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EDITORIAL

"YE DO ERR"

How many times we have all heard preachers predicting the date and day and the time of Jesus' second coming. Yet the Bible declares, the Apostle Paul wrote: "But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when they say peace and safety! then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labour pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape." (1 Thessalonians 5:1-3). Speaking about His second coming of the day of the judgment Christ Himself declared: "But of that day and hour no one knows, no, not even the angels of heaven, but my Father only." (Matthew 24:36). And at Mark 13:32 the Lord said, "But of that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father." All of this must be sufficient for all of us to know and understand that no man can ever know or predict when the Lord Jesus Christ will come again to, judge the world. Yes, the Lord will certainly come one day to judge the world and to receive unto Himself those who have been faithful to Him so that they might go with Him to live in His eternal home. But when will He come? God has chosen not to reveal that to man. Now, if someone comes along and teaches that the Christ is going to come on such and such day or time, then people ought to shun him and understand that he is a false teacher or prophet.

Yet, I never cease to be amazed at how gullible people can be. What happened in Korea on October 28th, 1992, was a repeat of

October 23rd, 1844, when in America William Miller had announced that Christ was going to come on that day. Just as many believed in Korea and some other parts of the world, including India, on the false prediction of Jesus' second coming on October 28th, 1992, so had thousands believed in Miller's prophecy in America in 1844. They had disposed of all their earthly possessions, had quit their jobs, had stopped their children going to schools. But Christ didn't come then, and hasn't come yet!

How wonderful it would be if people just read their Bible to know what it teaches, instead of listening to men what they teach in the name of the Bible. We are not, thank God, living today in an age when we do not have Bible available to us. It contains God's word. God communicates to man through its pages. We can for sure know what God want us to believe and do today to live acceptable lives for Him. For over one thousand years in the past Bibles were confiscated from the people and they were not allowed to read the Bible by the Roman church. It was said, that the church alone had the right to interpret the Scriptures for the people. During this period many unscriptural things were taught by the church and the people believed them as the doctrine of the Bible, which continue to be believed and practised as such even to this day by people in general who believe in Christ without any question or investigation. However, today we have the Bible available for us. No one is taking it away from us, but we ourselves mostly keep it closed for us!

What do we do when we want to know the exact weight of a certain thing? We put that thing on the weighing machine or the scale. Why can't we do the same in spiritual matters? Why not open and read directly from the Bible, whenever we have a question, or someone tells us that such and such the Bible says? I am afraid, most times people want to hear what a preacher has to say than read the Bible and check what God has said! On the other hand, **many just want to read in the Bible what is not there than to read what is there!** Recently a man told me that he can show me from the Bible that 25th of December was the birth day of Christ. But he never found it to show me. Because its not there!

One of the terrible consequences of religious deception is that it actually leads people away from God and His revealed will and the eternal life of heaven which our heavenly Father has promised for all people in His Son Jesus Christ. Why err, when we can know and do the right?

Assumptions

J.C. CHOATE

Most of us know someone who has the habit of assuming too many things. Such people don't always ask for permission to do what they do. Rather, they assume that it will be alright. We could give many examples of this behaviour, and we don't like it. But if it is bad for someone to assume things with us, how do you think God feels about a person who deals in such a manner with him?

We see this very thing being constantly practiced in the religious world. These are people who are supposed to be intelligent and logical, yet when it comes to God and their relationship with him they assume a lot of things. They don't even stop to think about the fact that God might look at it differently. They simply conclude that God will accept them on their terms.

The people being referred to are those who listen to the religious leaders of the day and assume that what they are saying is the truth. They never seem to question them. Neither do they go to the scriptures to see what they say. Rather, if someone questions them, instead of trying to show that what they believe really is based on the scriptures, they criticize the questioner. This is sad indeed.

When it comes to my convictions and practices in the name of Christ, I should welcome the opportunity to show in the scriptures both what I believe and why I believe it. But if I am unable to do that, it should cause me to begin to question what I have taught.

For example, think of all of those who assume that we are born in sin, that "faith only" saves us, that baptism has nothing to do with salvation, that the Lord accepts many churches, that the name we wear spiritually is not important, that there are many ways to heaven, and so on. These are well-known teachings of today which are accepted without question by millions of people. Then because so many do accept them, the conclusion is that they must be acceptable to God. How sad to think that people will close their eyes to the truth and go along with such man-made teachings, only to be lost in the end.

Even in the church, Christians may make the same error in their thinking. Many members of the church assume that they can miss worship and still be acceptable to God. They assume giving is not all that necessary, that it is not all that important to take the gospel to the rest of the world, and on and on we could go with many other things that are simply *assumed* by the average Christian. This is contrary to the

spirit of Jesus' teachings.

All of us should want to go to God's word for the truth on every spiritual matter. It is not necessary to assume anything. We can soon know exactly what the Lord wants us to do if we will take the time to read and study the scriptures, giving them an opportunity to speak. We do have God's will. It has been given to us by Him and preserved for us so we can study his written word and know exactly what it teaches. Christ says that we should search the scriptures (John 5:39), that the truth will make us free. (John 17:17). Paul says that the scriptures furnish us unto every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16, 17). Peter explains that the word of the Lord will give us all things that pertain to life and godliness. (2 Peter 1:3). James says that we should be doers of the word (James 1:22), and that if we will continue in the perfect law of liberty and do the work of God that we will be blessed. (James 1:25). Christ said that we should do his commandments to be blessed (Revelation 22:14), and that we should not add to or subtract God's word. (Revelation 22:18,19).

