

THE BIBLE TEACHER



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Grounded In The Faith

The Apostle Paul exhorted the Christians at Ephesus, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." (Ephesians 3 : 17-19). To the Colossian Christians, he wrote, "If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister." (Colossians 1 : 23). In these verses of scripture the writer is emphasizing the need for Christians to be grounded in the faith. The faith that he is talking about is the one faith (Ephesians 4 : 5), the faith that results from hearing the word of God. (Romans 10 : 17). It represents the truth, a knowledge of it, an understanding of it, the acceptance of it. To be grounded in that faith means to be firmly planted in it, to be rooted in it, to be settled in it, to be unmoveable, to be unshakeable, to be able to withstand every

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false teaching. It means to be committed, to be loyal, to be faithful.

To become a Christian it is necessary for one to know God's will, to understand it, and to believe it to the point of obeying it. (Matthew 28 : 19; 20; Mark 16 : 15, 16). To remain a Christian, it is necessary that one add to his faith, virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and so on. (2 Peter 1 : 5-7). That means that he must continue to grow and to develop so that he may be strong. (Ephesians 6 : 10). Imagine a large tree along side the road that is firmly planted in the earth. A car or lorry may run into it at high speed, but what happens to it? The car or lorry is wrecked, and perhaps those inside have been killed, but the tree continues to stand erect and as strong as ever. We are to be that way as Christians. We are to dig deep into God's word, and with a strong faith hold on tight to those wonderful truths. Then when we are faced with the things of the world, we are tempted and tried, we will continue to stand for the Lord. We are to be so strong that when we are confronted with false teachings that we will be able to meet them head on and throw them off to the side and thus to go on to victory with the Lord.

As Christians we are to know who we are and what we are religiously. We are to know the truth and we are to believe it, never doubting for a second. With that knowledge, and the faith that is built on Christ, then we are to have full confidence that we are on the right path that leads from earth to heaven. We need to have complete faith in God as the creator of all things and in Christ as being the Son of God. We need to believe his word without question. We need to know what the church is and to understand the oneness of it. We need to know the gospel of Christ and why obedience to it brings salvation. We need to be able to define baptism and to be convinced of its place in the Lord's plan to save the lost. We need to be conscious of the name Christ wants us to wear, of the worship that we are to engage in, and the kind of life that the Lord would have us to live. We need not only to know these great truths, and many others, but also to believe them, and to be able to convey them to others with full assurance that this is God's will for man.

We are living in a very difficult period in which many false teachers, both from within and from without, are working day and night to deceive, mislead, and to destroy the faith of God's people. Some are losing their faith and others are becoming confused. What's wrong? Too many Christians have a weak faith and this is because of the lack of teaching or study. When one is constantly being tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine, then it is obvious that such a person is not grounded in the faith and his life is not anchored to the Rock of Ages. When one is really digging down deep and holding on to God's will by faith, then such a person will not be constantly wondering, questioning, and unsure of himself and of his faith. Rather, he will continue to go forward with full knowledge that he is right. While others may fall by the way side, he will go on being faithful to the Lord and His cause. He will not do this blindly but with his eyes wide open, knowing and believing the truth of God's word. We are reminded just here of the words of Paul, when he declared, "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8 : 38, 39).

How we need Christians today who are strong, who will stand for something, who will give leadership, who will preach the old truths, who will live and practice what they preach without apology. Now we need Christians who will stand behind those who preach God's word, who will oppose false teaching, who will live for the Lord and will set a good example for all. These are the the kind who do not fall into this category but we don't have near as many as we need. All of us should study, believe, obey, grow, and develop to the point where we can be counted among this number.

What kind of Christian are you? Are you a weakling, unsure, uncertain of yourself and of your faith, and therefore, to end up unfaithful and lost? Or are you grounded in the faith, rooted, established, and sure of your salvation? Surely you know what the Lord would prefer, and you know what you must do to be happy in this world, and to have a home with God in the world to come.

There are no short cuts, no detours, but you must stay on the straight and narrow way that leads to that heavenly city to receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to give to all of those who remain faithful to him unto death.



**associate
editorial**

Why Seek Ye The Living Among The Dead ?

After Jesus had been dead for three days, Luke, one of the writers of the Bible, says in his book, "Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them. And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, why seek ye the living among the dead? (Luke 24 : 1-5).

The statement, Why seek ye living among the dead?, shows that they were ignorant of the fact that Jesus had already risen, and that they were in ignorance because no one had yet told them about the resurrection, neither had he appeared unto them yet. Consequently, they were seeking Jesus at a wrong place; they were seeking him in the grave. But he was not there.

Ignorance is a great enemy of man. Those who crucified Jesus did so, the Bible says, through ignorance. (Acts 3 : 17).

apostle Paul said he was a persecutor and a blasphemer and injurious because of ignorance. (1 Timothy 1 : 13). When Paul entered Athens, he found many people in that city who were through ignorance worshipping God. (Acts 17). In his letter to the Ephesians the Apostle wrote about them who have their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart. (Ephesians 4 : 18). Any number of people will be lost eternally because of their ignorance. (2 Thessalonians 1 : 7-9).

