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EDITORIAL

“Water Witness”

Just a few weeks ago I baptized a man who was earlier “baptized” in a denominational church. Why did I then baptize him, if he was already earlier baptized, ever when the Bible so plainly teaches that there is but only one baptism? Interestingly, the young man himself insisted, after we had studied together from the Bible, that I should baptize him. According to him, when he was earlier baptized, he was told by the preacher who had baptized him that that was his “water witness,” of the salvation that he had already obtained before he was baptized. But that now since he had learned the truth directly from the Bible, he wanted to be Scripturally baptized, for the specific purpose that was stated in the Bible. Thus, he was baptized for the first time just a few weeks ago.

The passages of the Scriptures that we had studied together were: Mark 16:16, where Christ himself commanded that one must believe and be baptized to be saved. Jesus didn't call baptism a “water witness” but he plainly stated that it was necessary for salvation, just as much as believing in Him was essential for salvation. Also, we noticed that Christ put salvation, in Mark 16:16, after, and not before, baptism. Also, we read from Acts 2:38, where people were first time commanded to be baptized, after the death and burial and resurrection of Christ. There the apostle Peter said, that they were to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins or to receive the forgiveness of sins. Also, we read, from Acts 2:47, that those who were baptized were not only saved from

their sins, but at the same time they were added by the Lord to his Church. (Matthew 16: 18). The Lord does not add people to two or two hundred or two thousand different churches, after people believe, repent and are baptized. But He adds all the saved ones to His church, and He has only one, of which He is the head (Colossians 1:18), and which is called by His name. (I Corinthians 12:27; Romans 16:16). Of course, there were other verses from the Bible that we had studied together, which put emphasis on the importance of baptism, such as, Galatians 3:27 which says as many of us have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ; Romans 6:3-5 which shows that one walks in the new life in Christ after one has been baptized; Acts 22:16, where we read one must be baptized to wash away sins, etcetera.

How wonderful it is to know that there are so many people on earth who want to sincerely follow the Lord according to His revealed will of the New Testament of the Bible. Indubitably, there are millions on earth who are in darkness religiously, and the main reason for this has been that people generally do not study from the Bible directly. Most believe in things of which they have heard from their church, or preachers, such as, baptism being a "water witness" etc., but they never investigate what they hear, whether it is taught in the Bible or not. What about you?

Remember, Christ said, "He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him -- the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day." (John 12:48). Thank God that we have His words written in the Bible which we can all read, study, and do, and thus prepare ourselves to be judged right on the day of the Lord.

Who Is Your Saviour?

J.C. CHOATE

Man is constantly looking for a saviour, consciously or unconsciously. While we might discuss endlessly who others may look to as their saviour, what we need to do is to take a close look at our own lives and who we look to as being our saviour. Even though we may claim Christ as our saviour, by our actions we may be looking to others as our Lord and Master. Is such a thing possible?

If we are not careful we can allow *money* to become our god. We may idolize it for the power it brings to us, for what we can buy with it, and for the attention and respect we get from those around us because

of it. Money within itself is not bad. It is only when we begin to love it and put it first in our lives that it becomes dangerous. Paul said, "But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that *will* be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness." (1 Timothy 6:6-11). Notice, that he does not say that *money* is the *root* of all evil but the *love* of it: what we can do with it and what it can do for us. The love of money and coveting go hand in hand because those who love money want more and more of it. They never seem to get enough. That is why it is dangerous, why it destroys. Let us not be deceived and think that money will solve all of our problems and take care of all of our needs. It will not. We can bow before it but it will only destroy us in the end. Let us not make the terrible mistake of letting money become our "saviour".

Another danger is that of making materialism our god, and of course this, too, is tied in with money. We can get so wrapped up in the material things of the world that we forget the God of heaven. For instance, there are clothes, cars, houses, TV sets, videos, cameras, and all of the other things the world offers. Even if we can't afford them, we can so long for them that they dominate our lives. Again, Paul reminds us of the fact that "we brought nothing into this world and it is certain we can carry nothing out." (1 Timothy 6:7). Material things and conveniences can be wonderful and make life easier, but they are only material things. They will not last. Neither will they satisfy for long. It is a mistake to put too much emphasis on these things. We need to use them for our good but not to our destruction.

Some of us may love the pleasures of this world to the point that we put them first in our lives and they therefore become our Lord and Master. It is wonderful to have a change of pace from time to time and to enjoy some wholesome entertainment, sports, travel, and good food. It may be that we have some type of hobby that we enjoy. But we must keep in mind, too, that there are all kind of entertainment and worldly things. Our first priority is to distinguish between the good and bad--but even good things can become bad if we put too much emphasis on them. The Apostle John reminds us to "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). James warns us, "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." (James 4:4). These writers are not saying that we can't enjoy life, that we can't laugh and have a good time. They are saying, though, that we can not do those worldly things that are bad and wrong and still be acceptable to God.

It is even possible for us to bow down to man-made images or pictures of what we imagine Christ, Mary, and others to look like. While we may have good intentions, the scripture is very clear that we are not to worship such things. We must worship *God*, not something that represents him. We must follow Christ, not something that look like him. Paul said that we should flee from idolatry. (1 Corinthians 10:14). Idolatry is listed along with the other works of the flesh. (Galatians 5:20). And finally, we are told that one cannot enter the kingdom or go to heaven if he is an idolater. (1 Corinthians 6:9; Revelation 21:8). The Bible teaches that there is one God and that he is a jealous God. We are to worship God and him only. (John 4:24).

