

# THE BIBLE TEACHER

Editor :  
J. C. CHOATE

Associate Editor  
SUNNY DAVID

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## EDITORIAL



### Jesus Christ, Man's Saviour

What people of the world long for more than anything else is that of forgiveness. This is what the religions of the world are all about. But also the guilt of sin leads many to go in the other direction. Some lose all respect for themselves and others. They become worse and worse. For some, strong drink is the solution. Others turn to drugs. Finally, some commit suicide.

Man needs forgiveness. That means that men, women, and every accountable being needs this forgiveness. The reason for this is because all people the world over, all accountable beings, of course, are sinners and must answer for their sins. (Romans 3 : 23). But how can one obtain forgiveness? Not through man's own righteousness, for sure. (Titus 3 : 5). Neither can any other man forgive us of our sins because the so-called holy men are also sinners.

For man to be saved then he needs a saviour. But who could qualify for that job ? True, there have been many religious leaders who have come claiming to be the saviour of the world, some of which are still followed, but the problem with all of these saviours was that they died just like all other humans have died, and just like all of us will eventually die. How could they, then, save others when they could not save themselves.

There is only one who can qualify to be man's saviour today and that one is Jesus Christ. Jesus also lived and died, but unlike all of the others, he came forth from the grave to live forevermore. There are many proofs and evidences of this, some of which are baptism, the Lord's Supper, and Christianity itself. But the gospel, the good news, is based on the Lord's death, burial, and resurrection, and of this, the Apostle Paul said, "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures : and that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve : After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time." (1 Corinthians 15:1-8). Then in Acts 1:9 —11, the record says concerning Christ, "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And While they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven ? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." And so the Lord returned to the Father in heaven and there he remains to this day. He will come again one day, but in the mean time he pleads with all to come to him that he might save them. When he returns it will be too late to be saved. At that time the judgment will take place.

God the Father saw that man was in sin and without hope. He therefore chose to send his only Son into the world and offer him as a sacrifice on a cruel cross that man might have a saviour and that through the blood of Christ that man could be forgiven. (John 3:16,17). We are told that Christ came to seek and save the lost. (Luke 19:10). Christ said that his blood was shed that man might have the remission of his sins. (Matthew 26:28).

But how is that sacrifice or blood reached. In other words, how can we apply that blood to our sins that we may be forgiven? To illustrate, how is one cured of a physical disease? First, he must recognize that he has the disease. Second, he must go to a doctor or physician who is able to give him the medicine that will cure him of that disease. Third, and finally, he must take the medicine as prescribed. Now, the scriptures tell us that Jesus is the Great Physician in the sense that he not only had the power to heal all manner of diseases, but also he had the power to forgive sins. (Matthew 4:23 Matthew 9:6). We must therefore believe in him and be willing to follow the instructions that he gives if we expect to have our sins forgiven. After the Lord's death, burial, and resurrection, and just before his return to the Father in heaven, he said to his Apostles, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:15, 16). When Peter and the Apostles preached to a large group of people in Jerusalem, and some three thousand of them were convinced by their preaching that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, then they wanted to know what they should do. The record says, "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts 2:38). Going on, it says, "And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." (Acts 2:40,41). And finally, we read, "Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." (Acts 2:47).

Now how can you and I be saved? How can we be forgiven

of our sins ? There is just one way, and that is by going to Jesus. We must believe that he is the Son of God. Jesus said, "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins : for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." (John 8:24). The Hebrew writer tells us that without faith we cannot please God. (Hebrews 11:6). Christ says that if we believe in God, that we should also believe in him. (John 14:1-3). Next, Christ wants us to repent of our sins, or turn away from those things that are bad and wrong. How can we be forgiven if we are unwilling to do that ? Christ says that we must repent or perish. (Luke 13:3). Paul says that God commands all men everywhere to repent. (Acts 17:30). Peter reminds us that the Lord would not have any to be lost but that all should come to repentance. (2 Peter 3:21). Next, Christ tells us, "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). Paul says that the confession is to be made unto salvation. (Romans 10:10). Philip was not willing to baptize the man from Ethiopia until he had confessed his faith in Christ. (Acts 8:36-38). And finally, Christ has commanded that we be baptized. (Mark 16:16). Peter says that once one believes in Christ, repents of his sins, and of course acknowledges that Christ is the Son of God, that on being baptized that he receives the remission of his sins. (Acts 2:38). Now this is what the Lord requires that one do if he is to be forgiven of his sins. Are you willing to follow his instructions ? If you are, then you can be forgiven. If you are not willing to obey him then you will have to continue in your sins, and your sins will finally destroy you. Please, do not allow that to happen.



**associate  
editorial**

## Why did Jesus Come ?

The life of Jesus has attracted more attention, more questions

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and answers than that of anyone else who ever walked the earth. Almost 2000 years ago Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod, the king. Although the Bible tells us about the wonderful birth of Christ, the date or day of His birth is nowhere mentioned in its pages. Evidently, God, the actual author of the Bible, didn't prefer for man to know the date of His birth, perhaps because of the idolising tendency that man has. (Galatians 4:10). The disciples of Christ who had associated with Him for more than three years, until His death, wrote in their testimonies about His birth and about His life on earth. They also wrote about His death, burial, resurrection and ascension into heaven, all of which they had witnessed. They believed in Him so much that the secular history reveals that most of them faced violent deaths for their faith in Him as the Son of God.

