

# THE BIBLE TEACHER

*Pleading for the restoration of pure New Testament Christianity.*

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## The Cost of Discipleship

Becoming a Christian is not so difficult. All one has to do for becoming a Christian is believe in Christ, and repent of sins and be baptized for the remission of sins. (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). The difficult thing, however, is to live the Christian life, and for this reason many go back into the world. Christian life, in fact, is the most challenging life. When Christ was on earth many were attracted to Him by seeing His mighty works and became His disciples, but when they heard what Christ demanded from them for being His disciples, they were discouraged and the Bible says, "From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more." (John 6:66). Not all who profess to be Christian will be able to qualify for receiving the crown of life, because Christ promised, "Be faithful until death," then, "I will give you the crown of life." (Revelation 2:10). No doubt, the Christian life is the most rewarding life, because there is the forgiveness of sins, the hope of eternal life in heaven in it. Also, there are wonderful promises which God has made to Christians only, such as, His providential care, His listening of prayers, making all things to work together for the good of Christian. But all these promises are for those who love God and do what He says. (Matthew 7:21; Romans 8:28).

Notice, what Christ says to them who would want to become His followers: "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me." (Luke 9:23). First He says, "If anyone". The invitation is for all. Whoever believes in Him. (John 3:16). Christ didn't die on the cross for a certain number or group of people, but He died for the whole world. Anyone can come to Him for salvation that He offers. Then He says, "If anyone desires." Before coming to Christ there must be the desire to come to Him. We read about Zacchaeus in the Bible, he had a strong desire to see who Jesus was. When he heard Jesus was going to pass through a certain way, he decided to see Jesus. But he could not see Him because of the crowd, for he was of short stature. The scripture says, "So he ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him, for He was going to pass through that way. And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and saw him, and said to him, Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house." And when Jesus was at Zacchaeus' house, Zacchaeus said, "Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor, and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold." (Luke 19:3-5,8). Not only Zacchaeus believed in Jesus but he was ready to change his life and was willing to pay the price for becoming a follower of Christ. He didn't have only the desire, but he was ready to do whatever the Lord would have him do.

There was another man, however, who desired to have the eternal life, but he was not willing to pay the cost. We read about him in Mark chapter 10. He came running, and knelt before Jesus, and asked, "Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit the eternal life?" He was a man of many good qualities. But the Lord said to him, "One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me." What did he do? The scripture tells us that "he was sad at this word and went away grieved, for he had great possessions." (Mark 10:17, 21, 22). Here we see that he desired to have the eternal life in heaven, but he was not willing to pay the price. It is good to desire. But Christ said, many will desire

but will not be able to enter heaven, because they are not ready to pay the cost. (Luke 13:24).

Then, again, the Lord said, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself." One must be willing to deny himself, that is, one must be willing to put himself behind the Lord. Must be willing to say, not as I will, but as You will. Denying one's self is the most important, yet the most difficult part of Christianity. When one denies himself then he put the Lord first in everything. He wants to do every thing for His glory only, and he wants to do only those things with which the Lord would be pleased. Christ made it plain when He said, "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me." (Matthew 10:37). For a Christian there is no choice left when it comes to doing the will of the Lord. His choice was made the day he accepted the invitation of the Lord to come after him. The Lord must have the first place in every thing in a Christian's life. Again, we notice, the Lord said, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily..." No one should come after the Lord if he is not willing to take up his cross daily. Christianity is the religion of the cross. The Lord is not asking here one to take up a cross of wood, or mettal, or stone, but the cross is the symbol of suffering, self-denial, obedience, and sacrifice. The Lord is saying that if one wants to come after Me then he should be willing to suffer for me daily, and should be willing to deny himself daily, and should be willing to do daily whatever the Father's will is, and should be willing to sacrifice himself daily. Some have made Christianity only a Sunday religion. But Christianity, in fact, is a daily religion. Hear once again what Jesus said, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me."

Here, now, notice the last words, "follow Me." If we are going to follow the Lord, then we must follow Him alone. If we are going to follow the Lord, Then we should not follow any man, and we should not follow our conscience. I am afraid, too many are following their church's doctrines today, rather than the Lord.

If it was not so, then why there prevail so many conflicting and confusing doctrines? Or have you ever wondered why there is so much division in Christianity today? Is it not because people have been following men and their teaching? Let's hear the Lord, Let us come to Him with denying ourselves, and let us take up our cross daily, and follow Him. But, if we are not willing to do so, then we are certainly heading in a wrong direction. (Matthew 7:13, 14).

## Will Christ Find Faith On The Earth When He Comes?

J.C. Choate

On one occasion Christ asked the question, "Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8). This is a good question, and on the basis of what the scriptures teach, we want to try to answer it at this time.

With the world being as wicked as it is, and with so much religious error, we may wonder if Christ actually will find any believers on His return. Could it be that the thing that will bring Him back will be the cessation of faith on the earth? Or, it may not be that there will no longer be any one on earth to represent him, but simply that the number has become so small that the Lord can no longer tolerate things going on as they are. We remember that when Sodom and Gomorrah had become so wicked that not even ten righteous people could be found, God made a decision to destroy them. (Genesis 18 and 19).

As we well know, many have jumped to conclusions about the matter of the Lord's return. They have assumed many things that the Bible does not teach. We do not want to make that mistake, but we can definitely know several things about his coming and we want to consider some of those at this point.

