

# THE BIBLE TEACHER

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## EDITORIAL



### Learning Through Repetition

Most of us like to think of ourselves as being smart. We like to think that we are able to learn and grasp something on hearing it the first time. For after all, we are not simple minded, but we are intelligent. But as smart and intelligent as we may be, still we know what we know as a result of repetition, hearing a thing over and over again. Repetition for learning is especially necessary when it comes to those things that are new and different to us, or where we are hearing things that demand a change in our thinking and in our lives. This is certainly the case when it comes to religious matters.

How does a child learn to speak a language? How does anyone learn a new language? What about arithmetic or mathematics or spelling? How about driving and thousands of other things?

Most learning and perfecting a trade goes back to repetition. We hear it over and over again or we continue to practice what we want to do until we have mastered it. Again, the same is true when it comes to learning God's will for man today. Some may read it or hear it preached one time, and for some reason they think that they should be experts on the subject. But as simple as God's message may be, many stumble over its simplicity. They think that it should be hard, difficult, and very involved. But it is not that way at all. God wanted man to know his will, therefore, he gave a message that all could read, study, learn, understand, and obey. It is only because of false ideas and man-made teaching that many end up confused and lost.

The Bible very effectively uses repetition both to teach and to remind the people of what God had done. For example, as you read through both the Old Testament and the New Testament, you will find reference after reference concerning the deliverance of God's people from the land of bondage. Christ quoted often from the Old Testament and one of those had to do with the statement that seeing they saw not and hearing they heard not. (Matthew 13:13-17). Such was to say that even though they were seeing and hearing, they did not understand what they were seeing and hearing. It was not that they couldn't, but they wouldn't.

Jesus spoke often in parables. (Matthew 13:3). This was a simple form of teaching where he took physical settings and drew spiritual lessons from them. In other words, they were like our modern day illustrations.

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John were eye-witnesses of Christ. They heard his teachings and saw his miracles. They also told of his death, burial, and resurrection. So as you read through their books you will read of many similar things and teachings, with each one telling the story as he heard and saw it. The book of Acts gives the story of the spread of Christianity. It records eleven conversions. In Acts 9 we read of Saul's conversion and then in Acts 22 he tells the story of his own conversion. Likewise, in Acts 10 we read of the conversion of Cornelius and his household, then in Acts 11 Peter relates that same story. Now, are the scriptures boring? Do you get tired of reading of the death, burial,

and resurrection of Christ as set forth in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John? What about reading through the book of Acts? Or what about reading the epistles of Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians where Paul writes similar things to all three congregations? No, they are not boring. Rather, they are refreshing, thrilling, informative, and challenging.

Our problem is that we don't read through them enough. We don't take the time to study and to meditate on these teachings as we should. We are mentally lazy.

We also hear the gospel again and again. When we go to worship, we may go through Bible classes that covers material that we generally know. But with preaching, Bible classes, and so on, we need to be reminded of what God has said. Peter said to the Christians of his day, "Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me. Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance." (2 Peter 1:12-15). Again, he said, "This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the Holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour." (2 Peter 3:1,2). Peter was saying here that he simply wanted to remind them again of God's will for them. Oh yes, they had been taught the truth of God, and maybe they had heard these truths over and over again, but man easily forgets. He needs to be reminded of the truths that he has heard. If he is not reminded then he may drift away from God and be lost.

I have observed over the years that many of those that take a Bible correspondence course often respond by saying that the lessons are too simple. But I have also noticed that in their answers to the questions that many times they give the wrong answers or indicate that they do not understand the lessons being taught. Sometimes we are not as smart as we like to think we are.

I have studied with many people, carefully and clearly showing them what the Bible says that one must do to be saved. I have gone into great detail to show the identification marks of the church, how the Lord's church differs from all other churches, and so on. Yet, I have found that the next week these same people talk as though I had never said one word to them. They revert back to their former ideas and concepts concerning the church or the plan of salvation. They thought they knew the truth on these things when they were originally discussed, but they didn't. They heard the truth and it made sense at the time, but it didn't really register with them. They didn't understand it. It did not become a part of their thinking. That means then that it is necessary for one to sincerely study and to go over the same lessons many times, or to be taught the same lessons numerous times, if he is to fully understand it so he can believe in the Lord and obey his teaching.

My prayer would be that you would not read a little from the Bible or hear a lesson or two preached and then to go away thinking that you know the truth or that you are ready to become a Christian. A lot of course depends on your desire to learn the truth and your willingness to accept that truth, but please continue to study and to learn until you are fully convinced, and only then proceed to obey the Lord's will. If you will do that, not only will you obey the Lord from the heart (Romans 6:17,18), but in all probability you will be so convinced that you have done the right thing that you will be faithful to the Lord. And in the end that is what will count.