In this study we want to focus our attention on the question : "Why did Jesus come?" Jesus was not born as all other human being are born. But He was born of a virgin who had conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost. The birth of Jesus was in fulfilment of all the prophecies and promises that God had made at different times beginning with the garden of Eden, when man had first sinned and was driven out of the presence of God. God sent Jesus, the Christ, His Son, to accomplish some specific goals so that man might be reconciled with God.

In the first place, Jesus came to reveal God to man, so that man might know who God really is. The Bible says, "No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him." (John 1:18). Jesus was God incarnate on earth. Before He assumed flesh and became a man, He was one of the members of the Godhead in heaven. (John 1:1,2; Philippians 2:6-8). But He became a man to save man from the eternal death of hell. His miraculous birth, His sinless life, His marvellous teachings, and His powerful works proved beyond any doubt that He truly was the Son of God. He told His disciples on one occasion, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him." Philip, one of the disciples, said to

Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us. Jesus said to Him, Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known me, Philip? He who has seen me has seen the Father; So how can you say, 'show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on my own authority; but the Father who dwells in me does the works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me, or else believe me for the sake of works themselves." (John 14:5-11).

Secondly, Jesus came to set an example before us so that we should follow Him. He assumed flesh. He became a man. He lived and died as a man. He faced lacks, needs, temptations, problems and all other things just as we do, but He never did any wrong. The Bible says, "For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin." (Hebrews 4:15). The Apostle Peter, in his epistle to Christians wrote, "For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: Who committed no sin, nor was guile found in his mouth, who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously." (1 Peter 2:21-23). Through His example we learn that if we will follow Him every day in our lives then we too can overcome sin through Him. (Matthew 4:1-11). In 1 Corinthians 15:57, the Apostle declared that God gives us victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Instead of yielding unto sin, Jesus fought with sin to the extent that He shed His blood. The writer of the book of Hebrews says, "Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls." (Hebrews 12:1-3).

Thirdly, Jesus came to fulfill the Law. Jesus Himself

had declared to people at that time, "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill." (Matthew 5:17). Here Jesus was speaking of the Old Testament Law of Moses and the prophets whose writings are found in its pages. Jesus never violated any command of the Law. In fact, He was the only person who ever followed the Law of Moses so perfectly. He was born under the Law, when the Law was in force as God's will. (Galatians 4:4). He did not only keep the law but He also encouraged others to do what the law said. When a young man came to Him with the question, What he should do that he might inherit the eternal life? Jesus told him that he should follow the Law. (Mark 10:17-19). Still on another occasion when a certain lawyer asked Him the same question, Jesus again pointed to the Law and asked him, "What is written in the Law? What is your reading of it?" (Luke 10:26). The Law and the prophets all pointed to Jesus. They foretold of His coming and of His propitiatory death. Jesus fulfilled the Law and the prophets in all points. Therefore, when He was on the cross, and just before He gave up his spirit, He declared, "It is finished." (John 19:30). The Apostle Paul at Colossians 2:14 said, "Having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross." Here he was talking about the Law that existed until the death of Christ on the cross. Jesus fulfilled the Law, first by keeping it and then by accomplishing everything which the Law had said about Him, and therefore, after fulfilling the Law, He took it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. In its place He has given us a New Law, His New Testament, under which we all live today. (Hebrews 8:7, 13; 10:9). See also Galatians 3:19-25.

Fourthly, Jesus came to demonstrate the fact that God loves humanity. Before His death He declared, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." (John 3:16). Then Paul said, "For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans

5:6-8). Again, John wrote, "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1 John 4:10). If Jesus had not come and died on the cross for sinners, we would not understand the true meaning and the extent of God's love for humanity. But since God became man and himself suffered for man's sins, we now know how much God loves us.

Fifthly, Jesus came to pay the price of our redemption. You hear of various imprisonments, captivities and bondages, but none can compare the bondage of sin. Christ made it clear, by sayings, "Whoever commits sin is a slave of sin." (John 8:34). In God's account all have sinned and fall short of His glory, (Romans 3:23), because none could match His purity and holiness. According to Matthew 10:28, sin destroys both body and the soul. Sin keeps people separate and away from God. (Isaiah 53:1,2). Jesus came to deliver man from the slavery of sin. He said, "I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance." (Matthew 9:13). He also said, "For the Son of man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." (Luke 19:10). He came and died in our stead so that we might pass from spiritual death into eternal life. According to the prophet Isaiah, "He has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him." (Isaiah 53:4,5). Then the Apostle Paul wrote, and said that God, "made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Corinthians 5:21). Apostle Peter, in his epistle to Christians said, "Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." (1 Peter 1:18, 19).

Thanks be to God who in His mercy and grace allowed His own Son, Christ, to leave heaven and to come on earth to die on the cross for all humanity so that we might not be condemned in hell eternally because of our sins. The Bible tells us that those who would believe in Christ and obey His commands, they will be saved from their sins. But those who would refuse to believe and do what He says will perish because of their own sins. The Bible



at 1 Corinthians 1:18 says, "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." This in other words means that those who would be saved for them the coming of Christ has been a great and valuable thing; but those who would be lost for them Christ's coming was in vain. What about you?