First, Christ is coming again. He has promised that he will. He said that if he went away, he would return. (John 14:1-3). We

know that he did go away, and based on the promise he made and the confidence we have in the faithfulness of his promise, we believe that he will come again. Many other scriptures also confirm the fact that Christ will come again.

Second, although we have his word that he will come again, there is no indication that he will ever set foot on this earth again. Even in Luke 18:8 the question concerns faith on the earth at his return, not that He will come back to the earth itself. We must understand that Christ can indeed come without coming to the earth. After the Lord's ascension to the Father in Heaven, two men robed in white appeared and asked those standing there, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus which is taken up into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven". (Acts 1:11). The emphasis here was not on the literal earth, but that Christ would come as he went away. He was taken up into heaven in the clouds and he will come in the clouds some day.

Probably the majority of believers in Christ think that he will one day return to this physical earth to reign in the literal city of Jerusalem for one thousand years. They say that during that time, the righteous will reign with him while the wicked will be put down. All of this comes from man's imagination.

What would be the purpose in the Lord returning to the earth? The scriptures show that when Christ comes it will be to receive his people and to take them to heaven, not to reign with them here on the earth. Furthermore, at his coming, the earth, heavens, and all things therein shall be burned up. Peter declared, "But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men . . . But the *day* of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; *in the which* the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." (2 Peter 3:7, 10). From these verses we see that when Christ comes, the heavens and the earth shall be destroyed. This means that Jerusalem will also be burned up, and that neither He nor His

followers will reign over a physical kingdom in this world. Actually, He reigns now (Revelation 1:5) and Revelation 1:6 says that Christians are already reigning with Him as priests and kings.

Third, although we know that Christ will return, we have no way of knowing when it will happen. Christ said concerning these matters, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." (Matthew 24:36). There has been much speculation as to the time of the Lord's return, but if the angels do not know, and if even Christ himself does not know, but only God knows of that day and hour, then how would you and I or any other human being have access to this information? Is it possible for any one to study the scriptures and to gather all of the clues and bits of information that would make it possible for him to solve this problem as to the time of the coming of our Lord? Surely not.

Fourth, we are told that Christ will come at an unannounced time (2 Peter 3:10), that he will come in the clouds (1 Thessalonians 4:17), and that he will come to take vengeance on those who know not God and obey not the gospel. (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9). At the same time there will be a general resurrection (John 5:28, 29), and the Lord will send his angels to gather out of his kingdom or church all of those who offend and do iniquity. (Matthew 13:41). And finally, all will be judged by the Lord according to his word. (John 12:48; 2 Corinthians 5:10), and the righteous will go away to be with the Lord forevermore but the evil will be cast into the lake of fire for eternity. (Matthew 25:46).

Fifth, and last, please notice some other things that will take place at the time of the Lord's second coming. The Apostle Paul, in speaking to Christians, said, "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For

the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words". (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

In this statement alone, several truths emerge. First, Christ will come again. Second, he will come from heaven and those who meet him will meet him in the clouds, not on earth. Third, those who are in Christ, that is, the faithful, will be resurrected from their graves first; and fourth, those who are alive when the Lord returns will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air and there they shall ever be with him.

In answer to the question then, "Will Christ find faith on the earth when he comes?", would be a definite yes. How many faithful Christians will be living on the earth at that time, we have no way of knowing. That number might be many as far as we are concerned, but of the Lord, in comparison to all of the wicked, that number will be so small that it will cause the Father to send his Son back to gather his people, his kingdom, that it might be delivered up to God.

Dear reader, what about you? Are you a Christian? Are you a faithful child of God? When the Lord comes will he find you among the faithful dead, or the faithful few who are alive on the earth? When that time comes, it will mark the end of things as we know them now. Only the righteous will be saved while the wicked will be cast into eternal hell. There will be no time to repent and to obey God in that last day. Now is the time to take heed to God's will and to make adequate preparations. We pray that you will.

## The Bible's Claim To Inspiration

Shelby G. Floyd

The Bible is the product of forty men, living over a period of

1600 years. They spoke different languages, lived in different countries, and were familiar with different cultures; and yet, when all their writings were brought together, and compiled into one book, which we call the Holy Bible, there is absolute unity and harmony upon the great theme which interests all mankind, that is, redemption from sin. Could it have been otherwise, apart from divine inspiration?

Could forty men, living in different countries, speaking different languages, and over a period of 1600 years all make a part for a great machine? And when those parts would be brought together that machine would be put together perfectly, and work in harmony to create a useful product? Obviously, such could not be done unless men were miraculously guided in their plans.

Could forty different men, living in different countries, speaking different languages, and living in a period of 1600 years, each one write a musical composition, and when all those musical compositions would later be gathered together, it would all unite into one grand symphony? Obviously, such could not be done. Neither could forty men have written the Bible unless they were guided by divine inspiration. But this is exactly what the writers of the Old Testament, as well as the New Testament, claim for themselves.

### **The Old Testament Writers**

#### **CLAIMED FOR THEMSELVES DIVINE INSPIRATION**

Let us notice just a few examples. After Moses was fully qualified, by education and training, God called him to deliver his people out of Egyptian bondage. But Moses made excuses, like many people do today, when God asks them to do something. Moses replied that he was not an eloquent man, or a man of words. He stated, "I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue." The Lord replied to his excuses by saying, "Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the Lord? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say." (Ex. 4:11-12). Obviously when the Lord promised to be with Moses' mouth, and



teach him what to say, this indicates that Moses would receive divine revelation and verbal inspiration. It can mean nothing else.

