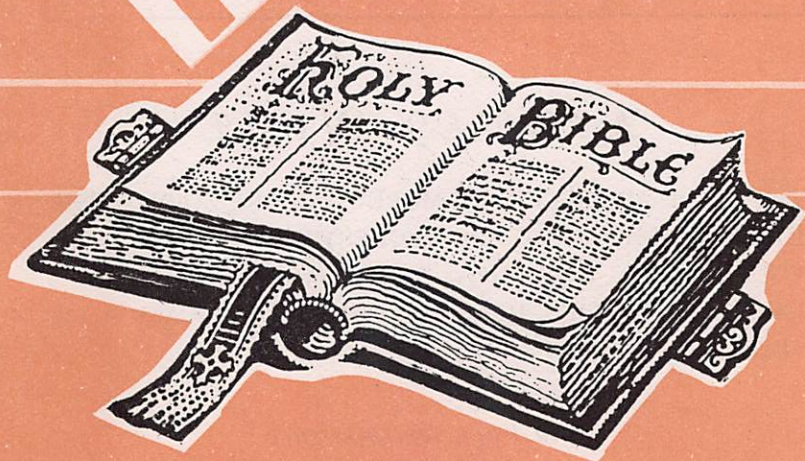


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EDITORIAL

Learning To Be Responsible

The Preacher at the close of his book of Ecclesiastes wrote, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether it is good or whether it is evil." (Ecclesiastes 12:13,14). This shows that each one of us is liable to be called to give an account, we are answerable and morally accountable for each action. Animals will not face God in judgment, but all humans will, because we are made in the likeness and after the image of God. As humans, we are spiritual beings, and therefore are eternal. We are going to live forever, like God, after whose likeness we are made. We cannot wipe ourselves out of existence. Accidents, diseases, old age and calamities can destroy our bodies, but as spirits or souls we are going to live forever. And we have to decide in this life where we want to go and live forever. We are not going to be reborn and come back again on this earth. Because the Bible plainly teaches that with men God has appointed once to die and then face the judgment of God. (Hebrews 9:27). There are only two places where people after death are going to live eternally and the Bible describes them as hell and heaven. Christ prewarned, as He spoke about the wicked and the unsaved, He said, "And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but righteous into eternal life." (Matthew 25:46).

Christ is our example, says 1 Peter 2:21. As we look on the life of Christ we learn that He accepted and fulfilled His responsibilities. Even

when He was young, He told His mother that "I must be about my Father's business." (Luke 2:49). At the outset of His Ministry He came to be baptized. And when John showed reluctance to baptize Him, He said, "Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." (Matthew 3:15). The Bible teaches that Christ was in the form of God, yet He did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation and took upon Him the form of a servant and came on earth in the likeness of men, to save humanity from their sins, because He realised that man cannot save himself from his sin. And all have sinned. Christ learned obedience by the things which He suffered. (Hebrews 5:8). He saw the need of perishing humanity and He came down and offered Himself to fulfill that need. When He was dying at the cross, and as He looked down and saw His mother weeping, He said to her, "Woman, behold your son!" Then He said to one of His disciples, "Behold your mother!" (John 19:26,27). He knew his mother needed someone to look after her in her old age. Christ chose to be responsible. He fulfilled all His responsibilities. For Him it was written: "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." (Luke 2:52).

Do you realise your responsibilities, towards God and men? Are you living upto the expectations of God before whom you will stand one day to give an account? God expects from all of us to "seek first the kingdom of God and His Righteousness." (Matthew 6:33). That is to say, that our first concern must be to do the will of God. In everything that we do and say we should try to ascertain beforehand whether it would please God or not. He expects from all of us to believe in Christ that He is the Son of God, who is the propitiation for our sins, and then repent of our sins and be baptized for the forgiveness of our sins, to be saved and to be reconciled with Him. (John 3:16; 1 John 4:10; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Acts 8:36-39).

We are responsible for ourselves. To Christians at Corinth Paul wrote: "Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Corinthians 6:19,20). How are you using the members of your body? To Timothy, Paul wrote, "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God . . ." (2 Timothy 2:15). Does God approve your actions, your speech, your habits and the way you live? According to the Bible, each one will receive the things done in the body, according to what one has done, on the day of judgment. We are responsible for our bodies and also for our souls. Christ said, "For what

will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul?" (Mark 8:36).

We are responsible for our children whom we have received from God. Parents are taught to bring up their children in the training and admonition of the Lord. (Ephesians 6:4). We need to see that our children study the Bible. God's word, that they attend Bible classes and worship services of the church. Likewise, children have the responsibility of obeying their parents and to honor their fathers and mothers. (Ephesians 6:1,2).

Husbands and wives have God given responsibilities towards each other too. We read, "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Saviour of the body. Therefore just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it." (Ephesians 5:22-25). Wife need to accept husband as the head, and husband must love the wife as Christ loved the church. This is God's arrangement for families. When this is not followed, there are problems.

