubbornly, even as the Lord's people, and see how close we can get to sin without doing it, or if we put ourselves in compromising situations where the temptation is too great to overcome, then we have no one to blame but ourselves. Again, the Lord is there and wants to help us and will help us if we will but look to him for deliverance. He has experienced temptation, and knows what temptation is like, and having overcome it, then he can not only sympathise with us but help us to overcome the temptations that we are confronted with.

Don't think for a second that you have the only problems in the world or that your problems are greater than that of all others. But regardless of our circumstances and our needs, remember that Jesus is greater than Satan and all of his labourers. We therefore may not be able to make it alone, and we are foolish to even try such a thing, but with the help of the Lord we can be victorious.

over all temptations and problems of the world. Try it and see if it doesn't work.

What Happens When One Becomes A Christian?

Sunny David

Certainly something must take place when one becomes a Christian. If nothing happens then why would someone want to become a Christian? At the beginning of Christianity, almost two thousand years ago, hundreds and thousands became Christian each day, (Acts 2, 3), when they came to know what it offers to them. Many people today are misinformed about Christianity. Many are attracted to Christianity today for just having a social change. Some want to become Christian for some material gain. The emphasis is only on the physical side. They are ignorant of what Christianity can really do for them and for the whole world. Let me, therefore, tell you what will happen if you become a Christian.

When one becomes a Christian, all his sins are forgiven. Isn't it a wonderful thing? All sins are forgiven! Many go through the life carrying their sins on their heads and living in constant fear of hell, with no assurance of forgiveness of their sins. Nowhere else is the forgiveness of sins promised. People are told to do something themselves for appeasing "gods" so that their sins might be forgiven. Many take to long journeys, punishing themselves in various forms to pay for their own sins. But it is impossible for man to pay the price for his own redemption. Because he is a sinner, he sins every day with actions, mouth, and heart. In the physical man nothing good dwells. There is no man who has never sinned and who does not sin. The apostle Paul made the statement, "O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" And then, he himself answers, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord". (Romans 7:24, 25). This is because Christ died on the cross for sinners. In Jesus God became man, and what man himself could not do, God did that for man.

Instead of the sinner dying for his own sins, Christ took his sins upon Himself and died in his place. The Bible declares, "For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare do die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us". (Romans 5:6-8). Again, we read, "That is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them . . . for He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him". (2 Corinthians 5:19, 21). So because Christ died for our sins, through Him our sins are forgiven. But when? Answering this question, the apostle Peter told, while preaching to a large group of people, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit". (Acts 2:38). When Saul (Paul) had become a believer and was repenting in the city of Damascus, the Lord sent Ananias to him, who told Saul, "And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptised, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord". (Acts 22:16). Therefore, in becoming a Christian one's sins are forgiven and washed away. But more.

In Christ one becomes a new Creation. (2 Corinthians 5:17). There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. (Romans 8:1). Those who believe in Christ and repent of their sins and are baptized in Him for the forgiveness of their sins, Christ saves them according to His promise. (Mark 16:16). At the same time He adds them to His church, which is His spiritual body. (Acts 2:47; Ephesians 1:22, 23). At Galatians 3:26, 27 the apostle Paul wrote, "For you are all sons (children) of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ". Through baptism one puts on Christ and thus becomes a child of God. Through sin he was alienated from God, but through Christ he is reconciled to God. Now he can pray to God calling Him as his Father. (1 John 5:14). The apostle Paul wrote, "Giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has delivered us from the power of darkness and

translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins". (Colossians 1:12-14). Notice, writing to his fellow Christians he says that God delivered them from the power of darkness, and has translated them in to the kingdom of His Son. What a great change! They were living in sin and ignorance, but by becoming Christians they were redeemed and forgiven.

A Christian has the hope of eternal life in heaven. (John 3:16). He knows where he will go and live eternally. (2 Corinthians 5:1). His sins are forgiven, and not only that, but each day as he lives in Christ His blood cleanses him from all sins. (1 John 1:7). If you become a Christian, then you too will have the hope of eternal life in heaven. You will know for sure where you will go and live in eternity. All your sins will be forgiven through Christ, and if you will live the life of a Christian, in Christ, then His blood will continually cleanse you from all sins. What more could you ask?

Giant Killers

Philip C. Wilkerson

Recorded in the Old Testament are the lives of many valiant men. Among the most intriguing stories are those of the giant killers—Caleb, Othniel, and David. Of the three, the story of David and Goliath is the most well known, but the stories of Caleb and Othniel also yield valuable insights.

A race of giants called the Anakim inhabited the southern portions of the land of canaan (present day Palestine), the land God promised to Abraham in Genesis 14:18-21. The Anakim were the descendents of a man named Arba who lived in a city named Kirjath Arba. According to Joshua 14:15, Arba was the greatest man among the Anakim, and Joshua 21:11 states that Arba was the father of Anak. Anak (whose names means "giant") had three sons whose descendents were giants, hence, the race was called the Anakim.

