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## EDITORIAL



### *Is It Lawful ?*

Time was, just a few years ago, when people were ashamed to talk about divorce in public, but now it has become a common place. New laws have been enacted in favour of divorce or dissolution of marriage. Some marriages today last only a few hours or days at the most. If a couple aren't able to adjust between themselves, they are encouraged and helped by various laws and social agencies to get a divorce. Changing partners in marriages has become in today's society like changing clothes. Court houses everywhere are full of couples seeking divorce on various grounds. How does God look at divorce? What does the Bible teach on this subject?

God is the creator of man. He knows what is best for man. When God, in the beginning had created Adam, the first man to live on earth, He saw that "there was not found a helper comparable to him. And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the felsh in its place. The rib which the Lord God had taken from man he made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. And Adam said: "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of

my flesh; she shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of man." Therefore, says the Bible, "a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh." (Genesis 2 : 20-24). Notice, God created one man and one woman. This is God's design for marriage. One man and one woman to come together in marriage to live together and to help each other in life. Their love and care for one another should be so much that they should, said God, "become one flesh", leaving father and mother. This does not mean that after marriage man and woman should forget their parents or should not keep any relationship with them. But it does mean that their love for one another as husband and wife should be so strong that nothing, not even parents, should be able to separate them. It is just as Christ taught at Matthew 10 : 37, "He who loves father and mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worth of Me." Christ didn't teach there that one should not love father and mother or son or daughter, but that one's love for Christ must be uppermost. That is, if one has to leave father and mother or son and daughter for Christ's sake then one must be ready to do that to prove one's love for Christ. And this is how much in marriage husband and wife should love each other. They should be willing to support and help each other in all circumstances, and should not let anything or any person come between them to cause them to separate.

God, the Bible teaches, hates divorce. (Malachi 2 : 16). When the question of divorce was brought before Christ by Pharisees and he was asked : "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?" Christ, in reply to them, said, "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning, made them male and female, and said, for this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh? So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate." But "They said to Him, why did then Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?" Jesus, in reply, said, "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so." Further, Christ said, "And I say to you,

whoever divorces his wife, except of sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery." (Matthew 19 : 3-9). Christ also said, "And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another she commits adultery." (Mark 10 : 12).

So, what do we learn? There is only one cause for which God, the creator of man, allows divorce, and that is, unfaithfulness or sexual immorality by either partners. In such a case, the guilty partner may be divorced or put away by the faithful partner. But this is not necessary, not a must. The best thing will be to persuade the guilty to repent and seek forgiveness from the wronged partner and God, if at all possible. But if it is not possible then the faithful partner has the right to divorce the guilty partner. This is the only scriptural ground for divorce. Those who divorce for any cause, other than fornication or sexual immorality and remarry, enter an adulterous relationship, and this applies to both men and women alike.

Just because a court allows divorce for most any cause is not proof that God is pleased with that. The day will come when all people, small and great, will face God in His Judgment. (Matthew 25 : 31-46; Acts 17 : 30, 31; 2 Corinthians 5 : 10). All will be judged on that day according to God's law. Whose law declares, "Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled, but fornicators and adulterers God will judge." (Hebrews 13 : 4). According to Romans 7 : 2 & 3, marriage is for life. People who are contemplating marriage, needs to know that marriage is supposed to last until the death of one of the partners in the contract. All who participate marriage should resolve to get along; they should cultivate the pattern of life that will be conducive to their marriage enduring all the problems that may arise. God wants that in marriage husband and wife become one flesh; that there should be a blending of two lives into one. Often disharmony comes in marriage because of self centeredness. And no doubt, the basic root to most marital problems is selfishness. The best way, therefore, to stop the evil of divorce is to teach and follow what God's law teaches. It says, in Ephesians 5 : 22-33, "Wives submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is the head of the

church; and He is the Saviour of the body. Therefore just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it. . . . So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church . . . This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband." How wonderful it will be if in each marriage, both husbands and wives follow God's instruction, not looking for his or her own interest but doing what is best for the other. There should be love and respect for one another in marriage. God's law, if followed, will help husbands and wives to live together in harmony, for which they were created, and certainly, there will be no divorce.

## *A Personal Examination*

J.C. Choate

Jesus said, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words hath one that judgeth him : the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12 : 48). With this verse you may conclude that we are saying that you have rejected Christ and his word and that one day you will be judged accordingly. Actually, we would assume that you believe in Christ and his word, and no doubt you are trying to obey God. But the reason the foregoing verse is used is to suggest that one day we will be judged by God's word. It should therefore cause us to want to know God's will, and do our best to obey His teachings.

We would like to invite you to take the following test. We'll simply ask some questions, let you write down the answers, and then at the close we will attempt to give the scriptural answers to those questions. The answers will be based on what the Lord's

word says, that which will judge us in the last day. We would therefore ask you to compare your answers with the answers given in the Bible, and we would hope that if your answers do not match God's word, that you will be honest enough to acknowledge that you are wrong and to make the necessary corrections. We pray that you will, and we have every confidence in you that you will want to do that.