Each Christian has some responsibilities towards the church. From Christ we learn that He loved the church so much that He gave himself for her. How much do you love the church for which Christ shed His blood. (Acts 20:28). Shouldn't we have the same mind or the attitude that Christ had? Yet many are asking, What the church has done for me? or What the church is doing for me? Instead of doing somethings for the church, giving to the church, they want church to do something or give something to them! We need to give of our time, money, and efforts for the church, because the church has a much greater task to fulfill. Christ came to save the lost in sin. And He left the message of salvation with His church. It is the responsibility of the church to preach the soul-saving gospel of Christ. We are responsible to others. If we will not do what we are expected by God to do, and what we can do, then we need to remember that, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." (Hebrews 10:31).

What Baptism Will Not Do

J.C. CHOATE

The Bible teaches baptism. It teaches that it saves (1 Peter 3:21),

that one must believe and be baptized to be saved (Mark 16:16), that it is for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38), that it puts one into Christ and the church (Romans 6:3,4; 1 Corinthians 12:13), and that it makes the new birth possible. (John 3:3-5). It should be understood, however, that baptism does all of these things, and more, only when it is done in the framework of hearing and understanding God's word, having faith in God and Christ as the Son of God, repenting or turning away from all sin, and confessing with the mouth that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. (Romans 10:17; Hebrews 11:6; John 3:16; Luke 13:3; Matthew 10:32,33). Such is to say that baptism is a command, in a series of commands, which results in one's salvation when it is obeyed and carried out according to God's will.

If baptism then is a command of God, or a condition of salvation, which must be complied with in order for one to be saved, then it means also that if baptism is not done according to the Lord's instruction, it cannot save or put one into Christ and his church. Let us therefore notice some things that baptism will not do.

Baptism, alone, will not save. That is, baptism of and by itself will not save anyone. There is but one baptism (Ephesians 4:5) but that one baptism must be preceded by several conditions that the Lord has specified in his word in order for baptism to be of any significance to the one who is complying with it. Actually, according to the scripture, no *one* thing saves us, but it is in compliance with a multiplicity of things that ends in one's salvation.

Baptism will not save infants or babies. It was never directed to them. One must *hear* God's word, *understand* it, and *believe* it to act on it. Infants cannot do this. (Romans 10:17; Mark 16:16). What is their status, then? They have no sin, they are not lost; they are safe. It is only when they grow up and learn right from wrong that they become sinners and need to be saved. (Romans 3:23; Romans 6:23).

Baptism will not save even an adult or an accountable being if he does not know God's will or understand what he is doing. In all of the cases of conversion in the book of Acts, we are told that the gospel was preached and it was only when people understood the teaching of God's word and believed in the Lord that they were ready to be baptized. For instance, there are those who are influenced by their friends to be immersed, but they are not saved. They do not understand the meaning and purpose of baptism. They are simply doing what their friend is doing. Many others do not understand that baptism has anything to do with their salvation. They are immersed because they believe that they are already saved, and therefore want to follow the example of Christ in

baptism. Since they have a faulty understanding of baptism, even though they are immersed in water, they are not saved. In this case baptism, cannot, and will not save them.

Baptism will not save a person if he does not believe in God or if he is unwilling to confess Christ as being the Son of God. Again, one might have certain motives for baptism, but still he might not believe to the point that he is willing to confess Christ as Lord before others. In that case, baptism cannot save him. The Bible clearly teaches that without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6) and Paul said that confession is made unto salvation. The confession of which he was speaking has reference to confessing Christ as the Lord of the universe (Romans 10:9,10), as did the man from Ethiopia in Acts 8.

Baptism will not save, apart from repentance or turning away from one's sins. Christ said that one must repent or perish. (Luke 13:3). Paul said that God commands all men everywhere to repent. (Acts 17:30). Peter and the apostles commanded the people in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost to repent and be baptized for the remission of their sins. (Acts 2:38). You see in this case that repentance and baptism are directly linked and when the command is obeyed the result is the remission of sins. But without one's willingness to repent there can be no forgiveness, even though one is willing to be baptized. That is why the Lord Himself does the saving because he knows when a person genuinely obeys him, and he knows when the actions performed are not acceptable.

Baptism will not save when it is not done by the authority of the Lord. Christ has all authority in heaven and earth (Matthew 28:18), and therefore whatever he says we must do, we must do in just that way. We are told that salvation is only in the name of Christ (Acts 4:12), and therefore it is only through his authority that we must be baptized, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 28:19,20).

Baptism will not take the place of worship or the Christian life. It will not replace faithfulness. Baptism will not keep one from sinning or from being tempted. While baptism will save, put one into Christ and the church, and enable him to live the Christian life, provided he is baptized according to the teaching of God's word, there are many other things baptism will not do. This means that one must understand what baptism will do and what it will not do, if he is to be in position to make wise spiritual decisions.

Please understand that one doesn't obey God by accident, and neither is one saved or added to the church by accident. One must know and understand God's will to comply with it and to be benefitted by

it. Once one does comply with God's will, he will not end up in some denominational or man-made church and wearing the names of men. When one truly obeys God, he will know it and the Lord will know it, and the Lord will save him and add him to his church. That person will know that he has been saved and that he is a member of Christ's church.

Have you been scripturally baptized? If you have not, you need to continue to read and study God's word and obey him so that you may be saved and be a member of the Lord's family, the church, the one which wears his name. Please let us know if we can be of assistance to you in your obedience.