Now when we do what the Lord has asked us to do, to study, to know, to obey, and to abide in his teaching, being faithful unto death, there is no room for assuming anything regarding the Lord and his will. *We must obey.* It is just that simple.

May the Lord help us to get serious about our relationship with him. Let us not neglect our salvation, be careless with our souls, or risk our eternal hope on hearsay, opinions of men, or taking a chance. Let us seek to know God's will, to put him first, and to prepare our souls to meet Him. Let us assume nothing.

Especially For Women

... Within Herself

BETTY BURTON CHOATE

"Out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them . . . So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him." (Genesis 2:19,20).

"And the Lord God said, 'it is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.'" (v. 18).

"And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib which the Lord had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. And Adam said, 'This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.'" (v. 21-23).

"And Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living." (Genesis 3:20).

Can we mentally turn back the centuries and imagine that first human couple? What was their relationship? Was the woman merely a servant to Adam, designed to fill his needs? In some cultures today that is the woman's role in life. But is this what God intended?

There is no record that in any other area of creation God took a part of one living being to form the basis of another. In this, Eve was unique. Concerning the creation of humanity itself, God had said, "Let us make man in Our image, according to our likeness . . ." (Genesis 1:26). So Adam was made of the dust of the earth, but in the likeness of God, as God breathed the breath of life into his nostrils in order that he might become a living soul.

But woman was formed from a rib taken from the side of man. In this she was unique in all of creation: formed in the image of God as a living soul, yet also one flesh with Adam.

What was Eve's role? God pronounced her "comparable to man". She was the completion of Adam. Just as, physically, God placed part of the reproductive system in man and the other part in woman, even so in every other way man and woman complete each other. The woman's gentleness and home-making qualities blend with man's strength and his drive to provide for the needs of his family. Man reaches out to form a working bond with the community; a woman at her best is in the home, forming strong family bonds from which will develop generations of emotionally stable families. Spiritually, the man leads the way in worship to God, while the woman in the home teaches the children the concepts of godly living, day by day.

Another word is used in the Bible to describe the role of woman; she is a helper. As a person *capable* of completing man. God intended that Eve form a *willing* partnership with Adam, *helping* him in whatever ways were possible. If women today cultivated this attitude toward their husbands, many common family problems would not arise. Our homes would be the places of peace and support God planned them to be.

At the same time, though, Eve realized that she was an independent soul with a direct relationship to God. When Cain was born,

Eve said, "I have gotten a man from the Lord". (Genesis 4:1). The wording of her statement is a pattern for women of all time. She acknowledged that God Himself had given the gift—in this case, a son—and that she, herself, was the recipient. Between the Giver and the receiver was an open avenue of recognition. Eve realized her relationship and worth to God, as well as her role in the structure of the home. Women today, though far removed in time from our first mother, would do well to follow her example.

"The Ancient Path"

P. PAUL RAJ

The presence of conflicting denominations and confusing doctrines is a hinderance to the truth seekers. Honest people often become very tired of denominationalism and even quit seeking the truth. Due to this confusion millions of sincere people live in a lost condition. Hence, we need to take a close look at the Pure New Testament Christianity from it's eternal plan to eternity. This will also help Christians to reaffirm their faith in the Lord.

Therefore I would urge you to go through this article and consider your religious believes and practices in the light of the scriptures.

God has always revealed His will to mankind. (Heb 1:1-2, Rom. 1:19-20) But alas! Men have always departed from God's will. Adam and Eve departed from God's will by eating the forbidden fruit. (Gen 3). Cain departed from God's will or way by bringing a false offering, (Gen. 4). The people of Noah's day corrupted their way on the earth inviting the great flood which destroyed them. (Gen 6:12, 7:21-23). God's chosen Israelites also violated His law and were justly punished.

God's kingdom, the New Testament Church, was established in Jerusalem in A.D. 33 on the first Pentecost day following the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Acts 2). It soon spread throughout the then Roman world. (Col. 1:23). Local churches were planted in many places like Antioch, Rome, Corinth, Galatia and in several other places. Many of them were strong and independent.

However the Holy Spirit predicted and warned against a drift from the Pure New Testament Christianity. (I Tim. 4:1-4; II Tim 4:1-4; Acts 20:28-32). Galatian Christians soon turned to another gospel. (Gal 1:6-9). Apostle Paul feared that the minds of Corinthian Christians might be corrupted from the simplicity that was in Christ (II Cor. 11:2-4).

Many strange teachings and practices such as Holy water, Celibacy, Purgatory, Infant baptism, Transubstantiation and host of others alien to the Bible appeared since the 2nd century onwards. Once again, God's chosen people in the New Testament, the Christians fell an easy prey to the teachings of the devil and departed from Pure New Testament Christianity.

Many centuries passed in spiritual darkness until the Reformation period emerged in the early 15th century. People like Martin Luther and others tried their best to reform and clear the catholic religious pollution but could not succeed. Subsequently the Protestant churches emerged and multiplied across the whole Europe. Unfortunately, the Protestantism also retained and borrowed some of the catholic practices.

Then came the period of Restoration in early 18th century when honest people from various denominations like Alexander Campbell & Elias Smith denounced their unscriptural beliefs and practices to go back and find the First Century Christianity in the Bible. This should serve as an eye opener to the present day denominational people. They can't afford to be sincerely mistaken any longer.