Another danger we face is that of having so much love and appreciation and respect for some person, especially a teacher, preacher, or religious leader, that we begin to idolize him. While we should show respect for our elders, and even for others in the Church who are our leaders still we should never worship them or idolize them. Regardless of who they are, how godly they are, of the good sermons they may preach, etc., still they are but human beings and they themselves are subject to mistakes and errors. Time and time again someone has respected a particular person, only to see that person fall to sin. The follower was so devastated by his disappointment, he was left spiritually crippled if not lost to the Lord entirely. We must not follow man but rather we must follow Christ. Christ told Satan, when he was being tempted, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." (Matthew 4:10).

After considering these different potential "gods", we now come to the one true and living God and his Son Jesus who died to save us from our sins. In reality, there is only one Saviour. None of the things or people we have mentioned can save us and take us to heaven. They cannot really do anything of lasting value for us. Christ put it like this, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross

daily, and follow me." (Luke 9:23). Again, he said, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matthew 6:33).

Who do you worship? Who is your saviour? You can worship most anything or anyone. You can also acknowledge most anything or anyone as your saviour. But that doesn't make real gods out of those people or things, and that doesn't mean that the thing you idolize can save you. You must recognize that there is only one God and that Jesus Christ his Son is man's only saviour. Get to know them, believe them, and obey them. Only then can you be saved and go to heaven. Yes, it does make a difference as to who you look to for salvation. Don't wait until it is too late to learn that truth.

Especially For Women

Through Her Power In The Home

BETTY BURTON CHOATE

God had said of Abraham that he was the kind of faithful man who would "command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of the Lord, to do righteousness to him [that 'I will make you a great nation... and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.]" (Genesis 12:2,3)

Abraham's son, Isaac, was faithful to God. He had two sons, Jacob and Esau. Esau chose to marry women who were not believers in God, so his descendants fell under that influence of paganism. Genesis 26:35 says of Esau's idolatrous wives, "They were a grief of mind to Isaac and Rebekah." In Genesis 27:46, Rebekah said to Isaac, "I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth (her pagan daughters-in-law); if Jacob takes a wife of the daughters of Heth, like these who are the daughters of the land, what good will my life be to me?"

Rebekah recognized the need for marriage and the home to be built on faith in God, in the heart of the wife as well as the husband. What an important factor this has been throughout history, and how wise parents would be today to teach their children to choose mates only among those of like-faith.

Because of Rebekah's insistence, Jacob was sent to Haran, to his

uncle's house. There he met Rachel, his cousin, and a worshipper of the true God. He loved her immediately, and with such a deep love that he agreed to work seven years for her." ... **and they seemed but a few days to him because of the love he had for her.**" (Genesis 29:20) At the end of that time, Laban tricked Jacob and gave him his older daughter in marriage instead of Rachel.

God's plan for marriage from the beginning of creation had been 'one woman for one man'. Concerning Adam and Eve and marriage, God had said, **"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."** (Genesis 2:24).

Contrary to God's will, in those days it had become a common practice for men to take more than one wife. This was evidently tolerated by God at that time, though He never spoke approval of it. In the case of Jacob, Jacob had loved and chosen Rachel, and evidently would have married only her. For seven years he had kept himself true to his commitment to her. In all good faith he had gone through the marriage, believing his bride was Rachel. But, **"It came to pass in the morning, that behold, it was Leah. And he said to Laban, 'What is this you have done to me? Was it not for Rachel that I served you? Why then have you deceived me?'"**

Laban explained that it was not their custom for the younger daughter to marry before the elder. He suggested that he would also give Rachel to Jacob -- if he would work for her seven more years! Jacob's love was so great that he agreed to Laban's suggestion.

what happened as a result of this practice of polygamy? Were they a large happy family? No, we read that Jacob **"loved Rachel more than Leah."** (Genesis 29:30) Naturally this was so, since Rachel had been his choice. But this caused jealousy, **"The Lord has surely looked on my affliction. Now therefore, my husband will love me."** Her statement shows her misery at being an unloved wife. Leah gave birth to a second son, and she said, **"Because the Lord has heard that I am unloved. He has therefore given me this son also."** (Genesis 29:33).

"Rachel envied her sister, and said to Jacob, 'Give me children, or else I die!'" (Genesis 30:1) Such pain and emotional torment we read in the words of these sisters!

With the passing years both women gave their handmaids to Jacob, claiming as their own the children born to them. This, too, was a practice of that age. Finally Rachel died, giving birth to Joseph, who became Jacob's favourite child. A few years later Rachel died, giving

birth to Jacob's last son, Benjamin.

What had the mixture of polygamy, jealousy, favoritism, and competition done in the lives of Jacob, Leah, Rachel, and their thirteen Children? Did it bring happiness or pain? What effect did these wives have on their husband's life? How did they influence their children?

Though these things happened in another age, reading the biblical narratives in the latter chapters of the book of Genesis we can feel the strong emotions. We can almost see their tears. We can learn from their mistakes that God's way is best.

He Lives!

STEVE HALE

INTRODUCTION

If Jesus Christ arose from the dead on the third day, as claimed in Scripture, He is the Son of God as He claimed (Matt. 16:18). He is the Savior of the world (Jn. 3:16, 17). You must submit to His will in order to go to heaven (Heb. 5:8, 9).