**associate  
editorial**

## The Tragedy of Sincerely Believing a Lie

In the Old Testament of the Bible, in the Book of I Kings

and chapter 13, there is a story about a man of God whom God had sent with a special message to Bethel. The man of God had to deliver the message to Israel's king Jeroboam who had forsaken God and had become an idolater. As the king Jeroboam listened to the Lord's message, which was against the king, he got very angry and the record says, "That he stretched out his hand from the altar, saying, "Arrest him." Then his hand which he stretched out toward him, withered, so that he could not pull it back to himself." . . . Seeing what has happened to him the king humbled himself before the man of God and said, "Please entreat the favour of the Lord your God, and pray for me, that my hand may be restored to me. So the man of God entreated the Lord, and the king's hand was restored to him, and became as it was before. Then the king said to the man of God, Come home with me and refresh yourself, and I will give you a reward." But the man of God said to the king, "If you were to give me half your house, I would not go in with you; nor would I eat bread nor drink water in this place. For so it was commanded me by the word of the Lord, saying, you shall not eat bread, nor drink water, nor return by the same way you came." So he went another way and did not return by the way he came to Bethel." (1 Kings 13:4-10).

The story goes on like this, "Now an old prophet dwelt in Bethel, and his sons came and told him all the works that the man of God had done that day in Bethel! they also told their father the words which he had spoken to the king. And their father said to them, "Which way did he go?" For his sons had seen which way the man of God went who came from Judah. Then he said to his sons, "Saddle the donkey for me." So they saddled the donkey for him; and he rode on it, and went after the man of God, and found him sitting under an oak. Then he said to him, "Are you the man of God who came from Judah?" And he said, "I am." Then he said to him, "Come home with me and eat bread." And he said, "I cannot return with you nor go in with you; neither can I eat bread nor drink water with you in this place. For I have been told by the word of the Lord, You shall not eat bread nor drink water there, nor return by going the way you came." (Vs. 11-12).

So far what we have seen in the story is sincerity of the man

of God. He didn't want to do any thing which was contrary to the will of God. He was sincere, honest, and a good man. But as we further read in the story, we see that the old prophet of Bethel was determine to take the man of God with him to his house and feed him. So he said to him, "I too am a prophet as you are, and an angel spoke to me by the word of the Lord, saying, Bring him back with you to your house, that he may eat bread and drink water." "But he lied to him" the record says. (Vs. 18). Then we read, "So he went back with him, and ate bread in his house, and drank water. Now it happened, as they sat at the table, that the word of the Lord came to the prophet who had brought him back and he cried out to the man of God who came from Judah, saying. "Thus says the Lord : Because you have disobeyed the word of the Lord and have not kept the commandment which the Lord your God commanded you, but you came back, ate bread, and drank water in the place of which the Lord said to you, "Eat no bread, and drink no water," your corpse shall not come to the tomb of your father. So it was after he had eaten bread and after he had drunk, that he saddled the donkey for him, the prophet whom he had brought back. So when he was gone, a lion met him on the road and killed him. And his corpse was thrown on the road, and the donkey stood by it; the lion also stood by the corpse." (Vs. 19-24).

What a lesson for us today! Somewhere in the New Testament we read, "Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the ages have come." (1 Corinthians 10-11). In the foregoing story, we have a man of God and a preacher of the Lord's word; he was an honest and a sincere man, yet he was deceived. And the saddest thing is that he was deceived by another prophet or another preacher. What the man of God did not remember is the fact that God never changes his word. He says what he means, and he means what He says. He is not a man who says one thing to some people and says another thing to other people. The man of God made a serious mistake by not relying on God's word. Instead of believing the old prophet's version he should have said that if it was God's will for him then, He would reveal that too to him, just as He had spoken to him the first time.

At 2 Timothy 3:16-17 we are told, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete thoroughly equipped for every good work." To the Galatians the Apostle Paul wrote this, "I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but, there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if any one preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed." (Galatians 1:8-9). The Apostle John had this to say, "For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone add to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if any one takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." (Revelation 22:18,19).

Today God is not speaking directly to individuals. He has revealed His will for every man in His book which contains His commandments and His promises. The Bible is able to make any man complete and equipped him for every good work, provided one reads and does what it says. There is no need for more revelation. If someone preaches another message or tells people to do something that is not found in the Bible, then the Apostle Paul says that he would be accursed, whether he be a man or an angel or whoever he may be. We must not add to God's commandments as written in the Bible and neither should we try to change its message nor take away from its message any thing.

The sad thing today is that many are going to man to learn what God has said. Even though we are living in such a good time when education and learning is common and most people can read one are more languages, yet people do not care to read the Book of God, instead they want to rely on some men for the knowledge of the will of God. Why not go to the Bible to know the answer to the question, What must one do to be saved and go to heaven? Why not go to the Bible and read directly from it about

what the church is, and should one be a member of the church to be saved? Why not read directly from the Bible, what the baptism actually is and why one must be baptized? The Bible tells us every thing that we need to know and do for going to heaven. The only reason why many are not prepared to enter God's heaven is that they are relying on man's word and not on God's will. They tell me that it was the preacher or the Reverened who told them to do this or that. But remember, it was a prophet who misled the man of God about whom we read in the story! Do not believe something to be the commandment of God unless you check it and verify it from your Bible. It does not matter who has said it, if the Bible did not say it then it is man's word and not God's. Luke, in the book of Acts, commended such people who were examining the preaching of the Apostle Paul in light of the Scriptures. He said, "These were more fair-minded than those in Thessolonica, in that they received the word with all readiness and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so." (Acts 17:11).