When God's chosen nation Israel had turned away from the law, Prophet Jeremiah appealed them saying, Thus saith the Lord: "Stand in the ways and see and ask for the old paths where the good way is and walk in it" (Jer 6:16). Likewise, we, Christians living in the 20th century earnestly appeal to our denominational friends to give up their man made churches and the doctrines and turn back to the Lord. Some find it difficult to understand the true Christianity. Yet some wonder whether there can be a true Christianity. And even if there is one how to identify it? Here is clear picture of the True Christianity from it's eternal plan to eternity.

A. GOD PLANNED IT

The church is a part of God's eternal plan and purpose. It is He who designed it. His manifold wisdom is to be made known through that church. Neither denominations nor an agency can do it. God is to be glorified in His church in Christ for ever. (Eph 3:9-11,21). Over the centuries men have invented many religions and denominations. They are a curse to the mankind. In India alone hundreds of precious lives and properties worth crores of rupees are lost each year in religious fundamentalism. The corrupted denominationalism is a great hindrance to the spread of true Christianity not only in India but also in the whole world.

B. GOD PROPHESED THE CHURCH

"Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it.

Many people shall come and say, "come let us go to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of God of Jacob; He will teach His ways, and we shall walk in his paths" For out of Zion shall go forth the Law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." (Isa 2:2-3).

Let us carefully note few Points here:

1. What will be established? . . . God's house.
2. When will be established? . . . In the latter days
3. For whom be established? . . . For all nations
4. Where it will be established? . . . In Jerusalem

In brief: God's house will be established in Jerusalem in the latter days of Jewish religion. (Please compare I Tim. 3:15, Heb. 3:6, Eph. 2:18-20, Acts 2:14-47).

"And in the days of those kings the God of Heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms and it shall stand for ever" (Dan. 2:44).

The prophecy speaks of the setting up of God's eternal Kingdom in the days of Roman rule. We should examine whether or not these prophecies have fulfilled.

C. CHRIST PROMISED TO BUILD THE CHURCH

On being asked by Jesus what the people thought about his divinity, the opinion of the people was wrong. But Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ the Son of the living God" Christ said "And I say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it". (Matt. 16-18).

Let us carefully note few points from the Lord's promise.

1. Christ is the builder of the church.
2. He will build only one church.
3. That will be His church because He said I will build my church.
4. It's built on the Truth that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God. (Please refer Eph. 2:19-20; I Cor 3:11).

Please note that Jesus never promised to build a catholic or a Protestant or a Pentecostal church. Nor did he promise to build a church on Peter or upon any other day or event.

D. CHRIST AND HIS APOSTLES PREPARED IT BY PREACHING

John the Baptist preached saying, "Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 3:2). Jesus Christ and His 12 Apostles preached the same message (Matt 4:17, 10:7). Later seventy disciples also preached the same thing (Luke 10:1,9).

In all 84 persons preached that the Kingdom was at hand. Christ directed the Apostles to remain at Jerusalem until they receive the promise of the Holy Spirit. (Luke 24:49).

Apostles, after seeing off the Lord leaving them for Heaven, returned to Jerusalem and remained there. (Luke 24:50-53; Acts 1:4-13). The stage is now set for the establishment of the Lord's Kingdom which is the Pure New Testament church.

E. THE CHURCH WAS ESTABLISHED ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST

The Kingdom was to come with power during the life time of the most of the Apostles. (Lk 9:1). The power was to come with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8). On the day of first Pentecost after the Lord's resurrection, the Holy Spirit came upon the Apostles. (Acts 2:1-4). As a result, Peter and other Apostles preached the Gospel to the multitude for the first time. About 3000 people obeyed in baptism for the remission of their sins. The Lord added them to the church. (Acts 2:14-38,41,47). Prior to this event the church was a future institution, hereafter it is being spoken in the Bible as the one existing. Yes, the true church which was planned, prophesied, promised, and prepared was established by our Lord at Jerusalem in AD 33.

This is neither Catholic nor Protestant nor Pentecostal, One might wonder whether the true church ever came to India. Prior to the coming of Europeans in 16th century, it's believed one of the Apostles of Christ, Thomas came to India in AD 52, preached the pure Gospel and many congregations of the New Testament church were established in the southern parts of India. They were not Marthomites or Jacobites. Little is known about the history of church in the middle age.

Christ is the builder, Head and Saviour of the body. (Matt 16:18, Eph 5:23). Hence the Bible, to show His ownership, calls it "Church of Christ" (Rom 16:16, Matt 16:18). Her members are called just "CHRISTIANS". (Acts 11:26, I Pet. 4:16). Nothing more, nothing less and nothing different. They know no human head or creed. (I Pet. 3:22, Col. 1:18, Gal. 1:7-9).

They worship on each first day of the week. Their worship consists of preaching, prayers, singing without musical instruments, giving and breaking of bread. (Acts 2:42, 20:7, Col. 3:16, 1 Cor. 16:1-2). Each congregation is organically independent with elders, deacons, preachers and members. (Phil. 1:1, Acts 6:1-6) They are all brethren. There is no clergy and laity system. (Matt 23:8). her servants do not wear special dresses or take special forbidden titles such as "Father or Reverend". (Matt. 23:5-10).

