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EDITORIAL

What Is The Work Of The Church?

Christ promised to build His church. He said "I will build My church." (Matthew 16:18). And He did. When the first gospel sermon was preached by His disciples, after His death and resurrection and ascension into heaven, people were pricked in their hearts and they asked "What shall we do?" (Acts. 2:37). They were told to "Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins . . ." (Acts 2:38). When they did that the Lord added them to His church according to Acts 2:41, 47. And it states there that the Lord continued to do that, that is, add people to His church as they were being saved daily by obeying His commands, which is true even today.

Sadly though both church and her work are greatly misunderstood in the world today. Most people think that the church is a place, a building set apart for worship. But according to the Bible, church means the body of people who belong to Christ. His followers are called the church. Nowhere in the Bible is the Church called a material building or a place to gather. The Apostle Paul at Romans 12:5 wrote Christians and said, "So we being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another." Again at 1 Corinthians 12:27 he wrote, "Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually." He was talking about Christians. They, people, were the body of Christ. And at Ephesians 1:22, 23 he explains further that that body is the church. We read, "And He (God) put all things under His (Christ's) feet, and gave

Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body . . ." When Ananias and his wife had lied to the Holy Spirit and were consequently punished instantly, we read, at Acts 5:11, "So great fear came upon all the church . . ." Was the writer talking about fear coming upon a building or on people? In the first three chapters of the book of Revelation, after admonishing congregations of His church at various places, the Lord again and again said, "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." (Revelation 3:6, 13, 22). The Lord didn't expect for the walls and bricks of a building to hear him, neither was He speaking of them. He was speaking to Christians, His people, His followers.

Most believers in Christ talk about this church or that church because a church to them is a place of religious or social activities. Instead of assembling together a church to worship, they want to go to the church or be at the church. Many think the church is a place of ceremonies. So when there is a marriage in the family, or a baptism or someone dies in the family they want to contact the church. That's all the church is for them! Or when they want a child to be admitted in a "Christian School", they want to go to the church to get a letter of recommendation! Others, and there are many, think that whenever they need money they ought to get it from the church. Because they believe the church has it to give away to anyone. I have seen people coming with all kinds of tricks, and most times they get away with some rupees. They have become professionals. I call them "Religious beggars." They are excellent actors. They have all kinds of excuses to put forth. They pretend, with such excuses that while travelling they have lost their money and they have to reach their destination and as soon as they get there they would send the money back; or someone in the family is sick and they need money; and such like. Most times they present themselves as being very good Christians. They move around from place to place and wherever they see a church sign board they go in with a heart-rending story. To them church is a place where to go and get money.

Jesus was the Lord of compassion and so His church must be. In one instant when He saw a great multitude coming after Him, he realized that they had been with him for several hours, so he wanted to feed them. And He did. With His power as the Son of God he turned five barley loaves and two small fish into a great meal for over five thousand men. Everyone was astonished. Many of them believed in Him, as a result. The following day they came again seeking Jesus, and when they found him they said to Him, "Rabbi, when did you come here?" And

in the very next verse, in John 6:26 is written: "Jesus answered them and said, Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled." And then He said, "Do not labour for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him." (John 6:27). Notice, Christ didn't feed them again another lunch or dinner, even though He knew that that was precisely for which they were looking for Him. Instead, He pointed out to them their greatest need, that they had overlooked, "food which endures to everlasting life."

When Christ had finished the great work of man's salvation and He was returning back to the Father in heaven, this is what He told His disciples to do: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned." (Mark 16:15, 16; also see Matthew 28:18-20). Thus the main and chief work of the church is to preach the souls' saving gospel of Christ. Gospel of Christ is the power of God to save all who would believe in Christ. (Romans 1:16). If the church will not preach the gospel of Christ then who will? There are many many institutions and organization the world over that are doing wonderful works of charity and are taking care of needy people in various ways, and they are doing a commendable work. But they are not preaching the gospel of salvation. This is the work of the church. That is why Christ built the church. This is the purpose of the church; to preach the gospel of salvation. Preach it through the printed pages, through radio, through public meetings, and by any other available means, but preach the gospel. Nothing is more important in this world than the soul of the person who is made after the likeness and image of eternal God. Christ said, "For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:26).

Finding The Lord's Church

J.C. CHOATE

It is quite common for a person to be obedient to the gospel, worship with the local congregation of the Lord's church, and then to be transferred to another city. Sometimes this may happen to an individual and sometimes a whole family is involved in such a move. If the

individual or family has been a part of the church for a long period of time, there probably will be no confusion in locating the true church. But if such people or families are new converts, they may experience some problems, depending on how knowledgeable they are concerning what the scriptures have to say about the church, and their ability to recognize the identification marks of the true church.

Suppose you decide to move to another city or area. Hopefully, you will want to locate the church immediately so you can let it be known that you are a Christian and that you want to begin to worship with and have fellowship with that local congregation of the church. Again, hopefully, the congregation you are leaving will give you information about the church where you are going, making it much easier for you to locate it and to begin regularly to worship with a sister congregation. On the other hand, such information might not have been given to you, for one reason or another. Now you must try to locate faithful brethren all by yourself. Being young in the faith, this could pose some problems.