## Bring Someone to Worship

Charles Hodge

Someone recently said, "Door knocking beats nothing, but that is all it beats." We are great at "guilt evangelism" so we run out and "knock doors" again. Brethren who cannot find prospects cannot keep converts. Is it better if people do not know us? In a local city why not meet, know, and develop relationships with the lost? By doorknocking we mean "cold turkey"...calling suddenly upon strangers. If one cannot influence family/friends, what qualifies him to pick on strangers?

So we look for the "magic button"...the new "evangelize the world in 80 days". For decades we have grasped for this "substitute" for real evangelism. Up and down like a roller coaster.

Evangelism is simply people with people. Why not invite friends to worship? It is that simple. One young man brought seven to worship recently. In the last year several have been baptized simply from such invitations. Try it! We remember the 50's when allegedly we were baptizing so many—one key work was "inviting." Friends were invited and brought. Let them see what the church is, who we are, what is expected.

Whom have you invited? brought? baptized? There is no need of talking about evangelism, world-wide missions, when we are not even interested in bringing others. Invite five per week, ten per week. Keep inviting. Let's have classes, sermons, works relevant with their lives. Before you criticize a lack of evangelism — bring somebody.

# It was Love !

**Dahlia Fischer**

When the saints meet on the first day of the week to worship God and partake of the bread and fruit of the vine in memory of the Lord's death, burial and resurrection. . . oh what a blessedness is ours. Think with me. It wasn't inability to defend himself that made Jesus endure his arrest and the cruel mockery of his trial. . . it was his love for you and me. It wasn't those spikes through his hands and feet that held him on that cross. . .it was his love for you and me. Remember the words of the song. . ."He could have called ten thousand angels to destroy the world and set him free" . . .but for his love for you and me. When that Roman soldier pierced his side, mingled with the blood and water which flowed, was love, grace, and redemption for you and me. Can we merit or ever be worthy ? No !.

When we partake of those emblems of the first day of the week remembering with gratitude and thanksgiving his great sacrifice, it is a personal communion with our Lord for each individual Christian, and he is there in our midst just as surely as if we were able to see and speak to him. What a blessing ! Think about it and stand in awe.

## The Nine Spiritual Gifts of the Holy Spirit

**Larry D. Mathis**

Local churches of Christ in the first century were endowed with miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit. These gifts were absolutely essential in the absence of written New Testament scriptures. The church at Corinth did not take a back-seat to any other congregation in spiritual gifts. (First Corinthians 1 : 7.) Paul, writing to the Corinthians, enumerates all of these gifts in chapter twelve. The following is a brief review of the nine miraculous gifts of the Spirit that were possessed by the Corinthians.

(1) "The word of wisdom." (First Corinthians 12 : 8.) Since this gift is called the "word" of wisdom it must have to do with the ability to communicate special, miraculous wisdom. Such supernatural wisdom was needed in the first century in the absence of the written New Testament. Paul referred to this wisdom in chapter two of First Corinthians. (Note verses 4-13.) Peter, no doubt, had the same in mind in Second Peter 2 : 15-16. No one possesses miraculous wisdom (James 1 : 5), it is not a miraculous reception that is received.

(2) "The word of knowledge." (First Corinthians 12 : 8.) Since this gift is also called the "word" of, it must likewise have to do with the ability to communicate special, miraculous knowledge. The early church needed inspired guidance and these gifts supplied that need, It is difficult today to explain the difference between the "word of wisdom," and the "word of knowledge." No one possesses miraculous knowledge today ! We are commanded to read the New Testament in order to gain knowledge in spiritual matters now. (Ephesians 3 : 1-7.) However, such gaining of knowledge is not a miraculous reception of the Spirit.

(3) "Faith." (First Corinthians 12 : 9.) This was a miraculous gift of the Spirit. Paul refers to it in I Corinthians 13 : 2, as "all faith, so that I could remove mountains." Evidently, some first century elders possessed this gift. (James 5 : 15.) No one possesses miraculous faith today ! Our faith comes from hearing the word of God. (Romans 10 : 17.) We, today, possess the "common" faith of Titus 1 : 4.

(4) "Gifts of healing." (First Corinthians 12 : 9.) This was miraculous, supernatural healing. People were healed completely and immediately. The "gifts of healing" probably refer to the same power that Jesus described in Mark 16 : 18. "They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." A good example is found in Acts chapter three where Peter and John healed a man who had been lame from birth. Also, compare James 5 : 14-15. No one has such power today !

(5) "The working of miracles." (First Corinthians 12 : 10.) A great variety of miracles are mentioned in the New Testament that

were spectacular displays of power. Jesus stilled a storm, fed the five thousand, raised the dead, etc. In Acts 13 :11-12 we have the account of Paul striking Elymas blind because of his evil conduct. Needless to say, no one has these powers today !

(6) "Prophecy." (First Corinthians 12 : 10.) This miraculous gift enabled one to predict the future. (Acts 11 : 28; 21 : 10-11.) However, the chief function of the New Testament prophet was to edify the church. (First Corinthians 14 : 3-4.) The prophet was second, in rank, to the apostle. (First Corinthians 12 : 28.) Paul regarded this gift as the most important to the local church. The prophet edified, exhorted, and comforted the congregation. (First Corinthians 14 : 3,5.) There are no inspired prophets today in the New Testament sense !