Please answer the following questions :

1. Does God speak today separate and apart from his word ?-----
2. Is the Law of Moses binding today ?-----
3. Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God ?---
4. Were you physically born a sinner, having inherited Adam's sin ?-----
5. Does faith only save ?-----
6. Does God answer the sinner's prayer ?-----
7. How are you saved ?
8. What is baptism ?-----
9. Were you saved before or after baptism ?-----
10. How many baptisms are there ?-----
11. Do you believe that once saved always saved ?-----
12. What is the church ?-----
13. What church did you join ?-----
14. Must one be a member of the church to be saved ?-----
15. Who is the head of the church ?-----
16. Is salvation in the name of Christ ?-----
17. What name do you wear as a follower of Christ ?-----
18. Are there many ways to heaven ?-----
19. Did Christ pray for unity or division ?-----
20. Do you have a Pastor ?-----

21. How often do you go to worship ?-----
22. On what day of the week do you meet for worship ?---
23. Do you tithe ?-----
24. How often do you partake of the Lord's Supper ?-----
25. Does man know when Jesus will come again ?-----

We will now give the answers to the above questions. Please compare them.

1. God speaks today only through the pages of the Bible. The Hebrew writer tells us that God has spoken in these last days through Christ (Hebrews 1 : 1, 2). We are not to add to it, subtract from it, or substitute for it (Revelation 22 : 18, 19; Galatians 1 : 6-9). Paul says that He has given to us his inspired scriptures and that it completely furnishes us to every good work (2 Timothy 3 : 16, 17). Peter says that he has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness (2 Peter 1 : 3). James says that we have been given the perfect law of liberty (James 1 : 25). God, therefore, does not speak to man through angels, visions, dreams, and other ways, apart from his word.
2. The Law of Moses is not binding because it was given before the coming of Christ. Jesus died on the Cross to take that law out of the way to give a new and better law (Hebrews 10 : 9, 10; Hebrews 9 : 15-17). But what about the ten commandments ? Commands having to do with murder, adultery, stealing, etc., are to be found in the New Testament.
3. One must believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God to be saved and to go to heaven (John 8 : 24; John 14 : 1; Matthew 10 : 32).
4. No human being is born a sinner, and neither does any such person inherit Adam's sin or anyone else's sin. The prophet of God said in the long ago. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the

- iniquity of the son : the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." (Ezekiel 18 : 20). Now when the child reaches the age of accountability, knowing right from wrong, then he becomes a sinner or he becomes accountable of what he does. Paul was speaking of this group when he said, "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." (Romans 3 : 23).
5. Faith only does not save, that is, separate and apart from obedience to the Lord. James talks about faith and obedience, and he concludes, "But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" (James 2 : 20). Faith must be there, for sure, but also one must believe in the Lord enough to do what he says to be saved. (James 1 : 22; Hebrews 5 : 8, 9; Revelation 2 : 10; Revelation 22 : 14).
  6. We read in John 9 : 31 that God does not hear the sinner's prayer, that is, by answering his prayer. If God did that, then what advantage would the Christian have over the one who is not a Christian. Peter said, "For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers : but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil." (1 Peter 3 : 12).
  7. Christ tells us that for one to be saved then he must believe and be baptized. (Mark 16 : 16). He also said that we must confess him before men if we expect him to confess us before the Father in heaven. (Matthew 10 : 32). Peter told a group of people, after they had heard the gospel and had become believers, "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).
  8. Paul says that baptism is a burial (Romans 7 : 3, 4; Colossians 2 : 12) and we read in Acts 8 : 26-39 that baptism is a burial in water.
  9. Salvation is a result of one's obedience to the Lord, the

- last command to obey being baptism. Read 1 Peter 3 : 21; Mark 16 : 16; Acts 2 : 38.
10. Paul says in Ephesians 4 : 5 that there is one baptism and it is identified in the scripture as being as a burial in water for the remission of sins. (Romans 6 : 3, 4; Acts 8 : 26-39; Acts 2 : 38).
  11. The Bible shows that one may be saved and then fall away. (Luke 15; 2 Peter 2 : 21, 22). To return to the Lord, one must repent and confess his faults. (James 5 : 16).
  12. The church is made up of the saved. It is the body of Christ. (Ephesians 5 : 23).
  13. One cannot join the Lord's church. If one obeys God, then the Lord saves him and adds him to His church. (Acts 2 : 47).
  14. One must be in Christ and the Lord's church to be saved and to go to heaven. (Romans 6 : 3, 4; 2 Corinthians 12 : 13; Ephesians 5 : 23).
  15. Christ is the one and only head of the church. (Colossians 1 : 18; Ephesians 1 : 22, 23).
  16. Salvation is in the name of Christ. (Acts 4 : 12).
  17. Those who obey the Lord and are saved wear the name Christian. (Acts 11 : 26; 1 Peter 4 : 16).
  18. Christ is the only way to heaven. (John 14 : 6; John 10 : 1).
  19. Christ prayed for unity, that we might all be one. (John 17 : 20-23). Paul exhorted that there be no division among us. (1 Corinthians 1 : 10).
  20. According to the scripture a pastor is one of the elders of a local congregation of the church. (1 Timothy 3; Titus 1; Ephesians 4 : 11). The preacher is often referred to as being a pastor, but he cannot be THE pastor of a congregation of the Lord's people. He may be one of the pastors or elders of a congregation if he is able to



qualify and the members see fit to appoint him along with others.

