

# THE BIBLE TEACHER

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## Beware of Satan

J.C. Choate

Satan is alive and well today. There is no place in the world where he cannot be found. Peter has said, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." (1 Peter 5:8). Notice carefully some points that Peter makes:

1. Be sober and vigilant. That is, be alert and stay on guard. Watch and be careful with every step that you take. Keep your eyes open and think seriously about all that you do.
2. You have an adversary, and that is the devil. Whether you are aware of it or not, he is your enemy. He is out to destroy you, and if you are not very careful, he will.
3. The devil is as a roaring lion. He is not a lion, but he has some of the traits of a lion. He is strong, dangerous, and vicious. He can be cunning and appear to be gentle at times. Still, his main objection is to catch you and devour you.
4. He walks about. That suggests that he stays on the move. He may pass you up for someone else, but he'll be back. He is constantly thinking that sooner or later that he will get you.
5. He is seeking whom he may devour. He is a hard worker. He never gives up. He is constantly looking and searching. He wants you to be his next victim.

Have you ever watched a game show on TV that was originally filmed in Africa? If you have then you have observed how the plains there are covered with thousands and thousands of all kinds of wild animals. Although some of them are very dangerous, and yet there they are all together. Most of them feed on grass but some of them feed on other animals. The lions, wild dogs, hyennas, cheetahs, and others walk or run along in no real hurry. Their prey is there for them to take any time they care to attack. All of the other animals walk or trot along, grazing on the grass here and there, but ever looking and listening. Danger is all around them. They could be attacked just any minute. A lot of them have young ones to guard against all of this danger.

Now it is in this setting that the enemy is set to make his move. May be he sees a young one, a crippled animal, or one that wanders a little too far from the herd. Just then, just at the right time, the enemy attacks. He pounces on the weak, or chases the young, sickly, or even the strong until they give out, and finally the victim is brought down. And right there, with a strangle hold, the enemy kills his prey and the feast begins. This kind of thing is very distasteful to see, or to even think about, but this kind of life and death struggle goes on every day in the kingdom of nature.

My friends, we are human beings and even though the devil takes many forms, still he is real, and this kind of life and death struggle goes on every day throughout the world. The devil roams about as a roaring lion seeking out his victim. Sometimes he is very evident and recognizable. At other times he hides behind good works and even religion. Those that he is out to get are plentiful. They look about occasionally, but get involved in different things, and get careless. Having others around them, or even large numbers, they think they are in good company or that since they are doing whatever they are doing with others, then that protects them and that everything will be all right. Some are young and others are sickly and weak. And just at the time that individual thinks that everything is fine, and at one's weakest point, then Satan attacks. When that happens, he is usually successful in bringing down his victim and destroying him.

All of this is to warn each one of us that we should not allow Satan to get too close to us. We should not think that he is harmless and that he will not really hurt us. Neither should we allow him to tempt us with something that looks so innocent and harmless. My friends, Satan is not out to help us but to destroy us. And it is bad enough to be hurt some way in this life, or to even lose our lives, but Satan is out to destroy us spiritually and eternally.

Now that we have been warned then we would be wise to take this warning seriously. Satan can hurt us, but he doesn't have to hurt us, and with the help of the Lord we can protect ourselves from him. When we obey the Lord then he saves us from our sins, and as we continue faithful to him, he has promised to be with us and to help us to overcome Satan and every temptation. (Mark 16:16; Matthew 28:20; 1 Corinthians 10:13). Furthermore, Christ has given his disciples every means necessary to be faithful to him. He has given us his word, has promised to hear and answer our prayers, and given us many brothers and sisters in Christ to encourage us. (Hebrews 4:12; 1 John 5:16, 17; Galatians 3:26, 27).

So brethren, beware of Satan. Don't get careless and get too close to him. Stay away from him. Take every precaution to protect yourselves from him. If Satan catches us and destroys us, then it will be no one's fault but our own. We have been warned and if we will be wise then we will take it seriously.

## What Does Not Take Place When One Becomes A Christian

1. In becoming a Christian one does not get relief from all his problems. When we become Christians then we leave all bad habits, such as smoking, drinking, stealing, cheating, lying, gambling, and all such bad things, and as a result we become good people, better people. But we still have our problems. If we are

out of job then we are not going to get a job immediately, just because we became Christians. We face sickness, shortage, unemployment etc., just as others do. To His disciples Christ told, "In Me you have peace, in the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." (John 16:33). The apostle Paul further said, "Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution." (2 Timothy 3:12).

2. In becoming a Christian one does not get miraculously healed, if one is suffering from a physical ailment. Some times people are attracted to Christianity by hearing the claims of some preachers that they have the power of healing people in the name of Jesus. But such is not true. No man has the power today to heal someone miraculously as Jesus and His apostles were able to do. Those who claim such powers are deceiving people in the name of religion. There is such a famous so called "faith healer", rather a "fake healer", in America, in Tulsa Oklahoma, he claims powers of healing all kind of diseases, yet recently he has raised several million dollars and built a large hospital. Now if he really had the power to heal people miraculously, then instead of building a new hospital he should have gone into already established hospitals in America and healed every body there. Can't people see this? How easy it is to be misled.