David has been called the royal bard of Israel, a man truly after God's own heart. Among the very last words that David, King of Israel, spoke were words claiming divine inspiration for his writings. "Now these be the last words of David. David the son of Jesse said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said, The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue." (II Sam. 23:1-2). Again, these words obviously mean that David was guided by the Holy Spirit, and that his words were the words of God.

Jeremiah, the weeping prophet, was commanded of God to go and to speak to his people, and to warn them of the error of their ways. But Jeremiah felt like he was a child, and therefore, not qualified to do God's bidding. "But the Lord said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord. Then the Lord put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the Lord said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth." (Jer. 1:7-9). Since the Lord promised to put his word in Jeremiah's mouth, then obviously the words which are credited to Jeremiah are the words of God, and not merely the words of Jeremiah. Jeremiah was verbally inspired in his pronouncements to the people of Israel.

In the book of Nehemiah, we have two verses which affirm verbal inspiration for the writers of the Old Testament. Nehemiah claimed that God gave his good spirit in order to instruct his people. (Neh. 9:20). Then later in the chapter, Nehemiah said, "Yet many years didst thou forbear them, and testifiedst against them by thy spirit in thy prophets: yet would they not give ear: therefore gavest thou them into the hand of the people of the lands." (Neh. 9:30).

The word prophet means not only a foreteller, but a forth-teller, one who speaks for God. The words of the prophets were the words of God because God had testified against the people by his spirit which was in the prophets. Therefore, the words of the prophets were the words of the Holy Spirit who guided and superintended their speech and their writing. The writers of the Old Testament obviously claimed for themselves divine inspiration.

## The Theme Of Revelation

Steve Williams

The theme of the book of Revelation is that good will be victorious in the end (Rev. 11:15). Revelation gives us a philosophy of history to live by, even in times of distress and hardship. It gives us an impetus to continue forward for the Lord. This theme is embodied in a beautiful piece of poetry by James Russell Lowell entitled "The Present Crisis." This poem was written in 1844 to protest slavery and was used eloquently by my teacher on Revelation, W.B. West, on many occasions.

Once to every man and nation  
comes the moment to decide,  
In the strife of Truth and Falsehood,  
for the good or evil side;...  
Though the cause of Evil prosper,  
yet 't is Truth alone is strong,  
And, albeit she wander outcast now,  
I see around her throng  
Troops of beautiful, tall angels,  
to enshield her from all wrong...  
Truth forever on the scaffold,  
Wrong forever on the throne,—  
Yet that scaffold sways the future,  
and, behind the dim unknown,  
Standeth God within the shadow  
keeping watch above his own.

Similar to this are the words of Bryant's "The Battle-Field":

Truth, crushed to earth, shall rise again;  
The ternal years of God are hers;  
But Error, wounded, writhes in pain,  
And dies among his worshippers.

## "He Knoweth Not The Way To The City"

Dillard Thurman

It happened again this week! A pickup pulling a horse trailer left the upper level on the downtown I-30 Mixmaster, plunging onto the third level below! The passengers lived, even though hospitalized. The wreck occurred because a driver was confused as to where he was going and failed to heed the traffic signs! Wrecks litter the highways because travelers don't know where they are going, or how to enter the city they desire to visit. Road signs and traffic lights have been installed to guide and direct, yet many fail to read or understand! In the words of the Wise Man, "*And the labour of the foolish wearieth every one of them, because he knoweth not the way to the city.*" (Eccl. 10:15). Lives are endangered, and confusion reigns on our Freeways and Cloverleaf Interchanges: all because many folk are bewildered, and don't know the way to the city!

### Travel Life's Road to God's City!

Blessed is that man who knows where he is going, and just how he will travel to get there! There is not a city in this old world that can guarantee us happiness, wellbeing and security! Their glitter and sparkle, and tinsel-draped flare does not assure peace and contentment! The "Great White Way" of Broadway has been the spawning ground of more broken homes, blasted dreams and ruined lives than any other place on earth. "Fun City" doesn't offer true enjoyment! Yet there is a wonderful city, far removed from earthly care and disappointment, which beckons the weary

pilgrims of earth! However, many are not aware of their need to enter; and they "*Know not the way to the city*". They must be told how they can reach that goal!

That wonderful city of God was the object of Abraham's search in the long ago! "*For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.*" (Heb. 11:10). Abraham, Isaac and Jacob lived in hope of entering, but died outside! "*These all died in faith, not having received the promises . . . But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.*" (Heb. 11:13, 16). How fortunate we are in our generation, for these things have been reserved for us! "*And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.*" (Heb. 11:39-40). They await us over there!

### Christ Shows the Way to the City!

The wonderful city of God was presented by Jesus in the words: "*In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. 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. 14:2-4). Since Jesus will be there, we know we will find rest, peace and contentment in that heavenly home! Even now our Lord and Saviour is preparing those mansions for all who will come to that city of God!