ADMISSION OF ENEMIES

In any court, witnesses carry dynamic weight. Incredibly, even the enemies of Jesus admit he arose! Here are some examples:

1. **The guards**—They told the chief priests that: (1) an angel of the Lord descended from heaven; (2) and rolled away the stone; (3) his garment was white as snow; (4) for fear of him, the guards became as dead men; (5) that the angel told the women Jesus has risen (Matt. 28:11; 27:1-6).

2. **At Pentecost**—Some of the very ones that obeyed the gospel that day had just called for Christ's crucifixion (Acts 2:36-41). Though they had killed Him, they were convinced God had raised Him from the dead (Acts 2:22-24).

3. **Paul**—No Jew ever opposed Christianity with more fervor than Saul of Tarsus (Paul). Of him, Luke said that he was "still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord" (Acts 9:1).

Yet, this former enemy became convinced of the risen Savior (Acts 9, 22, 26)! He was baptized into Christ to wash away his sins (Acts 22:16). He even documented eyewitnesses of the resurrected Savior (I Cor. 15:1-8)!

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE BODY?

If Christianity is built upon a hoax, why did not the Jews simply bring the body of Jesus to the Temple Mount, and destroy the movement once and for all? They could not, because they did not have it! If they had, they surely would have brought it forth!

Instead of stealing the body, the enemies tried to guard it. They:

1. Sealed the tomb (Matt. 27:62-66).
2. Put the guard there (Matt. 27:62-66).
3. Roman guards, the greatest in the world, changed watches every six hours.
4. Falling asleep or losing the prisoner, was to be punished by death (Acts 12:19).
5. Some sixteen highly motivated soldiers (Acts 12:4) guarded the body of Jesus.
6. The disciples could not have stolen it from these guard, even if they had wanted to!
7. They could not have excavated through the other side: it was solid rock (Matt. 27:60)!
8. The disciples had no desire to steal the body:
 - a. They could not revive it.
 - b. They scattered after his crucifixion: Peter even went fishing (Jn. 21:3)!
9. The enemies never confronted the disciples about stealing the body, because they knew they did not have it (Matt. 28:11-15)!

So, what happened to the body? The enemies did not have it. The disciples did not have it. The enemies could not show it was still in the tomb, and destroy Christianity. The only explanation is that God raised Him from the dead! He lives!

EYEWITNESSES

The church at Corinth needed to be strengthened. The factions and controversies so prevalent were weakening the disciples.

Paul reminded them that Jesus Christ arose from the dead. He lists these eyewitnesses for them (1 Cor. 15:3-7):

1. Cephas (1 Cor. 15:5);
2. The Twelve (1 Cor. 15:5);

3. 500 brethren at once (I Cor. 15:6);
4. James (I Cor. 15:7);
5. All the apostles (I Cor. 15:7);
6. Paul himself (I Cor. 15:8).

Most of those 500 (I Cor. 15:6) were still alive. Why could not the Corinthians find just one that would tell them it was all a hoax? How could all these eyewitnesses be so meticulously documented and available to the Corinthians?

Because Christ's resurrection is true! He lives!

CONCLUSION

We have not come close to exhausting the evidence. We could yet examine: (1) the fulfillment of prophecy; (2) the transformation of the disciples after the resurrection as opposed to them fleeing at the crucifixion; (3) the harmonious testimony of the disciples; (4) the New Testament's moral influence is without rival; (5) the New Testament's theological influence is without rival.

We could make this list longer. Jesus lives! He died, was buried, and resurrected (I Cor. 15:1-4). Those that die, are buried, and resurrected with Him through baptism become His (Rom. 6:3-7; Gal. 3:27). Are you His? Do you belong to Jesus? Are you a Christian?

Some Things You Should Know About The Church Of Christ

You should know that the church was First mentioned in the New Testament (Mt. 16:18; Rom. 16:16) Built and paid for by Jesus Christ (Mt. 16:13-18; Acts 20:28) Built on Christ as the only foundation (1 Cor. 3:11) Not built on Paul, Apollos, Cephas or any other man (1 Cor. 1:12, 13) Fully established on the first Pentecost after Christ arose from the dead (Lk. 24:49; Acts 1:8; Mk. 1:9; Acts 2).

You should know that Christ himself-Loved the church (Eph. 5:25), Bled for the church (Acts 20:28); Established the church (Mt. 16:18) Called the church His (Mt. 16:18); Added people to the church (Acts 2:47); Is the head of the church (Eph. 5:23; 4:4; 1:22, 23); Will save the church (Eph. 5:23; 4:4; 1:22, 23).

You should know that in New Testament times there was-One

family of God (Eph. 3:15); One kingdom of Christ (Col. 1:13, 14); One body of Christ (Eph. 1:22, 23; 4:4); One bride of Christ (Rom. 7:17; Eph. 5:22, 23); One church of Christ (Mt. 16:18; Eph. 1:22, 23; 4:4).

You should know that in the New Testament, the church is called-The temple of God (I Cor. 3:16); The bride of Christ (Col. 1:24; Eph. 1:22, 23).

The Kingdom of God's Son (Col. 1:13); The house of God (I Tim. 3:15); The church (Eph. 3:10); The church of God (I Cor. 1:2); The church of the firstborn (Heb. 12:23); The church of the Lord (Acts 20:28); The churches of Christ (Rom 16:16).

