

# THE BIBLE TEACHER

*Pleading for the restoration of Pure New Testament Christianity*

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## EDITORIAL

### *God's Plumb Line*

Plumb line is a tool used by masons to make sure they lay up brick wall straight and right. Amos, one of the prophets, in his book, referred to this familiar tool to explain that God would measure each individual and his devotion to Him by His plumb line, which is His word, His standard. Amos wrote: "Behold the Lord stood on a wall made with a plumb line, with a plumb line in His hand. And the Lord said to me, Amos, what do you see? And I said, a plumb line. Then the Lord said; Behold, I am setting a plumb line in the midst of my people...." (Amos 7:7,8).

God has set a plumb line for all of us. Christ, who came from God, said, "He who rejects me, and does not receive my words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day," (John 12:48).

A certain businessman once required several hundred boxes of a precise size. He sent his order for the cases to the carpenter with the specified description, and said that he would come after six months to receive all cases. When he arrived at the appointed time to receive his boxes, he took out his measuring rod and began to measure them one by one. To his great pleasure he found all cases made accurately according to his specification. He then asked the carpenter, how was he able to make them all precisely in the way he wanted them. The carpenter replied: "sir, I have the same kind of measuring rod that you have."

The Bible says, "And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment." (Hebrews 9:27). How wonderful it is that not only has God informed us that there is going to be the judgment, but has also provided for us the standard by which He would judge us.

Christ said, "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name, cast out demons in your name, and done many wonders in your name? And then I will declare to them, I never knew you; depart from me, you who practice lawlessness! Therefore whoever hears these sayings of mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. Now everyone who hears these sayings of mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell, and great was its fall" (Matthew 7:22-27).

It makes no difference how powerfully one preaches Christ's name, or does many good deeds in His name, or hear Him preached or read His Bible every day. It also makes no difference how many times in a day one prays or does any other religious and wonderful thing. If we have not done what Christ has said that we must do; and if we are not doing what he is asking us to do, then we stand condemned before The Judge. Do not neglect God's plumb line, be thankful for it, and use it to correct your life before our Creator

## ***The Need Of A Budget***

**J.C. CHOATE**

Many individuals, as well as most organizations, including governments around the world, have annual budgets. The majority of them find it difficult to keep their expenditures within their budgets, but they no doubt would do far worse if they did not have them.

A budget is simply a system of setting a limit on the money you are able to spend depending on the amount of money earned or that is coming in from various sources. Hopefully, you will not spend more than you earn. At least, that is the goal. Where one spends more than he takes in, then that means that you are going to end up in debt.

Each Christian couple needs to sit down and work out a budget for the coming year. It will take a little time and some work but it can be

done. First of all, count up your income for the year. With your job or jobs, and the salaries that they bring, along with any additional income received, please write that down. Then begin to make a list of what you will be paying out or spending over the next twelve months. Before you list any money for anything, put down how much you are going to give to the Lord. Figure what you are going to be giving each Sunday and add all of that up. Please don't cheat the Lord. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 16:2 that you should give as you have been prospered. If you do that you will probably give more in the coming year than you have given during the past year. But put it down and then give every week as you have listed in your Budget. If you will put the Lord first in your giving then it will be easier to do it that way and you will give more.

Next, there are the food expenses, money for clothes, transportation, schooling for the children, entertainment, taxes, and any other expenses that you may have. Add all of that up and take that away from your income, at least it is hoped that you can do that. Now if you have some left over then you may want to count that as your savings or you may use that for unexpected expenses during the year. On the other hand, if you find that your expenses are going to be greater than the money you bring home, then that means that you are going to have to go back and bring down your expenses. Knock off some on everything else, but leave your weekly contribution at the same level since you figured that according to your total income. Please don't cut back on what you give to the Lord if you expect him to continue to bless you. If you are not giving as you should, or if you do not plan to give as you ought, you are cheating the Lord, yes, lying to him. You say that you are giving as you have prospered, when you are not. One of the purposes of a budget is to help you to put the Lord first, give him more, and at the same time it will help you with your over-all income and how you spend it. Just be sure to not spend more than you receive. If you do that then you are going to run into a lot of trouble somewhere on down the line.

Then the church needs to make out a budget for the coming year. In that way they will know what they are taking in through weekly contributions and other gifts, and they will also be in better position to plan their work and expenses based on what they are receiving. If they know what their income is week after week, and they keep up with that over the year, then they can determine how the members are giving, according to the number of members they have, and see if there is some growth along the way. If they see that the members are not giving as they should then they may want to have the preacher to give some

lessons on giving, why they should give, the work that can be done with the funds given, etc. Then they are able to discuss their needs for the year, and based on their contributions, if they are sufficient, to take on some good works. They will want to list their local expenses, like the amount that they pay their preacher each week, money paid out for literature, advertising, benevolence, special meetings, etc. They may be paying some rent on their building each month, or they may want to set aside some each month for a building fund. Then they may be engaged in some Bible correspondence work which would require funds for printing, postage, and maybe some office help. Then they might want to help someone with some mission work. There also might be some other work that they would want to do. But then they would add all of that up and see how it comes out against their receivable funds. If their expenses are going to be greater than their income then again they are going to have to go back and refigure and cut back on some things.

This should be a real boost to the leadership and the whole congregation to see where they stand and to be able to look forward with confidence to all the good work that they are going to be able to do during the coming year. They should also set some goals for an increase in their contributions to challenge the members, and also to keep before the members that if they reach these goals that they will be able to increase their work.