21. The scriptures tell us that Christians are to meet on the first day of the week to worship (Acts 20 : 7; 1 Corinthians 16 : 2), and we are not to forsake the assemblies. (Hebrews 10 : 25; Acts 2 : 42).
22. On the first day of the week. (Acts 20 : 7; 1 Corinthians 16 : 2).
23. We are taught to give as we have been prospered. (1 Corinthians 16 : 2; 2 Corinthians 9 : 7).
24. Each first day of the week. (Acts 20 : 7).
25. Christ says that only Father knows the time of his coming. (Matthew 24 : 36). The scriptures also tells us that the Lord will come as a thief in the night. (2 Peter 3 : 10). In other words, He has not announced to anyone the time of his coming. We are taught to be prepared at all times. (Hebrews 9 : 27).

Now, how did you do ? I hope you have taken this seriously and that you will do whatever you need to do to bring your life, and your obedience to him, in harmony with his will. Remember that Christ does not save one in one way and another in yet another way. We should be in full agreement on these matters, and in obedience to obey the same commands, be saved alike, be added to the same church, worship alike, live the same life, the Christian life, teach the same truths, and have the same hope. May God help us to put the Lord first, as we obey him, and live for him. Only then can we be right and only then can God's word bless us in this world and in the world to come.

## *Aids To Prayer*

Steve Williams

As there are hindrances to a life of prayer and devotion, there are aids which will assist one to pray to God more often and more

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meaningfully. Prayer does not stand in isolation from the rest of one's life. It is coordinated and intertwined with our attitudes, our actions, and our beliefs. What, then, can one do to aid and assist a life of devotion to God ?

1. **A good moral life.** God is more inclined to listen to the prayer of one who is living a good moral life. He delights in prayer that flows from a life of purity. (Proverbs 15 : 8, 29; 21 : 13). If we expect to stand before God with his approval, we should cleanse ourselves from sin. (Psalm 24 : 3-4). Also, if we know that we have been trying to live a pure life, we will feel more inclined to approach God in prayer.

2. **A spirit of unselfishness.** If we approach God in a spirit of unselfishness where we are more concerned about the welfare of others than ourselves, God will look down with approval on us. Remember when Solomon did not ask selfishly for personal riches but for understanding to better rule the children of Israel, God approved of his choice. Also, we will feel better about ourselves if our prayer life is unselfish.

3. **A spirit of obedience.** In the Lord's model prayer, he taught us to pray : "Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." (Matthew 6 : 10). We ought to pray with a desire to do whatever God asks. And if we are living an obedient life, we will have more assurance and confidence to go to God in prayer. (1 John 3 : 21-22).

4. **Reverence.** Again, from the Lord's model prayer, he taught us to pray : "Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name." (Matthew 6 : 9). Showing respect and reverence to God is of utmost importance. Whether we show this through the posture we take with our bodies, in bowing, kneeling, folding our hands, stretching out our arms, or standing, we should show the utmost care in honouring the majesty of God. While it is perfectly acceptable to use contemporary language (e.g. "you" instead of "thou"), we should never speak "down" to God. In my opinion, addressing God in prayer as "Dear Daddy," is speaking without proper reverence.

5. **Humility.** Humility is essential for anyone who approaches

God. As Daniel was told, "Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your mind to understand and humbled yourself before your God, your words have been heard." (Daniel 10 : 12). We are not doing God a favour when we pray. (Psalm 50 : 12-15). He needs nothing from us. We are doing ourselves a favour when we pray, so pray with humility.

6. **In understanding.** Paul said, "I will pray with the spirit, I will pray with the understanding also." (1 Corinthians 14 : 15). We should not merely voice words we have learned or those we read in a book. If we expect God to pay attention to what we say in prayer, we should pay attention. We should pray with understanding. Those who claim to pray in so-called tongues are not praying with understanding.

7. **Trust, faith, and belief.** Frequently in the Scriptures faith is listed as an essential to proper prayer. (Matthew 21 : 22; Mark 11 : 24; James 1 : 6-7). While we should ask aright, we should ask in faith. While we should not ask the ridiculous from God, for things we do not need, or for things which may be harmful to our spiritual growth, we do need to ask in faith and believe that God will give us what we ask for.

8. **Sincerity.** We need to be honest and natural in our prayers to God. A prayer of hypocrisy or insincerity will not be pleasing to God. (Matthew 6 : 5-6; Psalm 17 : 1).

9. **Resignation.** We need to pray to God with a willingness to accept his answer no matter what it may be. God may answer "Yes," "No," or "Wait awhile." God may give us an answer to our prayer in a very different manner than we envisioned. Whatever God's answer may be, though, we should pray with resignation that we will accept God's will in our lives, as David did (2 Samuel 12 : 19-23), as Jesus did in Gethsemane, and as Paul did concerning his thorn in the flesh. God's way will be best, even if we do not understand it. (Isaiah 55 : 8-9).

10. **With perseverance.** Nothing will aid a life of prayer more than working hard to develop good habits of prayer. The longer you work at prayer, the easier it will be to pray. Growth in prayer will come with regular practice.