The honest reader might wonder about the origin and development of denominations. He might also wonder why they should exist at all. Here is a glance of the origin and development of some of the man-made churches.

Year	Place	Founder	Name of Denomination
AD 606	Rome	Boniface III	Roman Catholic church
AD 1530	Germany	Martin Luther	Lutheran
AD 1534	England	Henry VIII	Episcopalian
AD 1536	Switzerland	John Calvin	Presbyterian
AD 1550	England	Robert Brown	Congregationalist
AD 1607	Holand	John Smith	Latter day saints/Mormons
AD 1739	England	John Wesly	Methodist
AD 1830	America	William Miller	Seventh day Adventist
AD 1886	America	Mary Bekker Edi	Christian science
AD 1872	America	C.T. Russels	Jehovah Witness
AD 1900	America	A group	Pentecostalism

Please remember that we have already seen that the True New Testament Christianity was established at Jerusalem in AD- 33 according to God's eternal plan. We feel sad over the present divided state of all those who believe in Christ as their saviour. See how unscriptural they are in name, founder, place and time of establishment. Their teachings and practices are unscriptural too. Such division is condemned in the scriptures. (1 Cor. 1:10-13, 3:3-5). Christ prayed for unity among his followers. (John 17:20-23). Is Christ divided? (1 Cor. 1:13). No. Then why divisions among his followers? Denominationalism is contrary to the spirit of true Christianity. They have no reason to exist.

CONCLUSION

We have seen clearly that the Pure New Testament Christianity

was in God's plan, prophesy, promise, preparation and was established at Jerusalem in AD 33. We also noticed that the denominations came centuries later. Now you have to make a decision as to whether you would follow God or men.

We see and hear about the fatal deaths of those who disregard the road safety rules. How much more dangerous would it be if we disregard the appeal of God to give up denominationalism and turn to the body of Christ? Can we disregard His authority and go unpunished?

Once the writer of this article had an experience of boarding a wrong train with all sincerity to reach a right destination. But his sincerity in falsehood resulted only in frustration, shame, loss of money and time. Likewise your sincere belief in a man made church, social gospel and in a religious leader will never take you to heaven. Please remember that those who fail to do the will of the Father will be rejected. (Matt. 7:21-23).

Dear friend, does it appeal to you? If you are not a Christian we urge you to become one by believing in God, repenting of your sins, confessing Jesus as Christ and by being baptized in water for the remission of your sins. (Heb. 11:6, Acts 2:38, 8:37, Mk. 16:1-6). May God help you to do so. If you are a back slider please repent and turn to the first love and remain faithful till the death, so that you may obtain the crown of life. (Rev 2:10).

What About The 1000 Year Reign

STEVE HALE

OUR TEXT

"And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, the old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and cast him into the abyss, and shut *it*, and sealed *it* over him, that he should deceive the nations no more, until the thousand years should be finished: after this he must be loosed for a Little time. And I saw thrones, and they that sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God, and such as worshipped not the beast, neither his image, and received not the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they lived, and reigned

with Christ a thousand years. The rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years should be finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: over these the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years" (Rev. 20:1-6, ASV).

INTRODUCTION

Few subjects are more controversial and misunderstood than this text from the book of Revelation, and particularly the aspect of the 1000 year reign.

From the length of our text, it is obvious that this brief tract cannot give it an exhaustive treatment. However, we want to exercise stewardship over this material to share some important aspects of interpreting what is meant by the 1000 year reign.

Many sincere people believe they can have a fix on the Lord's return by premillennial theories about the 1000 year reign. However, the Bible clearly teaches that no one knows when Jesus will return. The Lord Himself said: "But of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only" (Matt. 24:36).

It is rather presumptuous to claim to know more about the return of Christ than Christ Himself! What then, is meant by the 1000 year reign of Christ?

Again we do not have the space in this brief article to deal with all men have said about the 1000 year reign. Rather than debunking all that has been said, we will seek to put the text in its first century context, and give the proper interpretation of the 1000 year reign.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The book of Revelation was written in a time of horrible persecution. Constant references to martyrs for the faith are made (Rev. 2:13; 6:9-11; 7:9-14; 11:3ff.; 13:7-8, 10, 15; 14:11-13; 17:6; 18:20, 24; 19:2, 8, 11-14, 19-21; 20:4-6). It is not insignificant that John describes heaven as a place of perfect protection (Rev. 21:9-21, 27).

Revelation 13 makes it abundantly clear that the emperor at the time viewed himself as deity. Three emperors of the first century had a sense of deity:

Caligula A.D. 37-41

Nero A.D. 54-68

Domitian A.D. 81-96

Caligula is much too early for the church to have spread into Asia

as it had by this time (Rev. 2 & 3). This leaves us with Nero and Domitian as possibilities.

This writer believes Domitian was the emperor during the time of Revelation because: (1) Laodicea had been leveled by an earthquake in A.D. 60. Nero's persecutions (about 64) would have been far too close to this time for the city to have been as prosperous as described in the book.

(2) The persecutions must have extended beyond the locality of Rome to have been applicable in Asia, which would point toward Domitian;

(3) John's authorship, late as it was with the gospel and the epistles (dealing with gnosticism especially), would point to a later date.

Revelation is written with much figurative language. John himself wrote: ". . . and he sent and signified *it* by his angel unto his servant John" (Rev. 1:1). The term "signified" means: "to show forth by sings." This is certainly the case with apocalyptic literature.