The descendents of Abraham (often called the children of

Israel) first encountered the Anakim in Numbers 13:28 when they came to claim the land of Canaan (the land promised to Abraham) as their inheritance. The children of Israel sent 12 spies into the land, and 10 of the spies brought back the discouraging report recorded in Numbers 13:33. "There we saw the giants . . . ; and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight". Joshua and Caleb, the other two spies, believed in the power of the Lord. Numbers 14:9 says they told the people, ". . . their protection has departed from them [the giants], the Lord is with us. Do not fear them." But the people were so unfaithful, that they wanted to stone Joshua and Caleb. The Lord was angry with the unfaithfulness of Israel, and He punished the people by making them wander in a desert wilderness for 40 years until all those 20 years old and over, with the exception of Joshua and Caleb, had died (Numbers 14:28-34).

When the forty years were over, Joshua led a new generation of people into the land of Canaan. Joshua 11:21-22 tells how Joshua defeated many of Anakim and forced them to flee from their cities to the coastal town of Gaza. One of those cities was Kirjath Arba (also known as Hebron). Built at the top of a mountain, Kirjath Arba was the highest city in Canaan. Joshua 14:6-15 tells of a promise made to Caleb: "Surely the land where your foot has trodden shall be your inheritance and your children's forever, because you have wholly followed the Lord . . ." At the age of 85, Caleb asked for Kirjath Arba as his inheritance. In 45 years his faith in the Lord had not waned, but grown stronger. Even as an old man, Caleb trusted the Lord so completely, that the Lord empowered him to personally defeat the giants at Kirjath Arba. Caleb believed in the power of the Lord, and through his belief, he became a giant killer.

In Judges 1:12, Caleb issued a challenge: "He who attacks Kirjath Sepher and takes it, to him I will give my daughter Achsah as wife". Kirjath Sepher was another stronghold of the Anakim (Joshua 11:21). In Judges 1:12 we read: "And Othniel, the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother took it; so he gave him his daughter Achsah as wife." Not only was Caleb a giant killer, but he influenced his nephew to become a giant killer too. Killing

the giants of Kirjath Sepher helped prepare Othniel for his later role as a Judge (deliverer) over Israel. In Judges 3:10 we see that Othniel also had a strong faith in the Lord, and the Spirit of the Lord came upon him. By the power of God, Othniel was able to defeat the king of Mesopotamia. Perhaps like Othniel, God prepares us for greater service in his Kingdom by allowing us to face a few giants along the road of life.

A remnant of the Anakim escaped the battles of Joshua, and fled to the cities of Gaza and Ashkelon. These cities, situated on the Mediterranean gulf, were inhabited by the Philistines. The Philistines and the Anakim lived together for many years and during the time of Saul, the Philistines gathered their armies against Israel (I Samuel 17:1). Among the Philistines was a giant named Goliath, who most likely, was a descendent of the Anakim. Imagine Goliath—9 feet 9 inches tall—with his coat of mail, his bronze armor, and his huge spear he must have appeared invincible! Only David, a young shepherd boy, was willing to fight against Goliath. He believed that with God's help, he could kill the giant. To the Goliath's face David proclaimed his faith in God, "This day the Lord will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you and take your head from you . . . for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give you into our hands". (I Samuel 17:46-47). David killed the giant with a sling and a stone, but he gave the credit for the victory to the power of the Lord. With God's help, David also became a giant killer.

Today, we as Christians also face giants. One giant we must defeat is the sin of complacency. To defeat complacency, we must never reach a point where we feel satisfied with our spiritual growth. We must continue growing, and learning, and studying the word of God. If we cease to grow spiritually, we lose contact with the strength which God provides. We must hold on to that strength at all costs, for it is only the one true God who will save us from the consequences of sin.

Another giant we must defeat is the sin of indifference. We must never become indifferent about the lives of those around us! So many people lives in the darkness of sin, never knowing

of the light of salvation. Christ said that we, as Christians, are the light of the world (Matthew 5:14). God is depending on us to help make his message known to all men. We must not let giants such as language barriers; not knowing what to say; being afraid of offending someone; etc, keep us from being evangelistic and telling those around us of the salvation available in Christ. Through faith in God, and genuine love for the lost, we can overcome indifference.

One of the most dangerous giants facing us today is materialism. We must never let the material and ephemeral things of this world overpower and control our lives. Materialism causes spiritual complacency and indifference because it forces us to spend too much time worrying about ourselves and our possessions. Jesus said in Matthew 6:19-21 "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also". Where is your heart? Are you more concerned with sharing the message of Jesus Christ than getting the "things of this world?"