You should know that members of the church are called-Members (I Cor. 12:27); Disciples (Acts 6:1) Believers (Acts 5:14; II Cor, 6:15); Saints (Acts 9:13; Rom. 1:7; Phil. 1:1); Priests (I Pet. 2:9; Rev. 1:6); Children (I Jn. 3:1, 2); Christians (Acts 11:26; 26:28, 29; I Pet. 4:16).

You should know that permanent classes of servants in the church are-Elders, who are bishops, overseers or pastors. Their duties are to oversee and feed the flock. (Acts 20:28; I Tim. 3:17; Tit. 1:5-9; 1 Pet. 5:1-4) Deacons to serve the church (Acts 6:1-6; I Tim. 3:8-13); Evangelists to preach God's word (Eph. 4:11; I Tim.; II Tim.; Tit.); Teachers to teach God's word (Eph. 4:11).

You should know that man did not-Purpose the church (Eph. 3:10, 11); Purchase the church (Acts 20:28); Build the church (Mt. 16:18); Name its people (Acts 11:26; Is. 62:2); Add to the church (Acts 2:47); Give the church its doctrine (II Jn. 9-11; Gal. 1:11).

You should know that the church and body of Christ are-The same (Eph. 1:22, 23; Col. 1:18, 24).

You should know that in the church are-Redemption (Eph. 1:7) Forgiveness of sins (Col. 1:13, 14); Sanctification (Eph. 5:25); All spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:3).

You should know that in order to get into the church, you must-Be saved, or forgiven of your sins (Acts 2:38, 47).

This takes place when-You believe in Christ (Jn. 8:24; Acts 16:31; Heb. 11:6); Repent of your sins (Lk. 13:3; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 17:30); Confess your faith in Christ (Mt. 10:32, 33; Rom. 10:10; Acts 8:37, 38); And are baptized into Christ (Mt. 28:19; Mk 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; I Pet. 3:21; Gal. 3:26, 27).

You should know that baptism requires-Water (Acts 10:47) Much water (Jn. 3:23); Going to the water (Acts 8:36; Mt. 3:5, 6); Going into the water (Acts 8:38); A burial (Rom. 6:3-5; Col. 2:12); A planting (Rom. 6:5); A washing (Acts 22:16) A birth (Jn. 3:5) A raising out of the water (Col. 2:12) A coming out of the water (Acts 8:39).

You should know that in baptism-Sins are washed away (Acts 22:16); You are saved from sins (I Pet. 3:21; Mk. 16:16); You have remission of sins (Acts 2:38); You get into Christ (Gal. 3:27) You get into the church (Acts 2:37-47); You put on Christ (Gal. 3:27); You begin to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:3-5); You obey Christ (Acts 10:48; II Thes. 1:7, 8).

You should know that the faithful church-Must worship in spirit and truth (Jn. 4:24); Must meet upon the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; Heb. 10:25); Must sing (not play) Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16); Must pray (acts 2:42; I Tim. 2:1, 2) Must edify one another (I Cor. 14:15-27); Must take the Lord's supper on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; Heb. 10:26; I Cor. 11:20-32); Must give of their means (I Cor. 16:1, 2; II Cor. 9:7).

You should know that the same church exist today-Is not a denomination in any sense. Is faithful to God's word. Is ONE in fact and teaching. Gains members by obedience to the gospel. Has the same freedom from human power. Has the same name for its members. Has the same name for the church. And you too can become a member of it.

For more information, write to the editor.

Implication Is As Old As Methuselah!

RON GILBERT

There are many today who attack the idea that the Bible teaches by implication. Some equate implication with private interpretation, which simply is not true. The question: "How does the Bible authorize?" seem to be causing many problems among Christians today. Some are trying to authorize that for which there is no authority. Still others are condemning faithful brethren who teach the truth concerning how the Bible authorizes. To illustrate this point, a book was written in 1987, entitled, *The Wrath of Grapes, Drinking and the Church Divided*. The author of this book set forth. "The purpose of this book is twofold: First, it presents reasons, backed by scripture, to uphold the thesis that the choice to use alcohol is allowable with the Christian ethic . . ." This book attempts to justify social drinking from the scriptures, which simply can not be done. The reason for mentioning this book is to show how some feel and teach concerning how the Bible authorizes. On page 11 he

states, "God gives every believer the freedom to do anything the Bible does not declare sinful." Then on page 13 he said, "Though everything not declared sinful in the scriptures is permissible or lawful, everything is not beneficial-either for the person who feels free to exercise liberty or for those who observe him exercising that prerogative . . ." Notice what was said. He believes that everything that the Bible does not declare sinful is permissible. It would seem that he is not alone in his thinking. Many seem eager to adopt this line of thinking when it comes to instrumental music and a host of other topics as well. This line of reasoning when carried to its end would accept anything as being right simply because there is no explicit scripture which condemns such. This idea is false. One must have authority for what is taught and practiced. (Col. 3:17). An action or doctrine is not right because one can not find a scripture that says, "thou shalt not." An action or doctrine is right because it is authorized in God's word. Then, it can be said to be by faith (Rom. 10:17). We are privileged and obligated to walk by faith (II Cor. 5:7). Many seem to believe that the Bible teaches by explicit statements only and not by implication. To say that the Bible teaches by implication is to say the Bible implies certain truths. The fact that the Bible teaches by implication is no new doctrine or idea. This truth, that is the Bible teaches by implication, is as old as Methuselah. It has been taught for many years by gospel preachers that the Bible teaches that Methuselah died in the year of the flood. Go back and read Genesis 1-9, you will not find it stated explicitly "Methuselah died in the year of the flood." But, does the Bible teach by implication that Methuselah died in the year of the flood? Let us go back to the book of Genesis and see!

