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EDITORIAL

Four Types Of Death

Why do people die? Where do they go, after death? Do they come back or are re-born, after death? Are the dead still living? Or do they cease to live after death? These are some of the questions men have often asked. Death is a reality. Every day we read about it and hear about it and see it with our own eyes. We have loved ones died in our own families and we have asked, why did it happen to us? Death is no respecter of persons. All die, rich and poor, healthy and sickly, alike. Even Christ, the Son of God, on earth had to face death. One day you and I will die. We are all born to die. Paul, in 1 Corinthians 15:22, wrote, "For as in Adam all die. . . ." Death has spread to all men as a consequence of the sin of Adam and Eve in the beginning. (Romans 5:12). The writer of the book of Hebrews in the Bible wrote: "And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment." (Hebrews 9:27). Christ taught, in the 16th chapter of the book of Luke, about the rich man and the beggar, and said, "So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom . . ." (Luke 16:22,23). From all of this we learn, that death prevails because of sin; that death is not the end of man's existence; that there is a place called Hades (Greek word, which means the abode of departed souls), where all, both good and bad, go and live, and will continue to live until the day of judgment. Physical death is not the only kind of death, however, about

which we read in the Bible, There are three other ways in which men can die, namely, in the spiritual sense, eternally, and by dying to sin.

Adam and Eve, the first man and the first woman, whom God had created in the beginning after His holy likeness, had died in the spiritual sense when they had disobeyed God. Before their disobedience they were living in the fellowship of God. But God had forewarned them that in the day they would disobey Him, they would surely die (Genesis 2:17). Just as in physical death, death comes at the moment the spirit or the soul leaves the human body, so when Adam and Eve had sinned against God, it brought separation between man and God, and man died spiritually. Wrote Paul at Romans 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death. . . ." In James 1:14,15 the writer said, "But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full grown, brings forth death." Talking about widows, Paul, at 1 Timothy 5:6 wrote, "But she who lives in pleasure is dead while she lives." One may live physically, yet be dead spiritually because of sin. The Bible teaches that, "the soul who sins shall die..." (Ezekiel 18:20). spiritually no one dies because of the sins of his or her parents or because of the sin committed by Adam and his wife. We do bear the consequences of the sins of others, but we cannot bear the guilt of others. That is why, little babies cannot die spiritually, because they cannot sin. (Matthew 18:3 & 19:14).

This spiritual separation from God can lead one to face the eternal death or eternal separation from God. At Revelation 21:8 this state is identified as existing in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. The first death, not mentioned here but is implied, is the physical death, which all must face, saints and sinners alike. But the second death is for those who had lived in sin and had died physically in their sins. and it is eternal or everlasting. Giving a preview of the day of judgment, Christ, pointing his finger at the people on His left hand said, "And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." (Matthew 25:46). God, it is said, is every where. But there is a place where God will not be there, and it is hell the place of eternal separation from God. And many, said Christ, will go there, because most people are walking in the broad way that leads to destruction. (Matthew 7:13,14). Christ was so concerned about it that He taught, "And if your hand or foot or eye makes you sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, lame, or with one eye, then to go to hell, having two hands or two feet or two eyes, into the fire that shall never be quenched—where their worm

does not die and the fire is not quenched." (Mark-9:43-48). Hell is eternal, and those who will go there because of sin will live there for ever and ever, eternally and everlastingly.

To rescue man from this awful fate God in Christ Jesus came down on earth to save man from going to eternal hell. Because God "is not willing," says the Bible, "that any should perish but that all should come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9). "For when we were still without strength," said the apostle Paul, "in due time Christ died for the ungodly for scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:6-8). Through His death on the cross for sinners Christ became the propitiation for our sins. (1 John 4:10). God, because He loves us, made Christ, who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become righteousness of God in Christ. (2 Corinthians 5:21). That is why Christ could say, "If anyone keeps my word he shall never taste death." (John 8:51). He also said, "I am the resurrection and the life, he who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die." (John 11:25,26) To Timothy Paul wrote, "For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him." (2 Timothy 2:11). To escape eternal death of hell one must die to sin. How does one do that?

To Romans Paul wrote: "How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection." (Romans 6:2-5). What was he saying? He was teaching, that when they were baptized they had died to their sins. Through baptism they were buried in water, as Christ was buried in a grave after his death. Thus, they were baptised into Christ's death, and became one with Him in His death. And not only that, but in coming out of the water after the burial in water they had been united in the likeness of His resurrection from the grave of His death, just as they became united with him in His death and burial. And, therefore, now they were to walk in the new life, the life in Christ,. Continuing, the apostle said, further, "knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. for he who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ,

we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death that He died, he died to sin once for all; but the life that he lives, He lives to God. Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 6: 6-11).

Have you died to sin? Have you done what the people in the passage cited above had done? This is the only way God has authorised through which one can come out of spiritually dead condition, and by which to escape the eternal death of hell. In the last book of the Bible we read these beautiful and most hopeful words: "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on, Yes, says the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works follow them." (Revelation 14:13). Not all the dead are blessed, but those who die in the Lord Jesus Christ are indeed blessed, because they are going to enter into the rest with the Lord, and their works, their godly living and good deeds which they had done on earth will continue to influence the people of the world to obey God.

Observations Of A Denominational Campaign

J.C. CHOATE

I recently attended a denominational campaign. I don't normally do this kind of thing because I don't want to leave the impression that I am supporting such a gathering. In this case, however, there was a circus atmosphere with many milling around, so I would have been looked on more as a spectator than a participant, which was true.

Having attended such a gathering, let me share some observations.