3. In becoming a Christian one does not get a place reserved in heaven. This is how some people feel. They think once you become a Christian then live as you please and Christ will take care of all your sins. Some teach, when one is once saved then he is saved forever and he cannot get lost. This, however, is a false assumption. If this was true, then why would Paul write to Christians, "Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall." (1 Corinthians 10:12). Also, about Christians, Peter said, "For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, then having known it to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. But it has happened to them according to the true proverb : "A

dog returns to his own vomit", and, "a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire." (2 Peter 2:20-22). After becoming a Christian one must try to live the Christian life. One should read and study the Bible daily, attend all services of the church, follow all things which Christ, Himself and through His apostles, has taught in His New Testament. "Be faithful until death," Christ said, "and I will give you the crown of life." (Revelation 2:10). Salvation from sin and the eternal life in heaven is conditional. One must do the will of the Father to be able to enter His kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 7:21).

4. In becoming a Christian one does not get miraculously changed. There is no direct operation of the Holy Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit does not come directly to cause the change in the person becoming a Christian. When one is baptized in water, nothing miraculous happens. In baptism one simply obeys the command of Christ. No miracle takes place when one goes down into the watery grave of baptism and comes out of it. Becoming a Christian means becoming a follower of Christ. After becoming a Christian one needs to imitate Christ every day. This is what Christ meant when he said, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me." (Luke 9:23). Becoming a Christian means daily living like Christ. The apostle Paul said, "If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth." (Colossians 3:1, 2). It is the Christian who must seek and set his mind, and follow Christ, he must strive to enter the kingdom of heaven. (Luke 13:24).

5. And lastly, in becoming a Christian one does not lose his capability to sin, that is, one can sin even after becoming a Christian. One does not cease to be a human when one becomes a Christian. One can sin, even after becoming a Christian, and might get lost eternally if he continue in sin. But the beautiful thing in being a Christian is that when a Christian sins, then being a child of God he has the hope of forgiveness. This doesn't mean that he should deliberately sin, but unintentionally or ignorantly if he sins then he can repent and ask God for forgiveness through Christ.

When a Christian, named Simon, sinned, Peter immediately told him to "Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray to God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you." (Acts 8:22). The apostle John wrote in his epistle and said, "If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and His word is not in us. My little children, these things I write to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." (1 John 1:6-10; 2:1). What a wonderful thing it is then to be a Christian. A Christian's life is hidden with Christ in God. (Colossians 3:3). His blood cleanses Christian of his sins daily. Just as your blood is in your body and protects you from diseases, so is Christ's blood in his body, which is His church (Ephesians 1:22, 23), and cleanses each member of the body from all sins. Are you a Christian?

## Are you Adjusted to the World?

Dillard Thurman

Apologetically an excuse is offered: "He Just hasn't been able to become adjusted to the world in which he lives!" But this could be most complimentary! Jesus Christ never adjusted Himself to the world; nor did He try! No adjustment was necessary, and it was not even desired! He came to change the world: not to become adjusted to it! Man becomes so enamored with the world that he seeks popularity, fame, glory and gold! Yet this is the cause of his heartaches and pain! "*Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.*" (Jas. 4:4). Fraternizing with the world places us in opposition to God. Seeking for popularity among men

means turning our backs on the Lord! While we seek fame, fortune and glory, we are losing sight of that which is of supreme worth; *"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness: and all these things shall be added unto you."* (Mt. 6:33). This embraces such things as our food, drink, clothing, and other necessities of life (see verses 25-34 for a full treatise).

### Jesus did not Adjust to the World!

Jesus Christ stood apart from the world, and offered no adjustment to close the breach! To His disciples He said, *"The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil."* (Jno. 7:7). He was not trying to get adjusted to the world, for that adjustment was not even desired! Again, He said, *"If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you."* (Jno. 15:18). He was not about to win any popularity contests! *"Then assembled together the chief priests and the scribes, and the elders of the people . . . and consulted that they might take Jesus and kill him."* (Mt. 26:3-4). None could accuse Jesus of courting the favor of the religious and political leaders! In explanation He said, *"For I came down from heaven not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me."* (John 6:38) Jesus showed no adjustment nor alignment to this sinful world's vain course of social behaviour! He emphatically stated: *"I am not of this world."* (Jno. 8:23). His whole life demonstrated this.

### His Saints Are Not to be Adjusted!

Jesus never intended that His true disciples would become adjusted to this world! He warned His disciples: *"If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."* (Jno. 15:19). We need not expect to be widely acclaimed by the world! Our lives are diametrically opposed to the worldly activities about us! Thus we are warned against fraternizing with the world in any way! *"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth*

away, and the lust there of: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." (1 Jno. 2:15-17). That well explains why we should not adjust to this world! There was no call for adjustment to the world in the words: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." (Col. 3:1-3). Rather than trying to adjust to this world, a Christian must be preparing for a far place with God!