Christ said, "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name, cast out demons in your name, and done many wonders in your name? And then I will declare to them, I never knew you; depart from me, you who practice lawlessness." (Matthew 7:22,23). Were these not good people who were sincerely desiring to go to heaven? Then what was wrong? Jesus said, "Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father in heaven." (Matthew 7:21). Many are doing the will of man thinking that they are doing the will of the Father in heaven. What about you?

## Is The Church of Christ A Denomination?

**Jim Massey**

The following reasons are given to show that the church of Christ is not a denomination, but rather is altogether unlike the



many different denominations in the true sense of the term "denomination." The church of Christ is not a denomination because:

(1) The church of Jesus Christ in the Bible was not a division of anything. Jesus built one church (Matthew 16:18) and prayed that all his followers be one. (John 17:21.) The Word of Christ condemns division among believers (1 Corinthians 1:10-13), and every Christian must strive diligently for unity in the one body or church. (Ephesians 4:3-6.) Since a denomination is a division, the Lord's church is not a denomination because it is not a division, but rather opposes division.

(2) Just because men may call the church a division or sect does not make it one. In Acts 24:5 the apostle Paul was called by his enemies a ringleader of a Jewish sect. When Paul defended himself he referred to the church as "the way which they call heresy." (Acts 24:14.) But this did not mean that Paul was a member of a heresy or sect.

Paul continued by saying that in the group which was everywhere called a sect he worshipped "the God of my fathers." This means that the way or group which men were calling a sect was really the way of God and no heresy or sect at all. In like manner the church today may be everywhere called a denomination, but this does not mean that it is a denomination, and calling the church a denomination does not make it one.

(3) Since a denomination is a group with a designating name to separate it from other divisions, this becomes another reason why the church is not a denomination. There is no single name for the church in the Bible. It was called by Jesus "my church" (Matthew 16:18); it was most often called simply "the church" (Acts 2:47); it was referred to as "the church of God" (1 Corinthians 1:2); "the church of the living God" (1 Timothy 3:15); and by many other descriptions and names. Congregations of the Lord's church were called "churches of Christ." (Romans 16:16.)

The church in a special way did belong to Christ as its builder, purchaser, owner, and head. But even the term "churches of Christ" was not the one name or the only name of the church. The Lord's church has no exclusive and division-causing name

such as denominations wear.

(4) Another important reason that the church is not a denomination is that men and women can be Christians and members of the church of the Lord without being in any denomination. There were no denominations in the beginning. Most of them began 1600 years after Jesus built his church. People were in the Lord's church in Bible times without being in denominations, and the same can be true today. If we believe in only the very same Jesus which they did, and obey nothing other than the Word of God which they did, we will be Christians like them and members of the same church of which they were members.

To make this point clear to all, let us ask this question: What would you ask me to do to be a member of your denomination? You would surely answer with two requirements: (1) I would have to desire or want to be in such a denomination, and (2) I would have to meet the necessary entrance requirements which would put me into the denomination. That is, to be in any denomination I would have to seek to be a member, and I would have to qualify to be a member. No denomination would grant membership without meeting these basic requirements.

But I do not (1) want to be a member of any denomination. Rather, I desire not to be a member of any denomination. I am not in any denomination because I have not met the simplest requirement of wanting or seeking to be a member. In the second place, (2) I refuse to do anything which any denomination has asked me to do to qualify as a member. I have met the simple requirements of Jesus to make me a Christian, and he has by these Bible requirements added me to his church. But I refuse to comply with the entrance requirements of any denominational church and have refused to meet the membership regulations of every denomination.

Now how could anyone say that I am a member of a denomination? I do not want to be, and I have refused to take the necessary steps to be, in any and every denomination on earth. And yet I am a member of Jesus' church, as were those Christians in the New Testament, because I have done, according to the Bible, what they did in order to be in the church. And what I

have done is what every one of you can do—you can be just a Christian, a member of the Lord's church, without being in any denomination.

Therefore, the church of Christ is not a denomination because (1) It is not a division, and denominations are divisions. (2) Calling a group a sect or division does not mean that it actually is one. (3) The church has no designating and distinctive name, but rather wears all Bible names which every believer could wear. And (4) it is altogether possible for anyone to begin the church while refusing to be in any and every denomination. Will you be just a Christian?

## Can One Be Saved In A Denominational Church?

W. A. Holley

Why is denominationalism sinful before God? Jesus built but one church (Matthew 16 : 18-19; Ephesians 5 : 23-25; Colossians 1 : 18); but denominational churches now number more than 1,000. . . at least 999 more than the Lord Jesus Christ built! Men, not the Lord Jesus, built these churches—viz., Smythe, Wesley, Luther, Calvin, *et, al.* It is a sin for men to build churches in competition with the Lord's church (Psalm 127 : 1; Matthew 15 : 13-14).

The Holy Bible teaches, it is a sin to cause religious divisions, or to be a party to them (Romans 16 : 17-18; Proverbs 6 : 16-19). Denominationalism represents total confusion, and therefore religious division is not of God (I Corinthians 14 : 33). Jesus prayed for all believers to be one; thus denominationalism is not of Christ (John 17 : 20-23).