Especially For Women

"Can Women Pray?"

BETTY BURTON CHOATE

There are many different beliefs about women and their relationship about God. Some would teach that women cannot come into God's presence to worship and pray as men do. In other systems, women may even do most of the public leading in worship.

Our question is, "What does the Bible teach about women and their worship and prayers to God?"

First, we must distinguish again between the laws of the Old Testament and the New Testament. In the early years of man's existence, God spoke directly to godly men who were heads of households. We see this in the case of Noah when God told him to build the great ark so that his family could be saved from the flood, according to Genesis 6-9. Further along in time, God directed Abraham to leave his home and to go by faith to the land God was promising to his children. This part of man's history is recorded in Genesis 11-25.

Later, in dealing with Abraham's descendants, the nation of Israel, God gave a written law through Moses because of their repeated problems with idolatry. Under this law there was a priestly system for the offering of gifts and sacrifices which the people made to God. The priests were men, chosen from the tribe of Levi only. We see from Leviticus 8 & 9 that the law specified in detail about the priests and their work.

But what was the purpose of the Mosaic law? Galatians 3:19 explains, ". . . It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed

should come . . .", that is, until Christ would come, according to verse 16. "Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ . . . For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus." (Galatians 3:24,26).

So, Christians live under a new law, the Law of Christ. What is the woman's role in this age? Can she be saved? Can she worship? Can she pray? Can she direct the worship of others? Is her work as a Christian approved by God?

The verses in Galatians 3:26-28 explain how we become the children of God, and also whether God shows preference to one nation or one group of people over another. "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

These verses teach us that under the law of Christ, God recognizes every person as a soul, and there is no preference as was necessary in the past, choosing one people over another, or recognizing one tribe, or dealing first with men as heads of houses. Today, God sees two groups: those who have been united with Him in Christ Jesus, and those who have not become His children. Pertaining to those in Christ, He says that we are all one, regardless of nationality, gender, or economic status.

This means that a woman's soul is as precious in the sight of God as a man's. It means that her sins can be forgiven, and she can depend on God's promises to hear and answer her prayers. 1 Peter 3:7 speaks of husbands and wives being heirs together of the grace of life, and this verse also gives instructions so that ". . . your prayers may not be hindered."

We read in numerous verses about women being workers in the church. Romans 16:1 mentions, "Phoebe, our sister, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea." Verse 3 says, "Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus." Verse 6 adds, "Greet Mary, who labored much for us." In Acts 16 we read of the conversion of a woman named Lydia. Her immediate desire was to open her home to Paul and the others in his company. Through hospitality she was able to work as a Christian.

During the years Jesus was teaching throughout Israel and training his disciples, women also traveled with the group. Matthew 27:55 says, "And many women who followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to Him, were there . . ." Luke 8:3 explains further that they, "... provided for Him from their substance." When Jesus was

resurrected from the tomb, it was to a woman—Mary Magdalene—that He first appeared. John 20:18 states, "Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things to her."

So, as Christians, men and women are of equal value to God, and both can pray and work in His kingdom. However, in one area of work in the New Testament, restrictions apply to women, to keep the man and woman roles in the proper perspective. By inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Paul wrote to Timothy, "Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control." These words not only restrict women regarding public leadership in worship, but they also explain why. 1 Corinthians 11:3 explains further ". . . the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God."

Therefore, because woman was made from man, and because Eve led Adam in their disobedience to God, God made the man the head of the family, to lead and protect the wife and the children who are dependent on him. Even in public worship, this leadership of the men is ordained by God and must be respected by women.

However, outside of public worship, women are taught to be ". . . teachers of good things—that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed." (Titus 2:3-5).

Understanding and accepting God's design for the family—the design which stresses man's leadership and care for the woman—does not mean that women are inferior to men or that their souls are not of equal value in God's sight. Therefore, any statement made in the scriptures regarding the Christian's personal relationship to God applies to men and women alike.

Can women lift their voices and hearts to God in prayer? We are taught, "Pray without ceasing." (1 Thessalonians 5:17) Hebrews 4:16 encourages us, "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." We are to be ". . . praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—" (Ephesians 6:18) Peter teaches us, ". . . be serious and watchful in your prayers." (1 Peter 4:7).

God's thoughts for us are written in the Bible. Our thoughts to Him are prayers. As long as these lines of communication are open, Christian women can be secure in their relationship with God as His faithful children.

The Word Of The Cross

JAMES S. RICKARD

"For the word of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us who are saved it is the power of God." (1 Corinthians 1:18.)

The word of the cross, the gospel of Christ, is the most powerful message ever heard in heaven or on earth. (Romans 1:16.) For three years Christ and his selected disciples went about preparing the way for the ultimate message of the gospel. Before that, John the Baptist went about preparing Israel for the coming Messiah (Christ). For the most part, the Jews (his own people) rejected Christ and his message. (John 1:11.) They became his "betrayers and murderers." (Acts 7:52.)