Should you find yourself in this type of situation, you need to be on the lookout for a congregation with these identification marks:

1. It will be wearing a scriptural name. This means that it will be known as the church of Christ (Romans 16:16), church of God (Acts 20:28), or one of the other names in the scripture which refer to the Lord's church. The church all over the world usually goes by the name, the CHURCH OF CHRIST. Other scriptural names might be used, but the reason for setting aside the one name, "the church of Christ," is because it is a scriptural name, and furthermore, the use of one name world-wide keeps down confusion. If the church did use different scriptural names in different places, this would be confusing because of so many different religious groups going by so many different names. One might not know if a particular congregation, which was using a scriptural name, would be in fellowship with a congregation of another area by a different name, even though that name also was scriptural. My point is, though, that if a church is the Lord's church it will use a scriptural name. In a few cases certain denominational groups do use scriptural names but are still not the Lord's church. You can mark it down, though, that if a group does not use a scriptural name then it cannot possibly be the Lord's church.

2. Its members will be known as Christians only. They will not be "this kind of Christian" and "that kind of Christian." They will not tack some man-made name on to the name of Christian. In Acts 4:12 we are told that salvation is in the name of Christ. Then in Acts 11:26, and 1

Peter 4:16 we have the record telling us that those who obeyed the Lord and followed him were known as Christians and only as Christians.

3. The Lord's church, the Church of Christ, would meet on the first day of the week to worship. (Acts 20:7). The members worship by praying (Acts 2:42), studying God's word (2 Timothy 2:15; Acts 20:7), singing praises to God (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16), partaking of the Lord's Supper on each first day of the week (Acts 20:7; Matthew 26:26-28; 1 Corinthians 11:23-29), and by giving of their money. (1 Corinthians 16:1, 2). Now if you should note that the congregation uses mechanical instruments of music with the singing, you can be assured that this is not the Lord's church. Or if the Lord's Supper is missing from the worship, again, you may be sure that this is not a true congregation of the Lord's church.

4. If you are still not sure if this is the Church of Christ, you can ask a few questions that will clarify matters. Ask when this church had its beginning. If it is the Lord's church, the answer will be approximately A.D. 33 as set forth in Acts 2. Again ask where the church had its beginning, and if you are told in Jerusalem (Acts 2), then you can be sure that this understanding is in keeping with what the Bible says about the church. Ask again how one becomes a member of the church. The correct answer would be that when one believes in God and in Christ as being the Son of God (Hebrews 11:6; John 3:16), repents of his sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30), confesses with the mouth that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (Romans 10:10; Matthew 10:32), and is baptized—buried in water—for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16), then the Lord saves that person and adds him to his church. (Acts 2:47).

5. If you observe the preacher wearing a robe or being called pastor or reverend, you can know that this is not a congregation of the Lord's church. (2 Timothy 3; Titus 1; Psalms 111:9).

6. If the preacher claims to have the baptism of the Holy Spirit, advocates miracles and speaking in tongues for today, you may know that this is some type of Pentecostal church but that it is not the Church of Christ. The word of God completely furnishes man unto every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16, 17). Miracles and speaking in other languages were done in New Testament times but ceased with the coming of the written word. Read 1 Corinthians 13.

These are but a few of the positive and negative marks that will help you to determine whether the church under consideration is the Lord's church. We know that there are many churches in the world. Some are very close to the truth and some are far from it. But it is not

enough to be close to the truth. We must be careful lest we be deceived and become a part of a group which the Lord does not recognize as belonging to him.

We in the Church of Christ are not trying to set ourselves up as being "better than thou." As humans, we either belong to the Lord or we do not. Christ promised to build his church (Matthew 16:18). He did so on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), and He is the head of the church (Colossians 1:18), as well as the saviour of it. (Ephesians 5:23). He died for that church and bought it with his blood. (Acts 20:28). The Lord has only one body or church (Ephesians 4:4; Ephesians 1:22, 23), and He will come back one day to receive that church which wears his name, and to take it to heaven. (Ephesians 5:23-27). So it is very important that we be Christians—members of that church we read about in the Bible, and that we worship faithfully with that church. We must be working also to bring others to the truth.

So when you go into a new area and you are trying to locate the Lord's church, be sure that you make a thorough check, comparing the churches with what the Bible teaches about the church. Only after you are certain that that group is a true congregation of the Lord's church should you become associated with it, worship with it, and become involved in its work. Don't settle for just any conveniently-located group of "believers". That would not be right. Should you not be able to find a congregation of the Lord's church near you then begin to conduct worship in your home and establish the church where you are. May the Lord bless you and help you to be true to him to this and in all things.

Especially For Women

... In the Shaping of the World

BETTY BURTON CHOATE

In earlier years as I looked at problems in the world. I sometimes remarked, "When I get to heaven, I want to tell Eve how I feel about all the wrongs she brought when she disobeyed God and ate the forbidden fruit!" We may feel like making that complaint. The struggle with nature, the pain of child-bearing, the aches of aging, the revenges of death—all of these are then results of that first sin.

But my true inclination is to think of Eve with pity. She probably lived a very long time, since Adam was 930 years old when he died, so

she had many, many years to reflect on the consequences of that one wrong choice. Just think of how Eve must have felt as she and Adam stood hand in hand, driven from the beautiful and safe haven of the Garden, and gazed at the angel with the flaming sword, barring the way to their home. Surrounded by fields and jungles where the growth of thorns and thistles was already marring the productivity. Eve must have cried within her heart, "I did this to the earth!"

When they ran in fear from the animals that had become wild and dangerous, Eve must have realized, "I did this."