The apostles never authorized religious divisions; such causes infidelity (I Corinthians 1 : 10; John 17 : 20-23). If the Bible taught all the contradictory doctrines incorporated in denominationalism, who could believe it??

Think of all the different denominationalism names, creeds, manuals, disciplines, etc. God did not give all of them—nor any of them—for God is a God of truth! (II Timothy 3 : 15-17; II John 9-11; Jude 3; II Peter 1 : 3). Almighty God wants his servant to show the difference between truth and error (Isaiah 5 : 20; Ezekiel 22 : 26; 44 : 23). With God 'scrambled eggs' will not do! (Cf. II Timothy 2 : 15).

Each denomination has its own terms of membership. Some claim to be saved "by faith only," some claim the direct operation of the Holy Spirit, others insist on being saved at a mourners' bench. Others insist on continuous revelation, arguing that God communicates directly with them, thus making void the word of God. (Mark 7 : 6-13).

What are the terms of New Testament church membership? The answer is simple : The answer is simple : sinner must hear and learn of the Father (John 6 : 44-45); become a believer (Hebrews 11 : 6; John 8 : 21-24); repent of all sin (Luke 13 : 3; Acts 17 : 30; Acts 2 : 38); confess the name of Jesus Christ (Matthew 10 : 32-33; Acts 8 : 37); and be baptized into Jesus Christ for remission of sins (Acts 2 : 36-38, 41, 47; 22 : 16; Romans 6 : 3-4). This is the Bible way !

The "branches" mentioned in John 15 : 1-6 are not denominations, but individual Christians. Christ is the vine, the branches are those who have heard and obeyed the truth of God (Hebrews 5 : 8-9; I Peter 1 : 22-23). Dear reader, do not permit the confusion of doctrines of denominationalism to blind you to the truth of God. You can become a member of that church that Jesus himself established. Do it today !

## Why Attend All Services ?

Joe E. Galloway

That every congregation has attendance problems can be seen by comparing evening service attendance with Sunday morning. At some congregations Sunday evening attendance will be less than half that of the morning, Then by Wednesday evening the number

is sometimes halved again. Before we breathe a sigh of relief, saying that our congregation does much better than that, we need to consider the Lord's will regarding attendance. The Lord expects us to "hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering . . . not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is" (Hebrews 10 : 23-25). He expects us to be present at all services that we are physically able to attend ! We need to compare our attendance with the Lord's standard; not compare our attendance with others who are falling short of the Lord's will ! Those who are "comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise" (II Corinthians 10 : 12).

That it is the Lord's will for us to attend all services should be sufficient reason for us to always be present when the church meets. After all, the Lord knows what is best for his people ! He does not give commands without good reason. Although we may not know all the reasons God wants us to faithfully assemble with his people, we shall stress some of them:

1. Man has a basic need to worship his Maker. The first thing recorded about man after his expulsion from Eden and the increase of his family, concerned worship to God. (Genesis 4 : 3ff). As soon as Noah left the ark he built an altar unto Jehovah and worshipped (Genesis 8 : 20). Wherever Abraham travelled, he built altars to worship (Genesis 12 : 7, 8; 13 : 18; 22 : 9). A large part of the law of Moses dealt with worship. In every instance of those in the Bible who served God faithfully, worship was involved. Even the heavenly inhabitants (both those of every earthly nation and those angelic in nature) are described as engaging to worship of God (e.g., Revelation 7 : 9-12). We have a basic *need* to assemble with the church to jointly worship God.

2. We should attend all services to learn more of God's word. The Bible study sessions on Sunday morning and Wednesday evening, the two sermons on Sunday, and even the children's Bible drill session can help us all know more of God's word week after week. Sometimes we hear some say, I "Can stay at home and get more out of my own study." Very seldom, though does one who absents himself from a service spend this time in private study at home ! We all should have regular, private periods of Bible

study; but we still need to have regular period of joint study, too. We will learn some things from others that we would never learn by ourselves.

3. We need to attend all services of our congregation in order to feel ourselves a part of the church. Those who attend regularly have the "we" feeling; those who attend only spasmodically usually have the "they" attitude. For example, do you speak of what "we" are doing, or of what "they are doing in the congregation? Some members always speak of the congregation as "they" because they do not really feel part of the group. Not attending regularly causes this; and irregular attendance often goes hand-in-hand with complaining, criticizing, and, general disinterest in the work and affairs of the local church.

4. We need to attend all services to receive the fellowship of the saints. Christians need one another. We are to "be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another" (Romans 12: 10). We are to "bear ye another's burdens" (Galatians 6 : 2). This includes warning the unruly, comforting those discouraged, and supporting the weak (II Thessalonians 5 : 14). Therefore we need to be with our fellow-Christians much. Although association with them apart from the assembly is good when congregations are large we must see them regularly in the assembly to really have fellowship with all members. Besides, there is a strengthening effect that comes from all worshipping together that cannot be had by personal association alone. These assemblies help unite us in heart and action. An example of a benefit we receive from the assembly that we do not get in personal association is the "teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" (Colossians 3 : 16) that the assembly provides. The early church met daily, besides eating together from house to house. (Acts 2 : 46).