(7) "Discerning of spirits." (First Corinthians 12:10). This was the miraculous ability to read hearts (Acts 5 : 1-11); to detect false teachers (First John 4 : 1); and to judge what prophets were saying. (First Corinthians 14 : 29.) The early church had to be especially careful of those who claimed to be speaking by the Holy Spirit. With no written standard, such as the New Testament, the church needed the help of those who had the ability to discern spirits. No one has this gift today !

(8) "Divers kinds of tongues." (First Corinthians 12 : 10.) This was a miraculous gift that enabled the recipient to speak in human language that was known by the people, but not previously known by the speaker. Tongue-speakers could speak in languages that they had never studied before. See Acts 2 : 1-4 for such an example. This gift was specifically a "sign to unbelievers." (First Corinthians 14 : 22.) When translated, the message of the tongue speaker would edify the church. (First Corinthians 14 : 5.) No one has this gift today !

(9) "Interpretation of tongues." (First Corinthians 12 : 10.) The miraculous gift of interpretation was the ability to translate what was spoken by the tongue-speaker into a language easily understandable by the congregation. No one has this miraculous gift today !

The nine miraculous, supernatural gifts of First Corinthians

cannot be demonstrated today ! If the gift of tongues still exists, why not the others ? The obvious answer is that there are none of these gifts exercised today. The counterfeits of the present are not at all the same as the gifts enjoyed by the early church.

## What About Grandma and Grandpa ?

Don Deffenbaugh

With the bones beginning to creak, a few gray hairs showing up here and there, and six grand-children I figure it is about time that I started thinking about what is going to happen to grandma and grandpa. It has been true with me as with others, I have preached on the subject of youth quite often, very seldom have I considered the aged. Growing old is one of life's inevitables and begins the day we are born. It is strange that while most people want to live a long time, many are reluctant to accept the fact that to live longer is to grow older.

Growing old is neither to be feared or dreaded. It is as Browning wrote :

“Grow old along with me !  
The best of life is yet to be,  
The last of life, for which the first was made :  
Our times are in his hand  
Who saith, A whole I planned,  
Youth shows but half : trust God : see all, nor be afraid.”

Another author who is unknown to me wrote :

“Afraid to grow old ?- I will not be.  
Serene shall be the heart of me ;  
I'll remember what age bestows on a tree,  
Beauty, strength, and majesty,  
Slowly, surely, reaching higher.  
So shall I each day aspire.  
To grow with grace, tranquility.  
As the Creator of life ordained me.  
One in whose presence friends may find.  
Hope and courage and peace of mind.”

# Now I Am Old

Ray Hawk

**"I have been young, and now am old" (Psalm 37 : 25).**

Do you know what David was talking about ? If you are under twenty-five, you probably do not. You are too busy. Too busy getting married. Too busy starting a new family. Too busy with your career. Too busy enjoying your youth.

Age doesn't usually dawn on folks until they hit thirty. For some reason people begin to notice they are no longer in their youthful twenties. They wonder if the next thirty years will pass as rapidly as the last thirty. If you are approaching thirty, I can guarantee the next thirty will pass faster than the first thirty did !

I suppose one really takes note of passing youth when he turns forty. Someone has said that one's forties are the youth of old age and the old age of youth. One day you notice that high school graduates keep getting younger looking every year. You don't remember your graduating class looking that immature ! You attend the twenty-fifth reunion of your graduation class and are shocked to see all those old people. You have trouble recognizing anyone. Some of the men have lost their hair, others are greying, and everyone seems to be burdened down with wrinkles. The men all seem to have falling chests and the girls that were so pretty in high school seem so, so matronly. Surely YOU don't look that way to THEM ?

You become aware that some of your friends who are in their early twenties are young enough to be your children. You begin to comprehend what David was saying. It seems only yesterday you were twenty-one, and now you are either a grand-parent or will be in a few years. My, where have the years gone ?

Have you ever heard an older person tell someone in their forties or fifties they were still young ? Did you laugh when you heard it ? You will not when you reach your seventies. A person who has reached seventy, or older, is still the same person he or she was at twenty-one, his body has just slowed down. My, where

have the years gone? Yes, with David, we may say, "I have been young, and now am old.

I am thankful this statement by David wasn't the only one he made. The most beautiful Psalm by David is the twenty-third. The more mature one becomes in the Lord, the better he can face the declining years. "The Lord is MY shepherd." As one grows older, he can use his experience to aid those who are younger. He can share his experiences in life with them. When he retires from work, he will have more time to serve the Lord. He can make visits to those who need his visits, people he can now empathize with, something he could not do when he was younger.

Yes, we may be getting older, but there is a world of challenges opening up for us that will keep us busy in the service of the Lord until we are ready to lay our armor aside and go to be with Him.

## Alone!

Dan Winkler

The silence is broken only by the pounding throb of one's pulse beating in his ear. Days are remembered when the phone was anxiously watched, waiting for that special some one to call; now, just any one would suffice. In the cafeteria, a smaller table is chosen—one tray needs little room. The cheerful countenance of most couples and families stand in sharp contrast to the emptiness felt inside.