Sacrifices were required because of sin, and she saw Adam's pain and sorrow as he raised his knife to take the life of the innocent, wide-eyed sheep. How hot must have been her tears, flowing as the lamb's blood ran red from his throat! How she must have cried, "I did this!"

On the day when Adam first became ill and fear raced through her heart, with what anxiety she must have watched his pain. As she waited, day by day beside his bed, praying for his sickness to leave and for strength to be restored, how she must have agonized in regret, "I did this to my beloved Adam!"

When Cain and Abel were born and grew to be young men, Eve must have grieved continually as she saw Cain's jealousy of his brother. Every word of enmity must have cut her heart with the realization, "I did this," and with what bitter anguish she must have cradled Abel's blood-soaked head when he lay dead in the field, killed by his own brother's hand. What broken cries she must have raised to God, "I did this! I brought sin into the world! Then death has come first to this son I love, not to me—me, who listened to Satan! I did this! I did this!"

No, when I see Eve, I won't say a word of accusation. For many hundreds of years she must have accused herself every day, seeing all the devastation her sin continued to cause.

But if Eve had not disobeyed, someone else would have, and the door would have been opened, allowing sin with all of its consequences to flood into the world. No, we do not have the *guilt* of that first sin, as some people falsely teach, but all people, individually, commit sin day by day. Those sins in our lives bring direct and ultimate consequences, just as Eve experienced.

Yes, we live—year after year—with the *consequences of our sins, our wrong decision*. If we are honest, how many times must we confess as we grieve over problems in our lives or in our children's lives, "I did this. Because I didn't seek God's way, because I didn't teach my children to love God more than all else, because I made wrong choices,

these problems have developed. I did this!"

We can look at Eve and see so clearly how she could have done differently that day in the Garden, and could have avoided the terrible price she and humanity have had to pay. *Can we look at our own lives and see as clearly?*

In What Sense Does Water Baptism Save Us?

BASIL OVERTON

"The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ; who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him." (1 Peter 3:20-22.)

This text says baptism saves us, and it obviously refers to water baptism. Some have said the text says baptism saves us in a figure, or figuratively, but it does not say that! It says baptism saves by the resurrection of Jesus Christ! This obviously means that if Jesus had not been raised from the dead we could not be saved by baptism or by anything else we might do. Paul wrote that our being counted righteous by the Lord depends on our believing that God raised Christ from the dead, "who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification." (Romans 4:24,25.)

IN WHAT SENSE?

In what sense does baptism save? It certainly does not save in the sense that in being baptized the water washes our sins away, because those who are Christians were washed in the blood of Jesus when they became Christians. (Revelation 1:5.) The New Testament teaches that this washing in the blood of Jesus takes place when one is baptized in water!

In 1 Peter 3:20, Peter said eight souls were saved in the ark of Noah by water. These were Mr. and Mrs. Noah, and their three sons and their wives.

These eight were certainly not saved by water from water, but the word of God says they were saved by water. They were saved from water by the ark. (Hebrews 11:7.) But, they were saved from an

exceedingly wicked, sinful world of people by water. (Genesis 6:5.) The water of the flood came between that wicked world and a world cleansed of all those wicked people. This is why Peter said in 1 Peter 3:21 that baptism's saving us is "the like figure" of those eight souls being saved by water.

"The like figure" of 1 Peter 3:21 is from the Greek word *antitupos* which means anti-type. The eight souls being saved by water in the ark was a type. The anti-type of that is our being saved by baptism.

Baptism is the act of faith by which one leaves the world of sin, and enters into a new world in Christ where Christ saves him. (Galatians 3:27; Romans 6:3, 4; 2 Corinthians 5:17.)

Salvation is in Christ. Baptism, when preceded by proper faith, repentance and confession of Christ, is the act by which one gets into Christ where salvation through the blood of Christ is.

All You Need Is Love

DAVID HESTER

Twenty-five years ago, a song was released which summed up the feelings (or so it seemed) of an entire generation of youth. With much fanfare, the Beatles aired the recording live, via satellite, worldwide. The song's title was, "All You Need Is Love." Immediately, people began to use the slogan to justify all manner of behavior. Although the cry was for "love," the reality was quite different.

SOME DESTRUCTIVE ATTITUDES

Those who chose to participate in the rebellious actions of that era were characterized by some specific attitude. First, they demonstrated the attitude of rebellion against authority. Second, they possessed the attitude of rebellion against rules. Third, they had the attitude of selfishness. Finally, they displayed the attitude of disdain for any objective standard.

All of these attitudes were cloaked in the slogan, "All You Need Is Love!" When the time came for some to face authority and questions concerning their behavior, "love" was transformed into hate.

Today, we in the body of Christ face much of the same way of thinking. From this same generation come those who appear to be sweet and loving on the surface, but who in fact are pressing for radical

agendas. Their slogan could be "All You Need Is Love!"

From these individuals we hear speeches against the authority of Scripture. To them, our "traditional" way of looking at the Bible is bad. They virtually say, "Never mind that Paul wrote, . . . not to go beyond what is written." (I Corinthians 4:6, ASV.) We also perceive a bias against the authority of elders. The Bible still says that elders are to be "overseers." (Acts 20:28.) From these men we detect a different mindset about worship. According to them, we must cater to the people's wants; if that includes changing our "traditions," so be it. If we don't change, they say, our people will leave. The World of God, friends, continues to set the standard for worship. Jesus said we must worship "in spirit and in truth." (John 4:24.) Selfishness is not the norm! Finally, we derive a peculiar attitude concerning the truth. Some say the Bible is not a "case law book" by which we may pattern the church. However, Jesus still says, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." (John 17:17.)

