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EDITORIAL



A Letter Concerning The Baptism Of The Holy Spirit

We are always getting cards and letters in response to The Bible Teacher. Some are commending us for the work and others are negative. This is to be expected. It is always good to hear from our reading audience and we encourage you to continue to write.

One of the letters received was in response to an article on The Holy Spirit. The author says, "We firmly believe that the Holy Spirit Baptism is relevant even today. Healings, laying on of hands, gifts of the Spirit and speaking in tongues is for today also. In my life too. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit which was given to the Apostles of old is freely given even for you today—if you ask! The Holy Spirit of God is moving in a mighty way throughout the world. Do not lose God's free gift. Yours sincerely."

Our thanks go to the author for taking the time to write. While we appreciate your effort to write, we will have to take exception with the things you have said. We will use your statements as the basis for making several points.

It is obvious that this writer makes the same mistake as do the Seventh-Day Adventists. Every time the Adventists come across the word law in the New Testament then they want to apply that to the Law of Moses, when in reality the Law of Moses may not be under consideration at all. But they are trying to uphold the Law and so they think this is the way to do it. The Pentecostal people, and all of those who claim to have the baptism of the Holy Spirit, when reading through the New Testament, and they come across a verse of scripture that speaks of the Spirit, or the Holy Spirit, then they automatically conclude that this is having reference to the baptism of the Holy Spirit today. But this is not the case at all. Often times when the Holy Spirit is spoken of it has nothing to do with the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Since such people misunderstand the difference between the baptism of the Holy Spirit and those verses of scripture that refer to the Holy Spirit, but has nothing to do with the baptism of the Holy Spirit, then this is further proof that they do not have such a baptism.

In these pages we have explained again and again what the Bible teaches about the baptism of the Holy Spirit, but here our friend is raising the same old questions and making the same old claims. We always support all of our statements with the scripture, but you will note in the letter that the writer had no scripture to offer. I wonder why. Actually, I know why none were given. That was simply because none could be given. Isn't that strange? And especially coming from someone who claims to have the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Let me state again that the Bible teaches that there were different measures of the Holy Spirit. Christ received the Spirit without measure according to John 3:31-35. If that be true, then others would receive it with measure, that is, there would be some limitations as to what they might be able to do by the power of the Holy Spirit. Christ promised to send the Holy Spirit upon the

Apostles (John 15:26, 27; 16:7, 13). Please note that this promise was not made to all, but only to the Apostles, those who had been with him from the beginning. Just prior to the Lord's return to the Father in Heaven, he spoke again to the Apostles, and said, "And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem; until ye be endued with power from on high." (Luke 24:49). Almost the same identical statement is made in Acts 1:8. Then in Acts 2 we have the Apostles gathered in Jerusalem; the Spirit is poured out on them, and as proof of it they were able to speak in other languages, languages that were understood by those who heard them, and also they were able to perform miracles. Listen to these words: "And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the Apostles." (Acts 2:43). Did you note that it specifically says that the wonder and signs were done by the Apostles. Why just them? Because they were the only ones who had been promised the power of the Holy Spirit and therefore they were the only ones who received the baptism of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. Paul also received this baptism since he was chosen to be an apostle to the Gentiles. (Galatians 1:10-17). Finally, Cornelius and his household received the baptism of the Holy Spirit to prove that God had accepted the Gentiles as well as the Jews. (Acts 10). When Peter was telling later of what had happened, he explained, "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. Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God" (Acts 11: 15-17). Notice some things here. First, Peter had to go all the way back to Pentecost to find another example of where someone had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. He said that the Holy Spirit fell on Cornelius and his household as it did on them (the Apostles) in the beginning (the first case of it on the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem). But if all received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, then why would it have been so strange for Cornelius and his household to have received? Second, what was the sign that the Apostles had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit? According to Acts 2:4, 8 they began to speak in other languages,

languages that could be understood by those present. What was the sign that Cornelius and his household had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit? The record says that Peter and those with him heard them speak with tongues or languages. (Acts 10:46). So we must conclude then that these are the only cases of Holy Spirit baptism in the New Testament. The Apostles, including Paul, representing the Jews, received this measure of the Holy Spirit and Cornelius and his household, representing the Gentiles, received the same measure of the Spirit. But there were no others from that day to this.

Then there was the laying on of hands measure of the Holy Spirit, and only the Apostles had the power or authority to administer this. You may read of examples of this in Acts 6, Acts 8, and Acts 19. The very fact that the Apostles laid their hands on selected ones, already said to be full of the Holy Spirit, that they might have the power of the Holy Spirit, indicates that such people did not have the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Yet, we are told today that all people who obey God may have the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Such people do not know the teaching of the word of God. But when the Apostles died, and those they laid their hands on died, then the miraculous age ceased. The purpose of the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the laying on of hands measure of the Holy Spirit was to enable those who had such power to remember all things that Christ had taught them (John 16:4), to speak in other languages so they could more rapidly spread the teaching of the Lord (Acts 2:11), and to perform miracles that the word of God might be confirmed. (Mark 16:20). This was necessary in those days since they did not have the New Testament in written form, but by the time the Apostles died, those they laid their hands on had died, then the New Testament had been given in written form. Therefore miraculous helps are no longer needed to confirm the word since it has already been confirmed. Furthermore, Paul tells us that faith now comes by hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17) and the scriptures have been written that we might believe. (John 20:30, 31).