11. **With thankfulness.** A joyful, thankful spirit will enhance one's prayer life. Spend time listing your blessings, and you will find you have much for which to be thankful. (Colossians 4 : 2). Thankfulness will make your prayer pleasing not only to God, but also to yourself.

Prayer is one of those activities which is easier if other factors are right. Real prayer comes from the depths of one's soul, so the soul needs to have its house in order. When this happens, through humility, obedience, faith, resignation, reverence, etc., prayer will come more easily.

## *The Brevity of Life*

Owen Solomon

Life at the very most, is brief. The Bible stresses the brevity of life, but it is difficult for the young to fully understand. They can believe it as a fact from God's word, but comprehension of the brevity of life is something that increases as we grow older. Knowledge from the Bible concerning the brief nature of life on earth should make people more alert to the need for serving God faithfully while young. Too, with advanced age may well come abating health and limited ability to serve God as much as was possible in younger years. Solomon admonished, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them." (Ecclesiastes 12 : 1).

### FIGURES IN THE BIBLE

Many figures are used in the Bible to impress man with the fact that life is brief. David said, "Behold, thou hast made my days as a handbreadth, and mine age is nothing before thee : verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity." (Psalm 39 : 5). Job said, "Man that is born of woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and he is cut

down : He fleeth also as a shadow and continueth not." (Job 14 : 1-2 ) Job also said, "My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope. (Job 7 : 6.) Moses wrote "The day of our years are three score and ten; and if by reason of strength they be four score years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away. Who knoweth the power of thine anger ? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath. So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." (Psalm 90 : 10-12).

Those who realize, even in a small measure, the brevity of life are likely to use their time more wisely. James wrote, "Go to now, ye that say, Today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain : whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life ? It is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that. But now ye rejoice in your boastings : all such rejoicing is evil. Therefore, to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." (James 4 : 13-17). We should all be aware of the brevity of life and live each day wisely.

### LIFE—A PILGRIMAGE

The Bible teaches that life is a pilgrimage. David said, "Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage." (Psalm 119 : 54). Pilgrimage is defined "In the sense of lodging; a temporary abode; where sojourn; be a stranger." (Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible).

Life on this earth is temporary. Abraham was aware that his life here was a pilgrimage. The Hebrew writer tells us of Abraham, "By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise : for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." (Hebrews 11 : 8-10). The Hebrew writer also tells us. "For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come." (Hebrews 13 : 14).

From the fact that life is a pilgrimage, we should realize that it is futile to try to make this earth a permanent home. Accordingly, Paul wrote to the church at Colosse, "If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth." (Colossians 3 : 1, 2).

Remember that Jesus said, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. We should all be very careful with life, for it will return to God who gave it." (Ecclesiastes 12 : 7). "And each one of us will give account to God for the way we have used our life." (Romans 14 : 12).

## *The Commandments Of The Lord*

W.A. Holley

"If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord" (I Corinthians 14 : 37).

The foregoing quotation represents a test which Paul applied to all false teachers. Those preachers or teachers who differed with Paul were false preachers. There were many false teachers in Paul's day. Hence, Paul wrote, "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual" but refused to admit Paul's authority to speak by divine authority, thereby shows himself to be a false teacher. All preachers who do not acknowledge the things Paul wrote or spoke were divinely inspired messages from God, are false teachers, even today !

The apostle Paul did not write his opinions into the text of the Bible, but he did write the truth of God, which was given by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (II Timothy 3 : 15-17; I Corinthians 2 : 9-16). Yes, the commands of the Lord are authoritative; the Lord has no non-essential commands which man can safely ignore (Galatians 1 : 6-9; Hebrews 5 : 8-9).

In our investigation, we should recognize that there are countless commands of men (Matthew 15:9). We need but to read Mark 7:6-13 to see that the commandments of men make the commandments of God of non-effect. It is a fact that millions now prefer the commandments of men to the commandments of God. We suggest that II Timothy 4:1-5 be imprinted into the minds of all preachers and teachers.

What are some of the commandments of men now being advocated? What about joining the church of one's choice? What scripture teaches salvation by faith only? Where is scriptural authority for sprinkling or pouring as Bible 'modes' of baptism? What passage authorizes the use of an organ or piano in Christian worship?

Jesus Christ issued a new commandment. We quote: "A new commandment I have given to you, that you love another as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one for another" (John 13:34-35, A.S.V.). The key to this passage is that we are to love one another, just as Jesus loved us. Jesus loved us fully, completely, without reservation: we should love one another in exactly the same way. The proper application is stated: "For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thy self. But if you bite and devour one another take heed that ye be not consumed one of another" Galatians 5:14-15, A.S.V.). We herewith suggest that Psalm 15:1-5, be read. Always use the Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12). "Go . . . preach the gospel" to "all nations" contains another of the commandments of the Lord (Matthew 28:18-20). Here, clearly stated, is our foremost duty. The church is the pillar and ground of God's truth (Acts 8:4; Ephesians 3:9-11; I Timothy 3:14-15). The gospel is God's power to save the lost (Romans 1:16). If we fail in our duty to preach the gospel to every creature, the blood of those who might have been saved is certain to be upon us (Acts 20:26-27; Ezekiel 33:11, 31-33).