Each of us has many other giants that we must face in our own personal lives. There is sickness, loneliness, depression, financial difficulties, marital problems, and the list goes on. Are you confronting the giants in your own life? Are you depending on the power of God to help you overcome them? The apostle Paul demonstrated the attitude of the giant killers in Philippians 4:13; "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me". Strive to be like Caleb, Othniel, and David—"seek the Lord and His strength" (I Chronicles 16:11), and you too can be a giant killer.

Just Suppose the Lord Should?

Dillard Thurman

When Jesus began His preaching and teaching in Galilee, his

fame spread immediately to distant regions, and throngs assembled to hear Him: *"And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from beyond Jordan"*. (Mt. 4:25). The crowds gathered wherever Jesus began a discourse, for *"The common people heard him gladly"*. (Mk. 12:27). With Him went God's signs of approval, so that one would say, *"Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him"*. (Jno. 3:2). The graphic report was: *"The people pressed upon him to hear the word of God"*. (Lk. 5:1). Jesus could say, *"The Son of man hath not where to lay his head", but one thing He did not lack was an attentive audience! Wherever He went, a throng followed to hear Him, and to observe His mighty works; "And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power"*. (Lk. 4:32).

Jesus Does Not Visit in Person Today!

The Son of God does not come in person to visit cities and towns in our day. God has now clearly and concisely revealed the terms of salvation in the inspired words of His Son and His apostles. That gospel of our salvation will not be altered or amended; and Paul asserts, *"But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us"*. (2 Cor. 4:7). But for a few moments, let us consider what our reaction would be if Jesus did come to our towns and villages, and speak to us as He did in Galilee over 1950 years ago! Would we rush out to fall at His feet as they did? What would we do and say about His teaching?

If Jesus Came to Build a Church?

Just suppose Jesus should come into your community and personally establish His church! Just suppose He pointed out the truth Peter stated on the mount of Transfiguration: *"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God"* and then said, *"Upon this rock I will build my church"*. (Mt. 16:16-18). Would you then face Jesus and contend, *"One church is just as good as another"*? Would you argue with Him that a church built by Luther, Calvin, Wesley, etc., is just as worthy as that built by the Son of God? Just

suppose that Jesus cited the inspired words of Paul: "*Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it*", and spoke of "*the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood*". (Eph. 5:25; Acts 20:28). What would you then say about that church, and what would your attitude be toward it? While facing Him, and remembering the price He paid for the church, would you still argue "One can be saved OUT of the church as easily as within it"? Just suppose that the Lord preached that God is glorified only in that church (Eph. 3:21), would you still try to glorify Him in civic clubs and lodges?

Suppose He Opposed the Sects?

Just suppose that Jesus Christ should come into your community and condemn those who entered into any church not divinely built? What if He should say, "*Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch*". (Mt. 15:13-14). Would you contend that Jesus lacked compassion and understanding? Would religious leaders charge that He was too legalistic in contending for these principles regarding the church He established?

Further, suppose Jesus was heard to pray: "*Neither pray I for these [the apostles] alone do I pray, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they may all be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me*". (Jno. 17:20-21). Would you still try to uphold the religious division that plagues the world? Would you still be willing to work for, plead for, and support that which Jesus so fervently prayed against? Or would you then be willing to become a member of the church He built, and pray and plead for that unity for which He prayed? If you could personally hear Jesus pray for unity, would you seek to unite the religious world on the principles of Truth He preached?

Suppose Jesus Spoke on Baptism?

Just suppose that Jesus personally appeared in your city, town or village, and promised: "*He that believeth and is baptized shall*

be saved". (Mk. 16:16). Would you be willing to step upon the same platform with Him, and declare: "He that believeth and is NOT baptized shall also be saved"? Or would you be willing to affirm, "He that believeth is already saved, and may be baptized if he desires"? Or would you stand on the same rostrum with the Son of God, and contend, "Baptism is non-essential. You can be saved just as well without it!"? When Jesus said, "*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved,*" would you tell your family and friends "But there are various ways to interpret that"? Would you look the Son of God in the eye and say His statement could not be fully understood by all who wanted to be saved? Would you be willing to debate the Son of God on His teachings on this subject?

Suppose the Apostles Appeared?

Just suppose Peter, Paul, John and other apostles came into your city, town or village, and set up a church having the very same doctrine, faith and practice as that which they set forth 1950 years ago! Suppose further that they set forth the very same terms of membership, organization, form of worship, name, and all other things relevant to that New Testament church. Would you welcome them into your midst? Would you receive them kindly, and accept readily their message? If they set forth the apostles' doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread and prayers (Acts 2:42), would you agree this was the gospel of salvation, or would you ridicule their efforts, belittle that church, ignore their plea, and oppose the whole undertaking to restore primitive Christianity to the world?

Suppose Jesus Sent Ambassadors?