5. Each needs to attend every service to be a good example to others. This will show our friends and neighbours that each of us is convinced there is something worthwhile in our faith. It will help us bring our children up, putting the Lord and his church *first* in their lives. It will encourage those weaker in Christ to see the need of attending more regularly. Try to imagine the effect on all three

of these groups if 100 per cent of all local members *faithfully attended all services* of the church!

6. Attending all services is essential to having a proper attitude toward the Lord and his work. We are to love God first, above all else (Matthew 22:37-38). So, we are to seek first his kingdom and his righteousness (Matthew 6:33). We belong to Christ, having been purchased with his blood (I Corinthians 6:19-20). Christ lives in us (Galatians 2:20). We are to present ourselves as living sacrifices (Romans 12:1). We are to constantly ask: "What *more* can I do?" rather than, "How *little* can I get by with?" (Matthew 5:47). All these principles necessitate our attending every service we are physically able to attend.

Sometime we are asked, "How can I determine if I should stay at home?" We suggest in response that we should have decided when we obeyed the gospel to be present in the assembly every time such is possible. If we did not so decide then, why not make that decision *now*? Then we won't have to decide, before each service, whether or not to attend—such will already be decided! If sickness or some other compelling emergency arises we might ask ourselves, "Would this same situation keep me from going to work? or, to school? would it keep me from taking part in my favorite entertainment?" If not, is the Lord more important to us than our work, school, or entertainment?

"Think on these things" (Philippians 4:8)!

## Caleb, The Mountain Claimer

John Waddey

The history of human progress is the record of courageous men and women who were willing to stand alone in the hour of trial and testing. Such a man was Caleb the co-worker of Joshua.

When Israel had taken Canaan and the land was being distributed, Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizite said to Joshua: "Lo I am this day fourscore and five years old. As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me. Now there-

fore give me this (mountain KJV), whereof Jehovah spake in that day . . . it may be that Jehovah will be with me, and I shall drive them (the Anakim, i.e., giants) out, as Jehovah spake" (Joshua 14:10-12).

### About the Man

Caleb was a Hebrew of the tribe of Judah. His father was Jephunneh the Kenizite (Joshua 14:6). Caleb was a prince of his tribe. Moses selected him to be one of the twelve spies to search out Canaan (Numbers 13:1-2,6). Only Caleb and Joshua were convinced that God would give Israel victory.

Of the men of war when they left Egypt, only Joshua and Caleb survived the forty years of wilderness wandering. To enter the promised land was his reward for faithfulness (Numbers 14:28-30). All through the long and difficult years, Caleb never forgot what he had seen in Canaan.

Although he was 85 years old, Caleb was privileged to lead his brethren in the conquest of the land. He was yet strong and capable, faithful and fearless. When the time to claim a portion of the land came, he challenged the stronghold of the worst of the enemy and took it for his own.

### His Character

Moses tells us that "he had another (i.e. a different) spirit" than the majority of his peers (Numbers 14:23). When Israel was at Kadesh, Caleb had great faith that God would give his people victory as promised. Others trembled with fear and unbelief. It was not the giants that kept them from invading Canaan at the first; it was their lack of faith in God. Caleb was courageous and eager to gain the victory. Others did not want to run the risk. They wanted victory, but without a struggle. While others wavered, Caleb was faithful unto death, always dependable.

Caleb "wholly followed the Lord" (Joshua 14:9). He refused to run with the majority. He took a stand for what he believed in, even though it might be intensely unpopular. We need to be reminded that public opinion is sometimes public enemy number



one! This great man remembered what God had previously done and staked his future on it. The crowd threatened to stone him, but he refused to compromise (Numbers 14:10). With all his heart, soul, mind and strength he followed the Lord. The godliness of his life made for his manliness in conduct. Caleb is a grand example for young men of today. His life was fully spent for Jehovah's cause.

Caleb dared to undertake a difficult challenge. He not only fought to secure the land for the others, he claimed the most dangerous and difficult region as his personal battle. He would drive out the feared Anakim, the fierce, giants of Hebron, that had so terrorized the others forty-five years earlier. He could have reasoned that he was too old; or, that he had already done his share of fighting. By rights he could have demanded an easier inheritance or one already secured (compare Numbers 13:21-22 and Joshua 14:12-14). It is a mark of greatness to attempt the difficult. People cheat themselves by always choosing the easy roads. Students seek out the easy teachers; adults want easy jobs; Christians want an easy road to heaven. May God give us character like Caleb to dream the impossible dream, to fight the unbeatable foe—and win! Remember that it is the straitened and narrow way that leads to life (Matthew 7:13-14).

### **Caleb's Rich Reward**

At Kadesh his contemporaries wanted to stone Caleb. They perished in the wilderness, but he entered the land of promise. The children of his critics honored him as an illustrious hero of the nation.

Caleb had the blessing of a good conscience. He knew he had done the right thing. He was true to himself. That alone is worth more than silver and gold.

God honored this brave man, calling him "my servant Caleb" (Numbers 14:24). His name was thus engraved in God's Hall of Fame.