### Non-Conforming Transformers!

Paul was asking for only a reasonable service in writing. "And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." (Rom. 12:2). We do not adjust nor conform; but we must be transformed, and become transformers of a degenerate world! We are urged to "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." (Phil.2:5). Having the mind of Christ will direct us in "all holy conversation and godliness!" (2 Pet. 3:11). To be sure, the world is offering the allure of popularity and acceptance, fame and prestige, gold and affluence: but all this is tarnished by sin and degradation! You cannot afford to push from you the great spiritual blessings God has promised the faithful "For what shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mk. 8:36-37). Standing before God's bar of judgment, you would give 10,000 worlds like this just to hear Him say, "Well done thou good and faithful servant enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

### It is Easy to Get Adjusted!

The enticements of the World are ever with us! It becomes easy to wear the name of Christ while embracing a non-aggression pact with the world! Many have spurned the call to purity as they have formed a coalition with worldly practices. They become so adjusted to the world that sin is not only condoned, but is often practiced. The line of demarkation between Christ and the world is obscured by the lives of so-called Christians until



the world sees little difference! It is not that we have rebelled against God; rather it show how far we have drifted! Sheep don't stamped from the flock: they merely seek after greener pastures, and wander off until they become lost! Little enticements have lured the flock of God from His fold!

### **A Subtle Change in Attitude**

In my youth, I heard many sermons on the evils of the "moving picture shows." They were denounced as detrimental to Christian influence. The saints of God were of one mind in branding this influence as being of the world, and not of God! But how well have we "become adjusted" to that which we previously opposed? Much of what is shown "on the tube" in our living rooms could not have been presented in those movies! Can we contend these movies are more refined and pure? All will agree that our shows are more sexually explicit, more graphically violent, more lewd and suggestive, then ever before! Yet we have become so "Adjusted" that we are smitten with the demon of dumbness, and have not raised a voice in protest!

### **The Influence of Hollywood**

Until the spawning grounds of Hollywood became the dominant factor in determining our attitude on sexual freedom, adulterous liberty, divorce and remarriage, Christians looked with disfavor on the work of our divorce courts. All mothers warned their daughters against associating with a "divorcee." Preachers gave out stirring sermons on this subject, and were not "brow-beaten" by cliques in the church already "adjusted" to this new concept of "marital freedom." But let a gospel preacher stand in most pulpits today and speak boldly and uncompromisingly on these matters, and immediately he is put on the defensive! Speaking bluntly, we have "become so adjusted to the world" that we now condone this deplorable situation, and feel helpless in trying to remedy it!

### **Not Adjusted to Sin's Effects!**

When I was a boy, we had drunks in the community! Not

many; but they were drunks! Now you can't find a drunk anywhere! Oh yes, we have vast multitudes of "alcoholics," but they are not "drunk." Back then, a drunk would feel shame for his drinking habits! But not anymore. Today he is sick. He has a disease: alcoholism! This disease is costing billions of dollars and rupees, while we ignore a simple remedy! Malaria was killing our men while working on the Panama Canal. But we found the source of the disease, eradicated the disease carrying mosquito, and that was that! Why can't we use good sense and get rid of the source of alcoholism? You dry up the fountain, and you rid the land of alcoholics! But our attitude has changed! Drinking is fashionable, for the well-dressed cuties on TV all drink! And we have become adjusted to the world! Beloved, as never before there is a drastic need for saints who will conform to the life to Jesus Christ, turn from the world, set affections on things above, and repudiate the Devil's Lures! God needs devoted saints!

## Esther

Frank Chesser

Every age boasts of extraordinary people. Esther was such a person. Prior to becoming the queen of Persia, she had at least four major things working against her.

First, she lost her parents at an early age. For a young girl to lose her parents in the tender years of youth is a tragedy of immense proportions. Though obviously grateful to be clothed with the love of Mordecai her cousin, such was no substitute for the joy of growing up in a real home.

Second, she was reared in a pagan environment. Esther's presence in Persia was the result of the idolatry of her ancestors, forcing God to bring judgment upon Judah by means of the Babylonians, who were later conquered by the Persians. The nature of her Persian environment can best be seen in the king's response to Haman's inconceivable proposal. When Haman proposed the annihilation of the entire Jewish race, Ahasuerus coldly and

unhesitatingly declared, "do with them as it seemeth good to thee" (Esther 3:11). Immediately, orders were dispatched to the various provinces to "destroy, to kill, and to cause to perish all Jews, both young and old, little children and women" (Esther 3:13), after which "the king and Haman sat down to drink" (Esther 3:15).

Third, she was denied a normal life. The triune goal of every Jewish girl was marriage, family and a home of her own. No doubt, Esther had often dreamed of those very joys of womanhood. Instead, she was placed in the harem of a king. In pagan society, it was not unusual for an undesired woman in the king's harem to exist in virtual solitude. Even as queen, Esther informed Mordecai on one occasion that she had not been with Ahasuerus for thirty days. (Esther 4:11).