The Lord commands us to believe his word. "And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his

Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment" (I John 3 : 23). No one can please God who does not believe (Hebrews 11 : 6). But "faith" comes by hearing God's holy word (Romans 10 : 17). One cannot be saved by "faith only" (James 2-14-17, 19, 24-26). One is saved by faith when that faith leads one to obey God Almighty (Romans 5 : 1-2; 6 : 3-4). To try to be saved by faith alone is to try to be saved by a "dead" faith (James 2 : 26).

The confession of Jesus' name is another of the Lord's commandments. "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 10 : 32-33). To "confess" Jesus is to confess his name—not our experiences, our feelings. The eunuch declared, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Acts 8 : 37). Romans 10 : 9-10 shows how important confession of Jesus is. In the Bible no one ever confessed : "I feel that God for Christ's sake has pardoned my sins."

The Lord has commanded all men everywhere to repent (Acts 17 : 30-31). What is repentance? Repentance involves a change of mind which results in a reformation of life. This change of mind of which we speak involves both a turning from sin and a turning to God. A fine illustration of what repentance is can be found in Matthew 21 : 28-29. Read the story and you will see. Repentance is a condition of remission of sins, but not the only condition (Luke 13 : 3; Acts 2 : 38; 3 : 19). Repentance is one of the more difficult commands to obey because it involves the human will. Many simply WILL not change their way !

The last command we wish to discuss is baptism : "And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord . . ." (Acts 10 : 48). "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16 : 16). "... Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2 : 37-38). Baptism puts one into



Christ, into his death, where one's sins are washed away by the precious blood of Jesus Christ (Acts 22 : 16; Romans 6 : 3-4).

Dear reader do not stumble over the Lord's commands.

## *The Incorruptible Crown*

W. Edwin Kearley

Down through the centuries the crown was worn by the rulers of nations who had the power of life and death over their subjects. Christ offers a crown to those who serve him and their fellow man.

Paul used the crown of athlete to illustrate the crown the faithful believer will receive. He said, "Do you know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way to get the prize". (I Corinthians 9 : 24 N.I.V.). All who run correctly will win the prize in God's service.

To Timothy Paul said, "Similarly, if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not receive the victor's crown unless he competes according to the rules" (II Timothy 2 : 5 N.I.V.). Where do we get a copy of the rules? Jesus said, "There is a Judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; that very word I spoke will condemn him at the last day" (John 12 : 48 N.I.V.). This would include the writings of the inspired men of the first century. Paul stated, "If anybody thinks he is a prophet or spiritually gifted, let him acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord's command" (I Corinthians 14 : 37 N.I.V.). Jesus promised the apostles would be guided "into all truth" (John 16 : 13 N.I.V.). Therefore the New Testament is the rule-book for the follower of Christ. It must be followed by those who would win the "incorruptible crown."

In the Greek games, no one could contend in the games unless he was a Greek citizen. No unsaved person can participate in the service of the Lord for rewards. One must experi-

ence the new birth to get into the kingdom of Christ. To Nicodemus, "Jesus answered, I tell you the truth, unless a man is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3 : 5). The Spirit begets the Christian through the word. Peter confirmed, "Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth. . . For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of the imperishable, through the living and enduring word" (I Peter 1 : 22, 23). Baptism is a burial and a resurrection to new life (Romans 6 : 3-4; Philippians 2 : 12). Peter says, as water pushed Noah's ark above the water of the flood, baptism in water saves us (I Peter 3 : 21). The begetting of the Holy Spirit by the word and baptism in water completes the new birth. When one is saved he is added to the church and translated into the kingdom by the Lord (Acts 2 : 41, 47; Colossians 1 : 13).

The Greek games had hard and fast rules for all participants. The new Testament contains the rules for the believers who would enter the spiritual race to win the "incorruptible crown."

The believer must deny himself of anything that would weigh him down and hold him back. The writer of Hebrews said, ". . .let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us" (Hebrews 12 : 2 N.I.V.). The believer must keep his eyes fixed on Christ. He must not turn to the right or to the left.

The strength of the believer is in the Lord. Paul taught, "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power; put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes" (Ephesians 6 : 10-11 N.I.V.).

The believer must place his all upon the altar of the Lord. The sacrifices are spiritual, not animal, Paul said, "Therefore I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God — which is your spiritual worship (Romans 12 : 1-2 N.I.V.).

The believer must, by faith, refuse anything that would stand in the way of spiritual progress. Let Moses illustrate. He would

not substitute Egypt's "throne" or its riches, for his faithfulness to God and his oppressed people (Hebrews 11 : 24-29).

While facing the guillotine for his faith, Paul said, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing (II Timothy 4 : 7-8 N.I.V.).

May seeking that "incorruptible" be the highest priority for our lives !

## *The Wounds of Jesus*

Don Williams

Then saith he to Thomas, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing" (John 20 : 27). In this verse Thomas had to see for himself the scars of Jesus and even feel them before he would believe. My friends, we cannot see the scars of Jesus, but believe me, they were there !