In a city-wide campaign such as this is usually sponsored by the major churches, and the one who does the preaching has to agree to work with all of these denominational groups. Think about the fact that they are divided by name, organization, doctrine, and perhaps in any number of other ways, but here they are cooperating to put on a successful campaign. They organize it, support it financially, advertise it, and provide workers to implement it. I suppose they will share the spoils

but then return to their former state of working independantly of each other.

This type of campaign is very expensive. Advertising is done through the papers, sign boards, posters, hand bills, etc. Then the grounds have to be rented in a prominent and well-known area, which can be reached easily by bus, taxi, or private transportation. A fence has to be erected, stalls are built for different organization to sell their books and many other items. Then there is the large stage or podium, the chairs that have to be rented and moved in, the loud speaker equipment, and the videoing to be conveyed to screens so those who are sitting or standing at a distance can at least see the speakers, singers, and other participants. Then there is the electric power and any number of other expenses involved.

A well know speaker or team is invited to conduct the campaign. He and his group are given the royal treatment. Such a man will use this campaign to promote his ministry locally and over the country, as well as in other countries. There will probably be politicians present and other prominent people from the area. Also among those participating in the meetings will be the major religious leaders of the area. They may be asked to give a short speech or lead a prayer. Each one who is given a public part will be encouraged to bring along his followers., to promote and support the campaign.

Such meetings, night after night, draw thousand of people. Just the size automatically draws people. Among those who attend will be people who are directly involved, members of the churches which are cooperating to put on the campaign, and other believers in Christ who will take pride in this large number of "the Lord's people" being able to come together. There will also be people of other religions and beliefs. Many will come out of curiosity. There is a carnival-like atmosphere with all kind of vendors selling their products and food items. There are people giving out tracts, pamphlets, and other such material. Some of these are religious and some are secular.

The meetings last several hours. there are prayers, testimonies, speeches by guests, offerings collected, some singing with a band, and finally a message. Part of the audience sits or stands and patiently observes and listens to all that is taking place. In addition, there are thousands of others milling around, constantly coming and going. Among those attending, a good many each night will "respond to the lord". But as a whole, most of the participating churches will realize little, if any, from having converts from the campaign to begin attending their meetings. After a while it is as though it never happened. The big winner

is the speaker and his team as they continue to receive funds from the contacts made during the campaign, and as their fame and prestige continue to grow throughout the country.

These campaigns generally have a Pentecostal flavour. The crowds are enticed to come on the basis that miracles will be performed, the sick will be healed, and solutions will be found to their problems. They are told that they will be prayed for each night. Of course, what most people don't know is that all of the "healings" and testimonies are well orchestrated in advance. Only select people will be chosen to give public testimony of their healing. The sad part is that those who came blind will return home blind. Those who came without a leg or arm will have to return home as they came. In other words, no real miracles ever occur. The large audiences have to rely on the testimonies of people who supposedly have been healed, and on the assurances of the speaker and his team that miracles have been performed. They never see sight restored, a withered leg healed, or the dead raised. You can mark it down that no real miracles are ever performed during such campaigns. Another obvious thing is the fact that these are the people who claim to have the baptism of the Holy Spirit which enables them to perform miracles, but there they are with translators! In the first century, the baptism of the Holy Spirit immediately enabled the recipients to speak in other languages, with no need of translation. (Acts 2:4, 6). But these modern "miracle workers" must use translators to convey their message to those who speak in another tongue. Can you imagine Peter and the Apostles on the day of Pentecost having to rely on translator, or Paul arranging for a translator wherever he went? In the case of the Apostles on the day of Pentecost, the record says that as they spoke every man heard in his own tongue or language. (Acts 2).

Finally, the pure gospel of Christ is not preached during such campaigns. There is a lot of activity, people from different churches speak, a show is put on, but the truth is not taught. Christ himself is not glorified and preached. The "baptism of the Holy Spirit" and the working of miracles are the focal point of the messages. Little attention is paid to the gospel. The people are not told the whole truth of how to be saved, that one must believe and be baptized into Christ. Neither are they told of the one church that is set forth in the Bible, the church of Christ (Romans 16:16), and that when one obeys the gospel Christ saves him and adds him to his church. (Acts 2:47). They are not taught that the family of God is the church, the one that wears the name of Christ, the one for which Christ is the foundation and the head, and the one for which he is coming back one day (Acts 4:12; 1 Corinthians 3:11;

Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 5:23-27). No, they do not preach such truths, and neither will they. They cannot and continue in denominationalism and division. Such men are false teachers, and they mislead and deceive people.

While it is impressive to see such large numbers gather "in the name of Christ" and while we are thankful for the freedom of religion which allows this it is sad to see so many people attending with hopes of hearing the truth or to be healed, but to be sent home empty handed. Those who are so blind as not to be able to see such deceit will continue following these men as their "devotees", practicing their man-made religion. Those who have "given themselves to the Lord" have been deceived and are still as lost as they ever were, because they have not done what Christ has said in His word that we *must* do in order to be saved. Others, no doubt will have been so disappointed that they will lose faith in Christainity altogether.

My friends, these things are not being pointed out because of envy or just to be critical. How wonderful it would be if we could commend such meetings and assure you that the truth of God is preached. But on the contrary, as already pointed out, such gatherings are not of God. The Lord, as well as the Apostles, warned again and again against false teachers. They pleaded with the people of their day, and they are pleading with us, that we be not deceived. Paul said that we should mark those who cause division. He said that they serve not the Lord but their own bellies and with good words and fair speeches they deceive the hearts of the simple. (Romans 16:17,18). Isn't that what we are talking about?

Don't take my word for it. Study the Lord's word, and compare the preaching of these campaigns with what the scriptures teach. Look at the gospel the Apostles preached in the book of Acts, what they told the people they should do to be saved, and then compare what the campaign speakers say with what the Apostles taught. For instance, the campaign speakers tell the people to ask the Lord to save them or to allow the Lord to come into their hearts and He will save them. Now you don't read of any of the Apostles telling the people of their day that they could be saved in such a way.