Just suppose Paul, Peter and other apostles entered your community as the ambassadors of Christ (2 Cor. 5:17-21), and began preaching the "Old Time Gospel" that folk talk so much about; what would be your attitude toward them and their message? Suppose they preached with power and authority in condemning divisions, factions and sectarian efforts—how would you then react? Suppose they exhorted all to speak the same thing, allow no divisions, be perfectly joined together in the same mind and judgment: would you argue with them that it is impossible?

Would you "thank God that we have so many different churches so that each might have the church of his choice"? Suppose these apostles taught that there is ONE body, and that Jesus Christ is its Head (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18); would you still contend for many religious bodies? And suppose they taught that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of that body (Eph. 5:23), would you still argue one could be saved as well in other bodies? Or would you become a member of the spiritual body of Christ, His church, and live in obedience to His authority as its Head?

Suppose Those Great Apostles Came?

Just suppose these apostles came into your community and preached Jesus Christ as the risen Lord and Son of God, and people were pricked in heart and cried out, "*What must we do?*" and were then told by the apostles: "*Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost*". (Acts 2:37-38)! How would you react to all this? Would you scoff at the idea of obeying? or would you humbly and submissively obey the Lord at the word of His apostles? Or yet, suppose a man found you penitently praying, and told you, "*And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord*". (Acts 22:16). Would you accept this command of the Lord and obey without question? or would you refuse the words of life, and adamantly continue in sin?

Suppose the Holy Spirit Came?

Just suppose the Holy Spirit came on you to confirm those things we have "just supposed". Would you be willing to accept the Spirit's testimony and confirmation? If the Spirit gave you "*a more sure word of prophecy*" (1 Pet. 1:19) in direct revelation, would you accept His signs, wonders and miracles? Or would you reject the witness of the Holy Spirit, and yet contend, "I'm perfectly satisfied with my religion, and don't care to investigate these matters"? Friends, we have cited you those things the Holy Spirit revealed through inspired men! They can help you begin an investigation of God's Word that can bring you eternal riches in glory! We only ask you to lay aside biased opinions, precon-

cieved notions, and rely on what God has given you in His Word: the Bible!

If God Should Offer it to You?

Just suppose that God the Father, and Jesus Christ the Son, offered you their autographed copy of the Bible, would you accept it, love it and respect it enough to follow it implicitly? Well, They will not come in person: but they have given us this sacred volume, signed and sealed with their approval, and bearing the precious promises God now extends to us! What is your attitude toward the Holy Scriptures? Are you willing to show your love and gratitude by obeying all that God has commanded? God will not come today to confront you; but even this day God may call you to face Him in judgment! How would you answer that summons? Can you honestly say you have diligently sought to do His will? Have you treated God fairly? Friend, think on these things! *“And now, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified”*. (Acts 20:32).

“Make it As Sure as You Can”

Clem Thurman

The Jews reminded Pontius Pilate of what the Lord had promised, *“After three days I rise again”* (Matt. 27:63), and asked him to put a guard on the tomb. Pilate replied, *“Ye have a guard: go, make it as sure as ye can”* (v. 65). I have little doubt that Pilate was just trying to escape responsibility. But in most of life's situations, his advice makes sense. Have you ever been burglarized? We were. Terrible, isn't? To think that someone has invaded your privacy and taken things for which you have worked and which meant much to you and to which they had no right. The police told us some things we could do to make our home safer, and before I went to bed that night, most had already been done. I wanted to *“make it sure.”*

Jesus asked, *“What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole*

world, and lose his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matt. 16:26). Surely, with regard to our spiritual welfare, we need to "make it as sure as we can." We face many choices as we journey through life. Sometimes the choice is between two things that both seem good, and right. But nearly always one of those two offers a choice that is safer, more sure, than the other. The apostle Peter exhorts us, "*Make your calling and election sure*" (2 Pet. 1:10). Every time there is a choice to be made regarding our spiritual life, we ought to choose what is "sure," for the soul is too precious and eternity is too long for us to take a chance. Let's follow the safe course.

Shall We Listen to Men or the Bible?

Many folk have the idea that "one religion is as good as another," and from that comes the idea that anyone who speaks for any religion is worthy to be heard. The premise is false, and so is the conclusion. Jesus said, "*In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men*" (Matt. 15:9). It does make a difference what we hear and believe. As Solomon wrote, "*There is a way that seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death*" (Prov. 14:12). A false remedy will not cure an illness, a false path will not lead to the desired destination, and false teaching will not save a soul. Jesus said, "*Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free*" (Jno. 8:32).

Only the gospel of Christ, the word of the cross, can save (Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 1:18). Shall we listen to what men say, or what the Bible says? The apostles, asked by the Lord if they would go away from Him, replied: "*Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life*" (Jno. 6:68). The apostles, guided by the Holy Spirit (Jno. 14:25-26; 16:13; 1 Cor. 2:11-13), were given also "*the words of eternal life.*" As the apostle Paul wrote later, "*When ye received from us the word of the message, even the word of God, ye accepted it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God*" (1 Thes. 2:13). That is what we must hear.