Have you ever thought about the wound that a spike driven through a hand or a foot might cause ? Think about the pain that Jesus must have felt as they pierced his skin. Think of the pain as they hoisted him up and suspended his body between heaven and earth. Think of the blood that flowed from such wounds and the desire to touch and to soothe that which he could not touch. Yes, the pain of the cross was real !

And yet, there is a pain that is still prevalent to Jesus today. It is a pain so terrible that in the Bible it is described as similar to the pain of the cross : those who "fall away" "crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame" (Hebrews 6 : 4-6). As if the pain of the cross were not enough, the writer tells us that Christ suffers all over again when children of God, those who have been forgiven of sin by the blood of

Jesus, surrender their faith (Luke 8 : 12), turn away from Christ, and refuse to return unto the straight and narrow.

Brethren, let us realize what we do to Jesus when we stray from his will ! Let us never hurt the cause of Christ and may we never cause him pain again, by living lives not in keeping with his will.

Several months ago, I read an old article about a General who had been in public office. The elderly man had fought long and hard for his country, and bore an ugly scar upon his face from an injury he had received in battle. On this occasion, the statesman was being confronted by angry politicians who wanted him out of office. They met to vote to ouster the General out of office. One of the politicians against him was a former soldier who had served under him.

The ouster proceeding began. One by one, the various politicians came and cast their ballots against the General. Finally one last vote was needed, and the former soldier had to cast his ballot. As he walked to the ballot box, his eye caught the face of the old General, who was in the upper chamber of the room watching the proceedings. Seeing his battle-scarred-face made him reconsider. Finally, tearing up his ouster ballot, he cried out, "I can't do it ! I can't vote against him when I see the scars !"

My friends, remember the "scars" of Jesus ! Do not vote against him by living ungodly lives ! See the wounds, see his shed blood—and continue to live for him who died for you !

## *The Whole Counsel of God*

Weldon Langfield

Some congregations still demand strong, Biblical preaching. They sincerely desire straightforward teaching on the one true church, baptism, proper worship, and the dangers of religious

error, Courageous elder ships remain who will not settle for anything less from their ministers.

The teaching of Paul included all of the above topics. Yet it dealt with other matters as well. Paul told the Ephesian elders, "For I shrank not from declaring unto you the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20 : 27). The apostle did not boldly teach only truths on which almost everyone agreed; he boldly taught all the truth. It has been said that any preacher can labour twenty years in one place and, if he desires, never preach on certain topics. Yet the one who endeavors to preach "the whole counsel of God" must patiently, yet clearly, deal with delicate problems in the congregation.

Let us consider John the Baptist, for example. Had John preached a steady diet of "Judea is the one true nation of God," he would have had no problems. But he boldly dealt with the sin eating away at the Jewish leadership. He said to them, "Ye offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" (Matthew 3 : 7). He warned them that being Abraham's children in no way compensated for their personal corruptness. John reminded them that at the great spiritual harvest of the last day, the chaff among God's people will be burned up "with unquenchable fire" (Matthew 3 : 12).

The honest gospel preacher, then, will not simply deal with general truths about the church, baptism, love, Christ, hell, and heaven, with which most members of sound congregations will agree. Rather, preaching in love, he will sometimes deal with passages of scripture that bring to light sensitive and even explosive shortcomings and sins. Someone might ask, "Can't a preacher avoid those sermons?" Yes, but he wouldn't be preaching the whole counsel of God and he wouldn't be honest.

## *Jerusalem, the City of Peace*

Clem Thurman

The name of the city means "*peace*" but it has had very little. The city of Jerusalem has experienced fifty-three major battles in

forty-two wars, and has been completely destroyed ten times. Yet Jerusalem persists, having been re-built by those who insist on perpetuating its interest history. The first mention of this city is in Gen. 14:18 when Abraham returned victorious from the battle of the kings, "*And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God.*" This "*Salem*" was later the city of the Jebusites (Josh. 18:28), and it is supposed that the name "*Jerusalem*" resulted. The word "*Salem*", though, literally means, "*peace*".

When David became king in Judah, he made Jerusalem the capital city. Seven years later, when he was named king of all Israel, Jerusalem became its capitol (2 Sam. 5:5-7). It was to Jerusalem that he brought the head of Goliath, symbolizing Israel's victory over the Philistines, and it was here that he offered the sacrifice on Araunah's threshing floor—the site on Mt. Moriah where Abraham came to offer Isaac (Gen. 22) and where the temple was later built by Solomon (1 Kgs. 6). There isn't a city anywhere in the world that can rival Jerusalem for her rich history, and especially her religious importance.

### Significance of the City of Jerusalem

A number of times God pointed to His selection of Jerusalem: "*For Jerusalem's sake which I have chosen*" (1 Kgs. 11:13). The psalmist wrote "*I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord. Our feet shall stand within thy gates. O Jerusalem*" (Psa. 122:1-20). As God had chosen the people of Israel for His special purpose, to bring forth the Saviour into the world (Gal. 3:16, 25-28), so He chose the city of Jerusalem to be the centre of life for His people. The government for Israel was in Jerusalem, from the time of David (2 Sam. 5:5). God said later, "*For David's sake did the Lord his God give him a lamp in Jerusalem, to set up his son after him, and to establish Jerusalem*" (1 Kgs. 15:4).