At Calvary the enemies of Jesus Christ thought they had forever silenced him and his message. "And they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying. Ha! thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself, and come down from the cross." (Mark 15:29, 30.) For sure, they thought they had put him to silence. They were wrong! They thought he was an imposter. They were looking for a "conquering hero." But the world was ready and the time was right for the word of the cross. (Galatians 4:4, 5.) Instead of a conquering hero the Jews and the rest of the world needed a savior. At Calvary, the word of the cross was silenced but only temporarily.

On Pentecost, fifty days after Calvary, the Holy Spirit of truth (John 16:13) descended on Jerusalem with "a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind" and brought the powerful word of the cross. (Acts 1:8, 2:1-4.) Peter, previously chosen by the Christ (Matthew 16:18, 19), broke the good news and about three thousand souls were saved the first day the word of the cross was proclaimed. (Acts 2:14ff.) Even then the Jews tried to silence the message by threatening the messengers and throwing them in jail. (Acts 4:1-12.) But a prison cell could not contain the word of the cross. The number of men alone who had obeyed the word of the cross had now reached about five thousand. (Acts 4:4.) As the good news continued to spread throughout Jerusalem "believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women."

(Acts 5:14.)

Even though the apostles were again imprisoned, the word of the cross could not be silenced. Within a short time "the word of God increased; and the number of disciples multiplied in Jerusalem exceedingly." (Acts 6:7.) The word of the cross was now being heard everywhere in the city. However, the stone walls surrounding Jerusalem could not contain the good news. (Acts 1:8.)

When the Jews saw they could not silence the word of the cross they inflicted great persecution against the church and scattered the followers of Jesus abroad. (Acts 8:1.) They thought this would silence the message. How foolish! They didn't realize they were helping to spread the word of the cross. (Acts 8:4ff.) Now, the message was being preached even to the hated Samaritans.

The apostles, who remained in Jerusalem after the persecution were concerned and wanted to "look into the matter." They sent Peter and John to Samaria to see about it. They found the matter to be true and preached the gospel to many villages while there. (Acts 8:25.) Now, the gospel had spread throughout Judaea and Samaria. But the boundaries of these provinces could not contain the word of the cross. The time had come for it to go "unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1:8.)

Again, Peter was privileged to break the good news. This time to the Gentiles. How unthinkable! God tried three times before he convinced Peter that the gospel is for all. (Acts 10:1-16.) The Jews simply could not accept the fact that salvation in Christ is for the Gentiles also. When Peter returned to Jerusalem after preaching the word of the cross to Cornelius and his household the Jewish brothers in Christ in Judaea and Jerusalem contended with him because he had preached to the Gentiles. However, after hearing the marvelous story of how the Gentiles had heard and received the word of the cross, the Jewish brethren rejected and glorified God.

The great apostle Paul, who had previously persecuted the church, and had members of it imprisoned and even put to death, was chosen by God to take the word of the cross to the uttermost parts of the earth. Through his mighty efforts the gospel was preached. multitudes of souls were converted to Christ, and churches were established throughout the Roman Empire. Thus during his lifetime the gospel was preached in all the world. (Colossians 1:6, 23.) Still, the gospel was opposed by unbelieving Jews wherever it was proclaimed. They succeeded in killing the messenger, but they were unable to silence the word of the cross.

Will the word of the cross be silenced in our time before another generation hears it? The Jews have never been able to silence it, but Christians can, and may, if it isn't preached with the fervor and zeal that characterized first century preaching. Even though it is still foolishness to them that are perishing, it is the only power God has for saving lost souls. It has been in "earthen vessels" for almost two thousand years. If we don't proclaim it no one else will. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation." (Mark 16:15.) First century Christians did it, and so can we.

The Resurrection of Christ

KYLE McWHORTER

Jesus foretold his resurrection from the dead. When he came to Jerusalem to the temple and saw those that sold sheep, oxen and doves and the money changers sitting, he made a scourge of small cords and drove them out. The Jews then asked for a sign. He said unto them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." (John 2:19.) This statement was a prediction of the resurrection of his body. While Jesus abode with his disciples in Galilee he said to them. "The Son of man shall be betrayed into hands of men: and they shall kill him and **THE THIRD DAY HE SHALL BE RAISED** again. And they were exceeding sorry." (Matthew 17:22-23.)

ONE OF THE CARDINAL DOCTRINES

The resurrection of our Lord is one of the cardinal doctrines of the New Testament. It also is one of the three great facts of the gospel of Christ. Paul said, "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also you have received and wherein ye stand: by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all the which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures: and that he was buried, and **THAT HE ROSE AGAIN THE THIRD DAY** according to the scriptures." (1 Corinthians 15:1-4.)

Every claim that Jesus ever made while he walked the dusty plains of Palestine, was proven to be true when he came forth from the grave. Paul said, "And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." (Romans 1:4.)

If Christ was not raised from the dead, there is no hope for men in general. There will be no resurrection of the dead. (1 Corinthians 15:18.) However, Christ did arise, and his resurrection is proof that one day all the dead will come forth from their graves. (1 Corinthians 15:19-23.) The central theme of the preaching of the apostles, in the first century, was the resurrection of Christ. (Acts 2:14-36).

HIS DEATH, BURIAL AND RESURRECTION

There are several things to be noted about the death of Jesus. The death that he died was violent. It was by crucifixion. (John 19:15-18; Philippians 2:5-11.) It was a slow and excruciating death; a death that was usually reserved by the Romans for the vilest of criminals.