THE CHURCH MUST BE A POSITIVE FORCE

In spite of all these troubling ideas, the Lord's church must still be a positive force for good in the world. In fact, the phrase "All You Need Is Love" is good if used in the right way. The Bible is replete with passages concerning the type of love God's children must possess.

First, we must love God supremely. Jesus said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, mind, and strength." (Mark 12:30.) This is an all-encompassing statement! It demands much more than most are willing to give. It demands that we bow our will to God's will.

Second, we must love our fellow-man, Jesus continued, "And the second is like unto it, namely this, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." (Mark 12:31.) This also demands much from God's people, because it implies we care for them. Hear the words of the apostle: "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." (Galatians 6:10.) This take true Christian love!

Third, we must love Christ and his church. Though some would say that we can separate Christ and the church, the truth is, one cannot love Christ without also loving his church! Jesus promised to build his church (Matthew 16:18), and he is its head. (Ephesians 1:22-23.) Consequently, Peter exhorts us to, "love the brotherhood." (I Peter 2:17.) When we love the church, we will of necessity love Christ, and when we love Christ, we must always love the church!

Fourth, we must love the truth. This love is demonstrated in

keeping the commandments. "If ye love me, keep my commandments." (John 14:15.) It is also demonstrated in not tampering with the word. "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." (1 Peter 4:11a.) "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." (Colossians 3:17.) "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine, the same hath both the Father and the Son." (2 John 9.) Truly, if we love the word, we will neither, "turn from it to the right hand or to the left." (Joshua 1:7.)

IT IS NOT EASY!

This love is not easy! It means giving up our cherished notions of how we think things ought to be done. It implies loving the brethren when they are unlovable (isn't that what Jesus did for us?) and caring for their needs. It demands taking stands for truth, with the right spirit, even when those stands may be unpopular. (Ephesians 4:15.) In short, it requires unselfishness! Possibly this may be the hardest thing for some to do of younger generations; it is difficult for all. However, Jesus never promised the way to heaven would be easy; he did say his burden is light. (Matthew 11:30.)

As a member of "Generation X," (the generation after the "baby-boomers,") I am frequently amused by the selfishness often demonstrated by some of those who were of the generation before me. However, I am not amused by the trouble often brought to the church of our Lord by those who claim we need to cater to a certain group of people! Brethren, the gospel is for all men, of all ages, for all time! (Romans 1:16.) When we get about the business of saving lost souls, restoring the erring, and helping those in need, we won't have any time for our selfish wants; we will "be about my Father's business!" (Luke 2:49.) May God help us all to submit ourselves to God and his word, and demonstrate the right love.

Baptism Of The Holy Spirit

MAX R. MILLER

Many errors have long been taught about the baptism in or of the Holy Ghost (Spirit). Consequently, some look for a convulsive, converting working of the Holy Spirit in salvation. Some pray for the

baptism of fire, supposing it to be Holy Ghost baptism. (Matthew 3:11.) Others, believing themselves to have been regenerated, crave God's second work of grace, the sanctifying power of Holy Spirit baptism. Some desire the baptism of the Holy Spirit that they may perform miraculous healing, speak in tongues, and receive divine revelation from God through the Spirit. Such is not the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

A brief Biblical study will result in a clearer, understanding of a matter that has been greatly confused by false teachers.

BAPTISM

The word baptism means to bury, immerse, submerge, to dip as dyaing a garment. Metaphorically it means to overwhelm, as one overcome with sorrow or calamity. The word baptize is a verb, and verbs show action, Baptism is the action of something being immersed, submerged, buried, or overwhelmed in some substance. Jesus said, metaphorically. "But I have a baptism to be baptized with . . . !" (Luke 12:50.) In this he referred to the over-powering agony of Gethsemane where he was overcome in dread and sorrow, anticipating the horror of Golgotha. (Luke 22:44.) Israelites, fleeing Pharaoh and certain destruction, "were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." (1 Corinthians 10:2.) Peter, in the house of Cornelius, asked, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized . . . ?" (Acts 10:47.) In one case baptism was overwhelming agony, as with Jesus in Gethsemane; in another, Israel under the power of Moses, the cloud, and the Red Sea; with Cornelius and his house it was baptism by burial in water. Paul said, "We are buried with him (Christ) by baptism." (Romans 6:4.)

APOSTLES BAPTIZED IN THE HOLY GHOST

Jesus, facing Calvary, knew he would soon depart from his apostles. Before his going he would "pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you." (John 14:16.) The Comforter would teach and guide them into all truth. (John 16:13.) After Christ's resurrection he continued with the apostles for forty days, further instructing them in things pertaining to the coming kingdom of God. On the last day of his earthly existence he again spoke of the coming of the Comforter previously identified as the Spirit of Truth, or the Holy Spirit. (John 14:26, 16:13.) Jesus instructed his apostles to wait in the city of Jerusalem "for the promise of the Father" and that they were to "be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." They

were to "receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." That power would fully qualify them for their worldwide mission of preaching the gospel of salvation to every creature under heaven. (Acts 1:1-8.)