But if you were not an Apostle, and there was no Apostle to lay his hands on you so you could have the power of the Holy

Spirit, then what is left? There was another measure of the Holy Spirit spoken of in the scriptures and that was the gift of the Holy Spirit. It did not carry with it any miraculous power, but besides the Apostles and those they laid their hands, along with Cornelius and his household, then all others who obeyed the Lord, and that comes right on up to our day, then they received the gift of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:38).

Now, I want to tell my friend who wrote the letter that you do not have baptism of the Holy Spirit and neither does anybody else living today have that power. You say that we can ask for it, but the Lord would not give it to us because he did not promise it to us. You further say that healings, laying on of hands, gifts of the Spirit, and speaking in tongues are also for today. I am sorry, but they are not. You misunderstand the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The Apostles and those they laid their hands on spoke in other languages, that the people could understand. They performed miracles. They raised the dead. They cast out evil spirits. They cast off poisonous serpents and lived. But you say that you have the baptism of the Holy Spirit. What can you do? Can you do those things? You say you can speak in tongues? Those who make such claims only end up in having intelligent people laugh at them because they only make sounds as a baby or child before it learns its mother's tongue. The people in the Apostles' days did not laugh at the Apostles when they spoke in other languages. They said, "How hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?" (Acts 2:8).

Let me go on and ask you for some information since you claim that you and others have the baptism of the Holy Spirit:

1. List one case of Holy Spirit baptism in the New Testament apart from the Apostles and Cornelius and his household.
2. Name one person in the New Testament besides the Apostles, Cornelius and his household, and those that received the laying on of hands by the Apostles, who were able to speak in other languages and to perform miracles.

3. Can you cast out devils? Can Satan cast out Satan?
4. Can you take up serpents or poisonous snakes, drink any deadly thing, without it hurting you?
5. Can you lay hands on the sick and then for them to recover every time?
6. Can you speak in languages that you have not studied, without a translator, and for your hearers to be able to understand as though you had always spoken that language?
7. Can you put a new leg or arm on a person who never had one?
8. Can you give sight to one who has been blind from birth?
9. Can you raise the dead?
10. Have you ever done any of these things? Where is the proof?

If you have the baptism of the Holy Spirit you can do these and other things. Also, all others who have the baptism of the Holy Spirit can do these things. You can do those things that will convince the unbeliever that God indeed is with you. If you and others could do those things then all the world would be at your door. But you know you can't do any of these things because you don't have the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the same is true with all others who claim to have this power. How do I know? Because I know what the Bible teaches and if you knew what the Bible taught you would know that too. The Bible teaches that when one says that something will come to pass and then it does not, then you may know that the person is a false teacher. Now, you may think you have this power, but you have never done anything like this and you will not even try because you know that you would fail. That should tell you and others something. But here are the excuses that you will offer to try to get around the truth. You will say that you cannot do these things

but that it is God that does them. You will say that you, or the ones you are trying to heal, do not have enough faith. You will say that to try to do these things, because I am challenging you to do them, would be to tempt God. You will try to explain that you can't, but others can. You will try to point to someone who has been healed, but you will not be able to point to anyone who has had a new leg put on, his eyesight given after being blind from birth, or one who has been raised from the dead. My friend, you are in error in that you misrepresent God and his power.

Let me also ask you about all of the preachers and different denominational people who claim to have the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Would you say that the Holy Spirit is working through all of them? If not all of them, then which ones? Would it be possible for one who is in a denominational church and wears a man-made name to have the baptism of the Holy Spirit? If so, then you would have the Holy Spirit contradicting his own word as set forth in the scripture and you would have him opposing himself. He would be telling one in one church to do one thing and another in another church to do something contrary to that, and so on. Surely, the Holy Spirit would not lower himself to such practices.

God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit lives in the true Christian (1 John 4:12-15; Ephesians 3:17; Romans 8:9), the one who has obeyed the truth as set forth in the scripture and therefore has been forgiven of his sins and added to the church. (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38, 47). But they do not dwell in any Christian separate and apart from the truth and neither do they give that person any miraculous power. That does not mean that God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit could not perform miracles. They can do whatever they want to do, but they have chosen not to since they have given the word in written form and therefore it completely furnishes man unto every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16, 17). Why would God need to perform a miracle today? What would be the purpose of it? Please tell me.

The Holy Spirit is moving today through the world only as his word is taught. That is why we are told to take the gospel into all the world and to preach it to every creature. (Mark 16:15).

Therefore Peter reminds us, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. (1 Peter 1:22,23).