Through ignorance some are trying to seek happiness in riches of the world. Such are ignorant of the fact that a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesses. (Luke 12 : 15). Through ignorance many are seeking salvation in wrong places and in wrong things. They are ignorant of the fact that salvation is available only in Christ whom God made the propitiation for the sins of the whole world by his death on the cross. (1 John 2:2; 4 : 10).

Some are ignorant about how they can be saved. Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16 : 16). Thus to be saved one must both believe and be baptized, but to be lost unbelief is enough. The Bible nowhere teaches that a baby should be sprinkled and later be confirmed. Such is being practised through ignorance about what the Bible teaches that one must do to be saved.

Others are ignorant about the church. The Bible teaches Christ as a church, he said he would build one, but he said "I will build my church." (Matthew 16 : 18). Also, the Bible says the church is the body of Christ (Ephesians 1 : 22, 23; 1 Corinthians 12 : 27), and that the Lord Jesus Christ adds all who are saved daily to his church. (Acts 2 : 47). But, through ignorance any number of people today are members of churches which Christ never built and of which we do not read in the Bible. Because they have never investigated enough the church they are members of, and have never tried to see in their Bible what the Bible says about the church.

Likewise, some are ignorant about what the Bible teaches about

the worship God requires today. Through ignorance many today are worshipping God in vain (Matthew 15 : 9; Acts 17). For instance, most people today do not realize that God requires us to sing his praises from our hearts and that he has not commanded us to play instruments of music of any kind while we sing to exalt his name. The Bible says we are to sing and make melody in our heart to the Lord. (Ephesians 5 : 19). But if we play melody on a mechanical instrument with singing, then we do something which is not authorized in God's book, the Bible, and thus we add to his teaching.

In the long ago, God through prophet Hosea said, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." (Hosea 4 : 6). The Apostle Paul said, that when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven on the day of judgment, he will take "vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. (2 Thessalonians 1 : 7-9). By "them who know not God" I doesn't mean those who believe not in God, because we all know that there is a God, because the whole creation, the whole universe is witness to the fact that there is a God. The Bible says, "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse." (Romans 1 : 19, 20). But those who do not know the will of God and consequently obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ, His son, as revealed in the New Testament of the Bible, are such people who do not know God. God has done his part, he has revealed his will for every man forever, and now it is our duty that we should seek his will in his book, the Bible, and do his commandments. Do we have an excuse to remain ignorant then?

The Baptism of Jesus

Charless E. Crouch

Although Jesus did many things not specifically mentioned

the New Testament (John 20 : 30; 21 : 25), a few events of his life are recorded more than once. His baptism by John, one of the grandest and most sublime actions of his life, is recorded by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. This event holds great significance for all believers today.

THE MINISTRY OF JOHN

To understand the baptism of our Lord, we must understand the ministry of the one who baptized him. Israel was largely in a state of apostasy. (Rom. 2 : 1-29). But in the fulness of time God sent John, the harbinger of Christ, who "first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel." (Acts 13 : 24). His was "the voice of one crying in the wilderness, "Make ye ready the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." (Matt. 3 : 3). John came "to make ready for the Lord a people prepared for him." (Luke 1 : 17); John was "more than a prophet." (Matt. 11 : 9). More about the need for and nature of John's mission, which was restricted to the Jews, is found in Luke 3 : 4-14.

Baptism was a prominent feature of John's ministry. His was a baptism that required faith in one that came after John, Jesus, the promised Messiah. (Acts 19 : 4; Matt. 3 : 11; Mark 1 : 7). John "came for witness, that he might bear witness of the light, that all might believe through him." (John 1 : 7.) John's baptism was a "baptism of repentance," and it was "unto repentance." (Acts 19 : 4; Matt. 3 : 11; Luke 3 : 7-14). It required repentance before one received it, and it required him receiving it to live in a state of repentance preparatory to the coming kingdom. Confession of sins was a requirement. (Matt. 3 : 6). It was a baptism "for the remission of sins." (Mark 1 : 4). John's baptism was peculiar to the period of preparation for the kingdom of Christ. It was not permanent in duration. Although it was done by God's counsel (Luke 7 : 30), it was not performed "in the name of Christ," nor "into the name of" the sacred three. And the Holy Spirit as a "gift" was *not* a promise to *all* who received it. (Matt. 3 : 11).

"COMEST THOU TO ME?"

At age thirty Jesus came about sixty miles from his home in Galilee to the place where John was baptizing. Being the sinless Son of God, he might have pleaded, like some moralists today, "I am an exception; I don't need to be baptized. But he requested baptism. John perceived the unusual nature of his request and demurred, saying, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" (Matt. 3 : 14). *Why did Jesus come to John?* Certainly not "for the remission of sins," but rather "to fulfil all righteousness." He desired to comply with "the counsel of God" (Luke 7 : 30) and he knew John's baptism was "from heaven," not from men. (Matt. 21 : 25). John's mission was to Israel; and Jesus was the only Israelite who kept the law perfectly. He came to do all God's will (Heb. 10 : 7), and to be well-pleasing to him. He has thus become an example to us of complete obedience to God. (Phil. 2 : 5-8; Heb. 5 : 7-9). Another purpose of his baptism, a matter pre-arranged with John by Jehovah, was for Jesus to be manifested as "the Lamb of God" to Israel. (John 1 : 29-34). His baptism then became the occasion for his public announcement as God's Son, and the beginning of his public ministry. The Bible says, "Then he suffereth him." (Matt. 3 : 15b).