We must not forget that Revelation was addressed specifically to "... seven churches of Asia" (Rev. 1:4). The book had to mean something to them! The basic message of Revelation is unmistakable victory! Those in the Lord will be victorious over those of Satan. Promises are made to all seven churches as to those who "overcome" (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 25, 3:5, 12, 21).

Wild, fanciful interpretations of the book, that take no consideration as to the time, people, purpose, and context of it should be rejected.

VICTORY OVER SATAN REVELATION 20:1-3

Here, we have a continuation of the previous chapter where we find the defeat of the beast (Roman Emperor, Domitian), and the false prophet that enforced worship of the beast (Roman Concilia, Rev. 19:19-21). Since chapter 13, these have been the main opponents of the Lamb. They had viciously persecuted the people of God, and appeared to be temporarily victorious.

These enemies of God and His people being overthrown, along with the devil's ultimate defeat (Rev. 20:7-10) is the theme, not the thousand year reign. Again, we must let the Scriptures teach us, and not make them say what we want!

As you read this text (Rev. 20:1-6), you will not find these popular, but false, premillennial tenets: (1) the Second Coming; (2) National Palestine and Israel; (3) The Throne of David; (4) The Establishment of the Kingdom For A Literal 1000 years; (5) The Coronation of Jesus as

King At The Second Coming; (6) Jerusalem; (7) Christ Reigning On The Earth; (8) The Rapture; (9) The Thousand Year Interval Between The Resurrection of The Righteous And The Wicked; (10) A "Heaven On Earth" Void Of Sin Or Violence.

Here, we do find an angel binding Satan for a thousand years. The thousand years is no more literal than the "key" to the abyss, or the "chain" by which Satan is bound. By key, we know the angel had access to the abyss. By binding the Devil with a "chain," we know the angel had the power to restrain the Devil.

For one thousand years, we understand he will be bound for a complete period of time. These people were as fascinated with numbers as we are with computers. 10 and any multiplication thereof was viewed as a number of completeness.

We know Satan is still powerful, and hard at work (Rev. 12:7-10). However, he is bound so that he will not "deceive the nations" (Rev. 20:3). He had been deceiving them by the worship of the beast (Roman Emperor) as enforced by the false prophet (Roman Concilia). Now, he is restricted from so doing.

VICTORY WITH THE MARTYRS REVELATION 20:4-6

There is no doubt that a mere reading of verse four find martyrs of the Domitianic persecutions. yet these are said to live and reign with Christ for a thousand years! And, they are not waiting to reign, but are reigning with Him now, and during this context.

That is why the 1000 years is a signification (Rev. 1:1) of a complete period of time. The first resurrection (20:6) had to do with these martyrs as they are brought to their thrones, and live and reign with Him. The rest of the dead will be called forth at the end, or when the thousand years are finished (Rev. 20-5; Jn. 5:28, 29).

THE REIGN OF JESUS IS NOW?

Premillennialists' use of the 1000 years reign presupposes that Christ is not reigning now, but will reign at the misinterpreted "1000 year reign." he is head of the church . . . now (Eph. 1:22-23). He is Lord . . . now (2 Cor. 4:5). He is the Chief Shepherd . . . now (1 Pet. 5:1-4). He is the Apostle and High Priest . . . now (Rev. 19:16; 1 Tim. 6:15).

His Kingdom, the church, is not a fleshly physical kingdom, but a spiritual kingdom, Jesus Himself said: "My Kingdom is not of this world." (Jn. 18:36). He reigns now, and His Kingdom is now!

NEVER AN EARTHLY, PHYSICAL KING

Jesus could have become an earthly, physical king early in His ministry. John wrote: "Jesus, therefore perceiving that they were about to take him by force, to make him king, withdrew again into the mountain himself alone" (Jn. 6:15).

Our Lord's mission was not an accidental rejection by the Jews. He came to save us from our sins (Matt. 20:26-28; 26:28). He knew the price to be paid (Lk. 22:42), and obeyed the Father in the completion of this divine plan.

In fact, Jeremiah's prophecies inform us that our Lord could never been an earthly king. Jeremiah, prophesying some years before the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem (587/586 B.C.), spoke in regard to the son of Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin. Jehoiachin is also referred to in Scripture as Coniah and Jeconiah.

So wicked was Jehoiachin, that he was taken into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar after being on the throne for only three months and ten days. In fact, Jeremiah ends his book by talking about the kind way in which Nebuchadnezzar's son, Evil-merodach treated Jehoiachin in the 37th year of his (Jehoiachin's) captivity (Jer. 52:31-34).

Of Jehoiachin (Coniah, Jeconiah), Jeremiah said: "Thus saith Jehovah, Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days; for no more shall a man of his seed prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling in Judah" (Jer. 22:30). In other words, no one of the lineage of Jehoiachin could be a physical king ruling in Judah, or sit upon David's throne (in the physical sense).

In the Lord's genealogy in Matthew, the publican wrote: "and Josiah begat Jechoniah and his brethren, at the time of the carrying away to Babylon. And after the carrying away to Babylon, Jechoniah begat Shealtiel; and Shealtiel begat Zerubbabel" (Matt. 1:11, 12). While in captivity, during these thirty-seven years, Jechoniah begat Shealtiel. And none of Jechoniah's seed would rule as Judah's (or Israel's) physical king.