Fourth, she was compelled to sacrifice her virginity to a pagan king. For a young woman like Esther, virginity would be among her most treasured possessions. It would be something she would guard with her life until she could give herself in marriage to the man of her choice. Instead, she was taken from her home and given to Ahasuerus like some kind of material object, a man whom she had scarcely seen and for whom she had no love and no feeling.

What kind of person would one normally expect to come forth from such conditions? A woman angry with the world, possessing an intensely bitter spirit and sour disposition; one who felt cheated by life; a person with a negative attitude toward everything and everyone. But even more acute were the temptations she faced on the other side of the tracks. She became the queen of the most powerful nation in the world. Following the death of Haman, all of his immense wealth was given to her (Esther 8:1). Thus Esther lived daily with some of the most potentially destructive forces with which man has ever had to contend: power, enormous wealth and worldly fame. Only eternity will reveal the legions destroyed by these. From these molds one would expect to see an individual characterized by

arrogance, egotism and self-sufficiency. In contrast, note Esther's sterling character.

First, she exhibited an humble and submissive spirit. Choice women throughout the kingdom were assembled in Susah the palace from which Ahasuerus would choose one to be the queen of Persia. These women were the most beautiful in the kingdom. No doubt most of them came from homes of the socially elite, women who had been pampered, petted and catered to all of their lives. For the most part, such women would be vain, arrogant and demanding. Prior to spending the night with the king, each one issued her demands and received whatever she desired (Esther 2:13). In contrast, Esther "required nothing but what Hegai the king's chamberlain, the keeper of the women appointed" (Esther 2:15).

Second, she possessed a lovely personality. "And Esther obtained favour in the sight of all them that looked upon her" (Esther 2:15). Providence? Yes, but respecting man's free moral agency, even providence must have something with which to work.

Third, she manifested a respectful and obedient spirit. Even after the royal crown adorned her head, the record declares, "Esther did the commandment of Mordecai, like as when she was brought up with" (Esther 2:20), She was queen of mighty Persia. She was powerful, wealthy and famous. How easy it would have been to forget Mordecai, even to view him with contempt; but not Esther.

Fourth, she was willing to sacrifice her life for her people. "I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law, and if I perish I perish" (Esther 4:16) She was willing, not only to surrender her power, position, wealth, and fame, but even her very life.

Esther is living proof that an individual can recover from personal tragedy, rise above a pagan environment, conquer extreme difficulties and be a blessing to the world.

# The Way of False Teachers

W.A. Holley

There are false teachers whether we wish to admit it or not. "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (I John 4:1). Again, "There were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction" (II Peter 2:1).

Since there were false teachers/prophets among first century Christians, we should not be surprised to find false teachers among the people of God, even today. We sincerely suggest that Acts 20:28-31, I Timothy 4:1-5, and II Thessalonians 2:1-12 be read and let us take warning.

Hymenaeus and Alexander are examples of false teachers who lived and preached in the early church (I Timothy 1:19-20). Elymas is another false teacher who sought to turn others from the truth (Acts 13:7-12).

A sermon is not a gospel just because someone says it is. Sermons which urge people to get saved, or to pray through at a mourners' bench, or to accept Jesus as your personal Saviour, or be saved by faith only; or just lay your hand on the radio/TV and be saved by the direct operation of the Holy Ghost are not gospel sermons; they are False Sermons!! Where is the book, chapter, and verse that shows that sinners are saved according to the notions presented in this paragraph ?? If such is God's way of saving sinners, why does the Scripture not say so ?

Every false teacher claims to be a teacher of truth. No false teacher would announce beforehand that his purpose is to deceive and to lead astray. Many preachers have splendid educations, wonderful personalities, charming voices, but they are not gospel preachers because they do not preach the gospel: they preach the

doctrines and commandments of men (Matthew 15:9; Mark 7:6-13). Satan is a pastmaster at deceiving mankind, even transforming himself into an angel of light; his ministers—and he does have ministers—also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness (II Corinthians 11:13:15).

How can we recognize false teachers? Well, measure his preaching by the Holy Scriptures. "If any man teach otherwise and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; he is proud [a *fool*, margin], knowing nothing, but doting [*sick*, margin] about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strifes, railings (*to revile or scold in harsh, insolent, or abusive language WAH*), evil surmisings [*to imagine or infer on the slightest grounds; conjecture, WAH*] perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself" (I Timothy 6:3-5; CF. Jeremiah 8:20). In order for a preacher to have both God and Christ he must "abide in the doctrine of Christ" (II John 9-11).