Matthew and Mark both reveal that after being baptized Jesus "went up straightway from the water." And from Mark 1 : 9, we learn that Jesus was baptized "in the Jordan." These statements are confirming evidence of the fact that his baptism was an immersion, a burial in water. This explains why John baptized where there was "much water." (John 3 : 23). It is good to know that Jesus did not balk at immersion, but humbly and gladly submitted to God's will. What a rebuke this is to those today who argue for a "more convenient mode"!

After he had gone up from the water, "Lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon him." (Matt. 3 : 16). Luke says, "Jesus also having been baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended in a bodily form, as a dove, upon him." (Luke 3 : 21, 22a). It is significant that our Lord, follow-

ing baptism, was *praying* when the Holy Spirit descended “in a bodily form, as a dove, upon him.” The story continues: “And lo, a voice out of the heavens, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” (Matt. 3 : 17). With these words God acknowledged Jesus as his own Son—not by adoption, but by eternal existence and by conception of the Holy Spirit. (Luke 1 : 35; John 1 : 1-3). By his baptism, the voice of the Father, and the descent of the Holy Spirit, the mission of Jesus was solemnly accredited by the sacred three, and publicly launched. That scene was unexcelled in grandeur and sublimity up until that time.

“**BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD**”
 Soon thereafter John said to his disciples, “Behold, the Lamb of God; that taketh away the sin of the world!” (John 1 : 29). He was then before the world for all to “behold.” The herald was then certain of the identity of the Messiah, and of his ability to fulfil his glorious mission. John’s own disciples soon began to follow Jesus. (John 1 : 35; 36). Later John nobly said of Jesus, “He must increase but I must decrease.” (John 3 : 30).

INTO THE WILDERNESS

Before his public ministry got under way, Jesus was led “into the wilderness” of temptation. (Matt. 4 : 1-11; Mark 1 : 12, 13; Luke 4 : 1-13). His chief adversary was among those to “behold” God’s worthy Lamb, and Satan went to work at once. The devil knew what was involved in the mission of Christ. He therefore made a supreme effort to defeat that purpose, an effort reminding us of the struggle in the garden of Eden. A gigantic conflict was begun—the battle of the ages was underway! Let us be eternally grateful that Jesus came from the wilderness, after forty days, unstained by the archenemy of mankind!

LESSONS FOR OUR TIME

From the baptism of our Lord we learn many valuable lessons for our time: (1) If Jesus, who had no sin, had to be baptized to obey God’s will and to fulfil all righteousness, how much greater

is our need, as sinners, to do likewise today? (2) If it required obedience in baptism for the sinless Jesus to be "well pleasing" to his Father, how can any person now feel he can be well-pleasing to God while rejecting God's counsel on baptism? (3) The "heavens were opened" *after* the baptism of Christ to make known God's approval. Can we expect heaven to "open" to us without similar obedience to divine counsel which applies to us? (4) At his baptism Jesus began his public career and pledged his life in service to God. Just so, at baptism we enter Christian service and pledge ourselves before heaven and earth to serve God the remainder of our days. (5) Satan tempted Jesus severely as soon as he pledged himself to God's service publicly. Even so, we can expect greater temptations when we have publicly enlisted in the cause of Christ against Satan. (6) God's Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus after his baptism. We are promised the gift of that Spirit *after repentance and baptism*. (Acts 2 : 38; 5 : 32). (7) Baptism derives much of its meaning from the baptism, the death, the burial, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord. (Rom. 6 : 3-7.) As we are baptized it would profit us greatly to visualize that most sublime action of Jesus in the Jordan River nineteen centuries ago.

Buried With Christ In Baptism

Fred J. Barton

Text: Rom. 6: 1-11

Paul's moving declaration in the text referred to above is one of the most enlightening discussions of baptism in all the New Testament. How many of us have not heard sermons which turn to this passage to establish that baptism is a burial and that baptism is the act of obedient faith which puts a man into Christ? Few of us have not appealed to these verses ourselves in support of those arguments. May I remind you, however, that Paul was writing here to Christians—to people who had already been baptized.

I do not mean to imply that these verses cannot properly be used to teach alien sinners concerning the nature and purpose of baptism, but I would insist that that is not Paul's primary purpose in writing these lines. His obvious intent is to impress upon us the tremendous significance of baptism for the Christian. Since baptism marks the end of an old life and the beginning of a new life, we are to reckon ourselves "to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus".

Go back and read chapter five of this epistle in order to see the context of Paul's words in chapter six. See the contrast of Christ and Adam and see the emphasis on the grace of God so that "where sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly."

Then begins chapter six:

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein? Or 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 as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life."

What a vivid and beautiful picture of baptism as the initiatory rite into the new life with Christ in God! What an inescapable challenge to Christians to earnestly and devotedly walk the new life into which their baptism has translated them! What a tremendous change baptism should mark in the life of any man!