There seems to be no end to the gnawing pain. LONLINESS overshadows the morning, grips the day, and haunts the evening. What can be done?

(1) **Christians need to remember that they never walk alone!** The words of Jesus are encouraging: "I am with you always" (Matt. 28 :20). It was he that promised, "I will in no wise fail (lit. "give up, leave, or let sink") thee, neither will I in any wise forsake (lit. "abandon or desert") thee" (Heb. 13 : 5).

(2) **Christians need to try and gather strength from their solitude.** Jesus frequently went apart to pray in solitude

(Cf. Matt. 14 : 13, 23). Even so, Christians are to pray in secret (Matt. 6 : 6); note, solitude is implied. Much can be said in favor of some quiet time between one's self and God (Cf. Ps. 46 : 10).

(3) **Christians must learn to live with self.** "Thou shalt love thyself" (Matt. 19 : 19; 22:39). "Even so ought husbands also love their own wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself" (Eph. 5 : 28). Many are the passages which imply the need of a healthy self esteem. To adjust to loneliness, one needs to become acquainted with, come to appreciate, and learn to live with self.

(4) **Christians must not forget to serve others.** Though one lives by himself, he must not live for himself. Selfishness is unbecoming (Cf. 1 Sam 25 :3-11; Esther 6 : 6; Isa. 56 : 11) and sinful (Phil 2 : 1-5) God's people are to "deny self" (Matt. 16 : 24) and serve the Lord (Rom. 12 :11) by serving others (Gal. 5 : 13; Cf. Matt. 25 : 31-46). Loneliness does not make void these matters. In fact, in service to others when one digs a hole for another's problems, he will find a place to put his own.

Loneliness can be a dragon which consumes the joy, the purpose, and the contentment that should characterize the Christian's life. However loneliness, like any difficulty of life, can be a source of strength through which its subject draws closer to God (Cf. 2 Cor.4 :17).

## We Must Have A Standard

Dalton Key

President John Quincy Adams once called both Houses of Congress together for a special meeting. He walked in carrying two bushel baskets. He said, "The bushel measure in my right hand came from South Carolina; the one in my left hand comes from the city of New York. One of these bushel measures contains sixty—eight cubic inches more than the other one." He then walked up to a table and picked up two one pound weights. He



said, "This weight in my right hand came from Massachusetts; this other one came from Maine. One of them weighs nearly an ounce more than the other one." He concluded, "Gentlemen, we need a standard measurement and a standard weight for the United States of America." The establishment of the Bureau of Weights and Measures resulted from this visual demonstration.

We understand that there must be a set standard for weights and measures. But there must also be a standard for matters of religion. Why is the religious world divided asunder by various beliefs and doctrines? The answer should be obvious. Most religious people are not content to use God's standard, the Bible.

We must not measure ourselves religiously by our own opinions or conjectures. Neither should we strive to live to the standards of man-made doctrines and creeds. We ought to be content with God's standard, the Bible. The Bible is truth (John 17 : 17), and as such thoroughly furnishes us unto all good works (2 Timothy 3 : 17). Furthermore, the Bible contains all that "pertains to life and godliness" (2 Peter 1 : 3). Yes, we must have a standard ! And that standard is God's word.

## The Old Rugged Cross

James E. Lacy

There is a song which we sometimes sing which begins like this :

On a hill far away,  
Stood an old rugged cross,  
The emblem of suffering and shame.

Let's go back to that scene for a few moments and see what the 'Old Rugged Cross' really represents. Outside of Jerusalem was a hill, called 'Golgotha'—an ugly hill which from a distance looked like a skull. Some historians also say that because of its designation as a place of execution there could also have been unburied skulls there. Christ had been taken from the Garden the

night before and was taken to be tried by the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate. During this time our Savior was Scourged—a brutal punishment which few men survived. Later He was ridiculed. A robe and a crown of thorns was placed upon Him, and the thorns were pressed down so that the blood ran down His face. Then He was given the cross upon which He was to be hanged, and was forced to carry it from the place of trial to the place on Calvary's hill where He was to die for the sins of all mankind—including such men as Abraham, Noah, Enoch, and others who had lived long before.

By their faith, these men of old were able to see the promise that God made to them. In Hebrews 11:13, we read, 'These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.' In other words, these men could see that 'hill far away,' and by faith they could see that 'old rugged cross' on which their Savior was to die in order to fulfill the promises given to them. These men really had something to look forward to, and it was through their great faith that this accomplishment came about.

Today that promise has been fulfilled, and, consequently we can look back to that scene—that scene on Golgotha's ugly summit where our Savior died. When He died there, the sun refused to shine. There was darkness upon the face of the earth. The earth quaked. Graves were opened. The veil of the temple was torn from top to bottom. Witnessing these events, a Roman centurion was moved to exclaim : 'Truly this was the Son of God.'