Ten days later, on the day of Pentecost, power came upon the apostles at Jerusalem, and they "began to speak with other tongues (languages) as the Spirit gave them utterance." (Acts 2:1-4.) (The antecedents of the pronouns in Acts 1:26 and 2:1-4 determine that only the apostles received Holy Ghost baptism.) The Christian dispensation was inaugurated by the apostles being baptized in the Holy Spirit. Peter identified the miraculous events of that Pentecost day as the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy whereby he spoke of the coming power of the Holy Spirit and of salvation to all who would call on the name of the Lord. (Acts 2:16-21; Joel 2:28-32.)

HOUSEHOLD OF CORNELIUS BAPTIZED IN THE HOLY GHOST

The second instance of Holy Spirit baptism occurred in the house of the Gentile Cornelius. (Acts 10, 11, alluded to in Acts 15.) As Peter began to speak at this gathering, "the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word." Those with Peter, and likely Peter himself, were astonished "because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts 10:44, 45.) Peter identified this event with that of Pentecost when the apostles received the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Later, relating the event, he said, "And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning." (Acts 11:15.)

Luke, author of the book of Acts, records other activities of the Holy Spirit, but he never reported another case of Holy Spirit baptism (nor did any other writer). There are only two baptisms of the Holy Spirit recorded in Holy Scripture.

PURPOSE OF HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM

The baptism of the apostles in the Holy Spirit was for one specific purpose; that of Cornelius for another purpose. There are similarities in the two cases. Both the apostles and Cornelius were baptized in the Holy Ghost, that is, they were overwhelmed by his possessive power, and to them certain endowments of the Spirit were given. The apostles and those of the house of Cornelius all spoke in tongues (languages not acquired by study). So ends the similarity.

There was a different purpose in the baptism of the apostles than that of Cornelius. The apostles were baptized to qualify them as perfect witnesses of Jesus Christ. (Acts 1:8.) The Spirit "shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you—he will guide you into all truth . . . he will shew you things to come—for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." (John 14:26, 16:13, 14.) In brief, the Spirit communicated divine revelation to the apostles in words which they in turn revealed to man to the saving of the soul. (1 Corinthians 2:9-16; Ephesians 3:4, 5.) The apostles were endowed with the power of the Holy Spirit that enabled them to preach revelations of truth and salvation and give divine confirmation to their message by miraculous acts. (Mark 16:17; Hebrews 2:3, 4.)

There was an altogether different purpose in the baptism of Cornelius and his household. The purpose there was to convince the Jews that the gospel was to be preached to the Gentiles; that they too were "ordained to eternal life." (Acts 13:48; Galatians 3:8.) Christ had commanded the apostles to preach the gospel to every creature. (Matthew 28:19.) Ethnically prejudiced apostles had limited their preaching to Jews only. Miraculous divine intervention was necessary to bring the saving gospel to every creature. (Acts 10, 11.)

Peter, after his housetop experience and at the invitation of Cornelius' servants, with six witnesses of Jewish heritage, left Joppa to go to the house of Cornelius to tell them words whereby he and all his house could be saved. (Acts 11:14.) When Peter saw the power of the Spirit in Cornelius house, he later stated, "Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost." (Acts 11:16.)

The Spirit's actions in the house of Cornelius reminded Peter of the like situation of the apostles' baptism in the Holy Ghost at Pentecost. Concerning this momentous event, "they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts 10:45.) This was convincing to the Jews as they later gathered in Jerusalem to consider receiving the Gentiles into the heretofore exclusive Jewish church. "When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life!" (Acts 11:18.)

The purpose of Holy Spirit baptism in the house of Cornelius was not to qualify them as apostles among the Gentiles. They benefitted in that the Jews, through these miraculous events, came to the realization that it was God's purpose that the Gentiles were to have the gospel of

salvation preached to them. There was to be no distinction between Jew and Gentile in the kingdom of Christ. (Galatians 3:28.)

Briefly, the purpose of Holy Spirit baptism in the house of Cornelius was to break down prevailing strong social-ethnic-religious barriers between Jews and Gentiles which prevented the gospel being preached to the Gentile world.

God had a purpose in both cases of Holy Spirit baptism, and his purpose was served to perfection. By the apostles' receiving the baptism of the Holy Ghost they were enabled to teach and preach the truth as it was revealed to them by the Holy Ghost. By that impartation of the power of the Spirit they were able to confirm their revelations by miracles, signs, and wonders. (Acts 1:8.) As a result the gospel "was preached to every creature which is under heaven" within a short span of years. (Colossians 1:23.)

The Gentile world was greatly benefitted in the case of Cornelius' baptism. His household did not receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit to save them, or to reveal truth to them. Its purpose was to convince the Jews that it was God's will that the gospel of salvation be preached to the Gentile world as well as to the world of the Jews.

It's Great To Serve

TOM KELTON

The role of a servant is not one most people seek. Serving seems automatically to put one on a lower level than those being served.

But, according to Paul, being a servant is the ideal for the Christian. In Philippians 2:3-4, he wrote, "Do nothing from selfishness or conceit, but in humility count others better than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others."

Often we do what we do to advance ourselves. Sometimes our service is performed for the purely selfish reason that it will give us a foothold one rung higher up the ladder of success.

Our desire for personal prestige is sometimes an even stronger motivation than our desire for wealth. It means a great deal to us to be admired, respected, and esteemed. We like to be known by name, and we take pride in being sought after for advice. We want others to know how important we are.