By having a budget like this, and showing what they are putting their money on, then this will be a real encouragement to the members and give them an incentive to give more and to give consistently. If they see their money is going to be used in the Lord's work instead of being stored in a bank somewhere, then that will make them happy and encourage them to give and work as never before.

Is there anything wrong with the budget? Certainly not. It is needed both by individual Christians and the church. It will help them to grow and to do more for the Lord than ever before. It will give them confidence in themselves, encourage them to know of their potential, and will reward them with greater service to offer to the Lord.

## ***"Parents - Children"***

**BETTY BURTON CHOATE**

Once there was a father and a mother. They had two boys. They were a fine family, but they had one problem: the older boy was the

father's favorite child, and the younger boy was the mother's favorite.

Today, we often see and hear of such inequalities around us. Parents proudly show off their favorite child and announce their partiality for all to hear. The children also know it well!

Sometimes the inequalities show up in other ways: the favorite child is given more and better food, if there is any shortage; he may be better clothed; he may receive most or all of the family inheritance; he may receive special treatment in the home, being spared discipline and being given a better education than the other children.

Returning to our story, we said that in that family there was one problem: favoritism! Can it be possible that partiality among children is a serious problem? Is real damage done by such doting love? Let us look to the story and see:

In Genesis 25:28, the scriptures say, "And Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his game, but Rebekah loved Jacob." The boys grew to be men and the time came when Isaac wanted to give his older son a special blessing, Rebekah overheard their conversation and sent Jacob instead to Isaac, who was blind. Jacob convinced his father that he himself was Esau and so he was given the blessing. When Esau learned what had happened he was so angry he declared that he would kill his brother. Rebekah was told of Esau's intention so she sent Jacob away to live with distant relatives until peace could be restored between the boys. Jacob lived for twenty years as an exile from his family and he never saw his father and mother alive again (Genesis 25-33).

Can favoritism be a real Problem? Can it do serious damage in family relationships??

In the family of Isaac, favoritism caused these problems and tragedies:

- A) Competition between parents.
- B) Competition between children.
- C) Lying to the father.
- D) Deceit of the father.
- E) Hatred of Jacob by Esau.
- F) Intention to kill Jacob in Esau's heart.
- G) Jacob's life-long exile from his family.
- H) Loneliness and grief for all family members.

Was favoritism a tragic thing in the family of Isaac? Certainly, it was, and it is also harmful and wrong in today's world.

All children have emotions and feelings. All need to have self-

esteem. All need to feel confident of the love of father and mother. When we, as parents, bring children into the world, it is our duty and responsibility to give them these basic requirements. It may not always be possible to give them ample food or clothes or whatever they want of physical things, but we can and must give them a full measure of love and the resulting self-esteem that are so necessary in the proper development of any child.

Let us not be guilty of causing hurts in tender hearts by rejecting one child with the cruel words spoken proudly of another "He is my favorite."

Acts 10:34 says, "...In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality." (see also, Romans 2:11-12; I Timothy 5:21; James 2:9.) "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy" (James 3:17).

## *Consider It Pure Joy*

**TAMMY STARLING**

While preparing for a dinner party in my home recently, I spent an entire day cooking, cleaning and performing little tasks to make everything "just right" for my guests. I remember thinking, as I hurried along, about helping my mother do the same things when I was a young girl and about the enthusiasm with which she prepared to entertain guests in her home. I must confess that at a young age, I was not enthusiastic at all about housework and especially not about all the "extra fuss" that was involved in having guests. Yet now, as an adult, I too feel Mother's excitement about what really seems like a privilege and a pure joy to labour in those ways.

Perhaps it's not unusual to consider as joy the labour of entertaining guests in my home but what about the labour of facing the trials and sufferings in my life?

The New Testament book of James encourages us in chapter one; verses 2-4, to :

"Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."

How do I consider it joy to face trials? For example, consider it joy to be stricken with a lasting illness? To lose my job or my home? To experience the death of a dear loved one? To feel pressured by all kinds of temptations? To wonder, at times, if God even knows I am alive at all?

It seems that sometimes we misunderstand what James means when he says, "Consider it pure joy..." We may think that James means we must be always smiling and happy throughout difficult times or that our faith in God is weak if we cry out amid our pain. Do you believe that is true?

The scriptures are full of stories in which men and women of great faith cried out in expression of their pain during times of trial. Perhaps these men and women realized that the relationship God wants to have with each of us is one that allows open and honest expression of our pains and fears as well as of our dreams and hopes. So, if it is okay to feel our pain and to express it to God, what is meant by "Consider it pure joy. . . whenever you face trials..."? Where is the joy found?

Think of the things that easily bring joy to you—being with family and friends, seeing the smile on a child's face, witnessing a soul's decision to follow Christ. What is it about each of these things that brings such joy and warmth to your heart? It seems to me that we experience joy in these things because we can appreciate their real value and the worth in each of them.

Notice how James explains the value of facing our trials as we read the statements in the same passage above, only in reverse order:

"So that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything, perseverance must finish its work. Because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance, consider it pure joy, my brothers, when you face trials of many kinds."

Needless to say, just trying to think about the value in your suffering may not be possible when you are in the midst of a crisis. God gave every single one of us human emotions and human minds which we may not ever be able to fully appreciate the value of some of our experiences here on earth. But God does promise us that there is value in facing our trials here and; that there is also value in persevering rather than giving up when we suffer. We simply are not called to always understand everything that God has promised however, we are called to trust and believe God's promises. After all, is not a big part of our faith made up of deciding to believe and rely on that which seems so very

unbelievable?