In Genesis 5:25, Methuselah was 187 years when Lamech, his son, was born. In Genesis 5:28-29, Lamech was 182 when his son Noah was born. Therefore, Methuselah was 187 years older than his son Lamech, and Lamech was 182 years older than his son Noah. The Bible teaches then by implication that methuselah was $187 + 182$ or 369 years older than Noah. In Genesis 7:11, the Bible says that in the 600th year of Noah's life the flood began. If the Bible teaches that Methuselah was 369 years older than Noah, and that Noah was 600 years old when the flood came, then the Bible teaches, by implication, that Methuselah was $369 + 600$ or 969 years old when the flood came. Genesis 5:27, explicitly states Methuselah was 969 at his death. However, Genesis 5:25, 5:28, 29, 7:11 implicitly teach Methuselah died in the year of the flood.

Those who attack the use of implication simply do not understand how the Bible authorizes. Let those who equate implication with private

interpretation and opinions argue that one can not really know that Methuselah died in the year of the flood. Implication is as old, yea older than Methuselah. The ability to reason correctly comes from God.

God has given us His word and demands that we reason correctly concerning it and warns in His word, He will punish man eternally for failing to reason correctly concerning His word.

A man who regards reputation as worth more than character is a coward. Reputation is what the world says of us; character is what God knows us to be. Many guard well their reputations, but care little for their characters, while the former we leave behind us at death and the latter goes with us to the judgment bar of God. If one's character is right, it will not matter in the judgment day what his reputation was.

Since, then, it is not reputation, but character, that goes with us, a man who strives to build reputation, to the neglect of character, is a coward.

J.T. Poe

It is good to have money and the things money can buy, but it is good also to check up once in a while and make sure we have not lost the things that money cannot buy.

A New Testament Principle Explained By Old Testament Example

DAVID E. ARMSTRONG

"... There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he should pray for it". (I John 5:16)"

A REVIEW OF I JOHN

In I John 5:16, we find a passage of scripture that has caused no small problem among students of the Bible. It is one of the most difficult

passages in the New Testament to understand. John writes through inspiration, "If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it."

John began this First Epistle by showing how we have and maintain our **fellowship with God** (1:1-10). In the second chapter he says of some, "**They went out from us . . .**" (2:19). And in the third chapter he describes what sin is, "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law, for sin is the transgression of the law . . . He that **committeth** sin, is of the Devil . . ." (1:4, 8). The word "committeth" in the Greek means a continuing action. So, those who **keep on committing sin** are of the Devil! Then in chapter four, John, speaking of Love, how God loves us and how we must love God and our fellowman, says, "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world." (4:17). And then in chapter five we are commanded by God not to pray for brethren who sin unto death.

THE OLD TESTAMENT IS OUR EXAMPLE **I COR. 10:6**

THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH

Jeremiah is known as "the weeping prophet." He shed many tears over the sins of his people and that he prayed for them often we do not question. Jeremiah also teaches us that just being "**religious**" and "**going to worship service**" does not put one in "**fellowship**" with God. "Stand ye in the gates of the Lord's house, and proclaim these words of the Lord, all ye of Judea, that enter in at these gates to **worship the Lord**. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, **amend your ways and your doings**, and I will cause you to dwell in this place." (Jer. 7:2, 3).

JUDAH, AS ISRAEL, HAD FORSAKEN GOD **JER. 1:16**

Recall that John began his epistle by showing how we enjoy fellowship with God. Then, in chapter two he declared that some had departed from this fellowship! Here, Jeremiah is told by God, "And I will utter my judgments against them touching all their wickedness, **who have forsaken me**, and have burned incense unto other gods, and worshipped the works of their own hands." (Jer. 1:16). In essence they

had forsaken their fellowship with God. Let us observe how God directs Jeremiah to deal with these rebellious "brethren" and see through Jeremiah the principle carried over into I John 5:16. Principles, like God, never change. They are as true today as when they were first set forth. So let us go to the Old Testament, and see how God dealt with His people in this manner under the Old Law.

GOD CALLED FOR THEIR RETURN TO THE OLD PATHS

JER. 6:16, 17

"Thus saith the Lord, stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, wherein is the good way, and walk therein . . . But they said, **we will not walk therein**. Also I set watchmen over you, saying, 'Hearken to the sound of the trumpet.' But they said, '**We will not hearken**.'" God would have those who have forsaken the fellowship they once had with God to return. And He expects His "Watchmen" to sound the **WARNING** (See Gal. 6:1). Yes, I have an obligation to my erring brethren to call for them to ". . . Hearken to the sound of the trumpet . . ."

THEY TRUSTED IN LYING WORDS THAT COULD NOT PROFIT (**JER. 7:8-10**)

"Behold, ye in lying words, that cannot profit. Will ye steal, murder, commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not; and come and stand before me in this house, which is called by name, and say, "We are delivered to do all these abominations?" These are those who declared, ". . . We will not walk therein . . . We will not hearken." But observe, friends, **they were still going to "worship" in God's temple!** Let us all take this to heart and examine whether we be in the faith of not (2 Cor. 13:5).