When we are bent on excelling, surpassing, conquering, or defeating others, we put ourselves in competition with everyone else.

Even the disciples were not immune to this temptation. There was keen competition among them. When they argued who was the greatest, Jesus said, "Whoever would be great among you must be your servant." But what Jesus said seemed to them to be completely upside down. Even after three years of close association with the Master, the disciples still found this strange teaching difficult to understand.

Eventually Paul did speak before royalty. But first he made several missionary journeys. He was in many prisons and suffered the pain of beatings; his persecutors stoned him. He constantly faced threats of death. It was after many years of service that he finally appeared before King Agrippa, and later went to Rome itself.

I haven't always been able to look at circumstances and say, "This is the way the Lord has led me." but I'm learning. I'm at least learning that my spiritual growth isn't always in one predictable direction.

It's not a matter of climbing one spiritual mountain after another. In between mountain peaks we encounter pitfalls, detours, backtracking, rerouting. We may not be able to get there from here—at least not directly—but we can know, even if we have to go three or four other places first, we will eventually reach our destination.

Strange Things Heard About Baptism

DALTON KEY

The subject of baptism is treated frequently within the pages of the New Testament, and always with candor and clarity. Few biblical themes appear so difficult to misunderstand as the matter of baptism. And yet strange things continue to be heard, such as the following.

1. "You were baptized in your way. I was baptized in my way. What difference does it make? After all, one baptism is just as good as another!"

If this is true, what difference is there between biblical baptism and a playful duck in the swimming hole? Why were "certain disciples" baptized again in Acts 19:1-5? And does the Bible mean what it says when it affirms in Ephesians 4:5, "There is one baptism?"

2. "Baptism merely confirms the fact that I have already been saved by faith only."

Notice the words of the inspired apostle Peter, taken from 1 Peter

3:21, "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us." In the many examples of conversion found within the New Testament, baptism is never mentioned as a mere incidental and is never shown to follow salvation. It is rather presented as essential for the salvation process.

3. "I just don't understand how water can wash away sins."

Indeed, water, even the water of baptism, has no power to wash sins away. Only the blood of Jesus Christ has this power. (Revelation 1:5.) And yet we come into contact with this cleansing blood in baptism. This is why Ananias could exhort Saul, "And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22:16.) If sins are not washed away during the act of baptism, what meaning can be understood from this clear command of scripture?

4. "I don't believe we have to understand the 'why' behind baptism. I was not baptized to have my sins washed away, but I was baptized to please God, and that should be enough to satisfy anyone."

Must one understand that baptism is a part of the salvation process for his baptism to be valid before heaven? Scan the New Testament. Search it out. Study it carefully. You will find no evidence of anyone baptized correctly, revealing a misunderstanding concerning baptism and salvation. The Ethiopian man in Acts, chapter eight requested baptism. After his baptism, and not before, he "went on his way rejoicing."

On the day of Pentecost, as recorded in Acts, chapter two, an anxious mob asked Peter and the other apostles, "What shall we do?" Their hearts having been pricked by the gospel and their need for divine forgiveness being keenly realized by them, they were instructed, "Repent, and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." (Acts 2:38.) Think for just a moment. Can one be saved from sin without knowing it? Can one think he is saved (by faith alone) and yet not be saved, but then be baptized later for some purpose other than salvation (perhaps to join a denomination) and end up saved anyway—almost by accident, at least so far as his understanding of the process is concerned? We need to understand the relationship between baptism and forgiveness.

5. "I know baptism is necessary for salvation, but I think I'll wait awhile before I am baptized."

With salvation from sin hanging in the balance, with everything to gain and nothing whatever to lose, with heaven calling and friends

praying—why wait? In the words of scripture, “And now why tarriest thou?”

“These Were For Our Example”

CLEM THURMAN

One of the greatest of stories is that of Israel, in bondage in Egypt, being brought out to freedom under the leadership of Moses. The people were reluctant, and when they saw the Egyptian army in pursuit before they even crossed the Red Sea, they asked accusingly, *“Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness?”* (Ex. 14:11). Moses replied, *“Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will show to you today”* (v. 12). The parting of the Red Sea that permitted Israel to escape, the swallowing up of the Egyptian army in the same sea—this and many other miracles should have been enough to convince them that God was with Moses, and with them. But, *“They soon forgot his works, they waited not for his counsel; but lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert”* (Psa. 106:13-14).

After they were delivered, Israel rejoined with that great song of deliverance. (Ex. 15:1-21). The next six verses show how soon they forgot. They got thirsty, and complained. God miraculously provided water for them. Then they complained about hunger, so God provided food in the form of *“manna”* and quail (Ex. 16:1-15). But that didn't stop their complaints. It just seems that at every problem, every hardship, every obstacle, the people complained against Moses and against God. When God provided water from a rock, they still murmured and complained (Ex. 17). When they heard of giants and armies and fortified cities in the land which God had promised, they even wanted to go back into slavery in Egypt! *“Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt. . . And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return unto Egypt”*. Finally, God's patience was at an end. He said, *“They shall not see the land which I swore unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it . . . your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness”* (Num. 14:23, 29).