Look, also at what the Lord and other New Testament writers said about the church and then compare that with what the campaign speakers said about the church. Of course such men usually say little or nothing about the church. Being supported by all of the different denominations which one would they talk about and encourage the people to accept? The problem is that most people don't know enough

about what the Lord has said to know whether or not they are hearing the truth when they attend such meetings. How sad!

Will it ever be different? Of course we live in hope that things will get better, that more and more will open their eyes and see what is happening, that more will settle for nothing less than the truth, but in order for that to happen, more will have to study their Bibles and be willing to accept the Lord's word as the final authority rather than running off after all kinds of promises and gimmicks. Knowing people in general as they are, though, the majority will probably continue to run after these kinds of preachers and make little gods of them, listing to them, following them, and supporting them.

But there is hope for *you* if you will decide that you are going to believe in the Lord, obey him, and be what he would have you to be, regardless of what others do. These remarks have been made to encourage you to do just that. Please don't follow me or any man, but follow only Christ. Then salvation and hope can be yours.

Especially For Women

"What Happens When love Goes?"

BETTY BURTON CHOATE

In past times it was the custom in many parts of the world for parents to choose mates for their children. In those cases the marriages were not built on a foundation of emotional love but on duty toward parents and responsibility toward the commitment. If emotional love developed after the marriage, that was "icing on the cake".

However, increasing numbers of young people are "falling in love" and making marriages with mates of their own choosing. Modern young people have been educated. They like to think for themselves. Especially in such an important matter as the choice of a lifetime companion, they want to make their own decisions. This practice has been encouraged by their exposure to films and television programs from the West. Dating, being "in love", and having a "love marriage" are portrayed as wondrously thrilling and exciting experiences.

But after the first thrill of a "love marriage" wears off, after life settles down to day-to-day work and responsibilities with the necessary adjustments to the new mate, problems may arise. Why?

Because emotions rise and fall, quite normally, in reaction to situation. Happiness may be replaced by sorrow, excitement by depression. And the emotion called love may seemingly disappear when quarrels come.

Feeling anger and resentment instead of warm sweet love toward her husband may cause the new bride to panic. She may wonder, "Can one fall out of love? What do I do now?" She may remember the terrible scenes of fighting and hate in the cinemas, and then she may think of turning to the ready solution; divorce.

But, wait! Life is not a cinema story, and real love is far more than the rising and falling of an emotion!

There are actually four kinds of love, and each one of them is experienced at one time or another in marriage.

1. The thrilling attraction young men and women feel for each other is primarily **erotic love**. This emotion is God-given, normal, and good, as it leads one to marriage and as it is experienced fully within the marriage relationship.

In Genesis 29:18,20 we read of Jacob: "Now Jacob loved Rachel; and he said, 'I will serve you seven years for Rachel, your younger daughter.' So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed but a few days because of the love he had for her."

2. A second type of love is that which dear friends feel for each other. A young man and woman may develop this friendship love first of all. Friendship grows out of knowledge of each other's personalities. It develops because of mutual interests, likes and dislikes. Good friends learn to be tolerant of each other's imperfections. They try to be understanding and to talk out disagreements. This type of love, coupled with erotic marital love, forms a strong foundation on which a marriage can be built.

3. A third type of love is that which family members feel for each other—parents and children, brothers and sisters. And as a marriage matures, the **family love** between the husband and wife should also mature. This is the kind of love that produces loyalty and defensiveness, whether or not it is actually deserved.

Family love is described in the saying, "blood runs thicker than water." What is meant is that if the family members or the family unit seems to be threatened, either by problems from the outside or by some outside person, the family will pull together for its own protection. Or if a husband, who is perhaps lazy and uncaring, is called a "lazy bum" by an outsider, the wife will speak out in his defence. Even in cases where children are mistreated and may be taken away from abusive parents,

often the "family love" and longing to be with the parents remain strong.

Erotic love, friendship love and family love are emotional types of love. They feel strong if we are happy with the person we love, or they may be very weak if the feeling have been hurt. Because individual emotions vary from day to day., love which is an expression of emotions can also vary from day to day.

So there are days and circumstances when the long-suffering of these three types of love comes to an end, momentarily. The husband has been so negligent and thoughtless that not a trace of erotic love stirs in the wife's heart. Perhaps both have been preoccupied with responsibilities and have failed to nurture their friendship love. And even the family love feels abused by short tempers and angry words.

Is there nothing left? What sustains a "love marriage" when, even for a few minutes of hours or days, these three types of emotional love seem to have disappeared?

The answer is the fourth and greatest love of all: the **whatever-is-best-for-you love** the special love we learn from God.

We cannot **command** emotions. No one can say, "Love him as a friend," or "You must feel erotic love for that person." **Emotions** can be *trained*, love can *develop* and *grow*, but it cannot be *commanded* to exist.

However this fourth and very special type of love *can be commanded, because it is not built on emotions*. Jesus said, ". . . love your enemies." (Matthew 5:44) This is a command, which means that our response is from the mind rather than the emotions.

But we say, "How is it possible to love those who would be enemies? Jesus went on to explain how: ". . . **Bless** those who curse you, **do good** to those who hate you, and **pray** for those who spitefully use you. . . ." (Matthew 5:44)

This is the beautiful type of love which fills the gap when the other types fall short. Though emotions maybe hurting, I can **bless** my husband, I can **do good** to him, and I can **pray** for him. This is God's kind of love. He says, "Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's well-being." (1 Corinthians 10:24)

We can practice this type of love toward our husbands, toward our in-laws, toward all the other members of our families. It is the greatest love of all, because it is ours to use, no matter what our emotions may be feeling. And through its use, the other types of love are cultivated to grow stronger and stronger with the passing of the years.