Those forty long years in the wilderness, Caleb was waiting to

receive a home in the promised land, while the others could only expect a lonely grave in a strange land.

Caleb experienced the joy of helping his brothers possess the good land they had long dreamed of. There is a satisfaction in having part in success and victory, in realizing dreams and goals long sought for.

The old patriarch claimed his mountain. He drove out the sons of Anak, took Hebron their royal city, and lived the rest of his days in rest and peace. "The land had rest from war" (Joshua 14:15).

### **Conclusion**

The words of Philip Brooks appropriately sum up this lesson:

"Do not pray for easy lives. Pray to be strong men. Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers. Pray for power equal to your tasks. Then the doing of your work shall be no miracle, but you shall be a miracle. Every day you will wonder at yourself, at the richness of life that has come to you by the grace of God."

With Caleb, claim your mountain. With God by your side you will surely do it.

## **The Voice Of Calvary**

**Michael R. Mobley**

It was a terrible day in the Roman Empire that Friday they scourged and crucified our Lord. With his hands tied, they beat him with a whip, spat on him as they slapped his face and beat him with a wooden rod. They crowned him with thorns because he claimed to be the King. His body now weakened from the lack of food and sleep, and from the beatings, he was to be nailed to a cross. He must have cried aloud as they drove those spike nails into his body!

Yet, in all that tragedy, our Lord then made possible our

salvation. "It is finished." (John 19:30.) Jesus could have prevented the event for he had the command of the universe. But the Lord knew what he had to do and never once resisted or struggled to be freed.

Why should Jesus the Christ, the Son of God Almighty, humble and submit himself to such agony and humiliation? I think we must believe that when God created mankind that he created something so precious to him he would do anything needed of him to save mankind from the ruin of his sinfulness. When he cried from Calvary, our Lord's voice went ringing out through the centuries. What is the voice of Calvary crying out to us?

### **"I LOVE YOU"**

God has always loved the sinner. "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8) Another word for **commendeth** is **demonstrated**. God does not love us because his son died for us; but, Christ died for us because of God's love. Calvary proves that love beyond any doubt.

Jesus was accused of eating with the sinners and social outcasts. (Luke 15:2) He gave three parables about God's grace to show that God loves all of us because we are sinners. (Luke 15:3-32.) We need the Saviour for our goodness will not save us from our sinfulness.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." (John 3:16.) God's love for us is so deep and genuine that it did not have to be bought. He just gave us a Saviour, and Jesus willingly died to be that Saviour.

### **"I FORGIVE YOU"**

It was our Lord's intention, desire, to die for you and me. He wanted us to be forgiven of our sins. "Oh my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done." (Matthew 26:42.) As he looked into the hate-filled eyes of his murderers and suffering the pain of their bloody hands, Jesus prayed

to God, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do."  
(Luke 23:34.)

If God has forgiven our sins through the blood of Jesus Christ shed on Calvary, then he does not have record of them any more. If he does not have any record of sins done, then he has nothing for which to punish us. The forgiven will be saved in eternity and not condemned to the endless torment of hell.

### **"BELIEVE IN ME"**

God loves all of mankind, but he will save only those who believe in his Son. (John 3:16.) God's forgiveness is possible for all mankind but given only to all those who are believers in Jesus Christ. "Therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their hearts and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them. Repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts 2:36-38.)

Let all the world know assuredly! Here God tells us how to believe in his Son's death for our salvation. We need to be saved from our sinfulness, our sinful living. So we must repent of our sins and be buried with Jesus in the waters of baptism. (Consider Romans 6:3-4.) Notice that Peter tells us to repent and to be baptized for the forgiveness of sins. The purpose of God for repentance and baptism is our sins to be forgiven.

### **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, let us consider these three points.

1. God is patient with us. He is waiting with the judgment day because he wants all of us to be saved (2 Peter 3:9.)

2. Everyone needs to believe in and obey Jesus Christ for everyone has become a sinner. (Romans 3:23.)

3. Therefore, everyone who has not done so, needs to repent of sins and be buried with Jesus in the waters of baptism before

the day of judgment comes and it is too late. (Mark 16:15-16.)

## What Is Spirituality?

Jerry L. Davidson

To be a Christian, one must be spiritual in mind and manner of living. But what does it mean to "be spiritual?" How is spirituality manifested on the part of God's people?

Paul wrote the Galatian churches, "Brethren, even if a man be overtaken in any trespass, ye who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; looking to thyself lest thou also be tempted." (Galatians 6:1.) It should be noted that those "who are spiritual" are not a high-ranking segment within the body of Christ who possess special spiritual powers and immunity from sinning. Even the spiritual man must be careful not to fall into temptation. The spiritual, according to this verse, are simply faithful brethren who are responsible for restoring those who have fallen into sinful practices.

### WHAT SPIRITUALITY IS OBVIOUSLY NOT

Being spiritual is not simply being more emotional in regard to religious activities. While there is no shame in showing genuine emotions in prayers, singing and preaching, emotional experiences in and of themselves do not confirm spirituality in the life of the Christian.