There is no detailed description given in divine revelation of that city of God, the home of the soul! Paul was caught up into the third heaven and saw things unlawful for him to utter, but said, "*For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*" And also, "*For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better*". (Phil. 1:21, 23). Then, the beloved apostle, John, was permitted to see it, and gave a partial description: "*And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them, and*

*they shall be his people, and God himself shall be their God.*" (Rev. 21:2-3). Then there follows the sweetest picture ever painted in words, as John gives us a view of the city of God, with walls of jasper setting on the foundation of precious stones, with gates of pearl, and streets of gold, having the stream that makes glad the home of God, bordered by the tree of life whose leaves heal the nations. In that wonderful city situated in the glad hills of God's glory, there will never more be death, pain nor crying! God shall wipe away all tears from all tears from all those who enter that city!

### **"Faith Only" is Not the Way!**

Many erring souls have chosen the path of "Faith Only" as the way to the city of God! But they have not stopped to ponder the question: *"What shall it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath works, and have not faith? Can faith save him?"* (Jas. 2:14). Have YOU seriously considered this matter? This question is answered very clearly in verse 17: *"Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone!"* But the point is stressed: *"But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?"* (Jas. 2:20). Then James makes the point more forceful by showing that Abraham was justified by works in offering Isaac upon the altar, and concludes by saying, *"Ye see then how by works a man is justified, and not by faith only"*. (Jas. 2:24). Be it noted that this is the only time the words, "faith only" are joined together in scripture, and is so done to show we are **NOT SAVED** by faith alone! Jesus Christ set forth our pattern: *"Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."* (Heb. 5:8-9). Will you follow the Lord to the City of God, or choose the path of "Faith only"?

### **Morality is Not the Way to the City!**

Many honest, religious, conscientious people *"know not the way to the city."* Yet they contend that just being a good, honest, moral man will assure salvation! But my friend, will you consider the plight of a centurion, Cornelius? He stood head and shoulders

above most moral men we see about us today; yet he was lost. Read the account in Acts 10. Cornelius was *"a devout man and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway."* (Acts 10:2). Yet despite this fine tribute given him, Cornelius was one who *"knew not the way to the city."* Therefore his prayer was interrupted by an angel telling him, *"Send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter . . . He shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do."* (v. 5-6). An angel did not tell him what he had to do: rather, an evangelist came with the words of life! (See Acts 11:13-14). Morality was not his guide into the city! He had to rely on faith generated by hearing the word of the Lord (Rom. 10:17). More than mere faith; that faith had to motivate obedience to demands of the gospel. Peter knew this, *"And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord."* (Acts 10:48).

### Many Are Sincere and Conscientious!

Many contend that one who is sincere and conscientious will surely be admitted into the city! But will you check out the background of Saul of Tarsus (later Paul, the apostle)? He was known for his sincerity and conscientiousness! His reputation was above reproach! He could say, *"I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day."* (Acts 23:1). Hear him on another occasion: *"If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless."* (Phil. 3:4-6).

So sincere and conscientious was Paul that he confessed: *"And I persecuted this way unto death, binding and delivering into prison both men and women."* (Acts 22:4). On trial before Agrippa, he said, *"I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison . . . and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them."* (Acts 26:9-10). Still, Paul knew that he was a sinner saved by grace, and his sincerity did not exonerate him for what he had

done. He openly admitted that he had been chief of sinners (1 Tim. 1:13-15). He learned the way to the city of God when Ananias came to him with specific directions given by the Lord! (Acts 22:16).

### Jesus Said, "I Am the Way"

When Jesus spake of the home of God, He said, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*" (Jno. 14:6). In this same vein of thought, He said, "*I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved*". But stressed, "*He that entereth not by the door into the sheep fold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.*" (Jno. 10:9, 10). Paul reveals why Christ died on the cross: "*for to make in himself of twain [JEW AND GENTILE] one new man [CHRISTIAN] so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross.*" (Eph. 2:15-16). Then to fully clarify it, he said, "*For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.*" (V. 18). All who enter that city must come to God by Jesus Christ!

This becomes more evident in studying the blessings God has placed in Him: "*For all the promises in him are Yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.*" (2 Cor. 1:20). So we find that God "*hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ.*" (Eph. 1:3). To this is added, "*We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus*" (Eph. 2:6). Thus "*in Christ shall all be made alive*" (1 Cor. 15:22) and "*are complete in him.*" (Col. 2:10), to fully enjoy "*the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.*" (2 Tim. 2:10). What more can be said? "*Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*" (2 Cor. 5:17). We should "*Rejoice in the Lord alway*" (Phil. 4:4), for "*Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord*" (Rev. 14:13). Yet all this only in Christ!

### "The Way of the Cross Leads Home!"

But how does one enter into that way that leads to the City of God? Paul is very specific in stating: "*For as many of you as*

*have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.*" (Gal. 3:27). When we enter into Christ, we also enter His body. "*For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.*" (1 Cor. 12:13). Thus when one is inducted into Christ by baptism, he is also brought into His church, which is His body (Eph. 1:22-23). Yet some who "know not the way to the city" contend: "We are saved by the blood of Christ, and not by water!" But meditate on that for a minute: where was His blood shed, and for what? Paul writes, "*Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that: like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*" (Rom. 6:3-4). His blood was shed in his death, and one is baptized into His death, even as he is baptized into Him! This is not "water salvation," but is salvation by His blood applied according to God's purpose! Of them Paul said, "*Ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.*" (Rom. 6:17-18). What was the form they obeyed? A death, a burial and a resurrection! When were they made free from sin? "*Then*" is the adverb of time showing when the action took place! The blood shed in His death became efficacious when they were baptized into Christ's death!