There does not seem to be much inherent value in simply being involved in a crisis or in having a trial put in front of us. The real value seems to come only in the suffering brought about and in the growth experienced through the pain and the struggles involved. You know, its sometimes irritating to have to count a pile of coins unless you are the one to whom it belongs, the one who laboured to claim it. Perhaps counting our joy in times of trial is just the same.

It's amusing to me that, as a young girl, I was hardly willing to believe that going to extra trouble for dinner guests would ever bring any kind of joy to me and now it is something that I enjoy so much. It also makes me wonder about the many other things I will become willing to believe and count as joy, too, as the years continue to go by. Thank you Lord, for your Spirit who reveals!

## ***The Thief Is Come . . .***

**TERRY CLAUNCH**

"The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy," (John 10:10). Is it not true that thieves take from those that have much to offer (have an abundance or are wealthy)? Do they steal from people, houses, and businesses which have nothing?

In the context of John 10 Jesus has reference to a spiritual thief. Jesus said that he was come "that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). The Christian is not given just life, but an abundant one. Therefore, spiritual thieves see the Christian as one from whom they can rob.

Time is valuable. What did you pay to have fifteen minutes of the doctor's time? What did it cost you to have the time of a plumber? What do you charge others for your time? The Christian, above anyone else, should know the value of time. "What is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away" (James 4:14). Ben Franklin said, "Dost thou love life? Then do not squander time, for that is the stuff life is made of." Paul exhorted that we "redeem the time." With time being so expensive, the thief will surely try and steal it. Will you allow him to do so?

The thief would also like to steal your talents and abilities. Christians should seek to find their place in the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12). Paul desired that the Romans "present their bodies

a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God" (Romans 12:1). Paul says this should be one's "reasonable service". This is in relationship to our being in the church or body of Christ (Romans 12:4 and 5). The thief has one tool in particular that he uses to steal talent, and that is fear. How many use fear as an excuse not to do the Lord's work? The thief used it on the one talent man.

He said, "I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth" (Matthew 25:25). Are you going to permit this thief to rob you of your abilities?

This thief is concerned about your money. He won't rob you like some pickpocket or robber would. He steals by convincing you not to give to the Lord and his church as you should. The thief has stolen your contribution when you don't give as you've been prospered (1 Corinthians 16:2). He robs you of the joy of giving when he makes you feel like giving is a necessity (2 Corinthians 9:7). He wants you to think that you can buy everything you want and then give to the Lord out of our remaining money. You wouldn't allow a thief to take money out of your wallet, would you? Will you permit this thief to take the Lord's money?

The thief wants to deprive you of your worship to God. He is even willing to give you something in exchange. He'll gladly give you a few hours of sleep if you'll skip Bible class. He will provide you with a nice stringer of fish if you'll forsake the assembly. He has much to offer if you're willing to accept. We must not and cannot allow him to deceive us into accepting something worthless as compared to the value of true worship. Jesus wouldn't take the "kingdoms of the world" to worship Satan. We shouldn't take anything the world has to offer to the neglect of our worshipping the Lord our God. Is he robbing from your worship?

If this thief it permitted to steal your love he will have gotten your most valuable possession. If he gets this he gets all of your other valuables as well. How one spends his time depends on what he loves. How and where one uses his talents reflects his love for those things. How one spends his money definitely reveals his love(s) in life. Who or what one worship presents an object of love. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Matthew 22:37). Has the thief entered your heart and stolen your love for God?

Thieves commit their crimes when they are least expected. They use disguises so they are not recognized. They are at times armed with weapons. Christians are to "watch and be sober" (1 Thessalonians 5:6). One should not allow his heart to be deceived by the masks of the thief

(Romans 16:18). The Christian has the ability to defend himself from the robber. "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Ephesians 6:11).

Satan the thief is willing to steal small bits and pieces of your precious and valued spirituality. If he keeps getting these he will finally "kill" you spiritually. His aim is to completely "destroy" you. God, however, will not let him pluck (steal) them out of his hand. God will not permit him to cause any to perish (be killed). God will not allow him to take eternal life (be destroyed) from them. The question remains. "Who are the ones that God will protect from this thief?" Is it not those who are willing to enter the "door of the sheepfold"? To enter the door one must believe, repent, confess Christ, and be baptized for the remission of sins. After entering the door one must be willing to hear, follow and obey the voice of the Great Shepherd (John 10:27-29). Are you faithfully following the voice of the Savior?

## *Is There Such A Thing As One True Church?*

**ALLEN WEBSTER**

This is one of the most important questions which could be asked. If the answer is "no", then one need not be concerned about "church affiliation". If it is "yes" then one must find the true church to enjoy spiritual blessings. (Eph. 1:3), including salvation (II Tim. 2:10).

How may one determine the answer to this inquiry. If he asks for opinions, no justified conclusion will be reached. If he consults creeds, he will not find a trustworthy answer. If he looks to his forefather's traditions, he may well find mistaken practices. Where can one turn?

Each must look to the Bible alone to find reliable answers. It is inspired (II Tim. 3:16), true (Jn. 17:17), and worthy of being followed (II Pet. 1:3). It claims to be the authority in spiritual matters (Isa. 8:20; I Pet. 4:11).

### **WHEN WE ASK OUR QUESTION OF THE BIBLE, IT REPLIES . . .**

"ONLY ONE CHURCH WAS PROPHESED." The Old Testament contains many promises of the coming kingdom or church (cf. Isa. 2:1-4; Dan. 2:44). One beautiful picture of it is a Shepherd and his flock (Ezek.