JEREMIAH TOLD NOT TO PRAY FOR THEM

JER. 7:16

"Therefore, pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them . . ." Why would God command His prophet Jeremiah, the "Weeping Prophet", who had shed many tears over Judah's sins, . . . "**NEITHER LIFT UP CRY NOR PRAYER FOR THEM . . . ?**" The very people God loved, redeemed and had fellowship with, He now commands His faithful not even to pray for them. Why? ". . . Neither make intercession to me, **for I will not hear them.**" (v. 16b). Here God says He will not hear "**thee**", Jeremiah. Listen again to the beloved John

“... There is a sin unto death, I say not that he should pray for it.”

JUDAH HAD TURNED BACK TO THEIR FATHERS' INIQUITIES

JER. 11:10

“They are turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers, which refused to hear my words . . .” John writes, “They went out from us...” (1 John 2:19). Again God declares to Jeremiah, “Therefore, pray not thou for this people . . . for I will not hear them in the time that they cry unto me for their trouble.” (Jer. 11:14). There is a time when God will not even hear those who would call upon Him for help. Those who do not seek to walk in God's ways have no right to seek His blessings.

NOT TO PRAY FOR THEM FOR THEIR GOOD

JER. 14:11

“Then said the Lord unto me, Pray not for them for their good.” God says there is a time when our refusal to pray for those who have forsaken God might be for their good! Where are the wise men among us who will learn this lesson?

*If you your lips would keep from slips
Five things observe with care:
Of whom you speak, to whom you speak,
And how and when and where.
If you your ears would save from jeers,
These things keep kindly hid:
Myself and I, and mine and my,
And how I do and did.*

The Doctrine Of Christ

HOWARD WINTERS

“Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath

both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." (2 John 9:11).

These verses seem simple enough to understand, but when the consequences of following their instructions are considered (especially by digressive and liberals), many find it easier to explain them away than to practice them. Thus a study of the "doctrine of Christ" as set forth by the aged apostle of love seem to be in order at this time, especially as it relates to the use of instrumental music in Christian worship and the principle that everything to be used in the worship of God must be authorized in his word, it must be a part of the doctrine of Christ.

SOME OBSERVATIONS

But before we begin our study directly, a few things should be observed about the total statement contained in the three verses cited. (1) Those who transgress (or go beyond) and abide not (act outside of its bound) the doctrine of Christ have not God—they have neither the approval nor the fellowship of God. (2) Those who abide in (remain in the prescribed boundaries) the doctrine of Christ have both the Father and the Son; they have the approval and fellowship of both God and Christ. (3) If anyone come unto us and bring something other than the doctrine of Christ, we are neither to receive him into our homes nor in any other way bid him God speed; that is, we are not to encourage him in any way in his teaching of false doctrine. (4) Those who bid a false teacher God speed (have fellowship with him) are partakers of his evil deeds. The teacher cannot be separated from his teaching in fellowship. (5) False teaching is evil, and it cannot be tolerated by lovers of truth. Truth and falsehood have no affinity, one with the other, and truth must always stand in opposition to error.

But to study this vitally important and greatly misused passage, we need to raise and scripturally answer three questions.

WHAT IS THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST?

Admittedly, the language here is ambiguous and some have understood it one way and some another. The prepositional phrase "of Christ" can be taken to mean either the doctrine respecting Christ (that is, his deity), or the doctrine taught by Christ. Which did John mean? When all the facts are considered impartially it is inevitably conclusive

that he meant the doctrine taught by Christ, through his apostles. To establish this fact clearly, a number of observations are here offered.

1. The context must be considered. But the context of verses 9-11 is not just the verse preceding and the verse following them: the context is the whole epistle, which is so brief that we would consider it amazing indeed for anyone to question this. The whole letter concerns itself with walking in truth while avoiding deception and falsehood. Hence the context is truth in opposition to error (or the truth in opposition to error). The word "truth" appears five times in the first four verses—"love in the truth," "known the truth," "for the truth's sake," "in truth and love," and "walking in truth. "But in contrast to this, "Many deceivers are entered into the world." (Verse 7.) The deceivers transgress and abide not in the doctrine of Christ, and consequently are not of God; but those who walk in truth abide in the doctrine of Christ and have both the Father and the Son. Hence, the context shows that "the doctrine of Christ" here means more than his deity: it means the truth, that which Christ taught, in which the faithful walk.

2. The "truth" as used by John means precisely the same as "commandment" or "commandments." "Thou art near, O Lord; and all thy commandments are truth." (Psalm 119:151.) Thus to obey (or walk after) the commandments (2 John 4, 5) is to walk in truth. But furthermore, to obey the commandments is equivalent to abiding in the doctrine of Christ. This inevitably makes the doctrine of Christ that which Christ taught. It is difficult to see how any one could seriously study this epistle and reach any other conclusion.

3. The word "doctrine" means teaching, and it is so rendered by the American Standard Version. Hence, it is the teaching of Christ, not just the teaching pertaining to Christ but the teaching of Christ. The teaching of Christ is that body of truth, the whole New Testament, which at first "began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will." (Hebrews 2:3, 4.) Paul called it the gospel of Christ. (Romans 1:16.) Jude called it the faith once and for all delivered unto the saints. (Jude 3.) We must conclude then that the doctrine (or teaching) of Christ is the whole Christian system, with all its facts, warnings, commands, and promises.