In closing, let me ask my friend: What church are you a member of today? Are you a member of the church of Christ? Are you a Christian only? What did you do to be saved? You have not said in your letter but you have written on a letterhead that indicate that it is connected with some religious group. Although you have not told me, I know that you are a member of some religious organization that is not found in the word of God. You wear a name other than the name of Christ. And for sure, you are teaching things here that are contrary to the teaching of the scriptures. Yet, you say that you and other such people have the baptism of the Holy Spirit. My friend, if you had the baptism of the Holy Spirit then you would surely not contradict the Holy Spirit and for certain you would be a member of the Lord's church and you would wear the name of Christ only.

I would ask that if you are sincere that you go to the scriptures and re-study this matter. It is not a matter of me being right or you being right, but it is a matter of what the word of God says. The truth of God is right and we must believe it and obey it to be right. Claims and charges, especially without the authority of Christ, means nothing.



**associate
editorial**

You Can't Be Saved Like The Thief!

Whenever the subject of baptism from the Bible is discussed

and the importance of obeying the command of Christ concerning baptism is stressed upon, there is always someone who would give the example of the thief who was crucified with Christ, to prove that baptism is not necessary for salvation. Even though Christ himself said, "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved..." (Mark 16:16). The example of the thief is used by many to evade baptism. In the Bible, concerning the thief, we read, "And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, if thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our dæds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with me in paradise." (Luke 23:39-43).

The only reason the example of the thief on the cross is used is to evade Christ's command to be baptized for salvation. It surprises me, however, why not people see the example of the three thousand men who were baptized for the forgiveness of sins. (Acts 2:38, 41). Why don't they see the example of the corinthians who, after hearing the things concerning Christ, were baptized both men and women. (Acts 8:12). And instead of the thief why not use the example of the great apostle Paul, who was told, before he became a Christian, "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22:16). Surely, these are more appropriate examples of the people who lived under the New Testament law of Christ, than the example of the thief who lived and died under the Old Testament law of Moses.

First of all, I would like to draw your attention to the question, where did the thief, under consideration, live? The thief did not live under the new will of God, but he lived under His old will, the Old Testament of the Bible, which was the will and the law of God for His people prior to the death of His Son Jesus Christ. But with the death of Christ the Old Law or the Old Testament was taken away, and in its place God gave His new will, the New Testament. (Hebrews 7:12; 8:7, 13; 10:9). At

Colossians 2:12 of the New Testament we read : "Blotting out the handwritings of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross." The thief under consideration did not only live but also died under the Old Testament law. Christ himself was born under that law and he too lived and died under the law of the Old Testament, because the Bible says, "And for this cause he is the mediator of the New Testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first Testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a Testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth." (Hebrews 9:15-17). What is he saying here? The testament is a will and a will is in force only after the death of the will maker. Thus the Bible teaches, the New Testament of Christ came into force or became effective after his death on the cross. But when Jesus promised the thief, "Today shalt thou be in paradise with me," he had yet not died. He made that statement to the thief while he was still living. Which means his New Testament was still in future, it was to come into force after his death, but at that time was not in force. To prove that he was truly the Son of God, Jesus in his lifetime forgave people of their sins in various ways just as he healed the sick and raised the dead and did many other things, to prove his claim to be the Son of God. This truth is seen in the case of the man who was sick of palasy, and in the cases of Zacchaeus and the woman who bathed his feet with her tears, and also the woman taken in adultery. (Mark 2:5-12; Luke 19:9-10; Luke 7:48-50; John 8:3). But following his death upon the cross, his New Testament became effective, as was the will of God. (Hebrews 1:1,2). Therefore no example of pardon which took place before the death of Christ can be our example today. We cannot argue and say today that because king David wasn't baptized, therefore we need not to be baptized also. Because David, the Psalmist, lived under a different law of God, in which he was not required to be baptized, and the thief also lived under that same law.

Now, let us ask another question. When did Christ command

baptism for salvation? According to the Bible, after his death and resurrection Christ lived on earth for forty days. During this period of time he appeared to people on many occasions. And then he was taken up and was received up into heaven. (Matthew 28; Mark 16; Acts 1:1-3). But just before he was received up into heaven, he met with his disciples the last time at a certain appointed place, and the record says, "And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen." (Matthew 28:17-20). Mark, in his account, says, "And he said unto them, 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 damned.....So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God." (Mark 16:15,16,19). Now, when did the Lord command, **HE THAT BELIEVES AND IS BAPTIZED SHALL BE SAVED?** After his death, when his New Testament will was in force, and the thief was already dead. The thief did never live under the New Testament of the Lord. The thief died forty-three days before the Lord commanded baptism for salvation. Therefore it is foolish to reason and say the thief wasn't baptized, in an attempt to evade baptism today, because the thief lived under a different law of God. However, all who live after the death of Christ on the cross live under God's New Testament will in which He require for all to believe in His Son Jesus Christ, and to repent of sins, and to confess Christ the Son of God, and to be baptized in water to be saved. (Acts 2:38; Acts 8:35-39). If you want to be saved today, you must obey the command of Christ, because the Bible teaches, Christ, after his death, has become the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him. (Hebrews 5:8,9).