“A Great Door Is Opened To Me”

CLEM THURMAN

The apostle Paul, enmeshed in strife and turmoil in his preaching of Christ in Ephesus wrote the church at Corinth: *“But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost. For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries”* (1 Cor. 16:8-9). Jesus said, *“I am the door”* (Jno. 10:1-2,7,9). Paul wrote in 2 Cor. 2:12 of *“The door”* opened to him at Troas. The Bible speaks of many different *“doors.”*

The Bible's figurative use of *“door”* usually means *“opportunity.”* That the obvious meaning in Col. 4:3, *“Pray that God would open unto us a door of utterance.”* When Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch from preaching among the gentiles, *“They rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles”* (Acts 14:27). The *“open door”* at Troas was the opportunity to preach the gospel (2 Cor. 2:12). In a similar way, there are *“doors”* opened to us today.

THE DOOR OF INSTRUCTION IS OPENED

From the beginning, God's plan has been that man should come to Him by the door of instruction. Jesus invited. *“Come unto me. . . take my yoke upon you, and learn of me”* (Matt. 11:28-29). Without learning, none could come to Him. As He said, *“No man can come unto except the Father which hath sent me draw him . . . Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me”* (Jno. 6:44-45).

God has decreed that this *“door”* is to be opened to all: *“Go and teach all nations . . . Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature . . . They shall all be taught of God”* (Matt. 28:19; Mk. 16:15; Jno. 6:44). None are to be excluded from instruction, for salvation depends upon it: *“Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed . . . Faith cometh by hearing”* (Rom. 10:13-17). God has never shut the door of instruction against anyone, it is open to all.

It is not only by the door of instruction that we come to Christ, it is also the opportunity given us to grow in Christ: *“I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace which is able to build you up”* (Acts 20:32). The apostle graphically shows the growth process in Col. 2:6-7, *“As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: rooted*

and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught." It is through learning we come to Christ, it is through learning that we grow up in Christ. As was true of the early disciples, it should be with us: *"They continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers"* (Acts 2:42). There is for us *"a great door opened."* Let us use it, and learn.

THE DOOR OF SALVATION IS OPENED

The one paramount reason for the coming of God's Son into this world was *"to save sinners"* (1 Tim. 1:15). He declared His mission succinctly, *"The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost"* (Lk. 19:10). His ministry, His miracles, His teaching, His exemplary life, His sacrificial death were all to one purpose: to save the lost. The necessity of that mission is shown in God's statement later. *"In none other is there salvation"* (Acts 4:12). If one is not saved in Christ, he cannot be saved at all! There is no other way, as He said, *"I am the way, and the truth and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me"* (Jno. 14:6). He is the only Savior, He is the only Way to the Father.

Jesus said, *"I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved"* (Jno. 10:9). He opened the door of salvation to all men, *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life"* (Jno. 3:16). That *"Whosoever"*; does not exclude anyone! The Saviour, told the apostles, *"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be condemned"* (Mk. 16:15-16). The door is opened wide by His blood for all men to enter into salvation: *"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. Being justified freely by his grace . . . through faith, in blood"* (Rom. 3:23-25). If any do not enter into salvation, it is by their own choice, for God *"would have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth"* (1 Tim. 2:4). God at Calvary, opened the door of salvation for all sinners. He makes it known by the gospel (Rom. 1:16). It is up to the sinner to respond.

The response of sinners to God's open door is demonstrated time and again in the book of Acts. When sinners heard the message (door of instruction), *"they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do? And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins . . . They then that received his word were baptized"* (Acts 2:37-41). This pattern of response to God's open door is found repeatedly: *"When they believed . . . they were*

baptized" (Acts 8:12), "*Philip preached to him Jesus. . . And they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him*" (Acts 8:35-38). We find the same response in Acts 9:6, 18: 10:48; 16:30-34; 18:8;22:16; etc. The apostle Paul depicts the "open door of salvation" through the cross as he writes in Rom. 6:3-6, "*Are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like us Christ was raised from dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life. . . that we should no longer be in bondage to sin.*" God opened the door of salvation at the cross, but we must respond by entering.

THE DOOR OF SERVICE IS OPENED

When people enter the door of salvation, another door is opened: "*The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved*" (Acts 2:47). The saved are added to the church, and the church exists to serve. To the church at Philippi Paul wrote, "*It is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure*" (Phil. 2:13). The saved are told, "*Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God*" (Rom. 12:1). When sinners bow to the will of God to be saved, they then rise to a life of service: "*Have put on the new man, that after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth*" (Eph. 4:24). The life of Jesus on this earth was one of service., "*The son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom of many*" (Matt. 20:28). If we "*follow his steps*" (1 Pet. 2:21), we will also serve. The real test of discipleship is service, "*Yea, all of you gird yourselves with humility, to serve one another*" (1 Pet. 5:5).

The early church was characterized by service, "*for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ*" (Eph. 4:12). They ministered to physical needs, even to the point of selling their properties in order to have the funds to do it (Acts 4:32-37). They ministered to spiritual needs, "*If a brother is overtaken in a trespass, ye which are spiritual restore such a one . . . Bear ye one another's burdens*" (Gal. 6:1-2). They were busy "*seeking the lost*" by telling the story of the cross daily (Acts 5:42; 8:4). "Theirs was not a monastic life, they were busy at the crossroads of human lives. And in a heiter-skelter world today, so should we be: "*In the midst of crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye are seen as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life*" (Phil. 2:25). There was "*a great door opened*" for Paul at Ephesus. There is a great door opened for us, and if we would be faithful stewards, we must use it. As Jesus

said to the church at Philadelphia, he says to us: "*I have set before thee a door opened, which none can shut*" (Rev. 3:8).