Each false preacher talks much of how much he loves the Lord; how much he loves truth; how much he loves the Bible; and how he loves the souls of men. But he will substitute his own notions and ideas for the plain and simple truth of God. A false teacher ignores the Lord's plan of salvation (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:36-38; 22:16; Romans 6:3-5; Galatians 3:26-27; I Peter 3:20-21), the essentiality of the church Jesus established (Matthew 16:18-19; Acts 20:28; Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4-6), and he turns aside the Lord's items of worship, substituting his own, because he thinks his way is more beautiful and more in keeping with man's nature (Acts 2:41-42, 47; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; John 4:23-24), And so he adds special robes and garbs; pianos and organs, images and pictures and pageantry designed to satisfy the fleshly mind.

Is it not true that such preachers possess an amazing knack for avoiding certain passages of Scripture? It is passingly strange that denominational preachers can preach a lifetime and never preach the Great Commission of our Lord (Matthew 28:18-20;

Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47). How is it that an honest preacher can overlook these passages? On one occasion I asked a well-known denominational preacher if the Bible teaches that sinner should believe and be baptized in order to be saved? His reply was, "Yes, I think I have read something similar to that, but I don't remember where it is to be found." I then asked him, "Have you ever preached such a doctrine?" His answer was, "Of course not!"

A gospel sermon cannot avoid the Great Commission! Nor can a gospel sermon contradict Peter (Acts 2:36-38); it cannot deny what Peter said in I Peter 3:20-21; it cannot add to nor subtract from God's holy word (Révelation 22:18-19); it cannot misrepresent James 2:14-26, claiming that sinners are saved "by faith only." Gospel sermons do not suggest that alien sinners are saved in answer to prayer (John 9:31; Proverbs 28:9; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38), God is the Father of his children only; God is not the Father of the devil's children (John 8:44; 1 John 3:10). Only those who have been born of water and of the Spirit have the right to address God as their Father in heaven (John 3:3-5; Acts 2:36-38; 22:16; Romans 6:3-4).

I know that a preacher may not have time to discuss all the Bible has to say on every subject. But I am disturbed when some truth is constantly avoided because of unbelief! I am disturbed when a so-called gospel preacher pays lip service to the word of God, and goes on preaching the doctrines and commandments of men (Matthew 15:9; Mark 7:1-13; II Timothy 4:1-8).

## Christ, the Answer

Dalton Key

Christ invites, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30).

In Christ we have the panacea for all the ills of earth. Only Christ can provide true rest. Only Christ can cleanse the sin-stained heart and aid us in our feeble efforts to keep the heart pure. Only Christ can provide us with a shining example of how to live within this robe of flesh so as to please the Father. Only Christ can lead us through death's valley of the shadow into the rest of heaven itself. Yea, as Paul declared, "Christ is all, and in all" (Colossians 3:11).

The coming of Christ brought grace and truth, hence it also revealed life and peace. "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). As a result, Christ was able to affirm, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). Likewise, "We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1). This peace-bringing, life-giving salvation is found in no other name but the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12). No wonder Christ invites, "Come unto me".

The answer to life's problems is not found in the bottle, whether it be the pill bottle or the booze bottle. Our ills will not find their cure in either the classroom or the courtroom. The solution will not be found in the pseudo-sage philosophies of twentieth century "free thinkers". Our most plaguing problems are rooted in our one most plaguing problem—sin. Because only Christ can provide remission of sins, only Christ is the answer, the solution, to life's problems.

Christ was right when he affirmed, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6).

## The Bible is Wonderful

Roy Beasley

The Bible is a wonderful book. It is the book of books. It is the impregnable rock upon which Christianity is built. It is the Magna Charta of human rights. It is the Declaration of Independence from the oppressions of ignorance and superstitions. It is



the Emancipation of the souls of men. Someone has observed that the four men who have stood nearest to the outgoings of human liberty and progress were: John Wycliff, the translator of the Bible. John Huss, the martyr who died to vindicate its right to be studied. Johannes Gutenberg, who first printed it. Martin Luther, who first made it the theme of his preaching.

The Bible is a wonderful book because of its Divine revelation. The holy men of God wrote as they were guided by the Holy Spirit. (2 Pet. 1:21) "All scripture is given by inspiration of God . . ." (2 Tim. 3:16).

It's wonderful because of its persistent freshness. Why is it that men never tire of reading the Bible and hearing its truth expounded? It is like an inexhaustible mine of wealth. It is like a fountain that never runs dry. It is like the widow's oil and meal that nourished Elijah. Men have drawn from the unsearchable riches of this incomparable book for centuries, yet it remains as fresh as ever. It has been studied more microscopically than any other book. Thousands of commentaries have been written upon it. Millions of sermons have been preached from its texts. Yes, the Bible is inexhaustible. It is the bread of life, and no matter how many slices we cut from it each day, there is plenty left. The works of men become stale and obsolete, but not the Bible.

The Bible is wonderful because of its amazing unity. The unique circumstances under which it was written makes its unity a wonder indeed. It was written on at least two continents in at least three languages. It was completed over a period of sixteen hundred years by some forty writers. It was written under a variety of conditions: in tents, deserts, cities, palaces, dungeons, in times of danger and in time of joy. Yet, when the various parts of the Bible were put together it fitted together as a complete whole without a single contradiction nor discrepancy. How could this be? There is but one answer: God was the controlling mind behind it all.