Overcoming Discouragement

by **Larry Sheehy**

Regardless of how great a man's character may be, he will

find himself discouraged occasionally. If we look at the great men of the Bible.....Abraham, Job, David, Solomon, the apostles.....we find them all discouraged and disheartened at one time or another. All faced it, and it is one of Satan's most effective weapons.

Disappointment and discouragement are normal human reactions to life's problems. But the Christian can learn how to overcome them. It is hard, but we can do it.

How may we overcome discouragement? I am of the firm conviction that the Christian has an advantage no one else can claim. He can turn to God in full assurance, knowing that he both desires and is able to help us become victorious. If we will put our faith in him and in his word, nothing can stand in our way.

When we are overcome with the cares of the world, let us seek his help openly and without fear. Believe the promises in such passages as Psalms 1; 55:22; 120:1; 121:1,2; Phil. 4:6,7; John 14:1-3; Matthew 6:24-34. If we fail to turn to God in time of need, we will be forfeiting the greatest help available. One of the mysteries of life is the fact that so many times we turn away from God instead of toward him. So many turn to the world, to alcohol, to self-pity, when the only sure help lies with the Lord.

Jesus said, "Come unto me; all ye that labour, and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." Do you know the peace that passes all understanding? You can.

Why I Believe the New Testament is God's Final Revelation

Delton Haun

Many conflicting religious positions today result from the idea

God has continued to speak through inspired men since the close of the New Testament.

I am convinced God brought His revelation to a close with the New Testament, that His revelation was completed through the gospel of Christ and that since the time of Jesus and His apostles no man has spoken by inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Here are some reasons why:

1. **The apostles of Christ were to be taught all things.** Before the crucifixion Jesus announced to the apostles the Father would send them the Holy Spirit and that the Holy Spirit would teach them all things and bring His teaching to their remembrance. (Jno. 14:26; 16:13). The revelation was to be made to them and through them to later generations.

2. **The Christian faith was once for all delivered to the saints.** Jude urged brethren to contend for the faith which he said, "was once for all delivered unto the saints." (Jude 3 ASV). The NEB says "once and for all." It is not possible for the faith to be once for all delivered in the first century if God planned to reveal it gradually over thousands of succeeding years.

3. **The salvation of every man today depends on the one offering made by Jesus on the cross nineteen hundred years ago.** The book of Hebrews speaks of the offering of animal sacrifices commanded in the Old Testament but points out they could not take away sin. (Heb. 10:3,4). When Jesus was offered, His sacrifices brought pardon to all who obey Him. (Heb. 5:8,9). His offering was the final payment for the sins of the world. (2 Pet. 3:18; 1 Jno. 1:7; Heb. 10:14). His death, burial and resurrection completed God's redemptive plan. The good news of Christ's work was to be preached to the whole world till the end of time. (Matt. 28:18-20).

4. **The gospel of Christ provides all things today that pertain to life and godliness.** All things that pertain to life and godliness have been given through the knowledge of Christ. (2 Pet. 1:3). They were given over nineteen hundred years ago. When God

revealed the truth through Jesus He held nothing back. He revealed all He intended to reveal. If a matter pertains to life and godliness then Peter said it had been given in his day. There isn't room for a later revelation.

5. **The greatest blessings are offered through the gospel of Christ.** All spiritual blessings are in Christ Jesus. (Eph. 1:3). Paul pointed out where God blesses us. It is in Christ. He points out the nature of the blessings. They are spiritual. He points out how many blessings God gives. He gives all of them. (Pardon, peace, fellowship, assurance, hope). It is evident these blessings were offered in Paul's day over nineteen hundred years ago. No additional blessings were planned or needed.

6. **The scriptures prohibit preaching any gospel other than the gospel that was preached by the apostle.** "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." (Gal. 1:8).

7. **To accept an alternative - to believe in special revelation through the centuries following the days of Christ and the apostles leads to contradictions and confusion.** There have been many who have claimed inspiration. These men have not stood together. How can two men be delivering God's word when their words contradict? (1 Cor. 14:33).

I believe God's will is revealed in the Bible and that we may learn it there. I believe that when we meet the conditions of pardon announced by Jesus and the apostles we become Christians. I believe we can enjoy every spiritual blessing in Christ and never listen to the voice of any living man who claims to be inspired. I believe the Bible is adequate to guide us through life and that if we are faithful to Jesus as He taught He will someday take us to heaven.

Jesus Idolatry

Fenter Northern

Do you have one of the new Jesus so fashionable in our religious world today? Satan has under mass production just about any sort of Jesus you want to worship. There is only one thing these varied Jesus have in common—they let people do just about anything they wish do in a good religious conscience. One can worship one of the new Jesus idols while thinking he is doing God service. This leads to a very serious question—"Is your Jesus God's true Son?"

Your first reaction to this question may be one of surprise and curiosity, but the more you think about it the more relevant it becomes. Jesus, as the true Son of God Who is revealed in the Bible, must be the same one you worship in your personal life!

Inspiration clearly reveals to us God's Son in Person and work. Promise, prophecy and history all reveal the Biblical Jesus in a context that only revelation from God could present. I noticed recently a source claiming that "we can reject the Scriptural record and still hold to the Jesus of that record in our personal life. This is a contradiction! One may hold to such a Jesus—but what Jesus?"