Look at the phrases and clauses in the text by which the old man and his baptism are described and "died to sin" "baptized into Christ Jesus" "baptized into his death" "buried with him through baptism into death"

"united with him in the likeness of his death"

"old man was crucified with him"

"that the body of sin might be done away"

"died with Christ"
 Now look at the descriptions of the new man as he is raised from the baptismal burial:
 "we also might walk in newness of life"
 "in the likeness of his resurrection"
 "we should no longer be in bondage to sin"
 "justified from sin"
 "we shall also live with him"
 "dead unto sin"
 "alive unto God in Christ Jesus"

What fuller explanation of the significance of baptism could one ask for? These verses help us to understand Paul's words about "the washing of regeneration" in Tit. 3:5. They help us to understand Christ's words to Nicodemus about the new birth. (John 3; see also James 1 : 21; 1 Pet. 2 : 23). They help us, also, to understand Peter's declaration of baptism's role in our salvation. (1 Pet. 3 : 20, 21). But most of all, they help us to understand that we who died to sin cannot any longer live therein. Having been raised in the likeness of Christ's resurrection, we are to walk in newness of life.

The Earth Is The Lord's

Batsell Barrett Baxter

Every man sustains many different relationships in life. There are three major areas which to a very large degree cover the whole ground. First of all, there is his primary relationship to God, who made him. Next, man sustains vital and important relationships to a great many people, such as parents, brothers, sisters, husband or wife, children, friends, teachers, employers, employees, and many more. In the third place, he also sustains vital relationships to things. Among these things are houses, lands, cars, clothes, books, personal effects, and many, many more.

In one sense these relationships and the attitudes behind them

will determine where man spends eternity. They will determine whether he is saved in heaven or lost in the eternal fires of hell, as mentioned by our Lord. Let us look at man's relationship to things.

GOD'S WORD

One of the simplest, yet most complete, of all the statements in the Bible concerning the material universe is that from the pen of David, often called Israel's greatest king. He wrote, "The earth is Jehovah's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein." (Psalm 24 : 1). David unequivocally stated that the world and everything in it, including man, belongs to God. This is what we might well expect, since we remember that everything was created by the power of God.

In the New Testament there is an important passage in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew which further points out man's relationships to things. This is the familiar parable of the talents, from which we shall read only a few key sentences. "For it is as when a man, going into another country, called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods." Notice that the man was the owner and that he gave his goods into the hands of his servants. "And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one; to each according to his several ability; and he went on his journey."

In the verses that follow we read that the man who received five talents traded with them and received five additional talents. When his lord returned he said, "Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Similarly, the man who received two talents earned an additional two talents and was given an identical reward. Tragically, the man who received only one talent failed to use that talent in any way and received only condemnation upon his lord's return. "Thou wicked and slothful servant.....cast ye out the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness: there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth." (Matt. 25 : 14, 15, 21, 26, 30).

It is obvious from this passage that man is God's steward, having the responsibility of administering God's affairs for a limited period of time. Perhaps the meaning will be made even more impressive if we describe man not as God's steward, but as God's manager, God's administrator, God's supervisor, in charge of certain earthly possessions for a limited period of time. Man is never the owner in the full sense, but rather is a steward, in whose hands a trust has been placed. It is his primary responsibility to use the material things that come to him in accordance with the will of God. His eternal destiny will largely depend upon the use to which he has put these blessings which constitute a trust from God.

A STRONG EMPHASIS

There are more verses in the New Testament on the subject of stewardship than on the subject of baptism, even though there are more than one hundred passages which contain the word baptism. There are more scriptures in the New Testament on the subject of stewardship than on the Lord's Supper, even though this is a significant, climatic act of worship for each Lord's day. Approximately half of our Lord's parables develop this theme. One cannot read far in the New Testament without realizing that everything we have belongs to God, and that we are his stewards. Whatever it is, if we have it, God gave it.

While here on the earth Christ placed little or no emphasis upon material things, except to indicate that they are relatively unimportant. For example, on one occasion when a man came to Jesus asking his help in claiming part of an inheritance, Jesus responded, "Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" Then Jesus took the occasion to add this important teaching on the theme of our study, "Take heed, and keep yourselves from all covetousness: for man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." Then Jesus told the story of the rich but foolish farmer, as found in Luke 12: 14-21. The emphasis that Christ makes that spiritual matters far exceed in importance our physical possessions.

A second example is found in the tenth chapter of Luke in the

story of Christ's visit to the home of Mary and Martha. Martha was cumbered about much serving, though Mary sat at the Lord's feet and heard his word. At one point in the story Jesus said, "Martha, Martha, thou art anxious and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful: for Mary hath chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her." (Luke 10 : 40-42). Even such ordinary affairs as preparing meals and keeping house are not to be compared in importance with the spiritual things of life.

HUMAN TENDENCIES

In contrast with this teaching from the Lord, the human side of our own nature goes in the opposite direction, placing great emphasis on the importance of things. Along with this, men generally feel that the things which they control are their own and, therefore, they may do with them as they wish.

Observation suggests also, that there is absolutely no end to man's wants. It is utterly impossible to satisfy all the cravings of the human heart, so far as material things are concerned. As a man's income rises, usually there is a corresponding rise in his standard of living. In all of this we need to remember our Lord's example. He had no real home and very few possessions. Let us be concerned lest we love things too much—so much that they crowd out the love of the Lord.