Friend, "*The Way of the Cross Leads Home*" is more than just another song! It presents a profound truth, and points to the way to the city! And should you ask, But who shall enter into that city? we would point you to the words of Our Savior who promised: "*Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city,*" (Rev. 22:14).. That is the last statement on the matter! Do you now know the way to the city?

## The Lord's Prayer

Philip C. Wilkerson

It's a common misconception that many people refer to



Matthew 6:9-13 as the Lord's Prayer. That prayer, which begins with the words "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name . . ." is "the Model Prayer." It was the model prayer that Jesus gave as an example, or a pattern to teach us to pray. The "Lord's Prayer" is recorded in John 17. It was on the way to the garden, where Jesus would be betrayed, that He uttered this prayer to His heavenly Father. There are some very important and relevant truths that we can learn from the first three verses of John 17.

Jesus opens His prayer with a statement of fact: "Father, the hour has come." Why did Jesus state a fact that the Father already knew? In the first place, He said it for the sake of the disciples who were listening. All throughout His ministry they had heard Him make the statement, "My hour has not yet come." This phrase then, "The hour has come" served as a powerful attention getter. Jesus wanted the disciples to hear every word of what was to follow. This was the hour that had all been waiting for. Secondly, this statement shows Jesus' submission to the Father. Jesus was about to die, and He knew it. He also knew that He came into the world for that very purpose. This was the hour that He had been born for, and now that hour was upon Him. In order to show His acceptance, His readiness, and His willingness to carry out the will of the Father. He said, "Father, the hour is come." The culmination of His redemptive work on earth was at hand, and Jesus was ready.

And then Jesus asks a request of His Father, "Glorify thy Son, that the Son may glorify the Father." Imagine for a moment that you have only a few hours to live. Would your last few hours be spent glorifying God? Even at the end of His life, Jesus wasn't thinking of Himself. Instead, He was more concerned about glorifying the Father. He desired that His death be viewed by his Father as a wonderful act of honour and glory to the Father. He knew that through His death, man would praise and glorify God. We don't think of being nailed to a tree as a way of glorifying God, but that is exactly how Jesus viewed His death. These verses give us just a glimpse into the thinking of God, and it's marvelous to think that it was all done for you and for me.

But notice also that Jesus is glorifying the Father, and the Father is glorifying Jesus. They are both glorifying one another, exalting one above the other in an act of reciprocal glory, and honor giving. The task, the event that was about to take place had been planned by the Godhead. This was the big event that all creation had been created for. God in the form of Jesus saw His task not as degrading, not as horrible, but as glorifying. He saw His death as an opportunity that had been given to Him by the Father, He felt glorified to have been chosen as the Messiah.

And then in verse 2, we see that the Father had given Jesus power, Some translations say authority. How extensive is this power? It extends over "all flesh," that is, over all men. When read together, you can see how Jesus links this act of glorification with the authority the Father had given Him. In other words, The Father glorified Jesus by giving Him the opportunity to go to the cross, and then the Father further glorified Jesus by giving Him a certain type of authority because He was willing to go to the cross. And thus we see that in verse 1 Jesus is also saying to the Father, "I will use the authority you have given me to glorify you."

But this was not an authority to boss men around, rather, it was the authority to give something to man. The authority that the Father gave to Jesus was this: the authority to grant eternal life. In granting Jesus the power to give eternal life, God gave Jesus power over men. One of the most prevalent, and dangerous, ways of thinking is the notion that, "Nobody is going to tell me what to do. Nobody is going to tell me how to live my life, and no one is going to be in control of my life but me". If you want to know who ultimately is in control of your life, here is the answer. The one who has the power to either grant or to deny you eternal life is the one who controls your life. That is a very awesome power to contemplate. All men can do is prolong life, or take life, but no man can give eternal life, nor has man been given that authority. If you think you don't have to answer to anyone or to anybody, or if you think that no one or anything has control over you and your actions, you are wrong. There is a

**Power in this universe that cares about you and wants you to live forever. That Power is God.**

But many people don't know that God is willing to give them eternal life. Many think that eternal life is just a myth, or a fairy tale. In John 17 Jesus is talking about life, about reality. Proclaiming the reality of eternal life is what His life on this earth was all about.

Suppose for a moment that you met a man who lived in your city, and you became very close friends with him. One day, he pulls his chequebook out of his pocket, and writes you a cheque for 100 million rupees. And then he tells you, "Anyone you know, your friends, your family, even strangers that you meet—I want you to tell them about me, and I'll give them 100 million rupees too." How many people would you tell? Would you keep something like that a secret? You and I have a friend like that, and He offers a gift worth much more than 100 million rupees. To accept the gift, you must first come to know Him.

Eternal life is found in knowing God as the one true God. Jesus wanted people to know that eternal life is the gift of God, available to any who will accept Him as the ruler of their life. The message of that gift was always on His lips; He was always ready to talk about it. You might think that knowing God is something complicated or mysterious, but it's not. True, we can't begin to know everything about God, and God does not expect that. But what God does want us to know about Him is this: He loves us, He cares for us, and He wants us to be in heaven with Him. I know it because Jesus Himself said it in John 3:16-17, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world through Him might be saved."