Shall We Follow Feelings or Faith?

Saul persecuted the church (Acts 8:3; 9:1), and evidently felt he was absolutely right to do so: "*I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth...I have lived before God in all good conscience until this day*" (Acts 26:9; 23: 1). But he was wrong and later called himself "*the chief of sinners*" (1 Tim. 1:15). He followed feelings instead of faith. You see, "*The way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his own steps*" (Jer. 10:23). Feelings are from within a person and result from what is believed. And because people's feelings vary so widely, there can never be unity based on feelings.

Jude exhorts us, "*Contend earnestly for the faith, which was once for all delivered to the saints*" (Jude 3). Faith comes from "*hearing the word of God*" (Rom. 10:17). God is "*no respecter of persons*" (Acts 10:34), and the message He gives to one, He gives to everyone. The faith by which we are saved (Rom. 5:1) and by which we are to live (Rom. 1:17) is "*delivered*" to us. That faith does not come from within, but from the God of heaven by means of His word- There is "*one faith*" for all those who adhere to His teaching (Eph. 4:5). Not a choice of faiths, but "*the faith once for all delivered.*" That is the "*unity of faith*" (Eph. 4:15) that brings together all those who trust in Jesus as Lord. Following "*the faith*" is the only safe way.

Is it "Faith Only" or "Faith which Works"?

That we are saved by faith, if we are saved at-all, is plainly taught in God's word (Jno. 3:16; Rom. 5:1-2; Eph. 2:8-9; etc.). Some even conclude that "man is justified by faith only." But, what kind of faith saves? And when does faith save? In Heb. 11 we read about Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham and others who lived by faith. In each case they heard what God wanted them to do, and they did it. Their faith was rewarded **only** when that faith led them to obey. They were not rewarded when they believed, but when faith obeyed! Without exception. Never, in all of God's dealing with man, has He rewarded faith until it led to doing His will.

Jesus asks, *'Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?'* (Lk. 6:46). In a similar vein, God asks what is the profit of faith that does not work (Jas. 2:14-16). In fact, *"Faith if it have not works, is dead"* (v. 17). The inspired writer then speaks of the faith of Abraham when he offered Isaac, and shows that his faith was *"reckoned unto him for righteousness"* only after he had done what God said (v. 23). Then comes the only time "faith only" is found in the entire Bible: *"Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only"* (Jas. 2:24). The only faith that can avail is *"the faith which works through love"* (Gal. 5:6).

Shall We Sprinkle or Bury in Baptism?

Lots of people think it makes no difference. But when Jesus commanded baptism, what did He command? The word translated, *"baptize,"* means "to dip, immerse, submerge." The word translated, *"baptism,"* means "immersion, submersion" (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon). The word for "sprinkle" (Greek, *rantizo*) is never used with regard to baptism. And doing something different from what the Lord commanded, [no matter what you call it, is not obeying Christ. And you don't have to know Greek to learn what baptism is. Let God's word show you.

When Philp preached to the Ethiopian, the eunuch asked to be baptized: *"And they went down both into the water, both Philp and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they came up out of the water..."* (Acts 8:38-39). The act of baptism required going *"down into the water"* and after the baptism *"coming up out of the water."* That is why Paul referred to baptism as he did: *"Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death...Having been buried with him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead"* (Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:12). Baptism is a burial. It is not, and never has been, anything else.

Shall We Wear Human Names or "Christian"?

Many people contend that "there is nothing in a name," and

they think the religious name we wear makes no difference. But the apostles taught otherwise: "*He [Jesus] is the stone which was set at nought of you the builders, which was made the head of the corner. And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved*" (Acts 4:11-12). The wearing of a name identifies our loyalty and our faith (1 Cor. 1:13). The question really is, though, what name does the Lord want us to wear?

The prophet Isaiah foretold "*a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name*" would be given to God's people (Isa. 56:5; 62:2; 65:15). The fulfillment is plainly given: "*The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch*" (Acts 11:26). When the apostle Paul preached to King Agrippa, the king said, "*Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian*" (Acts 26:28). That is all Paul ever tried to persuade people to become! Peter wrote later, "*Let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief...But if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name*" (1 Pet. 4:15,16). There are many religious names being worn by people today. But, really, which name will you wear if you want to "*make it as sure as you can*"?

A Denomination or the Church Jesus Built?