37:22). God predicted that he would set one Shepherd and King over all His followers (both Jews and Gentiles). This was fulfilled in the church, where Jesus is both the Shepherd of the flock and King of the kingdom (Jn. 10:11, 16; 1.Cor. 15:24-26).

**"ONLY ONE CHURCH WAS PROMISED."** Jesus said, ". . . upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Mt. 16:18). He never promised to build many churches; He promised only one. It follows that this one would be the one true church. It was established on the first Pentecost after His resurrection (read Acts 2), and one can read of its history, doctrines and practices in all the epistles (Romans-Jude).

Some one might object, saying, "I thought all the different churches made up the one church He promised to build." No, this cannot be because His church was not to be divided. He prayed for all His followers to be "one" (John 17:20). He rebuked those who were divided. (1 Cor. 1:10-13), commanding them to "speak the same things" and be of "the same judgment". Churches wearing different names, teaching different doctrines, obeying different plans of salvation, and worshipping in different ways, cannot make up the one church that Jesus promised.

**"ONLY ONE CHURCH WAS PRODUCED."** Following that eventful Pentecost day, one reads of only one church. It met in different localities, but all God's followers taught and practiced Christianity in the same way (Acts 2:42-47).

Paul even wrote that there was one church. He first identified the church as being the body of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23), and then affirmed "there is one body" (Eph. 4:4). Notice further that Jesus is said to be the head of the "body" not "bodies" (Eph. 5:23). Read Eph. 5:23-30 and underline each time the words "the", "a", and "it" (all singular) are used in relation to the church. This proves that there was one church in the first century.

Now we must contemplate if there is one true church today. In order to determine if the true church exists today, one must simply compare what the pattern (New Testament) says with what is being taught and practiced. When he finds the one church that measures up to the pattern in such essential matters as: how to be saved, how to worship, and how to live the Christian life, he knows that he has found the right one.

Since the denominational concept is unscriptural, any church that claims to be a denomination cannot be the one true church. Further, any church whose name is not found in the Bible cannot be the true church

(cf. Romans 16:16). Any church that demands more or less than faith, repentance, confession, and immersion for salvation, cannot be the true church (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38, 8:37).

Any church which teaches that one cannot fall from grace is not the true church (Gal. 5:4). Any church that does not worship by singing, praying, studying, giving, and partaking of the Lord's Supper each Sunday (Acts 2:42; Col. 3:16), cannot be the Lord's church.

Please consider these matters carefully and do not let anyone tell you what to believe. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12). May the Lord bless you in your search for truth.

## ***Ephesians 5:11***

**VICTOR M. ESKEW**

The verse which titles this article involves a simple straight-forward command from the pen of the apostle Paul. "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them"

Two commands are to be found in this passage of Holy Writ, one negative and one positive. The negative command is "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness." The positive command is "reprove them".

Fellowship involves sharing and joint participation. *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* defines "fellowship" as "association, community, communion, joint participation, intercourse" (p. 352). The opposite action is to be practiced by the Christian with regard to the unfruitful works of darkness. He is to have no association, no community no communion, no joint participation, no intercourse with such.

"But rather," to use the terms of the apostle, the child of God is to reprove them. Thayer defines this word in several ways: "To convict, refute, confute, generally with a suggestion of the shame of the person convicted by conviction to bring to light, to expose ...to find fault with, correct... to reprehend severely, chide, admonish, reprove" (pp. 202-203).

These two commands are not the most simple commands to be practiced. Fellowship involves togetherness, acceptance, warmth, hospitality, and the kindest of the emotions. It is shared with all of God's faithful children. These children include our closest friends, as well as, family members. No one enjoys having to break such ties. No one

rejoices in the loss of all that is wrapped up in fellowship.

In addition, reproving error is most difficult. This command places one on the offensive. It makes one the aggressor. Others come to view the one who is reproving as an unloving, evil individual. He is thought of as a troublemaker and a faultfinder. One is seldom thought of as the loyal, obedient servant of Jesus Christ when he obeys this command.

There was a time when only the first half of Ephesians 5:11 was obeyed. Individuals would refuse the association of those who walk contrary to the light of God's word. They would separate themselves from the evil ways and unholy practices of those in darkness. They, however, would not reprove sin and rebellion. Their mouths would remain shut even though they could not be partakers of the evil.

Today, though, times have changed. We are finding more individuals who are attempting to obey the latter part of Ephesians 5:11 while omitting the first part of the verse. These individuals can be found living, worshiping, and dining with those in error. They laugh, shake the hands of, and partake the Lord's Supper with those in sin and iniquity. Their justification for their actions is that they are reproving the wrong. In other words, in Bible classes or in business meeting they "express their concern" over some "items" which are bothering them.

Dear readers, the command by the pen of the noble apostle is clear and involves two things: no fellowship and reproving. Unless both aspects of the command are obeyed, the entire passage is being violated. It is not possible to be faithful while refusing fellowship, but not reproving. In like manner, it is not possible to be obedient while fellowshiping darkness, even though reproof is being carried out.

Let us obey the entire command, as difficult as it may be. In doing so, we will save ourselves. We will also save some of those who hear our reproof. And we will be pleasing to our Lord Jesus Christ.

## *Is Dancing Sinful?*

**JOHNIE SCAGGS, JR.**

The question is often asked, "Is dancing sinful?" One would think that after many years of discussion on this subject, that it would by now be a topic which no one would seriously consider a wholesome practice.

Webster defines dancing as such: "A series of rhythmic and patterned bodily movements performed to music".

When two people of the opposite sex come together in the act of

dancing, their bodies naturally make movements that are enticing to each other. School dances such as homecoming, prom, and others are no exception.