The influence of the Bible in the world is nothing less than wonderful. Because of the influence of the Bible the human being

has been elevated to his rightful place. Oppression of the poor and slavery have been greatly reduced. The position of woman has been elevated. Morality has been increased. Totalitarianism has been eliminated. Education flourishes, illiteracy abolished. The Bible has done more to emancipate and civilize the world than all the might of men combined. Eliminate the influence of the Bible from the great musical themes and composition and you have little worthy music left. Strip away the Biblical principles from the great poems and they lose their beauty. Remove from the walls of the art galleries the paintings which portray Bible scenes and people and you rob art of its masterpieces. Take away from our statue books, those laws based upon Biblical principles and you destroy our civilization. Take away from the libraries of the world those books which deal directly or indirectly with the Bible and you destroy our best reading. Yes, the Bible is wonderful. It has been felt in every segment of society and culture.

## The One Body

Philip C. Wilkerson

Much of God's World, the Bible, relies on the reader's common sense about familiar ideas and concepts to illustrate and to explain spiritual truths and concepts. In fact, one of the primary rules of Biblical interpretation states that the common sense meaning of a passage should be considered the true meaning unless the passage clearly indicates otherwise. Writing by the inspiration of God's Holy Spirit, the apostle Paul used this common sense approach by explaining the church as the spiritual body of Christ.

I Corinthians 12:12: "For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ." Paul makes his point by appealing to a common fact: every human body is made up of many individual parts (members), yet together, all the members constitute one body. The same point can be made about the body of

**Christ: it is made up of many parts (individual Christians), but all the members form one body. How do we know Paul is referring to individual Christians as members of Christ's body? Read further. Verse 27 states: "Now you (i.e., the Corinthian readers) are the body of Christ, and members individually." Romans 12:4 states lucidly that Christians are members of Christ's body: "For as we have many members in one body, all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another." These verses teach that the body of Christ is composed of Christians, and that Christ only has one body.**

In his letter to the Christians at Colosse and Ephesus, Paul expands on the "one body" concept. Just as our bodies have only one head, so the body of Christ has only one head. Colossians 1: 18 states emphatically, "He (Christ) is the head of the body, the church." Ephesians 1:22-23 says that God "put all things under His [Christ's] feet and give Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body." We learn two things from these verses: 1) the church has only one head; Christ. 2) The church is the body of Christ. Therefore, those who are members of Christ's body (as Romans 12: 4 states) are members of the church over which Christ is the head.

Ephesians 4:4 and 5:23 further re-iterate the "one head, one body" concept. In fact, Ephesians 5 goes on to explain the relationship of Christ and the church by comparing it to the husband-wife relationship. Just as the husband is the head of the wife, and the two form one body, so Christ is the head of the church, and the two form one body. Ephesians 5:30-32 states: "For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the Church."

In summary then, these verses teach that Christ is the head of His one spiritual body. There is only one head, and there is only one body. Christ's spiritual body, His church, is made up of His followers.

Even Christ Himself taught that there would be only one head and only one body. In Matthew 16: 18, Christ said, "I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." First of all, Christ uses the word "I." No other person was going to build the one church which would be Christ's body. When Christ said, "I will build my church," that excluded all other builders from building Christ's church, and it excluded all other churches from wearing the name of Christ. The word "my" signifies ownership. The one church that Christ built belongs to Him; Christ's church is the one that He Himself built.

Notice also that Christ says "church." He didn't say "churches." Christ only built one church, and that church is His one body (Ephesians 1: 22-23). He said that against "it" ("it" means "one"), the gates of Hades would not prevail. Christ only intended to build one church, and He made that intention quite clear. Thus, there is only one church which belongs to Christ. There is only one body which Christ calls His own. Just as a human body has only one head, so Christ is the one head of His one body, His church, which He built.

But, you may be asking, "why is it so important to understand that there is only one body?" The Bible says that in order to be saved from eternal damnation in Hell (the consequences of disobeying God), you must be a member of Christ's body. Ephesians 5: 23 says: "Christ is the head of the Church; and He is the Savior (i.e., redeemer) of the body." If one is not in the body, he cannot be saved by the Savior. We have seen proof from the Bible that Christ has only one body (I Corinthians 12: 12), and that the body of Christ is the church that Christ built (Matthew 16 : 18). The obvious question is, "Since there is only one body (the church) which Christ will save, how does one get into the body of Christ? The Bible provides the answer.

Look again at I Corinthians 12:12-13: "For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks,

whether slaves or free." This verse teaches that baptism puts one into the body of Christ. But what is baptism ?

The English word "baptize" is a transliteration (a letter for letter substitution) of the Greek word "baptizo," which means "to immerse completely." From two New Testament examples, we learn that people who were baptized, were baptized in water (see Acts 8: 36-38 and Acts 10: 47). The Bible further teaches that the act of baptism puts us into the body of Christ. Acts 2:47: "And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved." According to Acts 2:38-41 "those who were saved" were the ones who were being baptized.