Paul's Urge: "Be Not Deceived"

L.O. Sanderson

Regardless of what men think, one thing is plain and certain: Truth reveals the possibility and danger of deception; and Paul, more than all, warned against deceiving and being deceived. Of fifty uses, in the New Testament, of "deceit", "deceive", and related forms, Paul penned half of them. Prefacing the age-old principle of "sowing and reaping", he said, positively, "Be not

deceived." Twice elsewhere he used the same language, and thrice he warned against allowing a man to deceive. The original for "deceived" is also rendered *err* (Heb. 3:10), *wander* (Heb. 11:38), and *go astray* (1 Pet. 2:25). Let's be practical about it.

We can be deceived. If not, Paul was mistaken, other scriptural exhortations are senseless, and the devil, whose main weapon is deception, is foolish indeed. We can be deceived! Both good and evil men have practiced it, and have been the victims of it. Abraham, Isaac, and Rebekah each practiced it; Laban deceived Jacob, Simeon and Levi dealt deceitfully with the Shechemites; Michal deceived Saul; Judas at least kept the eyes of the other apostles blinded; Ananias and Sapphira tried deception, but failed. It is an action over which we have some control—*Be not deceived. Do not permit it!* By the sense of the word, we cannot but conclude that if we can be deceived, we can err as the Sadducees, go astray as the lost sheep, or fall from grace as those clinging to the law after becoming God's children. And if one dies in that condition, he will be lost forever.

Satan may deceive us. That's his business. As a serpent, he began his work in Eden, is now "Satan, which deceiveth the whole world," and finally, "the devil that deceived them" will be "cast into the lake of fire." (Cf. Rev. 12:9; 20:10). Satan tried to deceive Christ, desired Simon to sift him as wheat, was successful with Judas and Ananias, and, even now, when the good seed are sown, it is he who "cometh immediately, and taketh away the word." We must not, therefore, "give place to the devil," nor allow him "an advantage of us," but rather "resist" and "stand against" his wiles. Perhaps, if he would always look like the devil, or a serpent, or a lion, he would be less successful; but as a wolf in sheep's clothing or an angel of light, he is at his best. Yet he need not do the deceptive work personally—he is ever aping the Lord, and so delegates his tasks and power.

Satan's angels may deceive us. Remember, when Satan was "cast out into the earth...his angels were cast out with him." (Rev. 12:9). Paul said "a messenger of Satan" given "to buffet me" (2 Cor. 12:7)—and "messenger" is from *angelos*, almost always trans-

lated "angel." The "man of sin" is described as one "whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders," who will, "with all deceivableness of unrighteousness," cause men to go astray. (2 Thess. 2:7-12). Christ also declares that, in the last day, some will be told: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." (Matt. 25:41). Just who these wicked ones may be, and how the devil may use them, are not questions for this particular treatise; the stress is upon their existence, and that their business, even as that of the "father of lies," is deception.

False teachers may deceive us. Jesus said "many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many" (Matt. 24:11), and Paul warned that "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (2 Tim. 3:13). The Lord anticipated, and warned against, "false accusers," "false brethren," "false apostles," and even "false Christs." And if there be those who think such human agents are associated only with the world and worldly, he should be reminded of Peter's warning that "there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies." (2 Pet. 2:1). For love of money, the gullible have been duped; for want of fame, the ignorant have been the victims of exploiting.

Men may deceive us. They can, and they will. Does not truth warn, "Let no man deceive you"? Paul added, "by any means." And again, "Beware lest any man spoil you." (Col. 3:8). Remember, "it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps," and "if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." Hence, we must "try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." (1 John 4:1). And "if there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God-speed: for he that biddeth him God-speed is partaker of his evil deeds." (2 John 10, 11). Even religious men may deceive us! Were not the Athenians very religious? Peter "was to be blamed" for one of his stubborn ideas. (Gal. 2:11). All around us—in pulpits, over radio, on TV, by periodicals—there are religious men and teachers, some educated and many sincere; but either they are wrong, or God's word is in error. Surely God cannot lie—beware, lest men deceive you!

Man of God's flock may deceive us. Here is the greater peril. Nor can we be in error in this declaration. Paul reminded the elders of Ephesus that "also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." (Acts 20:30). Early troubles were attributed to "false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty." (Gal. 2:4). Paul said he had experienced "perils among false brethren"; Peter warned against those "sporting themselves with their own deceivings"; Jude called them "spots in your feasts of charity." Beware, then, lest we be "tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." (Eph. 4:14). It is sad, but true, that some are bent to rule or ruin; some have sold themselves to an obsession; some can find no text that does not allow them to ride a hobby; some are blunt of tongue and pen unless a brother errs in their sight. But may we not be deceived!

We can deceive ourselves. Hence the exhortation, "Let no man deceive himself." (1 Cor. 3:18). Hearers only, and not doers of the word, deceive themselves (James 1:22); a man who thinks himself something, when he is nothing, deceives himself (Gal. 6:3); he who fails to bridle his tongue is the victim of deception (James 1:26); and "if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves" (1 John 1:8). In fact, we can "be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." (Heb. 3:13). And we may more readily deceive ourselves about sin—that the "deceitfulness of riches" will not "choke the word"; that to be guilty of any one of many sins will still allow us to "inherit the kingdom of God" (Cf. 1 Cor. 6:9, 10); that we can sow as we please without just harvest (Gal. 6:7); that we can keep sin a secret; that "evil communications will not corrupt good morals"; and that there is no "just recompense of reward" for sin.