The message of John 17:1-3 is simple. All we have to do is accept the gift of eternal life that God offers. Those who are Christians have already accepted that gift. If you have not yet accepted it, you can do so today. Once you know and believe that

God is willing to give you eternal life, and once you are willing to turn away from your past life, and start living according to God's word, the Bible, then you are ready to accept the gift of God. The next step is to confess your faith in Jesus Christ as your Saviour, and then be completely immersed in water, in an act of faith that symbolizes being washed clean by the blood of Christ. Once you have been baptized, God forgives you of your sins. You are a new person, a Christian. God will forgive all your past sins, and make you righteous and holy. You can then truly worship God with other Christians in Christ's church. And if you remain faithful and true to God and His word, then, when your physical life on earth is over, you will live eternally with a God who loves you in a wonderful home called heaven.

## The Holy Spirit Simplified

Joe W. Nichols

### WHO OR WHAT IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

The Holy Spirit is a divine personality co-equal with the Father and the Son. (Mt. 28:19). He functioned in the creation—"the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the deep;" (Gen. 1:2). "By His Spirit the heavens are garnished". The Holy Spirit is designated, "the Spirit of truth." (Jn. 14:17) "Men spake from God being moved by the Holy Spirit." (2 Pet. 1:21).

Jesus promised the Holy Spirit as "another comforter" to the apostles (Jn. 14:17), who would "guide (them) into all truth," and "teach (them) all things, and bring to (their) remembrance all that (He) said unto (them)." (Jn. 14:26) The Spirit would glorify the Christ through His work with the apostles and the church. (Jn. 16:14) by taking the message of Christ and declaring it to and through them. (Jn. 16:14).

### HOW DOES THE SPIRIT WORK IN CONVERSION?

The Spirit accomplishes conversion of sinners through "obedience to the truth" (1 Pet. 1:22) when they "receive with

meekness the implanted word which is able to save . . . souls." (Jas. 1:21) As one responds to the preaching of the gospel, he is "begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which liveth and abideth." (1 Pet. 1:23) The seed of the Spirit is the "word of God." (Lk. 8:11) The Spirit through the word accomplishes an obedient response to Christ through belief, repentance, confession, and baptism unto salvation. (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:26-40).

## THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE ESTABLISHING OF THE CHURCH

God through the prophet Joel promised the Holy Spirit to work in a special way during the "last days" of the Jewish system. (Joel 2:28-32) This would involve both Jews and Gentiles, men and women, sons and daughters. Included was physical salvation from the destruction of Jerusalem and onslaught of the Jewish nation which occurred in A.D. 70 at the hand of the Roman army. (See Matt. 24).

## HOW WAS THE HOLY SPIRIT POURED OUT UPON ALL FLESH?

God's promise through Joel was later repeated through John the baptist, "He (Jesus) shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit . . ." (Mt. 3:11) This fulfillment was accomplished through the apostles and their work. (Acts 1:5) Jesus prepared the apostles to be His ambassadors to the world (Mt. 10:16-20; Jn. 7:38-39; Mk. 9:1; Lk. 11:13; Mk. 13:9-13; Lk. 21:12-15; Jn. 14, 15, 16; Jn. 20:21-23; Lk. 24:44-49; Mk. 16:16-20; Mt. 28:20). The apostles were made ready to receive the Holy Spirit at the ascension of the Christ, "and being assembled together with them (apostles, verse 2), He charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father . . . ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days hence." (Acts 1:5) Jesus assured them, "But ye shall receive power when the Holy Spirit is come upon you, and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth." (Acts 1:8).

The event of the upper room recorded in Acts 1:15-26 was

for the sole purpose of appointing another witness and ambassador of Christ. Only two men qualified out of the number present, and of the two, "Matthias was numbered with the eleven apostles." (Acts 1:26) **The baptism of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost (Acts 2) involved only the apostles.** The antecedent of "they" (Acts 2:1) is, according to strict grammar, Matthias and the eleven apostles of Acts 1:26. This is proven in verses 7, 14, 32, 37, and 42 of Acts 2.

Peter's preaching of Acts 2 first dealt with Joel's prophecy. Peter said, "This is that." The miraculous events seen and heard were the result of God's promise through Joel. This promise involving the miraculous was, according to Peter, "to you (present generation of Jews) . . . and to your children (sons and daughters), and to all that are afar off (Gentiles), as many as the Lord God shall call unto Him (to be a party to the promise of Joel)." (Acts 2:39) All who would, "repent . . . and be baptized . . . in the name of Jesus Christ (would have) remission of sins . . . (and would) receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:38) This corresponds with the promise of Mk. 16:16-20.

#### HOW DID THE CHURCH RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT?

Acts 8:5-21 is the divine commentary of the church receiving the Holy Spirit. This also explains the mechanics of the administration of the promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit to those who would repent and be baptized for the remission of sins on the day of Pentecost. (Acts 2:38).