It should be noted also that our Savior's death was voluntary. Christ himself said, "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to GIVE HIS LIFE a ransom for many." (Matthew 20:28.) Jesus again said, "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I LAY DOWN MY LIFE. that I might take it again. NO MAN TAKETH IT FROM ME, BUT I LAY IT DOWN OF MYSELF. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." (John 10:17-18.)

Christ's crucifixion was also vicarious. He died for sinful man. (1 Corinthians 15:3; Hebrews 2:9; 1 John 2:2.) There is no doubt that Jesus died on the cross. The soldiers who came to break the legs of those on the three crosses to hasten their death, recognized that Christ was already dead and did not break his legs. The Bible says, "But one of the soldiers pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water." (John 19:34.) The intermingling of the blood and water that came from the side of the Lord is evidence that he had already died.

Joseph of Arimathæa and Nicodemus came to Pilate and requested the body of Jesus. After having inquired as to the death of the Savior. Pilate gave them permission to take the body from the cross. (John 19:38-39; Mark 15:43-45.) These two men who had not consented to the death of Christ, wrapped his body in linen clothes and placed it in a new tomb. (John 19:40-42.) In order to make sure that the friends of the Lord did not come and steal his body, the tomb was sealed, and soldiers were assigned to guard it. (Matthew 27:62-66.) Thus it can be seen that the authorities took great precautionary measures to see that the body of Jesus remained in the tomb. However, despite all of these precautions, the tomb did not hold him. On the third day, the first day of the week, the Lord arose just as he said that he would. (Luke 24:1-6, 13, 21.)

PROOF OF HIS RESURRECTION

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is denied by the so-called modernists, and others of our day. However, there are millions of the sons of Adam's race who believe it without any reservations. The faith of the child of God in the resurrection of Christ is based upon indisputable facts; facts that cannot be successfully denied. Some of those facts are the following.

THE EMPTY TOMB. That the tomb was empty, there is no doubt. The women who came to anoint his body, and the soldiers who were on guard at the tomb, admit as much. (Luke 24:1-4; Matthew 27:11-15.) How can one account for the empty tomb? His enemies claimed that his disciples stole the body away while the guards slept. (Matthew 27:12-15.) But, this cannot be true, because the apostles, with the exception of John, died proclaiming his resurrection. They would not have given their lives for something they knew was not true.

Others claim that the enemies of Jesus took his body from the tomb. However, if the enemies of the Lord had his body, why did they not present it to refute the preaching of the apostles? The very fact that they did not present it is an indication that they did not have it. Since his friends did not remove the body and his enemies did not possess it, how can one explain the fact that the tomb was empty? The only logical explanation is that Christ arose.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE APOSTLES. In order for one to be an apostle he had to be an eye witness of the resurrection of Christ. (Acts 1:15-22, 26:16; 1 Corinthians 9:1.) These apostles of the Lord bore testimony to the fact of Christ's resurrection. (Acts 2:29-32, 3:15, 4:10, 4:33.) The testimony of these men would be accepted in any court of law today. They were not deceived. They had seen the resurrected Lord.

THE CHANGE IN THE LIVES OF PETER AND SAUL OF TARSUS. When Jesus was being tried, Peter cursed and swore that he did not know Jesus of Nazareth. (Matthew 26:69-74.) Evidently, Peter was afraid for his life. However, several days later, when Peter and John were arrested for preaching the resurrected Christ in Jerusalem they were charged not to preach any more in the name of Christ. Peter was no longer afraid. Very courageously, he declared that it did not matter what the rulers said, and that he must continue proclaiming the gospel of Christ. (Acts 4:19-20, 5:29.)

Saul of Tarsus led the persecution of the saints in Jerusalem. (Acts 8:1.) He obtained letters to Damascus to the synagogues that if he found any Christians there he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. (Acts 9:1-2.) He left for Damascus, and Jesus appeared to him on the

way. When he arrived in the city, he was baptized and began to preach Christ. (Acts 9:3-21.) This educated Jew, in a few days, turned from a persecutor to the persecuted. How can one explain the great change that occurred in the lives of Peter and Saul. There is only one plausible explanation. Christ arose, and these two men saw him and believed.

The Pattern In The Conversion Of Saul

ALBERT GARDNER

Paul, formerly Saul of Tarsus, called himself "the chief of sinners," but the Lord saved him and made him "a-pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting." (1 Timothy 1:15-16.) This means we can be saved the way he was saved.

As he looks back over his life, this great man claimed to be the chief of sinners because he was a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious. He fought against the church even unto death and lived with these memories all his life. That is why he believed he was the worst sinner on earth. He rightly concludes that if God could save him, he could save anyone. His salvation would be a pattern for every one else who wants to be saved. This means if we can find out what the chief of sinners did to be saved, and we do what he did we will be saved. This being true, it is worth the search, for our salvation depends on it.

The first mention of Saul is when they stoned Stephen. "And the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul." (Acts 7:58.) The death of Stephen set off a bloody persecution against Christians which resulted in the spread of the gospel into the whole world. "As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison." (Acts 8:3.) But what did he do to be saved?