How may we be deceived? It can certainly be accomplished by men "through philosophy and vain deceit." (Col. 2:8). Too many preachers are turning from down-to-earth teaching and true, practical doctrine, and delivering instead sermons of personality, psychology, and philosophy—and they "by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." (Rom. 16:18). Remember, there is such a thing as "handling the word of God deceitfully." (2 Cor.

4:2). It is an alarming thing, when professed gospel preachers leave the old paths to present something new; when they wrest the scriptures to achieve some ambition; when they show a lack of confidence in the power of the word. And what can we do? We have but one criterion—the word of God! We must know it, believe it, and live by it to avoid deception.

Rejoicing In Tribulation

Lewis Maiden

“And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.” (Acts 16:25).

Paul was on his second missionary journey, Silas accompanied him. They were living and guided by the Holy Spirit. Lydia had been converted, the first fruits of the gospel in Europe. Paul had cast the evil spirit of divination out of a damsel, his first miracle in Europe. This last act so incensed the damsel's masters because it cut off their source of gain, that they organized a mob and brought the men before the magistrates, and put them in prison in stocks. When the religion of the Lord Jesus causes men to lose profit, they are inclined to become enraged. Little did the men of Philippi realize what powerful antagonists they contended with when contending with Paul and Silas. There are no bands strong enough to resist God's power.

It is a trick of Satan always to make Christians as odious as possible to the public. Often they are represented as dangerous to the security of the country, destroyers of constitutions and government. The real truth is that Christians are the most desirable citizens in any community.

Phillipi was provided with a strongly built prison. The jailer thrust them into the inner prison where escape was impossible “and made their feet fast in the stocks.” This was an instrument of torture as well as of confinement. The stocks were constructed of

heavy pieces of timber; the holes for the feet were widely separated and thus made it extremely painful to the prisoners. This recalls the suffering of Joseph. (Psalm 105:17-18).

"Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God." At the hour of midnight, their backs bleeding, the prison in deepest darkness, they lifted their voices in praise to God. They realized that it is better to suffer for Jesus' sake than for any other cause. When persecution overtakes the servants of God, they should resort to prayer and praise. Their thanks giving consisted in expression of gratitude to God that they were worthy to suffer for Jesus. (Matt. 5:11; 1 Pet. 4:15-16). The speediest way out of trouble and sorrow is to begin to pray and sing praise to God.

Prisons are almost always associated with disgrace, but Christian men of honor have sometimes been put in prison. This incident shows that joy and contentment are possible in the most adverse situations. Paul writes and speaks much of joy in his own personal experience, yet no one was more persecuted. A prison may be the house of God and the very door of opportunity to us. It depends on our spiritual condition. (Gen. 28:16-17).

On being delivered to the Bedford jailer, the courageous John Bunyan said, "So, being again delivered up to the jailer's hands, I was home to prison." He had been twelve years in that prison; while there he wrote *Pilgrims Progress*. This spiritual book has cheered its millions of readers. When Samuel Rutherford was imprisoned at Aberdeen he wrote, "The Lord is with me; I care not what man can do. I burden no man. I want nothing. No king is better provided for than I am. Sweet, sweet and easy is the cross of my Lord. Thus in haste I make for my palace at Aberdeen." A child of God can serve the master in any situation.

Wicked men may beat the children of God, may imprison them, slander them, but they can no more stop the truth of God's message than they can arrest the sun and planets in their course. Truth is mighty and eternal and will succeed. Paul and Silas had one purpose: to preach the gospel.

In Acts 4:31 the house of prayer was shaken in token that their prayers were heard. At Philippi the prison was shaken by an earthquake in immediate response to the prayers of Paul and Silas. The hand of the Lord was in these earthquakes to show his resentment of the indignities heaped upon his servants, to warn those who base their faith on the material things of earth, to teach his people that though the earth is moved, they need not fear. (Psalm 46:2). Nothing can separate the Christian from the love of God.

The awakening of the jailer out of his sleep signified the arousing of his conscience out of the sleep of sin. The gospel call is "awake, thou that sleepest." (Eph. 5:14). The Lord saves through the gospel. People still respond to the gospel message. It just needs to be preached. The open prison doors were a swift reminder that the powerful Roman government was not equal to the power of God. It is said that after this incident the Roman lawyers in delivering criminals to jailers always made due allowance for escape by miracles. This was the third time that the power of God overrode the Roman soldiers. This was in the deliverance of Jesus (Matt. 28:2-4) and the deliverance of Peter. (Acts 12:4-9).

Later in his life, Paul wrote, "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." (2 Tim. 3:12). This principle was often tested by Paul, and Philippi was the most significant case of it.

When persecution overtakes the servants of God, they should resort to prayer and praise as opportunities come. The gospel must be preached. In this case the jailer and his family were converted as a result of gospel preaching by men of God rejoicing in tribulation.