THE DOOR OF HEAVEN IS OPENED

Jesus said, "*I am the door of the sheep . . . I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved*" (Jno. 10:7,9). Before His departure from the disciples, he told them: "*In my father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also . . . I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the father, but by me*" (Jno. 14:2-6). Jesus opens the door of heaven for those who will pass through the other doors He has prepared for us.

There is no way, while shackled by the imperfections of this life, that we can really comprehend the glories of that place called Heaven. But we get some glimpses. "*We know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands eternal, in the heavens*" (2 Cor. 5:1). "*God . . . who according to his great mercy begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you*" (1 Pet. 1:3-4). The spiritual description of the church will become objective reality in heaven: "*He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain*" (Rev. 21:4). John describes the scene in Rev 22:1-5, "*A river of water of life, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the midst of the street thereof. And on this side of the river and on that was the tree of life. . . And there shall be night no more: and they need no light of lamp, neither light of sun; for the Lord God shall give them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.*"

God opens for us the door of instruction, that we can learn and come to Him through Christ. By the blood of the cross, he opens for us the door of salvation. Adding us to the church, He opens for us the door of service. and, because we are His children, he opens for us the door of heaven. But there is one door that we must open. Jesus said, "*Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him*" (Rev. 3:20). Christ knocks at the door of your heart, your life; but He will not open that door. That is one door that you must open for Him. Jesus will not force His way into your life, you must invite Him in, "*A great door is opened!*"

The Pilot's Compass

RAYMOND ELLIOTT

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path" (Psa. 119 : 105). In a beautiful poem about the Bible, there is a particular line that goes like this : "It is the traveler's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword, and the christian's character." While I have never had the experience of a navigator's use with a compass, I have had to use one in other activities.

Some time ago, I was hunting with a Christian friend in unfamiliar woods. The weather was terrible. The sky was unusually dark and the sun was hid from human view. The rain descended in torrents. The timber was massive in side. As I continued to seek game, I became aware of the fact that I was 'temporarily mis-located'. I thought I knew the way back to familiar territory, but, the more I walked, the more I realized that I did not, It was then that I took out my small compass and began to follow a certain course. However, after walking some distance, I looked at the compass again and noticed that I was following the wrong end of the needle. I was actually travelling in the opposite direction from where I wanted to go. Then, I began walking toward the desired direction. After some time, I arrived at my destiny.

Perhaps, this experience is not completely parallel with the lessons I want to impress upon your thinking regarding the spiritual guide, but I feel that there are some thoughts you should ponder.

1. A person may 'feel' that he is walking in the right direction in religious matters and be completely lost. Man is not a safe guide. Subjective feelings are not reliable. Only God is the sure Guide (Jer. 10:23).

2. A person can look at the Bible in an improper manner and still be lost. Many failed to rightly divide the word (II Tim. 2:15). Some wrest the scriptures unto their own destruction (II Pet. 3:16) Many are given wrong directions by "blind" leaders (Mt. 15:14). Others are "ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (II Tim. 3:7). One must have an open mind and be willing to study diligently, possessing the attitude of obedience in the searching of the Scriptures (Acts 17:11; Jno. 7:17).

3. An individual must place complete trust in God's compass, the Bible and submit fully to the guidance of the Lord. This compass points only one way—upward to heaven (Jno. 14:6). It requires faith to believe that ones sins are washed away in baptism by the blood of Jesus (Eph.

1:7). It requires trust in God to believe in eternal life for the Christian. But God, who cannot lie, demands your complete confidence if He is to guide you in the right direction by His Word (II Tim. 3:16, 17).

Sound Doctrine Or Fables ?

W.C. QUILLEN

When Paul charged Timothy to "preach the word," he predicted that "the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own Lusts, shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears ; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth and shall be turned unto fables" (II Tim. 4:1-5).

Each week a great number of religious radio and television programs, sponsored by prominent denominations and featuring some well advertised personalities, are heard and seen in our living rooms. Much of the time is given to appeals for money to keep the program on the air, or to support some pet project being sponsored.

The subject matter may range from political issues and social action to getting the Holy Ghost, and testimonials of personal mysterious acquaintance with Jesus and the miraculous healing of some dreadful disease; from the glorious rapture and the seven years of great tribulation to the coming of Christ to establish a literal kingdom with His literal throne in literal Jerusalem, and personally to reign for a literal thousand years, with the resurrected righteous dead and the Jews, who He will deliver from the great tribulation. Everything is geared to the sensational, and designed to appeal to the emotions and to entertain the physical.

When have you heard any of these preachers tell their audiences what the Lord says that man must do in order to be saved" Do you ever hear them quote the Great Commission as given by Jesus in its entirety? Do they tell men that they must be taught of God in order to come to Christ? (Jno. 6:45; Matt. 28:19). Do they ever say that Christ said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved?" (Mk. 16:16). Or, "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God?" (Jno. 3:5).

When do you hear these men, who claim they personally know Jesus and have the Holy Spirit, tell believers to "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit?" (Act. 2:38). Or, "Arise

and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord?" (Act. 22:16).

Do men prefer false fables to the Word of God?

The Apostle of Truth

BOBBY DUNCAN

The apostle John has been referred to as the apostle of love, because in his writings he has so much to say about the subject. For example, in John's gospel, *agapao* and *agape* (verb and noun forms of the word translated "love") appear a total of forty-four times as compared to twenty eight times in the other three gospels combined. This is not to mention the fact that he uses *phileo* (another word translated by the word "love") a total of thirteen times as compared to eight for the other three combined. We would certainly say this qualifies John as "the apostle of love."