The apostle Paul wrote latter of these and other such events in Israel: *“Howbeit with most of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we shall not lust after evil things as they also*

lusted . . . Neither murmur ye, as some of them murmured, and perished by the destroyer. Now these things happened unto them by way of example; and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come" (1 Cor. 10:5-11). What they did, and how God dealt with them, are important lessons for us. *"These things were for our example."* There are four definite lessons that we need to learn from God's dealings with Israel.

1. GOD NEVER TAKES MAN'S SINS LIGHTLY

Israel probably felt as I have heard many people express it, "Well, I have a right to complain." But they didn't. Their complaining and griping was wrong, it was sin. When God *"Created man in his own image"* (Gen. 1:27), it was that man might *"glorify God"* (Eph. 3:20). But it wasn't long until man sinned (Adam & Eve, Gen. 3), and sinned (Cain, Gen. 4). In fact, before very long, *"The imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart"* (Gen. 6:5-6). We need to understand that the nature of God is to hate sin! We may sometimes pass lightly over sins, but God doesn't.

When Adam and Eve sinned, God drove them out of the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3). When Cain killed Abel, God banished him (Gen. 4). The prophet wrote later. *"Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you that he will not hear"* (Isa. 59:2). The point is, God will not dwell where sin is nor will He allow sin to dwell where He is. Why not? Because God hates sin. *"Thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee . . . thou hatest all workers of iniquity"* (Psa. 5:4-5). God declared, *"I hate every false way"* (Psa. 119:128), and the psalmist writes, *"Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness"* (Psa. 45:7).

The fire that fell from heaven to consume the Sodomites (Gen. 19) speaks eloquently of God's hatred for sin. The apostle John writes, *"God is light, in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth"* (1 Jno. 1:5-6). For those made in His image to walk in darkness grieves God today, just as in Noah's day or the time of Sodom. Israel should have known that, but maybe they thought God would just overlook it. He didn't.

2. GOD WANTS ALL MEN TO OBEY HIM

If someone were to ask your purpose on earth, what would you reply? Solomon searched for the answer to that question, and recorded

it in the book of Ecclesiastes. After showing that wisdom, wealth, work and pleasure didn't really answer man's basic need. Solomon wrote, "*Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter. Fear God, and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man*" (Eccle. 12:13). That is what I am here for, to "*keep his commandments.*" If I miss that, I miss the purpose for which God gave me life. God created man "*that he should seek after God*" (Acts 17:27) by doing the will of God.

Saul, king of Israel, was told by the Lord to battle the Amalekites and destroy them. God was clear: "*Utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass*" (1 Sam. 15:3). But Saul tried to improve on God's plan. He spared King Agag, and he brought back the best of the animals to offer as sacrifice to God (v. 15). God answered by the prophet, "*Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice; and to hearken, than the fat of rams*" (v. 22). If we would please God, it must be on His terms and not ours. That means doing what He wants in the way He wants it done—whether or not we like it, or even understand it.

Peter writes, "*Seeing ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth*" (1 Pet. 1:22). And in Heb. 5:9 we are told that Jesus "*is the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.*" Did you know that you can search the Bible from beginning to end without even finding one blessing for the disobedient? Every promised blessing is predicated on our doing what the Lord said. Jesus still asks, "*Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?*" (Lk. 6:46).

3. GOD REWARDS THOSE WHO OBEY HIM

When Israel did what God told them, God took care of them and blessed them. That was the promise, and God kept His promise. The faith that God rewards is described in Heb. 11:6, "*Without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him.*" Notice the two parts to that faith. The first is to "*believe that he is.*" That means believing in the existence of God, that He lives, that He is our Maker. The second part is quite often overlooked: "*believe . . . that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him.*" God rewards! But who does He reward? "*Them that seek after him.*" How do we do that? Abel "*by faith . . . offered a sacrifice*" (Heb. 11:4). Noah "*by faith . . . prepared an ark*" (v. 7). Abraham "*by faith . . . when he was called, obeyed to go*" (v. 8). God rewards those who "*seek after him*" by doing what He tells them (Heb. 11:4-8).

Israel should have known. The record of Abel and Noah was available to them. Their great-great-grandfather Abraham had certainly set a pattern for them to learn. In their own lives, it was evident that God rewarded them when they did His will; He punished them when they disobeyed. Why was that difficult to learn? And why is it so difficult for so many to learn today? Jesus warns, *"Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven"* (Matt. 7:13-14). The principle is clear, and found throughout the Bible: God rewards those who do what He says! That hasn't changed, and it won't. Some may argue about whether or not we have to fully obey. But one who really believes the Lord doesn't question that.

4. GOD'S PATIENCE WITH SINNERS IS LIMITED

God *"so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son"* (Jno. 3:16). He still wants man to be saved: *"But is long suffering to you-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance"* (2 Pet. 3:9). The truth, from Genesis through Revelation, is that *"God wants all men to be saved"* (1 Tim. 2:4). But we need to understand that God's patience is limited. He will not always allow wickedness to continue, but will destroy those who are determined to continue in sin. In the wanderings of Israel, they often sinned against God. But God still kept them, provided for them, led them. Until finally, they one time went too far (Num 13 & 14). Then the sentence came: *"How long shall I bear with this evil generation, which murmur against me? . . . Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness"* (Num. 14:27:29). When God had enough, He quit putting up with their rebellion, and they died in the wilderness.