It is not possessing miraculous "spiritual gifts" which were designed for believers of the first century church. Even when those gifts were operable they didn't guarantee spirituality. First Corinthians 12 lists nine specific "gifts of the Spirit," but possessing gifts did not make the Corinthian brethren more spiritual. Paul found it necessary to exhort the brethren against sinful attitudes toward each other. He asked them, "for ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you jealousy and strife, are ye not carnal and do ye not walk after the manner of men?" (1 Corinthians 3:3.) Possessing a spiritual gift did not assure spirituality in the

life of those who possessed it.

Being spiritual is not neglecting family and job (needed to take care of the family) to be constantly doing "church work." **Total commitment** to the Lord is an outstanding trait of a Christian, but he must recognize the wide area of responsibility involved in that commitment. (See Ephesians 6:4; 1 Timothy 5:8.)

Neither is spirituality shown by a tolerance toward sin under the guise of manifesting more love and more compassion. The "spiritual" are charged with restoring those who err. (Galatians 6:1.)

### WHO THEN ARE THE SPIRITUAL?

Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words suggests some ten uses made of the word **spiritual**. Mr. Vine summarizes these points by saying, "the spiritual man is one who walks by the spirit both in the sense of Galatians 5:16 and in that of 5:25, and who himself manifests the fruit of the Spirit in his own way . . ." He further writes that, "The spiritual state is reached by diligence in the word of God and in prayer; it is maintained by obedience and self-judgment. Such as are led by the Spirit are spiritual, but, of course, spirituality is not a fixed or absolute condition, it admits of growth; indeed growth in "the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." 2 Peter 3:18, is true evidence of true spirituality." (Volume 4, p. 65.)

### "FAITH WORKING IN LOVE"

I can think of no better definition of **spirituality** than its being, "faith working through love." (Galatians 5:6.) When we have "the mind of Christ" (Philippians 2:5) then we will see God's work to be accomplished through us. Where the hungry are to be fed, that will depend on me. Where the sick are to be visited, that's my job. Where hearts are to be comforted, it's my opportunity to offer help. If the lost are to be taught, it will depend on me. Paul says, "we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the exceeding greatness of the power may be of God, and not from ourselves." (2 Corinthians 4:7.) We are those "earthen vessels" to

do the Lord's work. May our spirituality in life and service shine brightly!

## Are We Saved By Water?

**Basil Overton**

God told Noah to build an ark. The apostle Peter wrote that eight souls or persons were saved in that ark by water. (1 Peter 3:20.) Then Peter wrote "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also 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." (1 Peter 3:21.)

### **NOT SAVED BY WATER FROM WATER**

Noah and his wife, their three sons and their wives were the eight people who were saved in the ark by water. They were not saved **by water from** water! They were saved **from water by** the ark. (Hebrews 11:7.) But, they were saved **by water from** something! From what were they saved **by water**? They were saved **by water from** a wicked, sinful world of people!

Of that sinful world, Moses wrote, "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in all the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." (Genesis 6:5.) The waters of the flood destroyed that world of exceedingly wicked people. The waters of the flood came between that wicked world and the cleansed world following that flood! Therefore, Noah and his family were saved **from** that wicked world **by water**!

### **WHAT IS "THE LIKE FIGURE"?**

After saying Noah and his family were saved by water, Peter said, "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us. . ."

"Like figure" of this text is from the Greek word **antitupou**. This word is put in English, or anglicized as **antitype**.

There are many types in the Old Testament. When a lamb was sacrificed for sins, it was a type of Christ; the lamb of God (John 1:29) who was sacrificed for our sins. (Hebrews 10:1-10.) A literal lamb offered in sacrifice under the old covenant was a type. Jesus being offered in sacrifice for our sins was the antitype of that Old Testament type.

Peter said our being saved by baptism is the antitype of eight souls being saved in the ark by water. This all obviously means that just as the water of the great flood came between the old world of wickedness and the new and cleansed world following that flood, even so the water of baptism comes between the world of sin and the new world of righteousness in Christ Jesus. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new." (2 Corinthians 5:17).

The person in Christ got into Christ by being baptized into Christ. (Galatians 3:27; Romans 6:3, 4.) So the water of baptism comes between the old world of sin and the new world in Christ. Jesus.

### **IN WHAT SENSE ARE WE SAVED BY WATER?**

We are saved by water in the same sense that the blind man of John 9 received his sight by water. Jesus told that blind man to wash his eyes in the water of the pool of Siloam. When he did so, he received his sight. Of course the Lord Jesus gave him his sight. The water of the pool did not give him sight, but Christ gave him his sight when he did what Christ told him to do. His doing what Christ told him to do involved water.

Even so, water does not wash away the sins of one when he is baptized in water. Christ takes away his sins when he does what Christ tells him to do by being baptized in water. His doing what Christ tells him to do involves water. That is the only sense in which water saves sinners.

### **THE BLOOD OF CHRIST SAVES**

The blood of Jesus Christ saves, but it saves in Christ. "In



whom (Christ) we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." (Ephesians 1:7.)

The reason baptism saves is because in being baptized one gets into Christ where the blood of Christ saves! Since water is involved in one's being baptized into Christ, then water is involved in one's reaching the blood of Christ.

To reach the blood of Christ in baptism obviously just means that one reaches the forgiveness of God Almighty which he gives because Christ shed his blood or gave his life for our sins.