4. Other passages where the word "doctrine" is used bear out the fact that John meant the doctrine taught by Christ. As examples, consider the following; (1) Many, many passages teach that we must follow that which Christ taught, some using the word "doctrine" while

others only imply it. (Romans 6:16-18; Matthew 28:18-20; 1 John 1:7; John 12:48; Galatians 1:6-9.) (2) "His doctrine" (Matthew 7:28; 22:33; Mark 1:22; 11:28; Luke 4:32) means that which was taught by Christ. (3) "The doctrine of the Pharisees" (Matthew 16:12) means that which was taught by them. (4) "The apostles' doctrine" (Acts 2:42) is without question that which the apostles taught. (5) "The doctrine of the Lord" (Acts 13:12) means precisely the same as "the word of God." (Acts 13:7.) (6) "The doctrine of God" (Titus 2:10) obviously means the doctrine which comes from God. (1 Timothy 6:1.) (7) "The doctrine of the Nicolaitanes" (Revelation 2:15) can have no other meaning but that which was taught by them. (8) Although there is a difference of opinion among Bible students here, it seems conclusive to us that the "doctrines of devils" (1 Timothy 4:1) is that which devils teach. Thus we conclude that the doctrine of Christ, in 2 John 9, is the doctrine emanating from Christ. This is its natural meaning; any other meaning would have to be clearly established (made necessary) by context.

5. The verses themselves will bear no other meaning. They affirm that whosoever abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son—that is, they are in covenant relationship with the Godhead. This necessarily implies and involves all that is necessary to become and remain a child of God; all that is involved in both the new birth and the new life. To say that the "doctrine of Christ" only means his deity would be equivalent to saying that all that is necessary to become and remain a Christian (all that is necessary to have the blessings and fellowship of God and his Son) is to believe in the deity of Christ. This simply means that by belief alone one would be abiding in the doctrine of Christ and have all the blessings involved in that. But we know of no one who is willing to say this, not even those who believe in "faith only" (their concept is that saving faith is more than the belief of a fact). Thus the passage itself demands that we understand "the doctrine of Christ" to mean his teaching.

We conclude then that the "doctrine of Christ" means his system of teaching for the five following reasons: because the context demand this; because "truth" and "commandments" are equivalent terms with it in this epistle; because "doctrine means teaching; because other passages and contexts where similar expressions are used bear out this meaning; and because the verses themselves will bear no other meaning. The "doctrine of Christ" is the teaching that he has presented to us through his inspired apostles in the holy scriptures.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO TRANSGRESS THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST

There are two statements to be considered here: (1) "transgress" ("goeth onward," ASV) and (2) "abide not in." The former means to go beyond the boundary line and the latter means to be outside the boundary, either by a failure to come up to it, or by-passing it, or by going beyond it.

Since the boundary line is the revealed will of God, the doctrine of Christ, we cannot go beyond or work outside that which is taught in the New Testament without being rejected by God. Paul had this same principle in mind when he wrote, "Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not to go beyond the things which are written; that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other." (1 Corinthians 4:6, RSV.) Thus those who go beyond or abide not in the teaching of Christ, the boundary line being the things authorized in the New Testament, have neither the approval nor the fellowship of God. It follows, therefore, with all the force that logic can have that to be pleasing to God we must do only that which is found in the doctrine of Christ, that which he has authorized us to do in his word.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO ABIDE IN THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST!

Since the doctrine of Christ is the teaching of Christ, it means to do exactly, no more and no less than that which is divinely revealed in the gospel of Christ. But the doctrine of Christ, the commandments of God, the faith once delivered, the New Testament, and the gospel are all expressions meaning identically the same thing. They all mean the revealed will of God, the new covenant, that which Christ teaches men to do. Thus the boundary line is that which is revealed.

Those who abide in the doctrine or teaching of Christ (the commandments of God, the faith once delivered, the New Testament, the gospel of Christ) have both the Father and the Son—they have the approval and fellowship of both. Thus to have the approval and fellowship of God and Christ, one must abide in the teachings of the New Testament.

To do the will of God is to walk with God; to do something other than the will of God (that which is revealed in the doctrine of Christ) is to walk contrary to God. God's blessings belong to those who do God's will, and his will is revealed in his word.

"And With Many Other Words"

THOMAS J. SPEARS

These words in the title of our lesson refer to Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost. For some reason unknown to us Luke did not record all of Peter's sermon that day. If it were possible, would you not enjoy reading the rest of that sermon? Have you ever wondered what other things Peter may have talked about on that day? While we may never know exactly what was presented to those people, yet each of us may have our own ideas.

He may have told them how that Jesus was that prophet that was to be raised up of your brethren, (Acts 3:22) and that he was the seed of Abraham, (Galatians 3:16) and only in Christ could they be heirs of the promise God made to Abraham. (Galatians 3:29.) Then he probably told them that baptism is not only for remission of sins but that it also puts one into Christ. (Galatians 3:27.)

There may have been present those who thought that one religion was as good as another, if so, they should have learned better that day. Peter was talking to a religious group of people who were following the law of Moses, so he could have pointed out to them that they were to follow this law until the faith, (the gospel) was revealed, (Galatians 3:23-25) and that while they could not be justified by the law they could be justified by Jesus or by his gospel. (Acts 13:39; Romans 3:20, 28.)