Therefore, Jesus Christ could never be an earthly king! His mission is not to militarily conquer the world. He has the power to destroy the world (2 Thess. 1:7-9)! His mission was to bring salvation through His own blood (Rev. 1:5)!

CONCLUSION

Jesus is king now, the 1000 year reign is happening now, and our submission to His rule must be now (2 Cor. 6:2). Premillennialism, with its

tribulation and rapture, misses the entire purpose of the coming of Jesus (Jn. 10:10)!

The Lord's church was no accident, but was in the plan of God all along. Jesus said: ". . . Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world . . ." (Matt. 25:34).

Jesus is the way of victory! Be His! Die, be buried, and resurrected with Him by baptism (Rom. 6:3-7; Gal. 3:27). ". . . thanks be to God, who giveth us victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 16:57). Amen!

Not Even The Smell Of Smoke!

EDDY GILPIN

In Daniel 3 the Bible records the account of the three Hebrew youths being compelled to worship the image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up in Dura of the Babylonian province (vs. 1). This image of gold (measuring 90' in height and 9' in breadth) was to be bowed down to in obeisance, as directed by Chaldean law. Yet, in obedience to an even higher power, Hannaniah, Mishael and Azariah refused to obey the king's decree. As a consequence of their actions, they were to be cast into the midst of a fiery furnace (vs. 6).

So highly favored were they, however, in the eyes of Nebuchadnezzar, that he was willing to give them a second chance (vss. 13-15). The three youths with one accord said, ". . . we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up" (vs. 18). In his fury, Nebuchadnezzar commanded that the furnace be heated "seven times more than it was wont to be heated" (vs. 19). So great was the heat from this furnace that the men who cast the three Jews into its bowels were consumed (vs. 22).

In utter amazement, Nebuchadnezzar watched as four men, free from any fetters, walked amidst the devastating flames. He asked of his wise men, "Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?" (vs. 24) Certainly they had. Yet, here were the three, loose and walking with a fourth, whom Nebuchadnezzar himself identified (vs. 25). What a miracle this was! Seeing his punishment was useless, Nebuchadnezzar bade them come forth from the furnace (vs. 26). When they did so it was found that they were completely unharmed by the fire, not one strand of hair was singed, their clothing did not have a different appearance (vs. 27). They did not even have the smell of smoke on them!

While there are no such miracles being performed today, there are lessons that can be learned from the circumstances of such miracles as this. Take, as an example, the decision made by these three young men. They had been brought into a foreign land by constraint. In this foreign land they were faced with many new experiences, temptations and decisions. When faced with the temptation to save their lives and forsake their God, they chose to "obey God rather than men." Because of their choice, they forfeited their rights to physical life. Yet, they would not be soiled by the society in which they lived. They entered that fire free from the stain of the sin of idolatry, and came forth free from the stain of punishment—not even the smell of smoke!

Like the Jewish youths, one has no choice in and of himself whether he is born into this world with its corrupt society. However, he does have a choice as to what he will make of himself in this society. In other words, he lives in the world, but does not necessarily have to live of the world. The choice is his own, just as it was with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. They refused to be stained by the sins of the society in which they lived. Even in the furnace, God saw to it that they did not bear the marks of their surroundings. While God does not keep "the smell of smoke", as it were, off of one's person miraculously today, He has given him the means of keeping himself "unspotted from the world" (Jas. 1:27).

In writing to the Ephesians, the apostle Paul stated, "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Col. 4:22-24). He presented the Romans with the fact that if they had been baptized into Christ's death (where His blood is contacted—Rom. 6:3-4), that the "old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed" (Rom. 6:6). Again, to the Ephesians he made this statement: "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Eph. 5:11).

In this last verse (Eph. 5:11), there are two commands. The first is, "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness." The second is, "but rather reprove them." While most people who have any desire to do what is right have little problem with the former command, most simply neglect the latter. This was not the case with the three aforementioned captives. They emphatically said, ". . . we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." They, in essence, were stating their refusal to be stained by the corrupt society

in which they lived. Consequently, they did not even smell like smoke!

What about you, dear friend? Do you smell like the smoke of society's sinfulness? In order to keep from it as the three Hebrew youths did you must "abstain from all appearance of evil" (I Thes. 5:22). That is, you must "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness." But, not only that, you must also "reprove them." Is your life one that says to society, "I will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up?" Or, is it a life that demonstrates that you have one foot in the world and the other in the kingdom? If so, you are only fooling yourself. Jesus said, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Mr. 6:24). One who attempts such just might have the "smell of smoke" on him at the Judgment.

Paradox

BENNIE FORISTER

Jesus said: "For he that is least among you all, the same shall be great" (LK. 9:48). Again, He said, "For he that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (LK. 14:11). He also stated, "He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it" (Mt. 10:39). Paul set forth a paradox concerning his life in Christ when he said, "For when I am weak, then am I strong" (II Cor. 12:10). Jesus had earlier told him, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness" (II Cor. 12:9). Jesus further taught that the greatest should be the servant of all (Mk. 10:44), and the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom (I Cor. 1:25).