How much faith do you have? Can you see that 'hill far away?' Can you by faith see your Savior hanging on that 'old rugged cross?' Do you attend a worship service where these scenes are brought vividly in memory each first day of the week? Heaven is the promise to all who will obey the commandments of our Savior. **COME AND WORSHIP THE SON OF GOD!**

## Repentance

Dan McVey

I am going to Kumasi from Accra and my only reason for going is to do something evil there. I have reached Nikawkaw. A

riend speaks to me of my mission to Kumasi and I tell him. He speaks softly-softly and persuades me I should not do such a thing. So what do I do? Should I continue to Kumasi? The temptation to do evil will be there. Should I go back to Accra? I should. I must thank my friend and turn myself to Accra. I have repented.

Again, suppose, I am a drunkard. While passing down the street, I hear some Christian people teaching from the Bible. I realize I am a sinner, my drinking is sin. What do I do? Continue in my drinking? I now know it is sin. There is only one thing I can do. I must stop drinking and strive to help others to stop also. The blue kiosk is no longer my friend. I have repented.

Again, Suppose, I am a fornicator. I love to chase women too much. I am always looking for a woman. I hear from the Bible that sex is only for a husband and wife. Any other sex is sin. What do I do? Do I keep myself to one girl friend? Do I stop having sex with any girl? I must stop. I understand that sex is only for a husband and his wife. Sex before completing customary rites is sin. Even if some one tells me it is proper, I know it is sin, it is evil to fornicate. Fornication is to have sex before I legally take my wife. I stop. I have repented.

My friends, you have seen three examples of repentance. God calls all of us to repent of our sins. Many people do not know what repentance is. Many believe repentance is when you feel sorrow or shame for sin, when you feel guilty. The Bible calls this godly sorrow. In II Corinthians 7:10 we read, "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation. . ." If I say that family respect worketh (produces) good sons, what do I mean? If a son has respect for his family, he will be a good son. So, when we feel deep sorrow for sin it brings us to repentance. Sorrow is not the same as repentance just as family respect is not the same as the good son. Respect helps to make a good son. Sorrow helps bring repentance.

What is repentance? It is to understand that I have sinned, to feel sorrow for that sin, and to stop or turn away from that sin. In Matthew 21:28-31, Jesus says, "But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said,

Son, go work today in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not; but afterward he repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir; and went not. Whether of them twain did the will of his father?"

In this story, Jesus tells us what repentance is. The first son said, "I will not go to the farm." He refused, but he then repented and went. You see, what he once refused to do, he then did. He changed his mind and his actions. He changed and did the right thing.

You now see why Jesus said in Matthew 3:2, "Repent ye for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." For people to find God's way, we must be willing to repent, to change from sin to goodness. The Bible says, "Let the wicked forsake his way . . . and let him return to the Lord, and He will have mercy on him . . . and He will abundantly pardon." (Isaiah 55:7) God promises to forgive all people if we will repent. Because if we repent, that means we accept God's will for our lives. The Bible says all of us are to repent because we all have sin (Luke 13:3, Acts 17:30). We are commanded, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38).

We must understand repentance. Without repentance we cannot be saved. Cannot serve two masters. Let us repent serve God. Remember these words: "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoever confesses and forsakes his sin shall have mercy" (Proverbs 28:13).

## Four Dimensional Love of Christ!

Dillard Thurman

Paul graphically set forth the four dimensional love of Christ to the saints at Ephesus. "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you according to

the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ which passeth all knowledge, that ye may be filled with all the fulness of God." (Eph. 3:14-19). Study just what Paul has written here!

Christians should be able to comprehend the four dimensions (the breadth, length, depth and height) of Christ's love; and should see it reflected in what He has done for fallen man! Though we cannot fathom that love, surely we can appreciate the hope it has given, and the salvation it offers! Then our lives must be given in humble service to Him who loves us so! We must live compatible with the glory and exaltation He has bestowed upon His saints!

### **The Breadth of His divine Love**

The breadth of the love of Christ is seen in that He died for all, and that with no discrimination! "For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto them that call upon him." (Rom. 10:12). Whereas man is partial in his affections, bestowing love on his family, kindred, and associates, Christ's love abounds toward all of every race and nationality, regardless of origin, creed, cult, and station in life! "But God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. 5:8). Christ's breadth of love encompassed all! "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead." (2 Cor. 5:14). His love was not confined to any one group or favored few! The breadth of His love covered us all. Thus Paul could say, "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." (Gal. 2:20). The breadth of this love means that "God is no respecter of persons," and "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." (Acts 10:34; Gal. 3:28). How tragic had it been recorded that "God so loved the rich, the socially prominent, the influential, etc.!"

## **The Length of His Divine Love**

To rightly establish the length of divine love, John wrote, "For God is love." (1 Jno. 4:8). As God is eternal (never ending), so is the love of Christ! How comforting to read: "Jesus . . . having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them to the end." (Jno. 13:1). His love is enduring and steadfast, and we shall never go beyond the bounds of divine love! It will always shelter us, and will never fail. The endurance of divine love is lauded by Paul in saying: "Nay, in all things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. 8:37-39). He loved us, and gave His Son to die for us while we were in a lost state! So that now, "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts" (Rom. 5:5), we must "shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end." (Heb. 6:11). This is the length of Christ's love manifest in our own salvation!