God's eternal principles are still at work today. God is still "long suffering not willing that any should perish" (2 Pet. 3:9). But one day His long suffering will end, and the sinner will be called to account. Israel found that out, and we had better learn it: *"Now these things were for our examples . . . they are written for our admonition"* (1 Cor. 10:6, 11). Israel wasn't warned, "Just three more sins, then you'll be punished." They had no warning that God's patience was coming to an end. Nor will we. *"Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation"* (2 Cor. 6:2).

There are great lessons that Israel can teach us. God never takes sin lightly. He expects obedience and rewards those who do what He tells them. And, even though God is long suffering, His patience will one day end and each sinner will then suffer the consequences of his

actions. "These things are written for our example" (1 Cor. 10). Let's learn from Israel, so that we don't have to learn from our own eternally fatal mistake.

Predestination Of The Lord's Church

STEVE HIGGINBOTHAM

The Bible doctrine of predestination in relation to the church is one of the most glorious and comforting doctrines contained within the Bible. However, many fail to find comfort from this Bible doctrine due to the abuses that have surrounded the doctrine of predestination.

Predestination is a term that suggests that from eternity, God chose, elected, or pre-determined, who would be saved and who would be lost. With this definition, none should take offense, for this is exactly what the Holy Spirit revealed in Ephesians 1:3-6. However, it is at this point that I feel that we should make note of a common abuse of this Bible doctrine.

In the 1500's, John Calvin proposed that predestination was "INDIVIDUAL" rather than "CORPORATE." In other words, Calvin taught that God chose "particular individuals," before the foundation of the world, to either be saved eternally in Heaven or be lost eternally in Hell. Thus man's eternal destiny was completely in God's hand. As Calvin saw it, before we ever had a chance to live our lives, God had already determined our eternal destiny, and there is nothing that we can do to change it.

Such a view of predestination is contrary to the teachings of the Bible. It undermines the necessity of obedience (Hebrews 5:8-9), for if God has already determined where I will spend eternity, and what I do in my life cannot change his decree, why concern myself with obedience? It thwarts the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20), for if God has already determined who is going to be saved, and that cannot be changed, then why inconvenience myself by going to preach the gospel in far away lands. It makes Jesus a bit sadistic (Matthew 11:28-30), for Jesus offered or "dangled" eternal rest unto "all" men, knowing full well that all men could not have it. And it makes God an unjust respecter of persons (Acts 10:34), for it would have God accepting and rejecting

people (pre-judging them) before they had a chance to live their lives.

If, Calvinistic predestination is an incorrect view of this Bible doctrine, what is the Bible doctrine of predestination? In an effort to answer this question, I believe that the following illustration may be helpful.

If prior to the beginning of the school year, a teacher looks at the list of those who are going to be her students, and then arbitrarily assigns them a grade, passing some and failing others, without giving the students a chance to prove themselves, would this teacher be considered just and fair? Of course not. But this is essentially Calvinistic predestination.

But there is another model to examine. Suppose a teacher, prior to the beginning of the school year, predetermines that all students whose average is within 90 percent to 100 percent will receive an "A," and those students whose average is 50 percent or below will receive an "F." Is this fair and just? Certainly it is. This is essentially the Biblical doctrine of predestination.

God did not predetermine that certain "INDIVIDUALS" would be saved or lost, but he did predetermine that a certain "CLASS" of people would be saved or lost.

Thus, we come to the point of this article. The "CLASS" of people that God has predetermined to be saved eternally is the church. And the "CLASS" of people that God has predetermined to be lost eternally is all who are outside the church. This is what the Bible teaches concerning the subject of predestination. And this is in complete harmony with the passages dealing with this subject. Notice the following.

"Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will." (Ephesians 1:4-5.) In the above passage we are clearly told that we were predestined to be sons of God. But where did God predestine us? He predestined us "in Him" or in Christ. Those who are in Christ have been predestined to be sons of God. In other words, before the foundation of the world, God predetermined who His sons would be; those in Christ or in His church.

Hopefully, we can see now more clearly, the importance of the church. When one fails to become a member of the church for which Jesus died, he has rejected salvation and is predestined to spend eternity separated from God. On the other hand, those who become

members of the Lord's church have been predestined to become the sons of God.

Surely, this should give those who are faithful members of the Lord's church confidence and security about their relationship with God. Just as the student whose efforts place him in the predetermined range for an "A" can have confidence and security of receiving the promised reward, a person who has placed himself in, and faithfully keeps himself in the predetermined class of saved individuals (the church) can have confidence and security of receiving his promised reward.

The question concerning the doctrine of predestination should not be, "Does God predestine certain individuals to be saved?," or "Does God choose certain individuals to salvation?," or "Does God elect certain individuals to salvation?" for the Bible tells us that He does:

"Having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will." (Ephesians 1:5.)

"Jesus as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love." (Ephesians 1:4.)

"Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies." (Romans 8:33.)

But the question that we need to be asking is, "Whom does God predestine?," or "Whom does God choose?," or "Whom does God elect?" The answer to which is, "those who are in Him" or those who are in the church.

God has predestined that those who are faithful members of the body of Christ, the church, will be heirs of salvation. (Ephesians 3:6.) About this, there can be no change. God predetermined this before the foundation of the world. (Ephesians 1:4-5.) But God did not predetermine whether or not you will be a member of the church. That is totally your choice. It is entirely up to you to decide whether you want to be a part of those who are predestined for Heaven, or those who are predestined for Torment? It is in regard to this monumental decision that Jesus said the following.

"Come unto Me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." (Matthew 11:28-30.)