Jesus Came To The World That We May Go To Heaven

It is difficult for many to believe that the Son of God voluntarily left heaven and came into the world in order that man might have the opportunity to go to heaven. But, this is the sweet story of redemption. Paul said, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief" (I Tim. 1:15). Because of the difficulty the finite mind has in comprehending such love, Paul referred to this as "the mystery of godliness" (I Tim. 3:16). This is the role that Jesus accepted. He 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" (Mt. 20:28). Even before His birth it was promised that He would "save His people from

their sins" (Mt. 1:21). His coming to the earth opened the way for man to go to heaven (Jn. 14:1-3). Paul rested in the assurance of his heavenly home. He wrote, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (II Cor. 5:1). Although it may sound contrary to fact, Jesus came to earth that man may go to heaven.

Jesus Was Born In The Flesh That We May Be Born Spiritually

"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through His death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Heb. 2:14). To accomplish this feat, Christ had to be born of the flesh. After revealing that the Word was with God and was God (Jn. 1:1), John revealed that "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (Jn. 1:14). That Jesus Christ lived in the flesh is a fundamental point of Christianity (I Jn. 4:2, 3). This incarnation of the Son of God made it possible for Jesus to teach that man must be born again spiritually (Jn. 3:1-5). Peter commented concerning the new birth thus: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (I Pet. 1:23). This new birth puts one into Christ as a new creature and makes him a member of the family of God, His church (Gal. 3:26, 27; II Cor. 5:17; Acts 2:47; I Tim. 3:15).

Beatitudes For Friends Of The Aged

Blessed are they who understand
My faltering step and palsied hand.
Blessed are they who know my ears today
Must strain to catch the things they say.
Blessed are they who seem to know
That my eyes are dim and my wits are slow.
Blessed are they who looked away
When coffee was spilled at the table today.
Blessed are they with a cheery smile
Who stop to chat for a little while.
Blessed are they who never say
"You've told that story twice today."
Blessed are they who make it known
I'm loved, respected and not alone.

Blessed are they who know I'm at loss
To find the strength to carry the cross.
Blessed are they who ease the days
On my journey home in loving ways.

—Author Unknown

Jesus And Jonah

T. PIERCE BROWN

For the past 60 years I have had conversations with skeptics of various kinds who would raise questions about the various difficulties and apparent contradictions in the Bible. In almost every case, when I would find a way to reconcile the difficulty, the person would drop that issue and raise another, for there was no interest in finding the truth, but simply in finding reasons to reject truth.

However, there are many honest, sincere persons who find these difficulties and want to find a logical way to reconcile them. Such a problem continues to arise concerning the statement of Jesus in Matthew 12:40, "As Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." The basic problem is, how could he have done that if he were buried on Friday afternoon and raised on Sunday morning? We do not need to "explain away" anything, but simply to look at all the facts, and discover that there is really no problem.

We are writing with the assumption that those who are reading this believe in the veracity of God and have faith that His Word is true. If you do not believe that the New Testament writers are to be trusted, then we need to start at a different place. So, let us look at the facts as they are presented.

First, it is said that he would rise again "*on the third day*" (Matthew 16:31, 17:23, 20:19, Mark 9:31, Luke 18:33, 24:7). Mark 8:31 says "after three days" and Matthew 12:40 says that He would be "three days and three nights" in the heart of the earth. Without any knowledge of language, customs or logic, we can immediately see that either the expressions mean the same period of time, or there is a plain contradiction in the scriptures. It is impossible for a person to arise "*on the third day*" and to stay buried until "*after three days*", according to our present language and mode of expression. So, without making effort to

either explain, or explain away, one can be sure that the expression "three days and three nights" means the same as "on the third day".

However, it would help us to be aware that the Hebrew method of expression from the earliest days showed that they meant the same thing by "after three days" as they did by "on the third day". In Genesis 42:17, 18 we find that Moses says that Joseph put his brethren into prison "three days", yet released them "on the third day". Other similar references are in I Kings 12:5-12. In verse 5, we find that Rehoboam said, "Depart for yet three days, then come again to me." Then in verse 12 it says, "And all the people came to Rehoboam the third day as the king had appointed." Esther 5:16 says, "Go, gather all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day." Then in Esther 5:1 it says, "Now it came to pass on the third day, that Esther put on her royal apparel." We could multiply the examples of such language, but one cannot read them thoughtfully without being aware that in the Jewish language "three days and nights", "on the third day" and "after three days" all mean the same thing.

That the same kind of language was used and understood in the days of Jesus is evident in the statement of the Pharisees in Matthew 27:63, 64. "Sir, we remember that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, 'After three days I will rise again.' Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day." If we were speaking about it, we would have requested that it be made sure until the fourth day.

Let us be aware that there is a great deal of difference in an honest faithful heart trying to find out how to reconcile two apparently contradictory statements and a doubting, skeptical heart trying to prove a contradiction exists. It is sad that we have many persons connected with the Lord's church now who teach that there are contradictory statements, but say that it makes no difference. They think that the Bible is not a book setting forth absolute truths and commands for us to follow, but a book of general ideas and suggestions for us to follow if the situation seems appropriate.

Can We Rightly Divide The Word Of Truth?

JERRI MANASCO

Paul's pen produced many memorable statements. Among these

are the familiar words that he wrote to Timothy in II Timothy 2:15. "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." The American Standard Version renders this verse, "Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth."