Over and over Jerusalem is called "*the city of God*" because he chose its people. "*Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King*" (Psa. 48:1-2). When the

people of God were taken captive by other nations, their first concern was to return and "*rebuild Jerusalem*" (Neh. 1:1-9, 2:1-5). To the Jews it was "*the holy city*". And God used that same term to describe Jerusalem: "*Then the devil taketh him into the holy city; and he set him on the pinnacle of the temple . . . Coming forth out of the tombs after his resurrection they entered into the holy city and appeared to many*" (Matt. 4:5; 27-53).

The greatest significance of Jerusalem has always been religious. From the building of Solomon's temple, "*the house of God*" for the nation of Israel, to becoming the birthplace of Christianity, to the "*holy city*" of Moslems nine centuries later—Jerusalem has always been a religious centre. It was here that "*Solomon to began build the house of the Lord at Jerusalem in mount Moriao, where the Lord appeared unto David his father*" (2 Chron. 3: 1). It was to Jerusalem that all the men of Israel came at least three times a year for the great feasts commanded by the Lord. When King Hezekiah tore down the temples of idolatry, he brought the people to the temple in Jerusalem and offered sacrifices there commanded of God (2 Chron. 29 : 27). Jeremiah, seeing Jerusalem trodden down by unbelievers, wrote, "*How lonely sits the city that was full of people ! How is she become as a widow ! She that was great among the nations, and princess among the provinces, how is she become tributary*" (Lam. 1 : 1). How heart-breaking that this city, "*the city of God*", had become desolate, with the knowledge of God seemingly erased.

### Jesus and the City of Jerusalem

Jesus was brought to Jerusalem very early in His life: "*And when the days of their purification according to the law of Moses were fulfilled, they brought him up to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord), and to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord*" (Lk. 2 : 22-24). Jesus grew up in Nazareth, in the province of Galilee. He spent very little time, of which we have record, in the city of Jerusalem. But the time He did spend in the city brought about some of the greatest events in the history of the world. At twelve he was left behind by his family, who had started for Nazareth.

When they found Him, He was in the temple in Jerusalem *"in the midst of the teachers, both hearing them, and asking them questions : and all that heard him were amazed at his answers"* (Lk. 2 : 45). Rebuked by Mary for *"getting lost"* Jesus just replied, *"Knew ye not that I must be in my Father's house ?"* (v. 49).

Jesus showed the greatest respect for Jerusalem, and the temple of God in that city. When he found people profaning the *"house of God"* with business dealings, *"He made a scourge of cords, and cast all out of the temple, both the sheep and the oxen; and he poured out the changers' money, and overthrew their tables; and to them that sold doves he said, Take these things; make not my Father's house a house of merchandise"* (Jno. 2 : 15-16). Jesus knew the importance of both the temple and the city, and He sought to keep both pure in which the people might live and worship God. When the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well asked, in effect, *"Who is right, my people or yours ? Shall we worship in this mountain, or in Jerusalem ?"* Jesus was straightforward with His answer : *"The hour cometh, when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father. Ye worship that ye know not : we worship that which we know; for salvation is from the Jews"* (Jno. 4 : 23-24).

Perhaps our best insight into Jerusalem's place in God's purpose comes from the statements of Jesus about her. *"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killeth prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her ! how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not ! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate"* (Matt. 23:37-38). You can almost hear His tears fall as He foretold the destruction of Jerusalem, *"There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down"* (Matt. 24:2). Once when Jesus came to Jerusalem, *"He saw the city and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known in this day, even thou, the things which belong unto peace ! but they are hid from thine eyes"* (Lk. 19:41-42). How ironic that *"the city of peace"* rejected the *"Prince of Peace"* (Isa. 9:6) and thereby rejected God (Lk. 10:16).

#### New Jerusalem, Church of the Lord

The apostle Paul wrote in Eph. 3:11 of *"the eternal purpose*



of God which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." The greatest significance of the city of Jerusalem is that she was the type, or figure, of the church which Jesus built. Prophets of old foretold that church. "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... for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isa. 2:2-3); "Therefore thus saith the Lord; I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies: my house shall be built in it" (Zech. 1:16). The apostle Paul wrote later, "The house of God, which is the church of the living God" (1 Tim. 3:15), and Jesus pointed out that His church was to preach "repentance and remission of sins... beginning at Jerusalem" (Lk. 24. 46-47).

The inspired writer shows the contrast between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant, between Aaron's priesthood and Christ's, between the animal sacrifices and the sacrifice of God's own Son (Heb. 1-11). He then says we are not come to Mount Sinai but "unto mount Zion, unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem... to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven" (Heb. 12:23). That church which Jesus built is "heavenly Jerusalem". But it is not a building, not a location; the church of Christ is a people. The apostle Paul wrote, "We are a temple of the living God; even as God said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (2 Cor. 6:16). The apostle John echoed this in his beautiful spiritual description of the church: "I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of the heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of the throne saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his peoples" (Rev. 21:2-3). The "new Jerusalem" is the church, those people who are "in Christ".