If one rejects the Scripture, He rejects the Jesus of that Scripture. If this true Jesus is rejected then the acceptance of another Jesus is only a product of the human imagination. There is nothing wrong in calling upon all of our God-given faculties in learning the truth, but if we arrive at a Jesus alien to the New Testament, the one we worship is not the true Jesus at all.

Some denominationalist attempt to persuade us that the Jesus they worship is known through the inner personal guidance of the Holy Spirit. This again is a contradiction as the Holy Spirit would not lead one to a different Jesus from the One He has

already revealed in His Scripture. The new Jesus would be only one of their imagination—an idol of their own craving

IT'S THE SAME OLD SIN—IDOLATRY!

It is not a novel thing for religionists to manufacture their own idols and gods. Jesus prophesied that false Christ would arise. These outside the faith of the New Testament church and the cults also, are products of men's imagination rather than Spirit guided thinking.

The holding of the truth and the true Jesus as revealed in the Scripture is of major importance. Believing in a self-manufactured Jesus can do severe damage and result in the loss of the soul. Being a pilot I can appreciate the importance of a compass on board the plane. It gives assurance that you are going in the right direction to reach a safe port. How much more important is this when eternal directions are involved.

It is obvious that all people do not believe in the same Christ. How different is the Jesus of the Human imagination from the One we read about in the New Testament. The Christ of modern thinking is divested of His divine personage, depicted as a frustrated superstar, stripped of the supernatural and conveniently wrapped in a brand new doctrine formulated so as to appear to worldly minds with an air of sophistication. To some He is merely a man that came closer to attaining perfection than any other man on this earth. Christ of the Bible is more than a Buddha or an Abe Lincoln. He has all the authority of the Godhead (Matt. 28:18-20).

There are others who would attempt to ascribe to Him some sort of divine image but at the same time deny the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures saying that these are only man-made documents which are the results of the enthusiastic writings of unlearned disciples.

WHAT CHRIST IS WORSHIPPED?

What Christ do they purport to worship? Is it not a product

of a discipleship even more ignorant of the truth and 2,000 years further removed from the actual facts? The Jesus embraced by these of whom we speak is only a god of their own imagination and not the true Jesus Christ of the Bible.

A DETERMINED EFFORT OF THE DEVIL

Why are such people determined to present to themselves another Christ? Is it not the same old game of the devil attempting to evade the authority of the Scriptures and lure all people at the same time into a damning deception which allows them to think they are believing in the true Jesus of the Bible?

We are told that scholars can no longer hold to the Bible record as true. This is another lie of Satan. There is still a jungle of scholars, some of them the ripest in the world, who still avow with all their might the reliability of the documents of the Bible.

The Challenge Of The Cross

John Stacy

Truly, the cross of Christ was a powerful force in the first century. Paul in I Corinthians 2:2 said, "For I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." The cross of Christ turned thousands of ordinary people into a real and dynamic force with which Rome had to deal. As a result of their belief in the power of the cross the enemies of the Christian faith charged in Acts 17:6 "...these that have turned the world upside down are come hither also!" The cross of Christ is still the most powerful force in the world and still offers some challenges to all men.

First the cross challenges men to love in a world of hate! The cross has always been a symbol of love to Christians. John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." Someone has observed that we are running out of

space and time in this world and thus we must learn to love each other or perish! Jesus said in Matthew 22:39, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

Secondly, the cross challenges us to have conviction in a world of compromise, Christians are to be people of conviction or they are not Christians. In I Peter 2:23 it is said of Jesus "...but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." Christ was Committed! Early Christians were committed! Note Revelation 2:13, "...even in the days of Antipas my witness, my faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwelleth." Most people religiously want convenience and not conviction. And they will burn in hell too!

In the third place the cross challenges us to be pure in a time of immorality! This nation is flooded with filthy magazines, movies, and television, Paul said in I Timothy 5:22, "Keep thyself pure." Jesus said, "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." (Matthew 5:8).

Finally, the cross challenges us to serve in a world that seeks to be served! We are served by thousands of gadgets in the home and at work. We are a nation of spectators rather than participators. Yet, note Matthew 10:24-25, "A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his Lord, it is enough for the disciple that he be as his teacher, and the servant his lord." Friends, Jesus did not come to this earth to be served! Matthew 20:28 says, "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many."

If Not Acts 20:7, When?