This, too, is a very simple choice. Jesus prayed for the unity of all believers, the same kind of unity which He and the Father have (Jno. 17:20-21). He points out that the church is His body (Eph. 1:22-23) and "*there is one body*" (Eph. 4:4). Yet denominations exist, dividing people into different groups, all claiming that they follow Christ. And it isn't new. It happened in Corinth 1900 years ago. Those denominations at Corinth were told that such division was wrong (1 Cor. 1:10-13). It still is, in your city or mine, today. And the question asked them needs an answer today; "*Is Christ divided?*"

The beautiful thing is this: you don't have to be a member of a denomination to please Christ! Jesus promised, "*I will build my church*" (Matt. 16:18). He "*purchased the church*" with his

own blood (Acts 20:28). That church is "his body" (Col. 1:18), the "house of God" (1 Tim. 3:15), the "kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 16:18-19; Col. 1:13), the "bride of Christ" (Eph. 5:22-32). And you can be a member of the church without ever being part of any denomination. When people 1900 years ago asked, "What shall we do?" they were told, "Repent, and be baptized." We then read, "They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls... And the Lord added to the church daily those that were being saved" (Acts 2:37-38, 41, 47). The Lord saves, and He adds the saved to His church. "Make it as sure as you can!" Why be a member of a denomination at all? Why not just be a member of the church which Jesus built, and saves?

Shall I Submit to Jesus Now or Later?

When Paul preached to Felix, the governor said, "Go thy way for this time; and when I have a convenient season, I will call thee unto me" (Acts 24:25). Felix made a fatal mistake, which many today still make. He thought commitment to the Lord could be a matter of convenience, but it cannot! There has never been a convenient time to obey the Lord's will: not in Eden, nor any time since. Obedience to the Lord is matter of conviction, not convenience. And when one is convicted, he will not worry about convenience.

The psalmist wrote, "Today if ye shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts" (Psa. 95:7; Heb. 3:15). The apostle exhorts us, "Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2). The Lord never said, "Obey me tomorrow" or "next week." It is NOW. When Philip preached to the Ethiopian eunuch, the sinner wanted to be baptized right then. And he was (Acts 8:35-39). The Philippian jailor, when he first heard the gospel of Christ, "was baptized, he and all his immediately" (Acts 16:33). No waiting, no delay. He obeyed the Lord right then. It is the only way to "make it as sure as you can."

Little Barefoot Buford

A preacher told this story in my hearing long ago.

About little barefoot Buford; to church he'd always go.
They had a big revival—got the best man they could find;
A most impressive speaker—the educated kind.
They swept and scrubbed the building, and worked with all
their might.
They dusted off the song books, and made things look just
right.

They handed out the pamphlets and knocked on every door.
They put up great big posters in every shop and store.
They invited all their neighbors and brought the kinfolk too.
To hear this brand new preacher who would tell them what
to do.

They put him in the nicest room; they fixed the fancy food!
They used their finest china, and planned to feed him good!

Well, he preached his greatest sermons; the singing was
divine;

The house was overflowing; and the weather turned out fine!

But the meeting was now closing and not a soul had come.

The people sat and wondered, where had their plans gone
wrong?

Then the crowd was startled by a movement in the aisle—

'Twas little Barefoot Buford, with his shy and timid smile.

Some said when it was over it was a disappointing week;

There was only Barefoot Buford, with dust upon his feet!

They'd wasted time and money, their work was all in vain,

'Cause little Barefoot Buford seemed to be their only gain.

But the years have gone by swiftly, and the tale is told today

That hundreds have been converted by Buford, so they say.

He became a gospel preacher, and spreads the Word with joy;

Old timers still remember that little barefoot boy.

We often hear about him; what Brother Buford's done.

And the folks from that meeting are proud he's a native son!

So, when the seed is planted, the yield we cannot know,

Just like little barefoot Buford in that meeting long ago!

Just One Mistake!

He brushed his teeth twice a day. He went through the clinic twice a year. He wore overshoes when it rained. He slept with the windows open. He ate lots of vegetables and fruit. He never smoked, drank, or lost his temper. He always rested all day Sunday. He was all set to live to be 100!

He is survived by 18 specialists, 4 health clinics, 6 gymnasiums, besides golf courses and tennis courts, and a host of makers of body-building equipment and antiseptics.

He made one mistake! HE FORGOT GOD! He lived as if he would live forever, and that this world would never end. Now he is gone to be with the great host of those who "*know not God*" (2 Thes. 1:7-10)

Victory Over Persecution

Johnny Ramsey

God has promised His loyal devotees to provide "*a way of escape*" when temptation comes (1 Cor. 10:13). and Paul clearly stated that persecution often brings us open doors (1 Cor. 16:9). The Savior told the oppressed congregation in Philadelphia of Asia many years ago that their fidelity in the midst of adversity prompted Him to open a door of opportunity that no man could shut (Rev. 3:8). Jeremiah reminds that there truly is a balm in Gilead for every troubled soul. The Lord of light and life brings sunshine to this darkened world (2 Tim. 1:10). He gives us purpose in living, reason for existing, hope in dying and a golden street of glory for the redeemed of all ages (Rev. 21:21).

Let us so live and love, so work and pray, that heaven's door

will always be open as the Father beckons us home. There is a beautiful spiritual hymn that challenges our attention:

*Green pastures are before me,
Which yet I have not seen.*

*Bright skies shall soon be o'er me,
Where the dark clouds have been.*

*My hope I cannot measure,
My path to life is free:*

*My Savior has the treasure,
And He will walk with me.*

Somewhere out yonder beyond the blue awaits a robe, a crown and a golden street. Let us press on!