## **The Depth of His Divine Love**

There is no depth of sin, degeneracy and degradation that the love of Christ cannot probe! It is difficult for man to fathom such depth of love and compassion which the forces of heaven have fashioned for his redemption from sin and depravity! For while a wretched, sin-cursed, dying world groveled in unbridled lusts, God sent forth His only Son to die in our stead! What other words can better tell the story than, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (Jno. 3:16). Christ's love descended to the depths of our own fall to rescue us from eternal loss! "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (Jno. 15:13). To die for a friend demands great sacrificial love: "But God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Turn back to read carefully Phil. 2:5-8. There is the real depth of Christ's love portrayed! The depth of His love is shown

in how far He stooped down to save sinful man !

### **The Height of His Divine Love**

Love is often prompted by what one has done for us, or in anticipation of what will be done. But not so with the divine love of God and His Son! "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." (1 Jno. 3:1). Through no merit of our own, the love of God hath elevated us to this high and lofty position! No man has ever amounted to much until he became aware that he was loved by a worthy person! Yet how much more to love and be loved by God the Father and Son! Our love is refined because of the height of divine love: "Beloved, let us love one another : for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God." "If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us." "We love him, because he first loved us." (1 Jno. 4:7, 12, 19). This height of love elevates all who become partakers of it! An uplifting word is given to all saints : "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savor." (Eph. 5:1-2). As we bask in the warmth of His divine love, let us be uplifted in thought and behaviour.

### **So, in Our Summation :**

Let us consider that His divine love has the breadth of the whole universe, reaching out to every creature under heaven, and extending the hope of pardon and redemption. The length of His divine love extends from man's need to the vast shores of an endless eternity, and cannot fail nor be left behind. The height of His divine love reaches to the exalted heavenly clime, and is entered in the throne room of our God, where Christ sits at His right hand making intercession for His own! The depth of His divine love descends to the sloughs of despondency and despair to lift the fallen, and eventually place them in His Father's house in heavenly mansions. We have His promise : "In my Father's house are many mansions : . . . I go to prepare a place for you.

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." (Jno. 14:2-3). Let us strive to comprehend the breadth, the length, the height, and the depth of Christ's love.

## Human Pride

Johnny Ramsey

Let us list eight clear-cut contributions to Judah's folly in 600 B.C., and then see the sad application to our own spiritual decline. If we can gain insight into human weakness and thereby correct our backsliding ways, our study shall be beneficial. If we do not have the wisdom and fortitude to change, then something even worse than Babylonian captivity awaits us. Two striking contexts reminding us of the reasons God punished Israel and Judah can be found in Judg. 2 and 2 Chron. 36. Briefly those passages tell us that Jehovah was tired of their : [1] Idolatry, [2] Ingratitude, [3] Immorality, [4] Disobedience, [5] Stubborn will, [6] Rebellion to God's word, [7] Flippant attitude toward worship and [8] Mocking of the prophets.

In our modern society and western civilization, we see the very same human pride that caused Jeremiah to weep in ancient times. (Jer. 13:15-17). It saddens the Creator when our haughty attitude deceives us (Obad. 3). Pride not only causes us to fall, but also thwarts heaven's plan (Prov. 16:18; Jas. 4:10). The form of idolatry that staggers many people today is the over-whelming sin of covetousness (Col. 3:5; Lk. 12:15-21). In the church today, we have many stingy givers who hinder the progress of the gospel due to an obsession with houses, lands, furs, jewelry and other fancy, but mundane, concerns that war against the simplicity of "the old paths" (Jer. 6:16).

Worldliness occupied the minds of Israel and Judah in the days of the prophets of old, and such carnality robs God today of full allegiance of many professed devotees of the gospel now. Rebellion towards the word of the Lord today is graphically portrayed in the lack of Bible knowledge so rampant among members of the body of Christ in this generation. We cannot walk in



the old paths if we don't even know where they are! We cannot teach what we do not know (1 Pet. 3:15; Heb. 5:13; 2 Tim. 2:15). When we procrastinate in regard to improving our spiritual depth this very delay becomes the tool of the devil in keeping us lost and heading us in the direction of bondage. Far too many of us seek out easy preaching that demands very little, just as Jeremiah warned in Jer. 5, "The Prophets prophesy falsely; the priests follow their example and the people love to have it so."

One of the saddest scenes in the scenario of the doom of Judah comes in Jer. 7:4 where the seed of Abraham have even made their sanctuary their cemetery! Yes, they put too much stress upon the Temple and forgot to cleanse their hearts (Joel 2:13). Some brethren today refuse to walk in the old paths of personal devotion while they foolishly centre their religion around a building, a pulpit and a preacher. When we try to guide ourselves (Jer. 10:23), we lose contact with our Maker (2 Cor. 3:5). The result will be a decadant society and a crumbling church. Such deterioration was carefully chronicled in Lam. 4 where Jeremiah weepingly reminded Judah of people who had been raised in scarlet but who now searched the garbage dumps looking for tiny reminders of the past! When we fail to walk in the old paths, we live to regret the joys we miss as we walk the broad path that leads to perdition. (Matt. 7:13-14).