He went to the high priest and got letters authorizing him to go to Damascus to bind Christians, whether men or women and bring them back to Jerusalem to be punished. (Acts 9:1,2.) Later, he said, "I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day." (Acts 23:1.) This tells us that honesty alone does not make one right, but we must also do the will of God to be right. (Matthew 7:21.)

On the way to Damascus something very unusual happened to Saul. He saw a light above the brightness of the sun at midday and he

fell to the earth blinded. Was he saved at this point? Must we have such experience to be saved?

Then, a voice said to him in the Hebrew tongue, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Was he saved yet? Must I carry on a conversation in Hebrew before I am saved?

At this point he did not know who was speaking, so he asked, "Who art thou, Lord?" The Lord replied: "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." Then he knew who was talking and he knew who it was he was persecuting. Was he saved? What had he done that I must do to follow the pattern?

After finding out who spoke "he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" He knew he was not saved yet. What had happened up to that time did not save him, so I have learned nothing of the pattern to follow.

Notice the reply to his question. "And the Lord said unto him. Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." He was not saved on the Damascus road, for if he were saved he did not know it, Jesus did not know it, Luke the author of Acts did not know it, and the Holy Spirit who revealed it did not know it! If I am to follow the pattern. I must find out what he was told to do in the city.

The Lord appeared to Ananias and told him to give Saul the answer to his question "What must I do?" If the Bible was ever going to teach the direct dealing of Christ or the Holy Spirit on the sinner's heart, this would have been an excellent time to do it. A sinner asked Jesus what to do to be saved and he did not tell him. Instead, he told him to go into the city and some person would tell him what to do.

Before going back to heaven, Jesus told the apostles to go preach the gospel to every creature, and he did not take that privilege away from them. "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us." (2 Corinthians 4:7.) It is the plan of God for people to tell other people what to do to be saved, and that is the reason Ananias came to Saul. When we learn what this disciple told him to do we will know what to do, for Saul is our pattern.

There are three chapters that tell about the conversion of Saul. In order to know all about it we must read all that is said about it. In Acts 9, 22, 26.

Ananias came to Saul and said, "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22:16.) Saul "arose was baptized." (Acts 9:18.)

Acts 9:1-18 reveals exactly what Saul did, and since he is our

pattern we will know, from that what we must do to be saved.

1. He believed in Christ. At first he did not know who had spoken to him until he asked.

2. He repented. His actions show this for he did not eat or drink for three days.

3. He confessed Christ. After knowing who had spoken, he asked, "Lord, what wilt thou have me do?" He acknowledged him as Lord.

4. He was baptized. This act washed away his sins for it put him in contact with the blood of Christ when he was baptized into the death of Christ. (Romans 6:3.) It is in this way that baptism saves. (1 Peter 3:21.)

We have now seen what the worst sinner in the world did to be saved, and since he is our pattern, we have learned from him what we must do to be saved.

Four P's In A Pod

DONALD LAYMAN

There are four P's that make the church of Christ unique. A departure from any one of these will result in something other than what the word of God intended for the church to be.

THE PATH

The first P is the PATH. Much of the religious world does not place much stock in the "path" we follow to get where we are going. Most often is heard the comment, "Well, we are headed for the same place. We are just traveling different paths to get there." Where do we get the notion that there are "many paths"?

In the world of car races, there is a type of race known as the "Road Rally." The race specifies ONE path (or route) that must be followed. A driver is disqualified and loses the race if he does not follow a predetermined route. There is but one path. Such is also true in matters of religion.

There is only ONE PATH. That path is given to us through God's word. That path is "the way of the cross, the blood-sprinkled way, and the path that the Savior trod."

Proverb 14:12 says, "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." The one true path is lighted by the word of God. The Psalmist wrote, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." (Psalm 119:105.)

Though the religious world at large may profess that we are headed toward the same place, Jesus still asks, "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46.) There is only ONE path that leads to heaven above.

THE PLEA

The second P that makes the church of Christ unique is its PLEA. That plea is to return to the word of God; to speak where the Bible speaks, and to be silent where the Bible is silent. That plea respects the authority of the scriptures, but also respects the silence of the scriptures. Thus, man does not have the right to go beyond what the scriptures teach. 1 Peter 4:11 says, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." All the religious division that is in the world today can be attributed to man's disregard for the authority of the scriptures.

THE PAST

The third P that makes the church of Christ unique is its PAST. To trace the past of the church of Christ, it is necessary to go to Matthew 16:18. There Jesus said, I will build MY CHURCH. Acts chapter 2 tells of the beginning of the church of Christ on the day of Pentecost. The chapter ends with the words "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." Ephesians 1:22, 23 tells us that the church is the body of Christ over which he is head. Ephesians 5:22-32 tells of the great love which Jesus had for his church. Looking at the church of Christ from a more recent past is to find a body of believers bound together by a common faith in the word of God. Rejecting all manmade doctrines, the church of Christ rests on the teachings of the Bible as the only guide for religious teaching and practice. A period known as the Restoration Movement was led in America by many great men of faith who believed that the church of Christ should follow only the Bible as its religious guide for doctrine faith, and practice.