Clearly then, baptism puts one into the body of Christ. The body of Christ, therefore, consists of those who have been saved. Jesus himself made the connection between baptism and salvation in Mark 16:16; "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned."

There is nothing miraculous in the water. Baptism is simply an outward sign of belief in Christ and His word, and your commitment of obedience to it. Baptism is a symbol of the blood of Christ, and it is the blood of Christ that saves you from your sins. The Bible says that Christ "purchased" the church (His body) "with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). Furthermore, the Bible says that we are "redeemed" with the "precious blood of Christ" (I Peter 1:18-19). Thus, all those who are redeemed by the blood are in the blood-bought church, the one body. The following verses also teach that the blood of Christ washes away sins. "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace" (Ephesians 1:7). "The blood of Jesus Christ . . . cleanses us from all sin" (I John 1:7). "To Him who . . . washed us from our sins in His own blood, . . . to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen" (Revelation 1:5-6).

The Bible plainly connects baptism and the blood of Christ. This point is illustrated in I Peter 3:21. Drawing from the old Testament story of Noah and the ark (Genesis 7:1, 13, 17-18;

8:13, 15-17) Peter says that "eight souls were saved through water. There is also an antitype (i. e., a symbol of being saved through water) which now saves us, namely baptism." Furthermore, Acts 22:16 says that baptism washes away sins: "And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord." The only logical conclusion one can draw from these verses is that through the physical act of baptism, one comes into contact with the spiritual blood of Christ. Clearly then, baptism is essential for salvation. Once you have been baptized, you are added to Christ's body, the church.

Since it is only in the one body of Christ that a person can be saved, you must determine whether or not you are in that body. Ask yourself these questions:

1. Have I been baptized in water in order for my sins to be washed away by the blood of Christ?
2. Am I worshipping with other members of the body of Christ who observe all the Biblical forms of worship that God has commanded, without adding anything that is not in the Bible?

If you would like to know where other members of the one body of Christ meet near you, write to the editor in care of this magazine.

## Faith-Proving Action

Johnny Ramsey

It is evident from a study of the glorious book of Acts that the early Christians taught daily, publicly and privately (Acts 5:42), the unsearchable riches of Christ (Eph. 3:8-11). They took seriously the challenge of Christ's great commission (Matt. 28) as they emblazoned the glad tidings of redemption in their age. How was it possible to get so much done with so few so soon?

Besides the poverty and persecution that surrounded them, we can readily discern the enmity of Judaism, Gnosticism, Romanism and Paganism on every hand. However, according to 1 Cor. 16:9, they believed that tribulation and open doors of evangelism went together. Paul could write of "*saints in Caesar's household*" (Phill 4:22) even while in a prison cell under Neronian persecution!

Heroic preaching, like Paul set forth before Felix and King Agrippa (Acts 24:25; 26:29), will still cause sinners to tremble and be persuaded to obey the '*King of kings and Lord of lords*' (Rev. 17:14). May we ever be loyal to the Lord, persevering and joyous as we share the sweet story of God's redeeming love and His matchless grace,

The book of Acts occupies a unique position in the New Testament. In many ways the book is the pivotal section of the whole Bible. Historically, it meshes prophecy and fulfillment cogently in the events of Pentecost (Acts 2). Fundamentally, Acts serves as the history book of the New Testament as it provides background material for other books. For instance, Galatians goes back to chapters 13 and 14, and the first tour of evangelism that Paul and Barnabas engaged in for the Master. Philippians is based upon the events chronicled in Acts 16 while chapter 17 introduces the Thessalonian epistles. Corinth received two letters from Paul that reflect the tremendous start of Christianity there as depicted in Acts 18. The grand treatise of Ephesians is built upon the dramatic events of Acts 19 and 20.

The New Testament has four major stanzas. First, in Matthew through John, we learn of the life of Jesus Christ. Next in Acts, we are taught how to become a Christian. The third section, Romans through Jude, sets forth how to live the Christian life. The last section is the final book, Revelation. Which informs us of the hope which Christians possess.

The clarity of the cases of conversion in this fifth New Testament book naturally coincides with the plan of salvation which Jesus had previously told His disciples to proclaim. All accountable beings in the gospel age must:

1. Believe the message of Christ's glorious gospel, or die in their sins (Jno. 8:24; Acts 16:31-35; Mk. 16:16).
2. Repent of their iniquities, or perish. (Lk. 13:3,5; Acts 2:38; 17:30).
3. Be baptized, upon confession of faith in Him (Acts 8:12; 8:26-39; 22:16; Gal. 3:27).
4. Remain faithful and loyal to the Saviour (Rev. 2:10; Gal. 6:9; 2 Pet. 3:17-18).

The book of Acts powerfully sets forth the establishment of the church of our Lord, which He built (Matt. 16:18) and to which He adds the saved (Acts 2:47). The beauty and necessity of this blood-bought organism (Acts 20:28) is stressed. Verily, Christ is glorified in His church forever (Eph. 3:21).