Philip preached the gospel to the Samaritans. "When they believed Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were both baptized both men and women." They were now saved. (Mk. 16:16) The Lord adds the saved to the church. (Acts 2:47) A church existed in Samaria as a result of Philip's preaching. (Acts 8:14) The apostles at Jerusalem "sent unto them Peter and John (apostles): who when they were come down prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit: for as yet it was fallen on none of them: only they had been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. (This is how the

church exists today except we have the addition of the written word) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit." (Acts 8:14-18) The Holy Spirit was only imparted to the church by the imposition of the apostles' hands. This point is further proven in Acts 19:1-6, Rom. 1:11, and 2 Tim 1:6. Involved was the imparting of the nine gifts of the Spirit of 1 Cor. 12:8-10 necessary to the edification and maintenance of the infant church until stability could be achieved. The church received the Holy Spirit miraculously only by the laying on of the apostles' hands. When the church reached, "unity of . . . faith and knowledge," the miraculous gifts ceased (Eph. 4:7-15; 1 Cor. 13:8-13) and faith, hope, and love remained. Today we have the completed New Testament revelation of truth which completely furnishes us unto every good work. (2 Tim. 3:16-17) We have the "faith once for all delivered unto the saints." (Jude 3) We are sufficiently cared for in the mature age of the church; we have an established law and order.

### WHAT WAS THE PURPOSE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT GIVEN TO CORNELIUS?

Cornelius and his household were the first Gentiles privileged to hear the gospel of Christ. This was made possible through the intervention of God in bringing Peter and Cornelius together. (Acts 10:1-48) The Jewish Christians had considered the Gentiles unworthy of eternal life. As Peter was preaching, the Holy Spirit fell on these Gentiles. This outpouring was before they were saved. (Mk. 16:16). The purpose of the Holy Spirit coming upon them was to, "bare them witness." (Acts 15:8) This was God's way of acknowledging to the Jewish Christians that the Gentiles were to hear the gospel and be saved. (Acts 15:7) Thus, the middle wall of partition broken down in the death of Christ was now broken down in the hearts of the Jews. (Eph. 2:11-22).

Gentile churches received everything that had been given to the Jewish churches. Paul was separated to be their apostle (Acts 9) and imparted to them the Holy Spirit of God enabling them to function until the written word was completed.

That which happened to Cornelius was for one time only and will never be duplicated again out of non-necessity.

## IN WHAT SENSE DO WE HAVE THE HOLY SPIRIT TODAY?

To have the Holy Spirit is to have "power." The apostles had miraculous power. (Ac. 8:10) The early church had miraculous power. (1 Cor. 12:8-11) There was a clear distinction between the power of the apostles and the power imparted by the apostles to the church. This is made clear in Acts 8:18-22 in regard to Simon the Sorcerer. He received the power imparted by the apostles, yet desired to buy the power of the apostles. See also (2 Cor. 12:12; Acts 5:32; 1 Thess. 1:5).

Evident in the New Testament is the transition from inspired men to an inspired book; from miracles performed to confirm the spoken word (Mk. 16:20) to miracles written (recorded by confident witnesses) to confirm the written word in order that man by it may believe that Jesus is the Christ and have life in His name (Jn. 20:30-31).

There are no miracles performed in and by the church today. No one can duplicate a single Bible miracle today. That which remains is "faith, hope, love." (1 Cor. 13:13). These greater gifts supercede the miracuious gifts of the early church and are supplied to the church through the perfect, complete New Testament revelation. **The only Holy Spirit power supplied to the church today is through the written word.** The Holy Spirit cannot be separated from the truth—"the Spirit is the truth." (1 Jn. 5:7) Through this medium, the Holy Spirit is able to accomplish his work of redemption and sanctification. God, according to the apostle Peter, through His "divine power has granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that called us by His glory and virtue." (2 Pet. 1:3) The apostle tells us, "who by the power of God are guarded through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." (1 Pet. 1:5) The power of the Holy Spirit in the church today is only exercised through the word of truth in benefiting sinners and the church



with the divine grace of God. This power is harnessed by the wise—"every one therefore that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man, who built his house upon the rock." (Mt. 7:24) The house fell not, "for it was founded upon the rock." (V. 25).

## CONCLUSION:

### HINDRANCES TO A STUDY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT—

As the Baptist err in their study of baptism, so we fail in administering proper hermeneutics to the study of the Holy Spirit. We allow scripture references regarding the miraculous power of the apostles and the early church to be mis-applied to our present day. We fail to screen the miraculous in applying New Testament passages. Nothing in the New Testament was spoken or written to us directly, but to the first century church with miraculous powers necessary to its existence and development. Our revelation of truth was written and spoken indirectly to us and through the first century church and we must separate from it the miraculous peculiar and necessary to their time.

### A LOGICAL CONCLUSION

There are no apostles today and no imparting of the Holy Spirit to the church of today simply because none is needed. In order to receive the Holy Spirit miraculous power of the first century, we would have to be: (1) an apostle of the first century (and we are not); (2) a church imparted the Holy Spirit by the apostles (and we are not); (3) the household of Cornelius in a lost state representing the Gentile world (and we are not).

Our problem today is that we do not allow the power of the Holy Spirit, the inspired word of God, to be perfect, complete, and supply us unto life, godliness, and every good work. Like the Jews of Jesus' day, we continue to seek and ask for more than what is given (that is more than the word) and reject the greatness and completeness of what is given. Until we accept God's word as power of the Holy Spirit for us today and give it free course in

our hearts and lives, we will continue to be plagued with misunderstanding of the Holy Spirit and will fail to utilize the power of the Holy Spirit for the Christian of today.