THE PATTERN

The fourth P that makes the church of Christ unique is the word PATTERN. Moses was told by God. "See that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount." (Hebrews 8:5.) The word of God provided Moses with an exact pattern for construction of the tabernacle, and for Old Testament worship. The church of Christ today follows God's divine pattern as set forth in the word of God. Whenever a religious body departs from the PATTERN of the New Testament, it ceases to be the church of which we read in the New

Testament. In order to be the church which Christ built, the pattern of God's word must be followed. The Bible explicitly sets forth the pattern for religious faith, practice, and worship.

To be the church as God would have it to be depends on the PATH, the PLEA, the PAST, and the PATTERN.

Satan Wants You To Say It

The preachers and others who say, "People will not pay any attention to the preaching and teaching of basic, biblical, fundamental and conservative doctrine," are saying exactly what Satan wants them to say. No doubt it is true that some will not pay any attention to such doctrine. That has always been true. Even the teaching of Jesus caused many of his disciples to turn back and walk with him no more. (John 6:66.)

It is also true that there are many people with "honest and good hearts" (Luke 8:15) who want good, sound, fundamental, biblical teaching and preaching. I know some preachers who should do some such preaching. They might be surprised how many people would be very pleased to hear it and respond to it!

What is preached should not be determined merely by what people want to hear! We should always preach and teach the word of God whether people want to hear it or not. I hear a lot about "preaching the needs of the people," but people do not always know that they really need. What people think they need may not really be what they need! Everyone needs God's word!

Therefore, The Bible Teacher always contains conservative, fundamental, biblical teaching.

All Paths Lead To Judgment

EDSEL BURLESON

Daniel Webster was a great statesman from New England who served our nation with distinguished service the first half of the nineteenth century. He was a great orator. Once he was described as "one who walked like a man, but spoke as a god." On one occasion he was asked what he considered the greatest thought he had ever

entertained. His great mind reflected for only a moment and he said, "My gravest thought has been that I shall someday stand before God in judgment and give an account of how I have lived."

All paths lead to the judgment. There is no way to escape it. The day of judgment is coming, and all are going to be there. Paul declared. "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (2 Corinthians 5:10.) he also warned that "every one of us shall give account of himself to God." (Romans 14:12.)

Regardless of what part of the world one lives in, the length of his life on earth, the degree of education he achieves, the amount of material goods he accumulates, whether he professes to believe in God or not, his paths are still leading him to the judgment.

A small-town editor of a weekly paper wrote an editorial proclaiming the values and blessing of church attendance and godly living. The local atheist took issue with the editorial and bragged about his own lack of godly living and that in all probability his fall harvest would be equal to, or greater than, that of his religious neighbors. And to this the editor responded, "My friend, God does not settle accounts in October."

Be honest with yourself. The path you are now walking is leading you to the judgment. Each day you are one day nearer. Will the path you are walking lead to eternal joy or unto eternal sorrow?

The Way To Heaven

STEVE MILLER

The way to heaven is revealed so beautifully in the Bible. God lovingly sacrificed his Son so that we might have remission of sins. In order for us to truly have our sins forgiven and have the hope of eternal life, we must obey and follow the Lord's commandments and be faithful unto death.

ONE WAY TO HEAVEN

In the New Testament Christianity is spoken of as the way. The Bible reveals that there is one way to heaven. (John 14:6.) Paul mentions a "more excellent way" in 1 Corinthians 12:31, and the Hebrew writer refers to a "a new and living way." (Hebrews 10:20.) Even though the scriptures are plain on this, some will preach more than one way to heaven. Paul warned the Galatians. "I marvel that you are so soon

removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. (Galatians 1:6-7.)

We should be thankful that God has given us a perfect book (James 1:25), where we can find the true way to heaven. We have no need to go to the book of Mormon or any denominational creed book to find the way. Paul told Timothy that the scriptures were inspired of God and would take care of all of our needs. (2 Timothy 3:16-17.)

The way to heaven is divine, planned by God, and brought about by his Son, Jesus Christ. In looking for the way to heaven we need to watch for some identifying marks that will reveal the true way.

WAY OF HOLINESS

The way to heaven is the way of holiness. "And a highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein." (Isaiah 35:8.) From this passage we notice that "no unclean person can walk therein." Only those who have been cleansed by the blood of Christ (Ephesians 1:7) are on the way to heaven. The people who don't live right and are stained with sin shall not pass over it. The way is for those who obey God and who are in Christ. We also see that the way is so simple that even fools should not mistake it.

STRAIT AND NARROW

The way to heaven is a strait and narrow way. "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." (Matthew 7:13-14.)

Jesus reveals that there is a wide way and a broad way. Examining the broad way one quickly find it leads to destruction and death. Those dead in their sins who have not been cleansed by the blood of Christ will travel this way. Jesus tells of another way which is strait and narrow. The way that leads to life is through Jesus Christ. Jesus said "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John 14:6.) The way to God and heaven is through Jesus by obeying his commandments. "Few there be that find it" shows that relatively few will be in heaven. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 7:21.) Only the people

who are obedient to the gospel plan of salvation and are faithful unto death will have a home in heaven.