However, it might be interesting to those who think that love forbids the strong preaching of the truth to note that this same apostle also is eminently qualified as "the apostle of truth." He uses the word *aletheia* 'truth' (in all its forms) a total of fifty-six times in his gospel. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all combined use the same word a total of seventeen times, and so "the apostle of love is also "the apostle of truth."

It was John who said: "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and *truth* came by Jesus Christ" (1:17). It was he who recorded the words of our Lord: "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in *truth*" (4:24). Some other things he recorded are: "And ye shall know the *truth* and the *truth* shall make you free" (8:32). "And because I tell you the *truth*, ye believe me not . . . And if I say the *truth*, why do ye not believe me?" (8:45, 46). "I am the way, the *truth*, and the life . . ." (14:6). "Every one that is of the *truth* heareth my voice" (18:37).

It is John who tells of the Lord's referring to the Holy Spirit as the "Spirit of *truth*" (16 :13). It is he who records Christ's references to the fact that men are sanctified through the *truth* (17:17, 19) and to the fact that God's word is *truth* (17:17).

Really we should not be surprised to learn that "the apostle of love" is also "the apostle of truth " because love and truth are natural go-togethers. It was God's *love* for the world that caused him to send his

Son to die on the cross for our sins (Jno. 3:16); but it is only through our obedience to the *truth* that we can have remission of sins (I Pet. 1:22). Christians are taught to speak the *truth* in *love* (Eph. 4: 15); and those cannot be saved who receive not the *love* of the *truth* in to their hearts (II Thess. 2:10).

Incidentally, we might also add that John is "the apostle of plain preaching." It is he who records: "Then came the Jews round about him and said unto him How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us *plainly*" (10:24). It was he who wrote: "Then said Jesus unto them *plainly*, Lazarus is dead" (11:14). It was he who recorded the words of our Lord: "These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs; but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you *plainly* of the Father" (16:25). And it was John who tells us that "his disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou *plainly*, and speakest no proverbs" (16:29). The word which is translated "plainly" in these verses is not used at all in Matthew or Mark. It occurs one time in the book of John. Perhaps this fact justifies our referring to John as "the apostle of plain preaching."

Certainly there is such a thing as preaching the truth in a rude and ugly manner; and such we abhor. But if we think there is something paradoxical about *plainly* preaching the *truth out of hearts filled with love*, we need to read the book of John.

Jesus and Evangelism

ROGER DICKSON

The life and work of Jesus was evangelistic. Because he knew that the gospel was the only hope for mankind., Jesus generated within the hearts of those early disciples the necessity of broadcasting the good news to all the world. And that's exactly what they, those early disciples, did.

Jesus was sent into the world to *seek* and *save* the lost (Matt. 18:11; Lk 19:10). You might say that He was God's first missionary bearing the gospel to the lost. Philippians 2: 5-8 more than explains the missionary attitude and actions of Jesus.

The gospel records are saturated with the evangelistic activity of Jesus, "*He taught in their synagogues*" (Lk. 4:15). "*He went into their synagogues throughout all Galilee preaching*" (Mk. 1:39). He "*went about in all Galilee . . . preaching the gospel of the kingdom*" (Matt. 4:23).

"Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching. . ." (Matt. 9:35)
"He taught in Capernaum" (Jn. 6:59). "And coming into his own country he taught them in their synagogues" (Matt. 13:54; cf. Mk. 1:21; Lk. 4:15; 6:6; 13:10; Jn 18:20). Yes the work of Jesus was evangelistic.

And Jesus placed no little emphasis on "going forth" to preach and teach about the kingdom. His evangelistic commands rang with a sense of necessity and urgency that would characterize His true disciples in any place and at all times in history. "Behold, I send you forth..." (Matt. 10:16). "Go your ways, behold I send you forth as lambs" (Lk. 10:3). "These. . . Jesus sent forth, and charged them saying, 'Go. . ." (Matt. 10:5). "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations . . ." (Matt. 28:19). "go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel. . ." (Mk. 16:15).

In the atmosphere of the above words of urgency in which the disciples were engulfed, a compelling motivation was generated within their hearts that sent them into the far corners of the earth. They went in obedience to the master's mission. But they also went because of the Master's life-giving message. they knew mankind needed it, therefore, "they went forth" (Mk. 16:20). "And every day, in the temple and at home, they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus as the Christ" (Acts 5:42). "They . . . went about preaching the word (Acts 8:4). That was the center of the activity of the first century church.

If any word ever accurately expressed the work of the early Christians it would have to be *evangelism*. They went! They preached! From the housetops, from the street corners and from the synagogues of the Jews they sounded for the good news of the Bright and Morning Star that had appeared over the hills of Judea. And as a result, the world that then was, was "Turned upside down" by the preaching of the gospel. Concerning those first evangelistic efforts the apostle Paul wrote, "Their sound went out into all the earth, and their works unto the ends of the world" (Rom. 10:18). Wouldn't it be just great if some future historian could write the same words concerning the evangelistic work of the church of this present time?

Baptism of the Holy Spirit

FRANK CHESSER

The Bible clearly reveals one all-powerful all knowing, omnipresent God. Thus, the scribe spoke the truth when he said, ". . . for there is one God, and there is none other but He" (Mark 12:32). Within this one God,

this one divine essence, are three persons—God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy spirit (II Cor. 13:14). They are co-equal, co-powerful and co-eternal.

To the degree it is possibly for humanity to comprehend deity, the difficulty lies not with regard to the Father of the Son, but with the Holy Spirit. Some view the spirit as a mere substance or fluid. Others refer to the Spirit as being nothing more than an influence or power like wind or electricity. Still others view the spirit as some dark and mysterious force exerting a direct and mystical influence upon the heart of man in order to secure his salvation. Much of this difficulty would be instantly removed if, like the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit was recognized as a "divine Person."