Peter may have pointed out to them things concerning the kingdom and how that Jesus while he was alive on earth had said, unto Peter, "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom." (Matthew 16:19.). He may have told them that this kingdom was to come with power, (Mark 9:1) and that the kingdom and the church are one and the same. (Matthew 16:18-19.). He probably also told them that he was using these "keys of the kingdom" to open the gates to this everlasting kingdom and that these keys were the terms of the gospel of Christ.

He exhorted them to save themselves. This must seem strange in the ears of those who think that people cannot do, say, or think anything in order to receive the forgiveness of their sins. Evidently the doctrine of not being able to do anything for one's own salvation was not heard of in Peter's day.

Peter had preached to them about Jesus, and the miracles, wonders, and signs that were done by him in their midst. (Acts 2:22.) He

was giving testimony as to who Jesus was. Surely these people had the ability to believe in Jesus, for the Bible says that faith cometh by hearing. (Romans 10:17.) He then commanded them to repent, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sin. (Acts 2:38.)

Can you imagine Peter commanding these people to do this, if it were true that a person could do nothing to save themselves? So, in saving themselves they needed only to obey the words that Peter spake unto them.

Brother Peter may have even told them about how much God loves them (John 3:16; Romans 5:8), and, that if they wanted rest from their burden of sins, that they should come unto Jesus. (Matthew 11:28.) He then could have pointed out the consequences of not saving themselves from this untoward (wicked) generation.

It pleases me to be able to read in verse 41, that there were about three thousand souls that gladly received his word and were baptized.

Yes, it would be wonderful to know the "many other words" that Peter spake that day.

The Pattern Still Stands!

J. TERRY WHEELER

INTRODUCTION

There has been a great deal of talk and affirmation lately, like unto the discussions of a century ago, that says that there is no real pattern for the church. There are repeated assertions that the churches at Ephesus, Corinth, Jerusalem, etc. were all different from each other, and that any effort to put them into one mold is vain.

Their reason for such talk is that our dwelling on a pattern for the organization and worship of the church is misguided and a great promoter of division through the years. They say denominational arrangements are allowable because God is much freer in his ideas of the church than we as a "movement" have been.

Of course, if the Bible does not teach "pattern theology," then it is wrong to give it emphasis in the church of Christ. But if God does demand adherence to a pattern in worship and organization of the church, then it is right to teach such; and those who disregard the pattern are truly the divisive ones.

PATTERN EMPHASIS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Old Testament teaches that the Israelites had definite strict guidelines to follow, if they were going to follow the Lord. The pattern for God's house of worship is given first through Moses and it was to be adhered to strictly, for the Tabernacle was to be a representation of the heavenly reality. (Exodus 25:9, 40; 26:30; 27:8; Hebrews 8:4, 5.)

When it was time for the temple to be built, God revealed to David the plan he wanted followed, and David gave strict instructions to his son, Solomon, and to the Levites to make it just as David told them. (1 Chronicles 28:11-19.) The plans were from the Spirit and were to be followed according to the will of God. After all, it was his house they were building.

PATTERN EMPHASIS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Now the house of God is the church built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. (Ephesians 2:19-22; 1 Timothy 3:14, 15.) Now does God have many houses or one house? (1 Corinthians 3:16, 17.) Can there be many patterns for the same house?

Fortunately, we do not have to guess and speculate as to how many houses or patterns there are, for God has revealed it plainly. Corinth was known for its individuality and uniqueness. In fact, they prided themselves in this. This pride carried over into the heart of the Christians there, and Paul rebukes them for it. Throughout the first letter sent to them is the admonition to conform to the apostolic pattern that Paul imposed on all the churches. Note what Paul wrote.

"To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both their and ours." (1 Corinthians 1:2.)

"Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." (1 Corinthians 1:10.)

"Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other. For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed

receive it, why do you glory as if you had not received it?" (1 Corinthians 4:6, 7.)

"For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church." (1 Corinthians 4:17.)

"But as God has distributed to each one, as the Lord has called each one, so let him walk. And so I ordain in all the churches." (1 Corinthians 7:17.)

"Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions as I delivered them to you." (1 Corinthians 11:2.)

"But if anyone seems to be contentious, we have no such custom, nor do the churches of God." (1 Corinthians 11:16.)

"For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints." (1 Corinthians 14:33.)

"Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also." (1 Corinthians 16:1.)

To the reader it should be obvious. Paul's message to the Corinthian church is, "Conform to the pattern!" It is impossible that this conformity is for Corinth only, for Paul repeatedly states that he is telling the Corinthians to do what he tells all the churches to do. So there can be only one pattern, even as there is only one church. (Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 1:22, 23; 4:4.)

CONCLUSION

The final point to be answered is, "Does the pattern still hold?" And the answer is a resounding 'YES!' As Christ Jesus still rules, as the gospel is still the only way of salvation, as the church is still his bride washed clean in his blood, so the pattern for that church is still valid and mandated by God Almighty. (2 Timothy 1:13; 2:1, 2.)

For whatever reason preachers may have for attempting to legitimize denominational variances from God's pattern, they are still wrong. However we have failed ourselves, there is still the goal of the word to be followed. We can properly proclaim Christ no other way, for the pattern reveals him. (1 Corinthians 12:27.)