Some of the well-known psychologists defend the dance on the grounds that it is a partial satisfaction of the sex urge. Such arguments as this should prove that dancing and the such like should be avoided. The Bible decries that such is not becoming a Christian, "They that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and lusts thereof" (Gal. 5:24).

As one looks at the idea of whether or not dancing is sinful, there are at least three words in the New Testament which must be considered. First, the word "REVELLING"- revelling is defined as "boisterous merrymaking or festivity or festivity with dancing, masking." God's children must not engage in the such like. Paul said, "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:19-21). Paul states that "revelling" is a work of the flesh and that Christians must not be engaged in such activities. Furthermore, those who do CANNOT inherit the kingdom of God. Second, the word, "WANTONNESS"- this word means "acts or manners, such as filthy words indecent bodily movements, unchaste handling of males and females". Once again Paul writes, "Let us walk honestly, as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ; and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof" (Rom. 13:13). Those who engage in wantonness are not walking honestly, but rather they are making provision for the flesh and not for the Lord. It must be admitted that dancing is covered by the word "wantonness"; if not, why not? (cf. II. Peter 2:18) The third word is "LASCIVIOUSNESS"—which is defined as "conduct and character that is unbecoming, indecent, unrestrained, shameless". (cf. II Cor. 12:21; Gal. 5:19). In all cases where the latter two words are used, they are always classified as being sinful. If these words do not prove to your satisfaction that dancing is sinful, then the phrase, "and such like" (Gal. 5:21) most certainly would cover dancing and thereby prove beyond any doubt that dancing is sinful.

In Exodus 32 Moses could see that dancing was sinful, for it was because of their dancing that they became naked, (ver. 25). John the

Baptist lost his head because of a dance (Matt. 14:6; Mark 6:22-24).

Among so-called heathen people, the modern dance is regarded as very shocking. These people recognize the power of dancing to arouse human passion as a prelude to sexual contact.

Based upon the evidence which has been presented, why would a Christian desire to be involved in any kind of dancing? Think about what Paul said, "Abstain from all appearance of evil" (1 Thess. 5:22).

## ***The "I Am's" Of Jesus***

***(Jesus Supplies Every Need)***

**LARRY D. MATHIS**

1. "I am the bread of life" (Jn. 6:35, 51) Jesus is the sustainer of life and the supplier of the soul's needs. What bread is to the physical body, Christ is to the soul.
2. "I am the light of the world" (Jn. 8:12). Without physical light man is in serious trouble—how much worse to be without spiritual light? Through Jesus, the light, the lost traveler can "see" how to go to heaven.
3. The Great, "I am " (Jn. 8:56-59). Jesus was anterior to Abraham. Here is a remarkable claim of deity.
4. "I am the door" (Jn. 10:9). There is absolutely no other way to heaven for sinners but through Christ. See Acts 4:10-12.
5. "I am the good Shepherd" (Jn. 10:11) As the good Shepherd, he leads, feeds and protects his sheep. This good Shepherd leads us to heavenly blessings.
6. "I am the resurrection and the light" (Jn. 11:25-26). Jesus has power to banish death forever; it is his enemy. He said, "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell (hades) and of death" (Revelation 1:18). Paul wrote, "For he (Christ) must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (1 Cor. 15:25-26).
7. "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (Jn. 14:6). As "the way" Jesus is the answer to man's "lostness". As "the truth" Jesus is the answer to man's "ignorance". As "the life" Jesus is the answer to man's "mortality".

8. "I am the vine" (Jn. 15:5). Jesus is the source of vitality and strength. How soon a severed branch withers and dies! Be baptized into Christ (Gal. 3:27; Romans 6:3), and abide in him.

## **THE CHURCH OF CHRIST**

1. The Bible is its only guide (Romans 1:16; I Thess. 2:13).
2. Wears a Biblical Name (Romans 16:16).
3. Established at the right place (Isaiah 2:2,3; Acts 2).
4. Established at the right time (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2).
5. Established on the right person (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:36).
6. Saved are in it (Ephesians 5:23; Acts 2:47).
7. Its members are enrolled in heaven (Hebrews 12:23).
8. Membership in it is obtained by obedience to God's commands including baptism (Acts 2:41-47; I Corinthians 12:13).

## **GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION**

1. Hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17; Acts 16:32).
2. Believing what is taught (Mark 16:16; Hebrews 11:6).
3. Repentance (Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30).
4. Confession (Romans 10:9, 10; Acts 8:37).
5. Baptism (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; I Peter 3:21; Romans 6:3,4).
6. After the above five steps, faithful Christian Living (I Peter 2:11, 12; Revelation 2:10).

# ***What Is Baptism?***

**DON RUHL**

What is baptism? How should it be performed? Who should be baptized? Why should a person be baptized? These are questions that for centuries have stirred controversy. Let us together investigate the scriptures and find the answers.

## **SPIRIT OR WATER?**

In the Spirit or in water? "Can any man forbid the water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit as well as

we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ." This account from Acts 10 shows that water baptism and Holy Spirit baptism are not the same. Cornelius had just been baptized in the Spirit, then Peter commanded that Cornelius be baptized in water. The baptism authorized by Jesus is performed in water by man. The baptism of the Holy Spirit was performed in the Spirit by Jesus (Matthew 3:11).

### **"MODE" OF BAPTISM**

Sprinkling? If baptism is sprinkling, then it should make sense to place "sprinkling" in the verses that have "baptism." In Acts 8:38 it is said, ". . . and he baptized him." Could it be written: ". . . and he sprinkled him?" This would say that Philip took the Ethiopian and the Ethiopian was the substance sprinkled. If sprinkling is the mode, then it would have said, ". . . and he sprinkled water on him."