Bill Graddy

If not Acts 20:7, WHEN? In Matthew 26:26-29, Jesus said, "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new

testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." This "newness" began in the kingdom on Pentecost Day of Acts 2. Thus, Christians are reminded weekly by this memorial feast of the "Body" and "Blood" of the HUMBLED ONE now EXALTED, Jesus Christ! These humble hearts were made pure by being baptized "for the remission of their sins" Acts 2:38, and "the Lord added them to His church" which made them citizens of His kingdom. Acts 2:47. **WHAT!** Our heavenly Father has always prepared a place and time to congregate and commune with His children. For Christians, the place is the church and the time is the "first day of the week" in which He communes around His table with His children in partaking of the Lord's Supper. Acts 20:7. This fellowship and partnership commemorates the death, burial and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ. In "discerning" (I Cor. 11:29) and partaking of the body and blood of Christ, we gain the life giving substance of our spiritual heritage. This SUPPER is a time for sharing, fellowship, and participation in the joys of being fellow-heirs, fellow-workers and partners with God. (Eph. 3:6; I Thess. 3:2; Philemon 17, 24.) The early Christians continued steadfastly in this way of worship. Acts 2:42. **WHERE!** In instituting this memorial feast, Jesus said, "I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." God prepared His kingdom and placed the table of the Lord in it. The body represented by the bread, is the church. The fruit of the vine represents His blood that was shed for the remission of sins and purchased the church of Christ. Acts 20:28. We cannot separate Christ and His bride, the church. We cannot separate Christ and His Word, and we cannot separate Christ and His Supper. It is in His church, God's kingdom. **HOW!** Christians must examine themselves to see if they be in the faith. II Cor. 13:5. In I Cor. 11:28, "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup." We must examine self, not someone else. The Bible is silent relative to man's invention of open and closed communion. Therefore, to practice open and closed communion is to add to the Word of God, a very hideous sin. Rev. 22:18. Why are we to examine ourselves? We

do this that we may partake in a worthy or proper manner, discerning, understanding, and appreciating the cost of the church, the remission of sins and the grace of God in forgiveness. I Cor. 11:29. Some think that "unworthily" in verse 29 means that we must be **good enough** to partake. If we waited until we were worthy or good enough to commune with the Lord, none would ever partake because we do not earn or merit this privilege. Therefore, we examine self and ask God to forgive us of our sins, live in harmony with His Word, and partake of the Supper in a decent manner, fully understanding **WHAT** we are doing, **WHY**, **WHEN**, **WHERE**, and **HOW** we are doing it! So, the how of the Lord's Supper is to examine self. **WHY!** "...this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he comes." I Cor. 11:25-26. Why? What has Jesus done for us? He gave His life's blood on Calvary's cross that we might live with God in heaven eternally. How ungrateful are those who never assemble in the house of God to partake of the Supper of God remembering His Son in what He did that we might have life and life more abundantly. This spiritual feast is energy to our souls. It is the refreshing of the Spirit that comes from the Lord. When a child of God sits in the house of God, communing, discerning, and remembering all that his blessed Son did for us, **what vitality to the soul of man!** A failure to remember this momentous event is spiritual death. The **WHY** of the Lord's Supper is a **life and death matter**. John 6:53. Eternity hangs in the balance as we remember or fail to remember what Christ did for us. **WHEN!** "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight." **IF NOT ACTS 20:7, WHEN?** Some people observe the Supper once a month. By what authority? Where is the passage of Scripture that so states? Some observe once a quarter. Where is the passage? Some partake annually. By what authority? Where is the Scripture? However, some partake weekly. Where is the passage of Scripture? Acts 20:7. If it were not Acts 20:7, a Christian could partake of the Lord's Supper one time—one time in his entire life and be Scriptural. But you ask, "What about I Cor. 11:25 and 26 where "as oft" and "as often" are used? Acts

20:7 is the only answer. This is the only passage that answers how oft and how often. IF NOT ACTS 20:7, WHEN? Why not be satisfied with Acts 20:7? What is wrong, difficult, or hard to understand about weekly communion? But you say, "it does not say every first day of the week." Look at I Cor. 16:2, where the same, identical words, "Upon the first day of the week" are used relative to our giving. This does not say every first day, but have you ever been to a religious meeting that misunderstood this? They understand so well that many of them not only pass the collection plate every Sunday morning, but some pass it again every Sunday evening. If I employed you to work for me and told you that I would pay you on Saturday, would you understand that you would be paid every Saturday? Some object by saying, "If you partake of the Lord's Supper every week, it will become common place." What about prayer? Do you pray more than once a week? Many pray more than once a day, even several times a day. Does prayer become common place because we pray almost continuously every day? Why not be satisfied with Acts 20:7? It is the only verse of Scripture in the Bible that answers the WHEN!!! It meets every argument, every test, and answers as simple as it does on giving. Friend, you cannot improve upon Acts 20:7, and those who follow the New Testament assemble upon the first day of the week to break bread. Those who do not are following themselves and the creeds of men. God, our heavenly Father, saw fit to call our attention to this great feast, reminding us of all that he has done for us, and warns us not to add to or subtract from His Holy Word. Rev. 22:18, 19.

The WHAT, WHERE, HOW, WHY, AND WHEN of the Lord's Supper is clear and concise. So simple, that the "wayfaring man though a fool should not err therein." Isa. 35:8. Christians should always be ready, prepared, and looking eagerly to the first day of the week so they may worship God in spirit and in truth as thus saith the Lord, it is written. John 4:24. The Lord's Supper in the kingdom or church prefigures our continuous feasting and fellowship with God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, and all the redeemed in Heaven as we surround the throne of God's Glory. I Cor. 10:1-4, 16-21; Rev. 22:1-5.