It is tragic that some brethren today are contending that Paul's words in this text cannot be taken seriously! No, I do not mean that we have brethren who are verbally suggesting that we rip II Timothy 2:15 out of our Bibles. However, there is a rising attitude among us that would eventually lead to the same results in action if not in fact! The rising attitude is that it is not really possible to rightly divide the word of truth! The fact is, being approved of God IS an objective reality. Handling aright the word of truth is an objective reality. I cannot figure out why Paul would have said we can rightly divide the word of truth if we cannot rightly divide the word of truth. If we cannot determine what the word of truth is, then how in the world could Paul have been so naive as to believe that we CAN so determine!

The word of truth is what God has revealed. It is the objective standard for all religious and spiritual teaching and testing. No other standard can be valid. Elders must stay within the confines of the world of truth. These men must certainly be faithful to the word they have received (Titus 1:9). Preachers must not depart from the objective reality that is the word of truth. All that is presented publically or privately must be the word of truth.

Paul's emphasis on the "word of truth" means that it is not merely a "tradition" or a "heritage" that is dear to the New Testament Christian. It is a heaviness in my heart when I hear faithful brethren assailed as members of a tradition-bound sect relying on worn out platitudes that are not valid in our modern world. Surely God has not changed his attitude toward his revealed will. Surely "the word of truth" is still "the word of truth." What else could it be? Surely Paul's statement in II Timothy 2:15 is a call to recognize the validity of real, objective, incomparable TRUTH. Why should it be any different now?

If the true and tried lessons presented by preachers of the past led people to the great salvation (Hebrews 2:1-4), then why should these sermons be rejected today? If these carefully and logically presented expositions of truth were nothing more than statements of a traditional heritage, then why do the modern "scholars" among us think that THEIR propositions should be taken seriously? There is an inconsistency here that any thinking person can detect!

Paul was in quite a dilemma if recent developments among certain brethren are accurate! Paul even placed Timothy in the same dilemma! Paul actually had the audacity to tell Timothy that he could rightly divide the word of truth! Paul somehow didn't see that he was pushing his tradition or his heritage onto Timothy! Paul had the idea that what he was teaching was the word of truth, and he was encouraging Timothy to make sure he was teaching the same thing!

If a brother or sister in Christ takes simply what the Bible says, there are philosophers among us who will quickly take them to task and hurl sophisticated barbs at them for their simplicity. A false enlightenment among us has led some to reinterpret the scriptures in the light of a desire to be more acceptable to the world. These modern times (they suggest) demand, a less stringent interpretation. Do these philosophers not know that there are true and competent SCHOLARS among us who DO NOT SUBSCRIBE TO THESE LIBERAL VIEWS? It is so much easier, though, to reject as negative any approach that calls for a positive acceptance of a "thus saith the Lord."

Can one rightly divide the word of truth? Thayer's lexicon defines the phrase, "to make straight and smooth; to handle aright . . . to teach the truth correctly and directly." W.E. Vine says the phrase has the idea of teaching scripture accurately. That surely is the point Paul is making in II Timothy 2:15.

What about that phrase "approved unto God"? How shall we be approved unto God if we do not or cannot know what it means to be approved unto God? What God approves is what approves us unto God. It is that simple. What God approves is what he has revealed in the word of truth. The only way we can determine what God approves and how we, therefore, can be approved unto God is to rightly divide (handle aright) the word of truth. Otherwise we shall be rejected (Matthew 15:13-14).

Our Worship

BOBBY KEY

Jesus told the woman from Samaria, "God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:25). "The Father seeketh such to worship him" (verse 23).

Worship is an act of reverence paid to the Creator. The believer directs his worship to God. "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and

him only shalt thou serve" (Deuteronomy 6:13; Matthew 4:10).

Worship involves an act. It is not merely an attitude of the heart. It is true that one must have the proper attitude, but the attitude must express itself in acts which find acceptance in the will of God. It is untrue that everything a Christian does is worship. This idea began with those who sought to justify the use of instrumental music in Christian worship. Some time ago we were told, "Worship does not involve acts but attitude, and if we have the right attitude, we cannot do anything in worship that is not pleasing to the Father." This individual admitted that there was no authority in the New Testament for instrumental music, but saw no need for such authority if the worshipper maintained the proper spirit.

Our worship must not only be in spirit but it must be in truth. Things unauthorized by the truth, (God's Word is truth), are unacceptable in the worship of God. Instrumental music is unauthorized, and, thus, unacceptable.

Worship is not an empty form. Man's whole being is involved in his worship. Man was created in God's image, and God requires man's reverence, attention, and worship.

Worship involves an act. It is not merely an attitude of the heart. It is true that one must have the proper attitude, but the attitude must express itself in acts which find acceptance in the will of God.

It is true that worship is not limited to an assembled group of people. God is free of any limitations of time, space, or place. A Christian may pray in his home, automobile, field, etc. Individuals are at liberty to worship God at any time and in any place. However, Christians are taught to assemble together (Hebrews 10:25). In partaking of the Lord's Supper, we come together in one place (I Corinthians 11:20). The early church "continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42; 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1, 2). These are specified acts of worship rendered by New Testament Christians. These early Christians were told to "teach and admonish one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Colossians 3:16). "In the midst of the church will I sing praises unto thee" (Hebrews 2:12).

It is safe to follow the examples in the New Testament. Our worship must be in harmony with God's will. It is spiritual and therefore involves the highest nature of the worshipper. Every faculty of man should be involved in elevating the mind and spirit of the worshipper into the presence of the Creator. Worship should never be haphazard; it is a privilege, a special time, a spiritual time.