Pouring? If pouring is the correct mode, then "pouring" should be put into the clause of Acts 8:38: ". . . and he poured him." Obviously Philip could not have poured the Ethiopian like water. Again it should have been written, ". . . and he poured water on him." if pouring were baptism.

Immersion. Now Acts 8:38 sounds rational: ". . . and he immersed him." The eunuch was the substance immersed by Philip. Immersion fits the figure of baptism which is likened to the burial and resurrection of Jesus (Romans 6:3-5). At his death, was Jesus sprinkled? or poured upon? (with dirt)? or placed in a tomb which was closed, hiding his body?

### **CANDIDATE FOR BAPTISM**

One who hears and receives the word. After Peter preached to the Jews in Jerusalem, it is written, "They then that received his word were baptized ...." (Acts 2:41). This would exclude babies and those who do not really love the word.

Believers. Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved...." (Mark 16:16). Salvation is not by belief alone, nor by baptism alone. When the Ethiopian asked to be baptized, Philip responded, "If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest." Babies are again excluded. Most young children "believe" in Jesus innocently, even as they might believe in Santa Claus.

Penitent believers. When John the Baptist saw some religious leaders coming to him to be baptized he warned them: "Bring forth therefore fruit worthy of repentance" (Matthew 3:8). When Peter

convicted that great multitude on the day of Pentecost of crucifying Jesus, he set forth repentance and baptism as the conditions for forgiveness. Repentance means to regret sin and change from a sinful life to a righteous life. Children are excluded, for they have no sin to repent of.

**Confession.** Nowhere does the New Testament state that SINS must be confessed before being baptized into Christ. The Bible is equally silent about confessing: "God for Christ's sake hath forgiven my sins." We are required to confess "that Jesus Christ is Lord"—that he is the Son of God (Acts 8:37; Romans 10:8-10).

### **PURPOSE OF BAPTISM**

It is commonly taught that baptism is nothing more than a declaration to the world of one's faith. Some think baptism is an outward sign of an inward grace.

Baptism is an act of faith, and is the result of God's grace; but it is not a sign that one is already saved (Colossians 2:12; Mark 16:16).

**Salvation.** Jesus and Peter state that baptism is an essential element involved in our salvation: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved...." (Mark 16:16). "Which also after a true likeness" (water, v. 20, D.R. ) "doth now save you, even baptism, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh but the interrogation of a good conscience toward God. . . ." (I Peter 3:21).

**Forgiveness.** Saul of Tarsus was told to "wash away" his sins in baptism (Acts 22:16). Peter instructed the Jews to be baptized "for the remission of" their sins (Acts 2:38).

**Other results of baptism.** Paul told the Roman Christians that they were in Christ and participated in his burial and resurrection, as the result of baptism (Romans 6:3-5). The Galatian churches were reminded, "For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ, Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Galatians 3:26-27). No man can be saved outside of Christ. Prior to faith and baptism, one is not in Christ. Furthermore, one is not a Christian until he has put on Christ. Christ is put on at baptism. Therefore, one is not in Christ and is not a Christian until he has faith and is baptized. Plus, baptism puts the believer into the church (Acts 2:41, 47; I Corinthians 12:13). Being born again occurs through baptism (John 3:5; Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:11-13).

**Have You Been Baptized According To The Scriptures?**

# ***A Preacher's Job?!***

**DALE JENKINS**

It is becoming more and more popular—that phrase: "It's not my job." I don't know where it came from, nor am I sure that I agree with it. What ever happened to the day when a man would give his life up for service in the kingdom of God? What ever happened to the preacher who knew he was involved in the greatest work on earth, therefore he would work tirelessly in God's Service?

I know that the preacher needs to spend time with his family. I am aware that he can't be expected to do all the work. I am sure he is not a "pastor." And I have known these things a long time. But, it seems to me, that in our new perspective on preaching, we are forgetting several things.

First, and foremost, that the man who preaches is a Christian: and he, like all other saints, is required to produce as much fruit as he can, using the ability God has given him. God never has, nor will he ever, accept half-heartedness! We are not in the comparison business! Just because some of the brethren aren't working, does not mean we can get out of our God-given responsibility (Matthew 28:18-20). This verse applies to us just as much, if not more, because of our ability to teach God's glorious word, as it does to our listening brethren. Some are so afraid of becoming glorified errand-boys, they have stopped being God's message carrier! I recently heard of a man who moved to a congregation, saying he "just preached." He had a family just like everyone else and he had a right to time with them. His service was to preach and that was all he planned to do! That man will be condemned by Jesus' commands to "Go" and "teach"—as will the folks he tries to convince each week if they also have that attitude. No wonder we can't convict people of the "priesthood" of all believers; we evidently don't believe it ourselves.

Secondly, we have a responsibility in our example. How can we preach the gospel, part of which requires every saint to produce fruit (at least plant the seed), if we are not living examples. The old adage "Practice what you preach" comes to mind. Have you come to view preaching more as a profession than a passion? "Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men," "Preach the word," "the love of Christ constraineth me." How about the verses that teach us to be daily crossbearers? or that we must put God's kingdom first? Where is the fire that burned within the proclaimers of old like David and Jeremiah?

the debt owed that moved Paul tirelessly (1 Thessalonians 2:9)? singlemindedness that moved Christ to the cross? the love that swelled the vocal cords of Paul and Silas—and led to the jailers' conversion? the desire to tell others that prompted persecuted Christians to go everywhere spreading the word (Acts 8:4)? the desire to see the Kingdom advanced that pushed men like Hardeman, Nichols, and Campbell? are we above them? why are there no more stories of extreme sacrifice that seemed so commonplace when those names are mentioned?