Victory in Christ is the glorious theme of the grand and eloquent book that closes the Bible story. Written to persecuted saints at the end of the first century concerning things that would shortly come to pass, the thesis of Revelation is found in Rev. 2:10, "*Be thou faithful unto death.*" The Lord promised the crown of life to those who remained loyal even in the face of imminent death. To be a faithful child of God in the persecution days of the Roman Empire was no easy task. Seventeen times in 22 chapters we will find the key word of the Revelation: "*overcome*". The salient point of the brilliant treatise was: "*Overcome, and you can come over to live with God*". In fact, Rev. 3:21 says just that. Jesus, who had to overcome Satan, self and sin, promises the beautiful home of heaven to His followers who do the same!

The background to Revelation is found in such passages as Matt. 5:10-12, Jno. 15:16ff; Rom. 8:18 and 2 Tim. 2:11-12. Those verses, along with Jas. 1:2 and 1 Pet. 4:12-16, promised early Christians that tribulation, duress and death would be a part of serving the Lord. No statement is more directly to the point of suffering for Christ than Phil. 1:29, "*We not only believe on him, but we also suffer for his sake*". Paul admitted that as a loyal devotee of the Savior he stood in jeopardy every hour and the sentence of death always hovered over him (2 Cor. 1:9).

In the opening stanza of the book, we learn that congregations of the Lord's people in Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea originally received the Revelation. The first three chapters contain specific material which is addressed to each church by the Lord. Five of the seven are rebuked. Only two of them. (Smyrna and Philadelphia) are praised. Ephesus had lost its earlier zeal for things divine, Pergamos allowed false teachers, Thyatira had compromised on morals, Sardis claimed to be strong but was spiritually dead while Laodicea boasted of wealth—although in the Lord's view was "*poor, miserable, wretched, blind and naked*". They had everything but Christ, and that equals zero!

The book of Revelation is unique in that it is a compilation of the things John saw and wrote in a book (Rev. 1:1, 19). Similar to Ezekiel's "*valley of dry bones*", wherein God taught the prophet through a vision he recorded, so is this final book of the Bible. When we read Revelation, we can "see" what John "saw" 1900 years ago. This last book in Holy Scripture is not a narrative in chronological order like Matthew or Acts. It is a section of the Bible much like parts of Ezekiel, Daniel and Zechariah filled with imagery and symbolism that emphasize the important principle:

Truth will triumph.

In the opening chapter Christ is introduced as One who has walked in a fiery furnace (Rev. 1:15). Did not such a Friend walk with Daniel's friends and deliver them (Dan. 3:17)? He is also shown to be the Redeemer who was alive, then dead, and now is alive forevermore (Rev. 1:18). What a comfort to first century Christians who were being intensely persecuted, imprisoned and killed for the cause of the Lord. They might be put to death by gladiators in the arena at Rome, or devoured by wild beasts to please the Caesar of their day, but by the power of God they too would be raised from the dead (Rom. 1:4). The bars of death could not hold the Christ (Matt. 16:18), nor could they prevent Christians from living with the Master forever!

Marriage and Divorce

"What therefore God hath joined together let not man put asunder". (Mt. 19:6).

I. SOME PLAIN BIBLE TEACHING

- A. "The Lord God said, it is not good that man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him". (Gen. 2:18).
- B. "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh". (Genesis 2:24).
- C. "Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body". (Eph. 5:22, 23).
- D. "Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it". (Eph. 5:25).
- E. "Children obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right". (Eph. 6:1).
- F. "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord". (Eph. 6:4).

II. GOD'S PLAN FOR MARRIAGE

- A. It is a divine institution. (Gen. 2:24).
- B. It is monogamic in form. (1 Cor. 7:2).
- C. It is procreative in design. (Gen. 1:28).
- D. It is patriarchial in government: (1 Tim. 2:13).
- E. It is religious in spirit. (Deut. 6:7; Prov. 22:6).
- F. It is indissoluable in nature. (1 Cor. 7:39).

III. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF MARRIAGE?

- A. For companionship (Gen. 2:18).

1. To rejoice with him in his success.
 2. To sympathize with him in times of sorrow and disappointment.
 3. To help each other live the Christian life.
- B. For procreation (Gen. 1:28).
- C. To avoid sin (Cor. 7:2).

IV. WHY DO PEOPLE MARRY?

- A. For love, companionship and protection.
- B. Social and economical security.
- C. Desire for home and children.
- D. Some marry for money or spite.
- E. Sexual attraction is the main concern of some.
- F. Adventure and romance.
- G. Social expectation. (Join the bandwagon).
- H. To escape a home situation.