## The Church of Christ

Johnny Ramsey

Although many people consider the church of the New Testament unimportant, we find in studying the Bible an inseparable yoking of Christ and His body (which is the church, Col. 1:18). In fact, in Acts 8:1 and Acts 9:4, we learn that to persecute the church is to persecute Christ. In Eph. 3:21 we are told that we are to give God "glory in the church." Jesus Christ is the head of that church (Eph. 1:22; 5:23) and He is the Savior of it (Eph. 5:23). Paul told the Ephesian elders that Jesus "purchased the church with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). When men obey the teachings of the gospel they receive remission of sins through the Lord. (Acts 2:38-41, 47; 22:16).

Christ has absolute authority over the church. He is given "all authority, in heaven and on earth" (Matt. 28:18) and is "head over all things to the church, which is his body" (Eph. 1:22-23). Therefore, whatever He desires in worship, doctrine, organization and life must be honored. We are subject to Him. (Eph. 5:24). This is the exact reason churches of Christ do not use mechanical instruments of music in worship. The head of the church said sing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16) and it is a mark of subjection to do what He tells us to do. (Jno. 2:5) and not those things which men want to do. We observe the Lord's Supper each "first day of the week" (Acts 20:7), just as He has taught. We have no earthly headquarters and each congregation is self-governing under the guidance of the Scriptures. (Heb. 12:23; Acts 14:23; 1 Pet. 5:1-4).

Any person or group espousing the concept of following the Bible exactly will have to constantly review the position occupied in their pursuit of truth. There can be no middle ground, no compromise, no favoritism. It shall ever be pre-eminently true that the church is "the pillar and support of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15). The glory of Ephesus, where Timothy laboured, was the beautiful marble temple erected to the goddess Diana. This wonder of the world had as its major attraction, 127 marble pillars that formed a colonnade around the building. These pillars, donated by many earthly rulers, provided the glory of the building. Following this background, Paul tells us the glory of the church of Jesus Christ is evinced in the bulwark of righteousness—the pillar and support of truth !

One of the most enlightening studies concerning the church revealed in the Bible is to discuss from a scriptural viewpoint just what the church is and what it is not! Negatively, according to the Scriptures, the church is not a physical building. Christ died not for brick and mortar, wood or stone. The church is a spiritual house made up of living stones (1 Pet. 2:5-10). The church is not a political regime (Jno. 18:36), but it is a divine monarchy with Christ as the King in a spiritual reign in the hearts and lives of men. The church is not a glorified social club, catering to the betterment of civil rights or urban renewal. It is a divine fellowship of mutual concern where God's servants find companionship, spiritually, with others who keep His precepts. (Psa. 119:63).

The church is not a denomination, where human doctrine finds a haven of safety. It is composed of "the called out people" who belong to Christ Jesus with eternal ties of love. The church is an army with the Master as the captain of our salvation (Heb. 2:10). It is the body of Christ with the Redeemer as the head of the body (Col. 1:18). Acts 2:36-47 will describe in detail how to become a member of the glorious church of Christ.

The Lord's church is unique in doctrine, design, and destiny. This makes sense to folk committed to following the Bible and the authority of Christ. His church, built upon His divine power, must be kept pure and scriptural until our Redeemer comes again (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 5:27). Notice carefully these words from a commentary on Acts :

"Many Christians today talk about the difficulties of our times as though we should have to wait for better ones, before the Christian religion can take root. It is heartening to remember that this faith took root and flourished amazingly in conditions that would have killed anything less vital in a matter of weeks. These early Christians were on fire with the conviction that they had become, through Christ, the sons of God. They were pioneers of a new humanity, subjects of a new Kingdom. They still speak to us today across the centuries. Perhaps if we believed, we might achieve what they achieved."

## Leading A Consecrated Life

Leon Cole

"Take my life, and let it be consecrated, Lord to thee." These are the words of a beautiful and beloved hymn. There are times when I wonder if we understand the implications of leading a consecrated life.

The word "consecrate" is defined: "to make, or declare sacred or holy; to set apart or devote to the service or worship of God." A second definition is "to dedicate or devote to some particular purpose—as a life consecrated to art." Yet another

definition is "to render sacred; hallow; sanctify."

These ideas are expressed by both Cruden and Young in their respective Concordances. Cruden gives the definition: "to devote anything to God's worship and service." I believe this is what is meant in the petitions we sing.

A consecrated life is easily distinguished from one that is not. One who is consecrated to the Lord will be present when the church assembles unless there is a cause beyond his control. The person who is not devoted to the Lord will not be there. His time will be spent reading the Sunday paper, sleeping late or out on the lake.

If you were seriously ill or one of your family was near death and you wanted fervent prayer to be offered, who, would you call upon? Would it be that one who spends his time furthering his own cause and entertainment? Would it be the consecrated man—the one giving his time, talent and life to God?

The consecrated life has an influence on others. We are "living epistles . . . known and read of all men." At Acts 20:18-20, Paul reviewed the conduct of his life among the Ephesians. His example of self-denial, faithfulness to the Master and devotion provided them and us with a desire to be better people.

Consecrated lives will bring us to a home with God. To the Corinthians Paul said, ". . . But first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God." (2 Cor. 8:5). When men first "give themselves unto the Lord," it is not difficult to obey the teaching of God. The things of this world take on secondary importance. If we are consecrated to God—dedicated to worship and service acceptable to Him—we must let him do the commanding and us the obeying. May the Lord help us to see the need of consecrated living.