Faith Once Delivered

"...it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." Jude, verse 3.

The Holy Spirit inspired penman, Jude, was greatly concerned about the faith that had been once (once for all, ASV) delivered unto the saints. He deemed the faith which was once delivered was worthy of one's most earnest contending for.

The term "the faith" refers to the body of doctrine, the words of Christ, the gospel of God, the gospel of Christ; in short, the divinely given Holy Spirit revelation commonly spoken of as the New Testament. The apostle Paul spoke of this divine revelation in coming into its completeness as "the unity of the faith" (Eph. 4:13). In Galatians 3:25 he speaks of the body of doctrine, the New Testament law of Christ, as "that faith." Clearly, the "faith once delivered" is the gospel of Christ.

Jude speaks of that doctrine as having been delivered. Note the verb delivered is a past and completed action. The faith, the doctrine of Christ (2 John 9), had already been delivered to the saints; delivered once (reference to time) and for all (all generations in time). In Jude's revelation that the gospel, or the faith, had been delivered, he also by inference reveals that there can be no later revelations of the faith. A revelation has been delivered in its completeness and leaves nothing further to be delivered.

That which Jude identifies as the faith was that which was made known to and revealed through the apostles and prophets of the New Testament Age. This period of time is spoken of as the Apostolic Age of the first century. God made this revelation known to "his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit" (Eph. 3:5). Jesus had promised the apostles that the Holy Spirit, "whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have taught

you" (John 14:26). That when "the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you unto all truth" (John 16:13). So, according to these Scripture statements, all truth, "the faith was," revealed to men of the first century of the Christian dispensation of time. It naturally, logically, and truthfully follows that: all truth, or the faith, having been once delivered in its entirety—no latter day revelations of truth; are possible; no latter day revelations have been made, none now are being made, and no further revelations of a divine nature are to be made in the future.

We believe this: We have, and have had for nigh unto two centuries the complete will of God for man. Furthermore, we believe that all who claim to have a "special revelation" of any sort are false claimants. Their revelations are not from the Holy Spirit we so affirm.

We believe the Bible, both the Old and New Testaments to be the authoritative, complete and final revelation of God to man. Such other claims of revelation we hold to be false e.g., The Book of Mormon by Joe Smith, Science and Health and Key to the Scripture, by Mary Baker Eddy, the official pronouncements of the Pope of the Catholic Church, as well as, Calvinists and Pentecostals who claim to speak the revelation of God "that He has laid on their heart."

Not only do we believe these so-called revelation to be false, uninspired of the Holy Spirit, and of the devil; but we believe that those who claim latter day revelation are to be withstood fervently as we "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."

You Have No Excuse

David Shaw

Why is it so easy to see faults and flaws in others? Why is it so hard to see the same imperfections in my own life? Shall I throw myself into danger when I censure in others that which I allow in myself?

Is not this what happened to David in the long ago? When Nathan told the king about a rich man sparing his own flock and seizing the one lamb of his poor neighbour's, David's anger was greatly kindled and he said that the transgressor was worthy of death. He failed to realize that with these words he was actually condemning himself. (2 Sam. 12:1-11).

In the pagan world of the first century there was a man named Seneca, a Stoic moralist. He exalted the great moral values, he exposed hypocrisy, he preached the equality of all men, he acknowledged the pervasive character of evil, he practiced and inculcated daily self-examination, he ridiculed vulgar idolatry, he assumed the rôle of a moral guide. But he engaged in connivance at Nero's murder of his mother Agrippina. Is that excusable? "No", says the apostle Paul.

Several years ago George Buttrick wrote, "Censure hides our own need and thus delays our own cure, for censorious judgment is always unwitting confession of the censor's own shame. It is always self-judgment. Psychiatry throws light in this issue. Censure is a 'transfer'. We avoid self-confrontation by blaming our neighbours—for faults that are in us. 'He is lazy', we say. But how do we know? Only by the experience of being lazy. That is why condemnation of our fellow men is often self-condemnation.

But suppose I am judged and maliciously criticized? The first thing to do is to make sure that I am right with God. Other matters are secondary (I Cor. 4:3-5). The next thing to do is to forget your Critics. Henry Ward Beecher said, "Life would be a perpetual flea hunt if a man were obliged to run down all the innuendos, inveracities, insinuations, and misrepresentations which are uttered against him."

Everybody Does It?

J.V. Copeland, Jr.

PEOPLE HAVE EXCUSES for doing everything, parti-

cularly for doing those things which are not pleasing to the Lord. This is true of older people, younger people, teenagers and all. It must be that many do not stop to realize that some things they do are not pleasing to God. If they do, they must not care whether they please God or not. The last reason is more serious than the former, because that attitude is more difficult to correct.

IT IS EASY to go along with the crowd. Infact, many people do that. Often times when parents ask one of their teenagers why they do certain things the reply comes back "EVERYBODY DOES IT". Or, if a son or daughter is denied a request for doing something, he/she says, "WHY? EVERYBODY ELSE DOES IT". It is entirely possible that many adults do certain things because in their own minds they are also saying, "EVERYBODY ELSE DOES IT". They may not give that as a reason, but subconsciously that idea is working on them.