The Bible abounds in references substantially the personality of the Holy Spirit. Seven times in John 16:13, Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit with personal pronouns. The Holy Spirit displays personal actions such as speaking (I Tim. 4:1) and teaching (John 14:26), and possesses personal traits such as mind (Rom. 8:27) and will (I Cor. 12:11). The personality of the Spirit can be seen by noting various actions perpetrated against him by men. He can be blasphemed (Matt. 12:31), grieved (Eph. 4:30), and lied to (Acts 5:3).. Thus, the Holy Spirit is a person. He is a divine person, possessing all the attributes of deity. He is co-equal, co-powerful and co-eternal with the Father and the Son. He is God!

In Joel 2:28-32, Joel prophecies concerning the outpouring of the Holy spirit without regard to race, sex or social status. This prophecy constitutes the background for every reference to the miraculous work of the Holy Spirit in relation to humanity in the New Testament. The first of such references is the promise of the baptism of the Spirit in Matt. 3:11. This passage is often cited in an effort to establish the availability of Holy Spirit baptism to all those who will seek for it. However, John's statement is prophetic in nature and prophecy can be understood only in light of its fulfillment. The New Testament reveals only two instances of Holy Spirit baptism. Acts 2 records the baptism of the Spirit in connection with the apostles. Acts 10 records the baptism of the Spirit in connection with Cornelius and his household.

The apostles' baptism in the Holy Spirit was essential in order to qualify them for their role in God's scheme of redemption. They were to make known the will of God to man. They were to function as instruments through whom God would grant these same abilities to others. Thus, they were to inaugurate, confirm and establish New Testament Christianity in the world. Christ promised to fulfill their every

need by giving them miraculous power. This clothing with power was to be granted in the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4-5, 8). Acts 2:1-4 records the coming of the Spirit upon the apostles. Peter identified the coming of the Spirit with the prophecy of Joel (Acts 2:16). Thus, as prophesied by Joel and promised by Christ, the apostles were baptized in the Holy Spirit to qualify them for the work which God had ordained for them to do.

Some years after the events of Pentecost, God instructed Peter to go and preach to Gentiles, Cornelius and his household. Scarcely had Peter begun before the Holy Spirit fell upon Cornelius and all those present with him. As a manifestation of their reception of the Spirit, they spoke with tongues and magnified God (Acts 10:44-46). With regard to this unique incident, several things should be noted:

Cornelius and those present with him did receive a baptism of the Holy Spirit. The coming of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles is not referred to as a "baptism" of the Spirit in Acts 2. Consequently, how do we know what happened to the apostles in Acts 2 constituted a baptism of the Spirit? We know this because of the promise made by Christ in Acts 1:5. Christ promised the apostles that they would be baptized with the Holy Spirit. That promise was fulfilled in Acts 2. Therefore the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles in Acts 2 constituted a baptism of the Spirit.

In regard to Cornelius, Peter said, "And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost" (Acts 11:15-16). When the Holy Spirit fell upon Cornelius and those with him, it reminded Peter of what Jesus said in Acts 1:5. Therefore, Acts 1:5 furnishes the background, not only for what happened to the apostles in Acts 10. Inspiration ties both the apostles and Cornelius to the promise of Christ regarding the baptism of the Holy Spirit in Acts 1:5.

However, Cornelius and those of his household did not receive "apostolic powers." The Holy Spirit did not come upon them for the purpose of making them apostles. Just as there is a clear distinction between the Holy Spirit and the Word, even so is there a clear distinction between the Holy Spirit and the power (Acts 1:8). When the Spirit came upon Cornelius and those with him, it reminded Peter of the promise Christ made regarding the "baptism" of the Spirit in Acts 1:5, but it did not remind him of the promise Christ made regarding the "power" of the Spirit in Acts 1:8. Cornelius and his household received the baptism of the Holy Spirit as did the apostles, but they did not

receive apostolic power.

For what reason was Cornelius and his household baptized with the Holy Spirit? To save them? To make them spiritual? To show that baptism was not essential to salvation? How does the Bible use this incident? If we can determine how the Bible uses it, we can know the purpose of it. It is used three times (Acts 10, 11 and 15) to prove "that the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel" (Eph. 3:6).

Approximately thirty years after Pentecost and twenty years after the experience of Cornelius, Paul said, there is, "one Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Eph. 4:6) That one baptism is the baptism of the great commission (Mark 16:15-16). It is water baptism of the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 8:36-39). Holy Spirit baptism was administered by Christ. The baptism of the great commission is administered by man. Holy Spirit baptism had no connection with salvation. Water baptism is a condition of salvation to a lost world. Holy spirit baptism has fulfilled its purpose and is no longer available to man. But for as long as the world stands, the gospel must be preached and men must ask, "here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized?" (Acts 8:36).

Who Or What Were The Demons?

GUY N. WOODS

Demons were wicked spirits, under the direction of Satan, opposed to God, and capable of causing much misery to man (Matt. 8:28-34, 12:24). Their powers over human beings enabled them to afflict people with dumbness (Matt. 9:32, 33), blindness (Matt. 12:22), and insanity (Luke 8:26-36.) They acknowledged the deity of the Lord, conceded their wicked state, recognized impending judgment, and trembled in contemplation of it (Matt. 8:29; Luke 4:41; James 2:19). the apostles were given the power to cast out demons and an instance in which they exercised it is seen in Luke 10:17, 18, though Mark 9:18-29 shows that their lack of faith hindered their ability to do this on the occasion mentioned.

Efforts to "explain" demonology of the New Testament as (1) popular superstition; (2) accommodation of the Lord to current views; (3)

illness or insanity; (4) fallen angels; or (5) what is perhaps the most absurd of all, the progeny of angels and wicked women, all fail either (a) because of their own obvious falsity or (b) because they conflict with known facts and out Lord's limitless goodness and knowledge.