Luxuries have made us both lazy and materialistic! We seem more concerned about hearing our name called out than calling out God's name. You can't be "sound" if no SOUND is being heard. Let us awake to the lost world around us! Let the trumpet of God's "Good News" ring loud and clear! Get out there! Dust off those old Jule Milers filmstrips! Get the Sword sharpened—and get busy!

## ***"My Kingdom Is Not Of This World"***

**W. EDWIN KEARLEY**

Though this is not a sensational sermon, it is a much-needed one. the desire for security is very basic in man. Most seek security in material things. However material things are very unstable. Trust in material things hinders spirituality. When we make a god of material things, we dethrone the Almighty God. The wise Christian makes use of material things to serve God. Jesus declared, "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36).

A definition of the word "world" helps us to see that Jesus spoke not of the habitable earth, nor the evil people of the universe (Psalm 90:2; 1 John 2:15-17). He is speaking of all of the lost humanity (John 3:16).

In order to have a vivid idea of the kingdom, it is necessary to give the Biblical description. It is composed of those purchased with the blood of Christ (Acts 20:28; 2:47). The church and kingdom are the same institution (Matthew 16:18-19). Christ is its king, or head

(Ephesians 1:23). It is designated (1) the body of Christ (Ephesians 1:23), (2) the house of God (1 Timothy 3:15), (3) the bride of Christ (Revelation 22:17; John 3:29-30) and (4) leaven (Matthew 13:33).

At the end of the world Christ will deliver the kingdom of God, the Father (I Corinthians 15:24; Ephesians 5:25-27).

Jesus declared he and the apostles are not of the world (John 17:16). The world hates righteous people (John 17:14). The reason is stated in John 3:19-21. The world feels condemned as Cain did in his rebellion. The world reacts today as Cain did. Many Christians today are more influenced by the world than they influence the world.

Jesus did not pray for deliverance from the world, but from the evil of the world (John 17:15). As it is fine and fitting for the ocean liner to be in the ocean, it is fine and fitting for the kingdom or church of Christ to be in the world. As it is tragic for the ocean to be in the ocean liner, it is tragic for the world to be in the church. When truth is compromised, our influence for good is lost.

Christ's kingdom is a militant kingdom. It does not use carnal weapons but spiritual ones (II Corinthians 10:3-5). Paul urged, "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Ephesians 6:11). The Kingdom also is an offensive kingdom (Mark 16:15-16; Jude 3). Its mission is world-wide in scope. However, we must begin where we are located. It is not selfishly contentious but it must be contentious for "the faith once delivered" (Jude 3).

Paul uses the armor of the Roman soldier to illustrate the Christian's armor (Ephesians 6:10-17). The Christian's loins are girded with truth. Truth must be one of the highest priced commodities (Proverbs 23:28; Matthew 5:6; John 17:17). The Christian soldier has a "breastplate of righteousness," "his feet shod....with the preparation of the gospel of peace," quenches fiery darts with "shield of the faith," "puts on the helmet of salvation," and takes "the sword of the Spirit, . . . the word of God." The word is "living and active" (Hebrews 4:12, A.S. V.), and produces faith (Romans 10:17).

Every activity of life should serve a spiritual end (Colossians 3:17). One should find service to his fellowman in his employment. Even rest and recreation should improve one for future service (Ecclesiastes 12:13; Matthew 25).

# **The Second Coming Of Jesus Christ**

**W. A. HOLLEY**

Many false teachers have had the audacity [reckless boldness] to dare to set the time and year of Christ's second coming. For example, William Miller (1782-1849) figured the time of Jesus' coming; but the passing of the years have shown him to be false teacher. "Russellites" (Jehovah's Witnesses) contend that Jesus came in October, 1874, and that has been here ever since. "Pastor Russell" further argued that the 'consummation of the ages' would occur in 1914; but time has shown him to be a false teacher (Deuteronomy 18:20-22).

To settle the question as to man's ability to determine the hour or day of Jesus' second coming, we shall quote Jesus Christ himself: "Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. It is as when a man, sojourning in another country, having left his house, and given authority to his servants, to each one his work, commanded also the porter to watch. Watch therefore: for ye know not when the lord of the house cometh, whether at even, or at midnight, or at cock-crowing, or in the morning; lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch" (Mark 13:33-37, A.S.V.).

The fact of Jesus' second coming is attested by the inspired testimony of God's holy word (Acts 1:10-11; Revelation 1:7; Hebrews 9:27-28; John 14:1-6); but the hour, or the day, or year of his coming is unknown. No man knows, nor can know! Hence, Jesus will come again, if Jesus (John 14:1-3), if angels (Acts 1:10-11), if James (James 5:7), if John (I John 3:2), if Peter (I Peter 1:13), if Paul (Philippians 3:20-21), spake the truth of God.—And they did beyond all reasonable doubt!!

According to the Holy Scriptures, what shall be the manner of his coming? Jesus will come "with great power and glory" (Mark 13:26). He will come personally, ". . . this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11). His coming will be audible for "all that are in their graves shall hear the voice...." (John 5:28-29; I Corinthians 15:52; I Thessalonians 4:16). When the trumpet sounds, the dead shall be changed by resurrection; the living shall be changed—because "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (I Corinthians 15:50-57).