Spiritual Brothers And Sisters

Maxie B. Boren

Jesus said, "For whosoever shall do the will of my father who

is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother. *Matthew 12 : 50.*

Notice that there is a contingency on one's being spiritual kin to Jesus. An individual **MUST DO THE WILL OF THE HEAVENLY FATHER** or else he **IS NOT a brother to the Lord.**

Those who do the will of God comprise the family of God. And a great affinity should prevail among these. Thus, the apostle Peter wrote, "love the brotherhood." *I Peter 2 : 17.*

The words, "brother" and "sister" are employed by New Testament writers, ALWAYS in reference to those akin *in Christ!* I am talking of a *spiritual* connotation. I do not refer to physical brothers and sisters, and neither do I have in mind the broader sense of all human beings, posterity "kinship" in Aamd. I am talking about the relationship that people have with one another, *spiritually*, as members of God's family, the church!

It is right and proper to address one another *in the church* as "brother Smith," or "sister Jones." Peter referred to Paul as "our beloved brother Paul." *II Peter 3 : 15.* And Paul made reference to "Timothy our brother." *Philemon 1.* Any number of Scriptures could be cited in support of this.

But it is *not right nor proper* to address people outside the family of God in the above mentioned manner. People who are *not* spiritually kin to those who are! Therefore, we should refrain from using the terms, "brother," or "sister" in a way that is contrary to New Testament teaching.

Please think on this, my brethren, because it manifests a lack of Biblical understanding whenever a member of the Lord's church addresses a person steeped in religious error with such terminology. "Brother" and "sister" should be reserved for those **IN THE FAMILY!**

STILL NO TWO WAYS ABOUT IT

Gene A. Ellmore

"A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a

corrupt tree bring forth good fruit...Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit". (Matt. 7:18; 12:33).

Whether speaking of the evil of blasphemy or the evil of false prophets, Jesus STILL says there are NO TWO WAYS ABOUT IT. The same principle is true when speaking in the realm of truth and good works.

We are living in a synthetic age. We are eating synthetic foods, receiving synthetic organ transplants, and operating our automobiles on synthetic tires. Some results are good and some results are disastrous. Even our thinking has become synthetic with the aid of computers. These computers are sometimes reliable and sometimes not. The delay in the final moon launch is a case in point.

The most critical area of synthesis is in reasoning, for it is in this area that the issues of life are determined. If there are still no two ways about it in this area, then any wrong road will perish, but it does indicate that their only rescue lies in a return to the right road, and working a fresh from that point, never by "simply going on."

The rational principle of synthesis argues that where there is a thesis, there is an antithesis, and synthesis is the combination of the best parts of the two to form a new thesis. This means, in the words of C.S. Lewis, "that reality never presents us with an absolutely unavoidable either—or situation; that, granted skill and patience and (above all) time enough, some way of embracing both alternatives can always be found; that mere development or adjustment or refinement will somehow turn evil into good without our being called on for a final and total rejection of anything we should like to retain." The principle of synthesis is like pollution; it always dissolves into something but never leaves the original in its former state, rather, a polluted one. The charted course is always downward from the ideal.

There is a Heaven (Acts 17:24) and there is a Hell (2 Pet. 2:4), and never the twain shall meet. There is truth and there is error'

and the one shall not evolve into the other by reason of elapsed time. Neither is the church a halfway house for wandering rationalists, Hell-bent for Heaven, nor a nursing home for neurotic truth-seekers who will receive neither truth nor error but are bent on combining the two to establish their own way.

HAPPINESS IS AWARENESS OF HEAVENLY NEARNESS

MAXIE B. BOREN

God has promised His people of times past, and *NOW*, "I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee." (See *Deuteronomy 31 : 6* and *Hebrews 13 : 5*). Again, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." (Note *Leviticus 26 : 12* and *II Corinthians 6 : 16*).

One of the *GREAT* teachings of the Bible is that the church is the temple, i.e., "the dwelling place," of God! By inspiration, the apostle Paul wrote to the Lord's church at Corinth, and inquired, "Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" *I Corinthians 3 : 16*. The same apostle, in writing to the church in Ephesus, informed them that as individuals they were "fitly framed together" as a "holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit." *Ephesians 2 : 21-22*.

Not only is the church "as a whole" the temple of God, but each individual Christian has the blessed assurance of Holy Writ of the abiding presence of Deity. The Bible teaches that the Father dwells with us and in us! (Read such Scriptures as *John 14 : 23*; *I John 4 : 12, 15, 16b*; and *Ephesians 4 : 6*). The Bible also teaches us that Christ abides with us and in us! (Note *Colossians 1 : 27*; *II Corinthians 13 : 5b*; *Romans 8 : 10*; and *Ephesians 3 : 17*). And further, the Scriptures affirm that the third Person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit, abides with us and in us! (Consider *I Corinthians 6 : 19-20*; *Romans 8 : 9*; and *Galatians 4 : 6*).

I do not profess to fully comprehend something so profound! It is "beyond me" to fathom it completely. But I believe it because the Bible teaches it! While controversy has raged, and still does from time to time, over the "how" of the Divine presence in the life of a Christian, isn't it enough to just accept it and rejoice over it!

I am thankful for the comfort of knowing that my Heavenly Father is near! I rejoice in realizing that Jesus Christ my Lord will be with me until the very end! I am grateful that the Spirit abides with me! I don't totally understand it, and I don't really believe anyone else does either, but I'm thankful for God's revelation that informs us it's true! For the Christian, *HAPPINESS IS AWARENESS OF HEAVENLY NEARNESS!*

Know The Truth

Marvin Rainey

ARE YOU CONFUSED ?