ENTRANCE INTO THE WAY

Entrance into the way includes several commands. First, one must hear the gospel. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ." (Romans 10:17.) By hearing the gospel we develop a working faith in God and Jesus Christ. (Hebrews 11:6; James 2:26.) Faith leads us to repentance. (Acts 2:38; 17:30.) Repentance is making a change for the better. We are then required to confess Jesus as God's Son. (Romans 10:10; Acts 8:37.) In order to become a Christian, we have to be baptized into Christ (Acts 22:16; John 3:5; 1 Peter 3:21.) Obeying the gospel puts us in Christ, makes us members of his body, the church (Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:22-23), and makes us New Testament Christians only. The Lord adds us to the church (Acts 2:47) only when we obey the gospel as revealed in the Bible.

Once on the road to heaven, one must follow the directions, for the Bible teaches that after a person obeys the gospel he can still be lost. "Once in grace always in grace" is not a Bible teaching, therefore it is false. There are hundreds of warnings in both the Old and New Testament that teach it is possible for a child of God to fall away. Hebrews 3:12, 6:4-6; 1 Corinthians 10:12, 9:27; 1 Timothy 5:8; and Galatians 5:19-21 are only a handful of passages that reveal one can fall from grace.

A child of God can stay on the way to heaven by studying the word. (Acts 2:42.) "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (2 Timothy 2:15.) Studying God's word gives us strength and keeps us aware of what we should be doing. A person on the way to heaven prays without ceasing. (1 Thessalonians 5:17.) Partaking the Lord's Supper each first day of the week helps us stay on the way. (1 Corinthians 11:23-29; Acts 2:42.) Christians must also keep Jesus' commandments (John 14:15) and stay faithful to the Lord. (Revelation 2:10; 2 Timothy 4:8.)

Which road are you traveling? Are you obeying the Lord or man? Your eternal destiny is at stake! Make the right choice. "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." (Revelation 22:14.) The only way to heaven is through Jesus Christ, and that is the gospel truth.

When Does Faith Save?

CHARLES BOX

None who reads the Bible would deny that faith saves. (Ephesians 2:8-10; Romans 5:1.) But, when does faith save? Faith saves when that faith obeys the commands of God.

The sinner has the commands of the gospel of Christ to obey in becoming a child of God. Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." (Mark 16:16.) Peter said, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." (Acts 2:38.) Repentance was the command of Christ as recorded in Luke 13:3 and Luke 24:47. Jesus taught men to confess him before men, that he might confess them before the Father in heaven. (Matthew 10:32-33.) Therefore, as the sinner is to hear the teaching of Christ, so is he to believe in Christ as the Son of God, and he is to repent of his sins and he is to confess his faith in Christ before men and he is to be baptized for the remission of sins.

"But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered to you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." (Romans 6:17-18.) The form of doctrine is that of the death, the burial and the resurrection of Christ. This must be obeyed in faith and from the heart. When this is done, we are made free from sin.

The "Word" makes clear the time of forgiveness, or freedom from sin. When the sinner obeys from the heart that form of doctrine, exemplifying the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, he is then made free from sin. (Romans 6:3-5.)

To this agrees the example of Saul of Tarsus. The Lord appeared to him on the Damascus road as we read in Acts 9. Saul believed in the Lord, and said, "Lord what will thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6.) For three days Saul waited, penitent and praying, in Damascus, until the Lord's messenger, Ananias, came to tell him what to do. And what command did Ananias give Saul? Acts 22:16 says that when he came, he said, "And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

If you have not obeyed the gospel of Christ, we encourage you to do so today. If we can assist you in your gospel obedience, please contact us immediately. After you obey the gospel be faithful to Christ. (Revelation 2:10.)

Illustrations That Illustrate

BASIL OVERTON

BULBS

There are multitudes of illustrations of God's power, intelligence, and greatness all around us:

When a bulb is planted upside down the roots will come out and turn downward. The stem will grow out and curve upward.

HUMAN KIDNEYS

Scientists tell us that each human kidney has about one million nephrons or tubes or capillaries. These in both kidneys have a total length of about 50 miles. Your kidneys select what to take from your blood and what not to take. They take poisons or bad things, and leave nutrients or good things. Some kidney patients have to stay on dialysis machines many hours each week to stay alive. These machines take the good and the bad from kidneys, and following treatments the patient has to take nutrients.

HUMAN LUNGS

Your lungs are filled with about 300 million air sacks called alveoli. If all these could be flattened out and laid together they would cover about 750 square feet which is over 40 times the surface area of an average sized human body.

The alveoli are clustered like grapes. Each sack or alveoli is one to two millimeters in diameter. Within these tiny sacks carbon dioxide comes from the blood and oxygen goes into the blood.

We are indeed, "fearfully and wonderfully made." (Psalm 139:14.)

You have about 300 million precious, and very vital little sacks in your lungs which God Almighty designed and made. Do not take them for granted. Please do your best to protect them from the carbon monoxide and nicotine that come from burning tobacco, and from other poisons and irritants.

Scientists say about 100,000 people develop lung cancer in the United States alone each year, and they say 90 percent of them will die in three years. They also say most of these people smoke tobacco!

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