Jesus' coming will be visible: "Every eye shall see him...." His coming cannot be secret, as some allege (Revelation 1:7). The hour and day and year of his coming will not be published to the world by newspapers, nor television, nor by any special sign from heaven. Jesus will come "in flaming fire," accompanied by them "which sleep in Jesus . . ." (1 Thessalonians 4:14; Jude 14; cf. I Peter 4:17; II Thessalonians 1:7-9).

The time of Jesus' coming is unknown to angels, as well as to man; it is known only to God (Mark 13:32-37). His second coming will be before the Great Judgment (Matthew 25:31, 34, 41, 46; John 5:27-30; I Thessalonians 4:13-17). All speculation, guessing, or calculation can never alter the truth of God's word.

At the time of Jesus' return there will be scoffers and mockers who ridicule the thought of his coming (II Peter 3:3-9). Indifference and immorality will characterize earth's citizens (for the most part) of that day (Luke 17:20-37). Jesus taught (Matthew 7:13-14) that only a relative "few" shall be saved. the wicked shall weep and wail because of the great calamity which come upon them (Revelation 1:7; 6:15-17). But, according to the Bible, the righteous shall welcome his coming (Philippians 4:5; Titus 2:11-15; James 5:7-9; Revelation 22:20; II Timothy 4:6-8).

What is the grand purpose of Jesus' coming? It is not to teach and instruct the human race, as at his first coming (Matthew 25:31-46). He will not offer himself as a sacrifice upon the cross a second time (Hebrews 9:27-28). Jesus will not return to set up an earthly kingdom, since his kingdom/church has been established since the first Pentecost after his resurrection (Matthew 16:18-19; Acts 2:1-4, 36-38, 41-42; 11:14-15; Colossians 1:13-14; Hebrews 12:28; Revelation 1:9). No passage of Scripture teaches that Jesus will ever set his feet upon earth again. At his coming the earth will be burned up (II Peter 3:10-15). Thus, there will be no place for a thousand-year reign of Christ upon the earth!! His kingdom is here and now!! It will be delivered up to the Father at Jesus' coming (I Corinthians 15:20-28). "Then cometh the end," not the beginning....(vs. 24).

Jesus is not coming the second time to give people another chance to be saved (Hebrews 9:27-28; Luke 16:19-31). But, Jesus will return to raise the dead (John 5:28-29), to judge and separate all nations (Matthew 25:31-46), to reward every one according to his works (II Corinthians 5:10), to take vengeance upon the wicked (II Thessalonians 1:7-9), and to save eternally the righteous (Matthew 25:46; Revelation 2:10).

What is our duty toward God Almighty while we await the second coming of the Lord? Sinners need to be taught the truth of God (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Romans 1:16; Acts; 2:36-38, 41-42, 47; Romans 6:3-4). Christians must be instructed to remain faithful even unto death (Hebrews 5:11-14; II Peter 1:5-11; Revelation 2:10). Thus, Christians must worship right (John 4:24), live right (Titus 2:11-12), and must talk and walk right (Ephesians 5:3-16).

Dear Reader, remember that soap is only useful when it is applied. Even so, the truth of the gospel never changes the lives of men unless it is applied!!

## ***A Hard Lesson To Learn***

**KEN TYLER**

Thank God for material blessings! "It is He that giveth thee power to get wealth" (Deuteronomy 8:18). But can we handle riches? Can we keep them from controlling us? These are important questions, and this is an area in which all of us must be extremely careful. It is very easy to become POSSESSED with materialism.

Solomon said in Ecclesiastes 5:10: "He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this is also vanity." Why can't we understand this point? When we make money and material things our LIFE, we are never "satisfied." The more we have, the more we want. It is just a vicious cycle. I want to make some suggestions which I hope will help you avoid this great device of the devil.

1. **TAKE THE LORD'S OFF THE TOP.** Realize the first responsibility with your prosperity is to the Lord. He gave it to you. Solomon said: "Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, any thy presses shall burst out with new wine" (Proverbs 3:9-10). If you will practice this Bible principle, God will take care of the rest.
2. **DON'T BASE YOUR HAPPINESS ON MONEY.** Of course, material things are important; but they are not the basis of our lives. Find a job that you like, and resolve to be contented with it. Plan and save for an adequate house and then be satisfied with it.

But please base your happiness on your relationship with God, and not the things of this world. Then you can rejoice through thick and thin, good and bad. Truly, in this life there are both. Paul said from a Roman prison, "Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice" (Philippians 4:4). This is the attitude toward life that all of us need.

3. **BE CAREFUL NOT TO OVERSPEND.** There are multitudes of credit cards, and all kinds of loans; and if we are not careful, we will reach too far. Buy only what you can pay for without putting yourself in a worrisome turmoil. This is a hard lesson, but all of us must learn it. Young couples, I especially encourage YOU to be careful in this area.

I sincerely hope the thoughts of this article will help us to always control things, instead of letting things control us. Remember that God's Holy Spirit through Paul said, "the love of money is the root of all evil. . ." (1 Timothy 6:10).

## ***Bible Bits***

What determines Godly apparel? Not society, for the apostle Paul writes not to be conformed to this world. Romans 12:2. The Bible describes Godly dress as being modest and discreet. This implies the need to use sound judgment based on an understanding of what the Bible describes as godliness. The individual who is truly trying to follow the example of Jesus will not be influenced by what his or her peers do or wear. Nor would that individual dress in such a way as to be the cause of others to look with impure thoughts and desires. Matthew 5:27-28. No, God did not say how little is too little or how tight is too tight. God has left it up to the individual's heart. Is your heart with the world or with God? Like 10:25-28.

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