Are you wandering if you are right in what you have believed and obeyed? There are so many conflicting doctrines being taught that many are confused and do not know what to believe or what to do. It is bad to be confused about anything but to be confused about salvation is certainly bad. Your preacher may have told you, "Believe on the Lord and you can be sure of heaven". This sounds good because it is easy. It may be taught by the majority of the religious people but the question that should concern us is this, is it right? In I John 4 : 1 we are told to be careful as to what we hear because many false prophets (teachers) are gone out into the world. How can we know if the preacher is preaching a false doctrine or the true doctrine. There is only one way and that is to be sure that what he teaches is in the Bible. Don't continue to be confused. Ask your preacher for chapter and verse. All of God's commandments are righteousness, Ps 119 : 172.

Only those who do his will can expect to go to heaven. (Mt. 7:21).

Jesus is the author of eternal salvation to all that obey him, Heb. 5:9. He will render vengeance to them that obey not the gospel. II Thess. 1:8. Many teach that faith only will save. The Bible teaches, "Ye see that by works a man is justified and not by faith only," James 2:24. Do I hear you say, "I am confused and do not know what to believe? Why be confused? Just take what the Bible says and you will be right."

Let me tell you what to do to be saved. I do not want to confuse you, so get your Bible and we will see just what the Bible teaches concerning salvation. Peter told those who believed to "repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus for the remission of their sins," Acts 2:36-38. Saul, who believed and was penitent, was told, "be baptized and wash away thy sins," Acts 22:16. In every case of conversion they did the same thing. They all believed in Christ, repented of their sins, confessed their faith in Christ and were baptized for the remission of their sins. They were not confused. Why should we be confused today? Just remember this: A doctrine that contradicts the Bible is false. It is truth that makes us free. John 8:32.

God's Message to Men

Pervie Nichols

Since the beginning of time God has "at sundry times and in divers manners" spoken to man. (Heb. 1:1-2). In these last days Jehovah has spoken to us through His Son, Jesus. His message of salvation through Christ is revealed and written in the New Testament.

A Complete Revelation

The written word of God is complete; it contains all the infor-

mation man needs in order to learn how to be saved, become a child of God, and prepare for heaven. Please observe the completeness and all sufficiency of the Lord's word, as set forth in the following statement: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (2 Tim. 3: 16, 17). There is not a condition or need of mankind but that one or the other of these statements will adequately apply. Peter declared that we have, through the knowledge of Christ, been given all things that pertain unto life and godliness: (2 Pet. 1: 2).

If the Bible thoroughly furnishes us unto "every good work", what about Creeds, Manuals, etc.? Why have a supplementary book? To accept a creed, manual, or human articles of faith is to reject the Bible as the complete revelation. No one can truthfully say, "I accept the Bible as the complete guide into all truth" while subscribing to some creed or manual. We need no articles of faith, rules or regulations other than those found in the New Testament.

WRITTEN MESSAGE FINAL

There has been no divine revelation since the New Testament was revealed and written by the Holy Spirit in the first century. Christians are urged to "earnestly contend for the faith...once for all delivered" (Jude 3, R.V.). "The faith" here means the gospel—the teaching or doctrine of Christ, God's final message to man. "The faith" has been "once for all delivered," and confirmed (Heb. 2: 1-3), and a curse pronounced upon anyone who would deliver anything different to that which was delivered to those inspired men of long ago. (Gal. 1: 8, 9; 2 Jno. 9). This proves that (1) there is no need of further or continued revelation, and (2) God has delivered no revelations since the first century when the New Testament was revealed, confirmed and recorded for all time to come.

CLAIMS OF FURTHER REVELATION

Many religious cults of today are built upon the idea of continuous revelation.

Mr. William Miller, leader in the Seventh-Day Adventism movement, in the nineteenth century, claimed to have had supernatural dreams and visions. When these proved false he quit. Then Mrs. Ellen G. White, one of his followers, modified his prophecies, added the seventh day Sabbath doctrine, and this introduced another religious order. She claimed to have been caught up to heaven and while there received a special revelation regarding the keeping of the Sabbath.

One, Joseph Smith, claimed that an angel showed him where to find the Mormon plates which he said, were hidden in the ground. He said the angel told him that he could read and translate them only by using the spectacles he said he found with the plates. From this claim has come "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints".

The Catholic Church teaches progressive or continuous revelation. It teaches that the highest voice in the church is vested in the Vatican head, the living pope. It also teaches that the Catholic Church is the mother of the Bible, that the Bible is the product of the church. And since the church continues, revelation continues. If the Catholic church were to abandon its human tradition and claims of continued revelation it would cease to exist. Not one doctrine peculiar to that church can be found in the Bible.

LET US BE SATISFIED WITH GOD'S MESSAGE

Today we are confronted with the fact the Bible is covered with the creeds and manuals of men. These contain things not in the Bible. Let him who claims to love the "Faith once delivered" uncover the Bible, take the creeds away, and let people see the "faith once delivered" in all of its purity and power. It is the only standard of Authority in religion.

Let us be satisfied with God's message to us, and diligently follow its divine guidance.

We have enough "religion" not to shoot anybody but not enough "righteousness" to keep our big mouths shut, and to forgive and forget. We have enough "religion" and to argue who's right but not enough "Righteousness" to teach cottage meetings and save a man's soul.

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