Jesus made forgiveness of sins available for everyone when he died on Calvary's cross. Those who are baptized into Christ receive what Christ made available when he died.

### **A GREAT BAPTIST SCHOLAR'S TRANSLATION**

The great Baptist scholar, Dr. Charles B. Williams, translated 1 Peter 3:21 as follows. "Baptism which corresponds to this figure, now saves you too—I do not mean the mere removal of physical stains, but the craving for a clear conscience toward God." (The New Testament, A Translation In The Language Of The People, by Charles B. Williams.)

Dr. Gerrit Verkuyl of Princeton translated in his Berkley Version of the New Testament 1 Peter 3:21 so that it says that baptism saves and that it is "the earnest seeking of a conscience that is clear in God's presence." Could one who knows that being baptized is essential to being saved by the blood of Christ have a good conscience until after he is baptized?

One who knows that Jesus said "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" could not have a clear conscience before God until after he is baptized. Therefore, when he is baptized he is seeking for, or craving a clear conscience before God.

## **One Eye Closed; Can't See with The Other**

**Jimmy Edwards**

This is a humorous expression which describes a person who

refuses to see what is obvious reality. The word "blind" has a physical and spiritual meaning. Physically, "blind" means that one is sightless. Spiritually, "blind" means that one is unwilling to discern, perceive, or judge what the word of God teaches, indicating complete insensibility.

Physical blindness is a tragic and unfortunate condition for numerous people. Even more regrettable is the fact that millions are spiritually blind. From a Biblical viewpoint spiritual blindness is far worse than physical blindness because spiritual blindness will lead a person to hell.

Jesus condemned the Scribes and Pharisees because of their ignorance. He rebuked them strongly and said they were "blind." The fact that they professed to be religious leaders made the situation worse. Jesus called them "blind guides," "fools and blind," and "blind Pharisee." (Matthew 23:16, 17, 19, 25, 26.)

The New Testament mentions others who were spiritually blind. Paul thus describes the self-confident and boastful condition of the Jews who felt qualified to teach the "blind" Gentiles. (Romans 2:19.)

In 2 Corinthians 4:4 Paul indicates that some did not receive the gospel because Satan, "the god of this world," had blinded the minds of those who were lost.

In 1 John 2:11 John mentions three conditions of the person who hates his brother:

- (1) he is "in the darkness,"
- (2) he "walks in darkness," and
- (3) he "does not know where he goes" because "the darkness has blinded his eyes."

The Christians at Laodicea were "blind" because they could not see the reality of their spiritual condition. (Revelation 3:17.)

What causes people to be spiritually blind? Basically, spiritual blindness is caused by the agency of Satan. He does this by:

- (1) direct and indirect influence on the minds of human beings;

- (2) false philosophies and teachings;
- (3) prejudice; and
- (4) traditions. of course, he has many other means of blinding people but these are some of the most widespread.

God does not want us to be spiritually blind. In fact, Jesus came "to open the blind eyes." (Isaiah 42:7.) Paul was called by Christ through a "heavenly vision" to the ministry to "open the eyes" of the Gentiles "to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God." (Acts 26:18.) In Ephesians 1:18 the desire of Paul for the Ephesians was that the "eyes of their understanding be enlightened."

No person should allow Satan to blind him from seeing the truths of the gospel. Only the gospel can enable people to live the Christian life on earth and save them eternally. How sad that millions have the gospel all around them but are blind to it.

The prayer of every Christian should be: "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold the wondrous things out of thy law." (Psalm 119:18.) Do not ever be caught with one eye closed and not being able to see with the other, especially when studying God's word.

## Needed! More Children!

RANDY WOOD

Michael Quoist has a meditation in his book, *Prayers*, called "I Like Youngsters." In these reflections he puts into his own words his interpretation of Mark 12:13-15. In this passage Jesus receives little children and says that such make up the kingdom of heaven. Quoist has a section in his work referred to which reads as follows:

I like youngsters because they are still struggling because they are still sinning.

Not because they sin, you understand, but because they know that they sin, and they say so, and they try not to sin any more.

But I don't like grown-ups. They never harm anyone; they have nothing to reproach themselves for.

I can't forgive them; I have nothing to forgive.

It it a pity, it is indeed a pity, because it is not true.

Jesus spelled out that trait of children which disciples are to

have—humility. (Matthew 18:1-6.) Humility at least in part means we recognize our weaknesses and are not ashamed to admit them but try to improve them. Paul said, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." (1 Corinthians 10:12.) We need never to think that we are above being in the wrong.

The writer of Proverbs said, "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall." (Proverbs 16:18.) Men and women need enough humility to say "I'm sorry" or "I was wrong about that." This is a childishness that we need in the church!

If the child in us would be allowed to express itself at the right time, husbands and wives could find living together a much easier task. Elders, deacons, preachers, and other Christians could also find more harmony and peace with a little of this kind of childlikeness. More childlikeness will mean a more beautiful world in which to live.

My mother has a picture of a little boy on her wall. Underneath the picture is the caption: "There is a little boy inside every man." Jesus says there should be a little child in each of us.

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#### FORM IV

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