## Can I Know That I'M Saved?

Roy Beasley

Can I know that I'm Saved? Of Course, I can.' I do not have to doubt or guess or wonder whether or not I am Saved, for God has made it possible for me to know for sure. The Bible Says, "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; *that ye may know that ye have eternal life*, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God." (I Jn. 5:13).

Salvation is not based upon feelings, good works of merit, nor moral goodness. Salvation is based upon the word of God. I know that I'm in a saved relationship with God because my Bible says so.

My Bible has revealed to me that I was a sinner. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Rom. 3:23).

Realizing that I was a sinner, unable to save myself, and that the wages of sin is eternal death, I rejoiced to learn that I could still have eternal life as a gift from God. "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. 6:23).

The Bible tells more about the gift of eternal life in Ephesians 2:8, 9: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." Notice that this passage does not say that we are saved by grace alone, but that we are saved by grace through faith. Grace is God's part; faith is man's part.

Many people think they have faith, but in reality they do not know what faith is. It is not mere intellectual believing, for "the devils also believe, and tremble." (Jas. 2:19). Nor is faith simply trusting in Christ for our earthly needs. Saving faith is when we

stop trusting in ourselves, our own good works or moral goodness and start trusting in Christ for our eternal salvation. Faith is when I reach the point that I am willing to stop ruling my own life and allow Jesus Christ to become Lord of my life. This means to depend upon what Christ has done rather than on our own good works.

Next, there is the decision of faith. This is when we make the decision to turn from the practice of sin. We call this repentance.

Then there must also be a declaration of faith—a confession that Jesus is the Christ the Son of the living God. Jesus said, "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven . . ." (Matt. 10:32).

Finally there is a demonstration of faith. We demonstrate faith by complete obedience. A little girl once defined faith as doing what God says without asking any questions. In the 11th chapter of Hebrews we read of the faith of several outstanding Characters of the Bible. In each instance they demonstrated their faith by their obedience. It was by faith that Abel *offered* a more excellent sacrifice . . . by faith Enoch *walked* with God . . . by faith Noah *built* the ark . . . by faith Abraham *offered* his son Isaac . . . It is by obedience that we also demonstrate our faith, and baptism is one of those commandments. "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." (Acts 2:38) "Arise, and be baptized and wash away thy sins calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22:16). For "even baptism doth also now save us." (I Pet. 3:21).

Can I know that I'm saved? The answer is yes, if I have by faith accepted God's offer of salvation. If I have made the decision of faith, a declaration of faith, and a demonstration of faith through obedience.

## Weeping Over Sin

Johnny Ramsey

The weeping prophet of Anathoth made it very clear that refusing to walk in "*the old paths*" (Jer. 6:16) was a definite sign of apostasy on the part of Judah. Another prophet abruptly told his fellows to "*leave the landmarks, alone*" (Hos. 5:10). Babylonian captivity was a harsh reality for thousands because of rebellion in their hearts and spiritual apathy in their lives! Today one can see

the same trend in the church. Especially can we observe a disdain for God's plan in regard to the Bible way concerning the purity of the church and the sanctity of the home.

Following the biblical criterion is more than some folk intend to do. A lack of regard for divine mandates can be clearly detected by any honest student of the Holy Scriptures. When we read and compare the background of the problem in Jeremiah's day with the parallel situation in our day, we learn again that human nature has not changed in all these centuries. What caused apostasy in Jeremiah's time? Why would his contemporaries reject the old paths? Are these exact problems in our midst today? Yea, verily!

Just as Judah mocked the prophets, some brethren today chide faithful proclaimers of the gospel. In fact, a favorite pastime of some folk is to run off those devoted to truth. And, as the marriage and divorce issue becomes more sticky due to worldly people who put asunder what God has joined together, we can expect even more ridicule. Walking in the old paths of marital purity is more than some will tolerate! Jeremiah impressed Judah that one must seek the old paths and not avoid them. Therein is the key. When good and honest hearts desire to do right in the sight of heaven the problem is solved. May God help us to point men in that direction and to be sure that we walk there as well! There was no greater preacher in Old Testament days than Jeremiah. His burning, ringing rhetoric would long echo in the ears of his impenitent contemporaries.

Rather than basking in the comfort of "I told you so," Jeremiah is genuinely broken and contrite in spirit over the devastation of his beloved city. Jerusalem is in shambles and the prophet is in tears. It gave him no pleasure to realize that Judah's sins had produced such a calamity. He only regretted that their hardness of heart had made captivity a reality. If ever a scene brought vividly to mind the caustic wages of sins it was the burning destruction of a once glorious Jerusalem. The temple, which had been a superstitious shrine to the Jews, was just a passing shadow as the prophet gazed sadly upon the panorama that had been the glory of by-gone years.

Jeremiah's reflections at this time remind us of the psalmist, "*Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord . . . I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope*" (Psa. 130). Indeed, the wailing man of Anathoth made his feelings known when he exclaimed, "*I am the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of his wrath*" (Lam. 3:1). The only hope of Judah was to "*search and try their ways and turn again to Jehovah.*" They should have been forever grateful for God's spokesman who made the way back toward heaven a possibility. Perhaps we should lament over the fact that so few Jeremiahs exist among us today!