As the temple under the Old Testament was the place where people worshipped and where God promised to meet with them, the church is the temple of God under the New Testament. Scripture says that God "Put all things in subjection under his [Jesus] feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body" (Eph. 1:22-23). Then, "Ye are fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God... groweth into a holy

*temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit*" (Eph. 2:19-22). The temple of God today is a people, the church which Jesus built. It is there we worship, as God directs. It is in that temple where God has promised to meet and bless His people.

How poignant are the words of psalmist, "*Pray for the peace of Jerusalem*" (Psa. 12:6). But let's remember that the Jerusalem today is "*the heavenly Jerusalem*" which is the church of Jesus Christ and which was built by "*the Prince of Peace*" according to His promise.

## *Joshua's Farewell*

Gary C. Hampton

As Joshua neared the end of his life, he called for all the leaders of the people to meet with him. He reminds them that it was God who fought for them in the conquest of the land. How else could the walls of Jericho fall down and the sun stand still? The parts of the land remaining to be conquered were their's for the taking because God would drive the people out.

Joshua did place a burden of responsibility upon the people of Israel as well. First, they had to keep the law of Moses. Second, stay free from the idols and people of the nations around them. Third, they should remain loyal in their service to and love of the one true God (Deuteronomy 6:5). As long as they did these things, God would cause one Israelite to be able to chase a thousand of their enemies. He warned the leaders that failure to follow God result in him turning from them just as surely as he had fought for them. They would perish like the wicked people they had driven out of the land with God's help (Joshua 23:1-16).

Then, Joshua called for all the people to come with their leaders to Shechem to present themselves before God. Since the expression, "before God" indicates before the ark of the covenant, it must assume the tabernacle, or at least the ark, was moved for this solemn renewal of Israel's commitment to God. Shechem was the place Abraham first received the promise of the land (Genesis

12:6-7), Jacob set up his tent upon his return from Laban (33:18-20) and apparently Jacob called for his family to cleanse itself from false god (35:1-4).

Joshua briefly related the history of God's people all the way back to the time when they lived on the other side of the Euphrates. Terah, Abraham's father, and his son, Nahor, worshipped false gods. God directed Abraham's path to Canaan and gave him Isaac. Jacob and Esau were the two sons born to him. Esau was given the area around Mount Seir and Jacob went into Egypt along with his children. God sent Moses and Aaron to deliver his people from Egypt and used plagues to cause their release. He destroyed Pharaoh's chariots in the sea and was with Israel in the wilderness. He kept them safe in the wilderness and gave to them the land of promise. They did not win the land by their own power but with the hand of God. They reaped the harvest of crops they did not sow (Joshua 24:1-13).

On the basis of all God had done for them, Joshua urged the people to serve God and renounce all the gods their Fathers had once served beyond the Euphrates and in Egypt. That they had a choice is clear from verse 15. All must recognise that one cannot serve the true God and false gods at the same time. (Matthew 12:30). The choice must be made immediately while God is still readily available and receptive to the sinner. (Isaiah 55:6-7). The best choice is for God because he can take care of those who follow him now and in the world to come (Matthew 6:33; 10:28).

The people chose God because of all the good he had done for them. Joshua did not immediately accept their commitment but made them realize that God is jealous and will punish all who profess to follow him yet still serve other gods. Yet, the people still said they would serve the Lord and Joshua told them to put away idols and give their hearts to God (John 4:24). This they committed to do and let Joshua set up a rock as a reminder of their agreement and wrote their decision in the book of the law of God.

After the renewal of the covenant, everyone went his own way and Joshua died. They buried him in his inheritance. As a fitting tribute to God's great leader. The text notes the people served the

Lord all the days of Joshua and the elders who served with him. The people also buried the bones of Joseph in Shechem as had been promised years before (Genesis 50:24-25). Eleazar, the high priest, also died and was buried by his son, Phinehas (Joshua 24:14-33).

## *Questions Seventh Day Adventists Will Not Answer*

- Which Catholic pope changed the day of worship from Saturday to Sunday ?
- Name the secular or church document that changed the sabbath from Saturday to Sunday.
- Can one scripture be produced that commanded anyone from Adam to Moses to keep the sabbath ?
- Is there a scripture that commands the Gentiles to keep the Sabbath in any dispensation ?
- Is there a Scripture in the Bible that mentions a moral or ceremonial law ?
- If the keeping of the seventh day is imperative, why did Christ not command it ? And why did the apostles neither command it, nor condemn its non-observance ?
- Seventh Day Adventists stress the failure to keep the sabbath as the great sin, the mark of the beast. Then why is it that the lists of sins recorded in the New Testament never mention the sin of not keeping the sabbath ? For example, in mark 7:21-22 thirteen sins are listed; in Romans 1:29-31 nineteen sins are listed; in Galatians 5:19-21 eighteen sins are listed. In all the great warnings concerning sins, why was not failure to keep the sabbath day given prominence ? It was not mentioned. Why ?
- Where in the Bible is the term "The law" ever applied to the Decalogue apart from the rest of the law of Moses ?
- Is the law of Moses and the law of the Lord two different laws ? Or anything other than the ten commandments ?
- How could the sabbath be a sign between God and Israel (Exodus 31:17) if other nations are included ?