V. WHY MARRIAGE IS SERIOUS BUSINESS

- A. God is the author of marriage.
- B. It is life lasting—until death separates them.
- C. It involves the rearing of a future generation.

VI. SOME DIVORCE STATISTICS

- A. In 1890 there was one divorce to 16.9 marriages, and in 1946 there was one divorce to 3.2 marriages. Today it is about one to four.
- B. In 1919 there were 141,000 divorces in the U.S., and in 1946 there were 550,000.
- C. From 1900 to 1941 the population of the U.S. increased 90%. During the same period the marriage rate increased 100% and the divorce rate 450%. Think of this?

VII. DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

- A. When two people marry, divorce for unscriptural reasons, and both remarry, four are then guilty of living in adultery.

1. The one who put away an innocent companion. (Mt. 19:9).
2. The innocent one put away. (Mt. 5:32).
3. The one who marries the innocent party. (Mt. 19:2; Lk. 16:18.)
4. The one who marries the one who put away an innocent companion (Necessary inference).

B. Hence, only an innocent party who put away a companion for fornication can scripturally remarry.

VIII. WHY CHRISTIANS SHOULD MARRY ONLY CHRISTIANS

- A. "She is at liberty to be married to whom she will, only in the Lord". (1 Cor. 7:39).
- B. Believers are not to enter into an unequal yoke (2 Cor. 6:14-18).
- C. Why should Peter speak of husband and wife being heirs together unless both are thought of as being Christians? (1 Pet. 3:7).
- D. Children cannot be trained in the fear of the Lord, if His law of marriage is disregarded. (Eph. 6:4).
- E. Intermarriage has always been dangerous:
 1. The Sons of God married the Daughters of Men (World) and because of these inter-marriages, wickedness gained sway, and the mighty flood came upon the earth. (Gen. 6:1-5).
 2. God's law to the Jews prohibiting marriage with idolaters was stated in plain terms (Ex. 34:12-16; Deut. 7:3-4).
 3. Solomon with all his wisdom became a wretched fool among his idolatrous women,
 4. The Nation of Israel became saturated with idolatrous practices through intermarriage with surrounding nations. They suffered the dire consequences of transgressing God's law.

- F. Bitter experience is being realized today by many Christians who, through ignorance or self-will, have disobeyed the divine instructions in regard to marriage.
- G. Be careful in choosing your partner for life so that you may have a happy, Christian home and live a complete and useful life in the service of God.

Is Life Worth Living?

Roy Beasley

Is life worth living? Some have decided that it isn't, and they seek to destroy themselves. But, God says that your life is worth living.

Nobody ever finds life worth living; he must *make* life worth living. Life is to be *lived* rather than endured. Living is an art, and the person who masters this art has accomplished something greater than the works of any artist or sculptor. There is a vast difference between living and merely existing. Your life will be what you make of it. The word of God reveals the secret to happy and successful living. It is an art that each one of us can learn if we will but take the time and effort to do so.

Work is essential to happiness. The unhappiest people in the world are those who have nothing to do but to have a good time. "An idle brain is the Devil's workshop". It causes discontentment and bitterness. It permits the imagination to run riot, and exposes one to all kinds of worries and fears. God intended for man to work. When He created Adam and Eve and placed them in the Garden of Eden, He gave them a work to do. He commanded them to "dress the garden and keep it". He knew that their happiness and content depended upon keeping busy.

Love makes life worth living. It takes the bitterness out of the trials and tribulations of life. Life without love is without purpose or meaning. Read the 13th chapter of 1 Corinthians about the meaning of love. Love brings joy. Everybody wants

to be loved, but what about loving others? In order to be loved, you must learn to love. Love begets love and love manifested begets joy.

Cultivate an interest in others, this will make life worthwhile. There is too much selfishness in the world. A little boy was asked what he got from the story of the Good Samaritan. His reply, "The lesson I got from it is that when I'm in trouble, my neighbors ought to help me". He missed the point and so do we.

Become sincerely interested in others. Learn to "love thy neighbor as self" (Matt. 22:39). Seek HIS good. Help him when he is in need. Bring him to Christ if he is lost. Remember, "it is more blessed to give than to receive".

If life is to be worth living, you must learn to accept self. We all have different talents and degrees of ability. Don't grumble and complain about what nature did not give us. Instead, let us faithfully use what we have. The one-talent man was rejected, not because he had only one talent, but because he didn't use that talent. Let us learn to use our talents and whatever abilities we possess. You may have some handicap. Learn to accept that; learn to use our other abilities.

Keep yourself fit to live with. You must live with yourself. Live so that you can respect yourself; if you can respect yourself, others will respect you. Live conscientiously. Don't let your conscience condemn you; a condemning conscience will destroy happiness, mar personality, undermine health, and steal your sleep.

Live one day at a time. This is the only way to live. We cannot live yesterday, for it is past; neither can we live tomorrow, for it has not come

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