## The Foolishness of God

"Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men." (1 Cor. 1:25).

### I. Introduction

- A. "It is not in man that walketh to direct his own steps". (Jer. 10:23).
- B. "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man but the end thereof are the ways of death". (Prov. 14:12).
- C. "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways, my ways' saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." (Isa. 55:8, 9).
- D. One of man's greatest errors is to try to find a way of salvation that is reasonable and logical to the human mind. Christianity is a matter of faith, not logic. (2 Cor. 5:7).



## II. Examples of the Principle

### A. NAAMAN, A GREAT MAN, WAS A LEPER. (2 Kings 5).

1. Leprosy was an incurable disease except by divine intervention.
2. The little maid who was taken captive wanted Naaman to go to the prophet in Israel that he might be healed.
3. The King of Syria wrote a letter to the King of Israel and Naaman carried it to him.
4. The King could not help him but God's prophet sent for Naaman to come to his house.
5. The prophet told Naaman: "Dip seven times in Jordan and be healed".
6. Naaman became angry—"he went into a rage". The remedy was too simple. It was foolish to him.
7. But he changed his mind, did what God commanded, and was healed.
8. What a foolish remedy! What cured him? Was it the water in the Jordan River? No. God did it. Could God have done it some other way? Yes, but he didn't.

### B. GOD GAVE JOSHUA THE CITY OF JERICHO (Josh. 6).

1. But Joshua and his men of war were required to march around the walls one time each day for six days and seven times on the seventh day. The priests were to sound the horns and the peoples were to shout, and the walls would fall down and they could possess the city.
2. God gave them the city but they had something to do before they received it.
3. It was grace on God's part plus obedience on Joshua's part.
4. What caused the walls of Jericho to fall? Was it the

marching? **No.** Was it the horn shouting? **No.** Was it the shouting? **No.** God caused the walls to fall. But when? When and only when Joshua and his men did what God commanded.

5. Could God have done it some other way? Certainly, upon any condition or without conditions, but after he gave his word, it must be obeyed.

### **C. THE ISRAELITES WERE BITTEN BY FIERY SERPENTS. (Num. 21).**

1. God told Moses to place a brazen serpent on a pole and command the Israelites who were bitten by the fiery serpents "to look and live".
2. They did exactly as they were commanded and were healed.
3. What a foolish remedy for poisonous snake bites! What cured them? Was it the brazen serpent? **No.** Was it the pole? **No.**
4. God healed them. Could he have done it some other way? **Yes.** but he didn't. God's word must be obeyed even though it may seem foolish to man.
5. It was the grace of God, plus faith and obedience on the part of the Israelites, that healed these people.

### **D. CHRIST HEALED A MAN BORN BLIND (Jno. 9).**

1. Christ spat on the ground and made spittle and anointed the blind man's eyes, and commanded him to "go, wash in the pool of Siloam".
2. The poor blind man did exactly as he was told and he saw the light of day for the first time.
3. What caused the blind man to receive his sight? Was it the spittle? **No.** Was it the clay? **No.** Was it the water in the pool? **No.**
4. It was the power of God manifested by the Lord Jesus Christ. It was grace coupled with faith and obedience.

5. The world would call this foolishness, but remember "the foolishness of God is wiser than men and the weakness of God is stronger than men". To the blind man it was not foolishness.

### III. WHAT ARE THE CONDITIONS OF SALVATION?

- A. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved". (Mk. 16:16).
  - B. Who shall be saved? He that believeth only? No. He that is baptized only? No. Who then? He that believeth and is baptized.
  - C. "But he that believeth not shall be damned". (Mk. 16:16). Why did the Lord not say: "He that believeth not and is not baptized shall be damned"? Because he that believeth not is damned already. (Jno. 3:18).
  - D. The Lord said in Mk. 16:16 there are two things one must do to be saved—believe and be baptized. But he that believeth not shall be damned; he could not be baptized. A failure to be baptized cannot damn him any more.
  - E. The disbeliever cannot repent, confess Christ, be baptized or eat the Lord's Supper. Everything that one does in becoming a Christian or in living the Christian life is by faith.
- F. SOME EXAMPLES PARALLEL TO MARK 16:16
1. "He that goeth out of the building and crosses the street shall receive a hundred rupees but he that goeth not out of the building shall not receive the money". There is no reason to add: And does not cross the street shall not receive the money". He cannot cross the street if he stays in the building.
  2. "He that eats food and digests shall have good health". "But he that eats not shall die." There is no need to add: "And digesteth it not" shall die. He will not die of indigestion if he does not eat.

3. **A True-False Test (Place the correct answer in the blank).**
- a. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mk. 16:16).....
  - b. He that believeth and is not baptized shall be saved. (Men).....
- G. To men the conditions of salvation may seem foolish but God's ways and thoughts are above his. We must obey God rather than men.
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## FORM IV

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