An induction of statements will reveal that (1) they were intelligent beings (Mark 1:24; 5:7, 8); (2) they were wicked and were ultimately to face judgment (Rev. 9:11); and (3) they came from the "abyss." These considerations have led thoughtful men to conclude that they were disembodied spirits of wicked men who in some way escaped from Tartarus of Hades and afflicted persons whom they seized. So strongly did Alexander Campbell believe this that in his lengthy and intricate discussion of the theme in his *Lectures and addresses* he wrote, "We conclude that there is neither reason nor fact—there is no canon of criticism, no law of interpretation—there is nothing in human experience or observation—there is nothing in antiquity, sacred or profane—that in our judgment weighs against the evidence already adduced in support of the position that the demons of pagans, Jews and Christians were the ghosts of dead men, as such have taken possession of men's living bodies, and have moved, influenced and impelled them to certain courses of action." This was the view of the Jewish historians Josephus and Philo. The former wrote, "Demons are the spirits of wicked men, who enter into living men and destroy them, unless they are so happy as to meet with speedy relief;" and the latter said, "The souls of dead men are called demons." Early Christian writers, such as Justin martyr, Irenaeus, Origen, and many others, may be cited to this same effect. Lardner's conclusion, after detailed examination of these ancient writers on this theme, is "The notion of demons, or the souls of dead men, having power over living men, was universally prevalent among the heathen of those times, and believed by many Christians;" and brother McGarvey, in his commentary on Matthew and Mark says that "In the Jewish usage of the term it is applied exclusively to the departed spirits of wicked men. This usage was adopted by Jesus and the Apostles, and consequently all that is said of demons in the New Testament agrees with it."

Are people today afflicted by demon possession? Obviously, not. Even a casual examination of the instances chronicled in the New Testament will show that the circumstances attending demon possession then are not characteristic of our day. Our Lord bound Satan in his own house or domain (Matt. 12:5-29), and the gospel today is the "chain" which restrains him and his servants (Rev. 20:1-4). Then, those seized by these agents of the devil were powerless to throw off their

chains; but *now* all men through the help of the Lord, have the power to repel Satan's influences. The Lord met Satan in his own domain and triumphed over him. Today, the devil's power over men is limited to deceit and temptation both of which may be resisted by the help of God and the sword of the Spirit (Matt. 4:1-13; I Cor. 10:13). Now, if we *resist* the devil he will flee from us (James 4:7), because he is afraid of any one who wields the weapon of the Spirit—The word of God (Heb. 4:12).

John 3:16 Or Acts 2:38?

JAMES JOYNER

We have before us two wonderful passages of scripture. These two passages should be of special interest to you because both of them deal with God's great plan for redeeming mankind. Both of these passages deal with the same subject but say entirely different things about that subject. John 3:16 tells us that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son and that if we believe in Him we should be saved. Acts 2:38 tells us that Repentance and Baptism give us forgiveness of sins. Your first impulse is probably to ask the question, "Which of these two passages is correct? Are we saved by Faith in Jesus Christ, or are we saved by Repentance and Baptism?" Before you decide which of these two passages is correct, examine each one and see what it is teaching.

JOHN 3:16

The event surrounding this passage is that of Nicodemus coming to Jesus by night. Jesus immediately tells him that he must be born again. As Jesus tells Nicodemus about this new way of life he uses an example from the Old Testament to illustrate His teaching. The children of Israel spoke against God and Moses; because of their rebellious attitude God sent fiery serpents among the people and many of the people died. The children of Israel repented of their sins and asked Moses to ask God to deliver them from the fiery serpents, God directed Moses to set a serpent of brass upon a pole. All of those who would look upon the serpent of brass would be saved from the snake bite (Num. 21:1-9). Jesus taught Nicodemus and teaches you that no longer is a person to turn to a brazen serpent, the law of Moses, his own

goodness, his works, or anything else for deliverance, but now a person must turn to Him. John 3:16 teaches you that if you will turn to Jesus Christ as your source of salvation and if you will place your complete trust in Him, then you will be saved.

ACTS 2:38

Peter had just finished preaching the first Gospel sermon. During his message Peter told the Jews present that they had killed the very one who had come to save them. The people listened to what Peter told them and realized that they were guilty of a terrible sin, for the scriptures tell us that they were "pricked in their hearts". Wanting to be forgiven of this sin they asked "What shall we do?" Peter did not tell these Jews to believe in Jesus, because they already believed in Him. Peter told these believers to "Repent and be Baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for (unto) the remission of your sins". Acts 2:38 teaches that when a person places his faith in Jesus Christ as his source of salvation then he must meet the terms of Repentance and Baptism before his sins are forgiven.

CONCLUSION

There is no contradiction between John 3:16 and Acts 2:38. They are both inspired of God and are true. If you believe John 3:16 can you refuse to believe Acts 2:38? If your faith in Jesus does not lead you to obedience then you do not have the same faith that the people on Pentecost had and yours is not a *Saving Faith*. You may wonder why God placed Repentance and Baptism as terms of pardon. I can tell why God told the people on Pentecost to Repent and be Baptized before He would forgive their sins if you can tell me why God required Naaman to dip seven times in the Jordan River before He would cleanse him of his leprosy (II Kings 5:1-14). The important thing in both of these events (Pentecost and Naaman) is that when God has spoken it is not ours to ask why, it is only ours to OBEY. If you Believe in the son of God then you will Obey Him BELIEVE in Jesus Christ as your only hope of Salvation (John 3:16), REPENT of your sins (Acts 2:38), CONFESS Christ before men (Rom. 10:9-10), be BAPTIZED for the remission of your sins (Acts 2:38), and then you will be a CHRISTIAN. After you become a Christian, search the Scriptures and be obedient in all that God requires of you.

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