LOOKING AT THE SCRIPTURES we can see that was not true always. When Lot was living in Sodom it was a very wicked city. Most people were living in sin. Lot could have used that for an excuse to practice evil. But he didn't. No one else, in the city could say "EVERYBODY IS DOING IT". Lot was not. Lot could have said it, but he did not use it as an escape to engage in sin. Look what happened to everybody else too. They all perished in fire and brimstone.

DOWN IN BABYLON Daniel could have said, EVERYBODY IS DOING IT when the decree went out for everyone to pray to the king only. But he did not make his petition to the king just because all others did. He continued to pray to his God in heaven.

IN THE DAYS OF NOAH, only Noah and his family could say "EVERYBODY ELSE IS DOING IT". Because they were the only people on earth whose "Thoughts and the imaginations of their hearts" were not evil continually. They could have used that excuse to walk in the paths of sin, but they didn't. *But*, look what happened to EVERYBODY ELSE. They ALL perished in the flood.

THE LORD TOLD ISRAEL "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil." (Ex. 23:2). Here he was telling them they should not do evil because they thought **EVERYBODY ELSE IS DOING IT**. Even if **EVERYBODY DOES IT!**.....every body else does something, that does not make it right. The only way to decide what is right or wrong is, "Does the Bible teach it or does the Lord approve of it." A thing is right because the Bible teaches it. It is wrong because the Bible condemns it.

WHEN YOU are trying to decide whether to do something or not, don't look to see whether most other people are doing it: That does **NOT** make anything right or wrong.

"Writing Out Loud"

Bob Hurd

PSALM 118:24... "THIS IS THE DAY WHICH THE LORD HATH MADE; WE WILL REJOICE AND BE GLAD IN IT."

These words of the psalmist indicate a very important truth we must grasp. For too many are involved with "tomorrow living". I'll really start living when I get this or that out of life. So, these hurry on through life, setting goals, looking for the rainbow, waiting for their ship to come in...and in the mean time, miss out on the best life God has given to all of us, **TODAY!**

This is the day! Get the message? Tomorrow may never be! In the parable of the rich fool, Jesus, attempted to get our minds to realize that we can't put off until tomorrow what we need to do today. Luke 12:16-21. This isn't to imply that we can't set goals for ourselves, plan ahead for a better tomorrow...but it demands we do what we **CAN NOW**, and if God will's our plans and hope's can become reality.

Today! The text says we will REJOICE AND BE GLAD IN

IT! Millions are waiting for their ship to come in, to see that rainbow become reality, and they let slip through their fingers the most precious possession we have...TODAY! What have we done with today? Have we told our wife or husband "I love you"? Have we taken time to sit with our children on our knee? Have we done the little deeds of life which brings a smile to the face of the sorrowful, brought cheer to the down-cast. Today may well be the last day we live! There is an old song which says, "IT'S NOW OR NEVER"...and how true that is. Job may have desired to say a last I love you to his children, but time ran out and they were destroyed. Had Joseph known he was to be treated badly by his brothers, he may have held his father, Jacob, a little closer, a little longer, but life isn't like that. God alone knows the future. We have TODAY! Just how are we using today? Has it been a joy? Has a tear been dried up? Have we brought a smile or a frown? Can we leave this life today and say, "I have rejoiced and been glad with today." If not, our life needs some changes made in it. Procrastination is the thief of time! Mine and yours! Live for God one day at a time, and we will rejoice and be happy... today is all God has promised!

The Devil Is After You!

Paul Epps

The chief adversary of every person is the *devil*, and he is after you. The name "devil" means slanderer, false accuser. In *I Peter 5:8*, we read where he is mentioned as "a roaring lion," which expresses his fierceness and strength. The Scriptures states that he "walketh about, seeking whom he may devour..." He has restless energy and is always on the prowl, ready to utterly destroy every soul. The *devil* wants to accomplish three things:

First, he wants to keep non-Christians from becoming Christians. The *devil* is an arch-enemy of God and Christ, knowing that God provided salvation for every person through the gift of

His Son and His death on the cross. The *devil* knows that anyone outside of Christ is unfit to meet God (*Isaiah 59:1, 2*). He also knows that there is power in the gospel (*Romans 1:16*), therefore he wants the gospel to be mutilated so that it loses its saving power. The *devil* also knows that when one becomes a Christian, the Lord *adds* him to the church, that blood-bought institution which came into existence in 33 A.D. in Jerusalem. The *devil* knows that God is glorified through the church (*Ephesians 3:10*), therefore he is happy when you do not obey the gospel, thereby remaining outside of the family of God.

Secondly, the devil wants all who obey the gospel to leave the church of Christ. Members of the body of Christ are continually warned to be on guard (*Ephesians 6:11-18*). If we "put on the whole armour of God" daily, we shall be able to withstand the onslaughts of our adversary, and we shall be able to say with the apostle Paul, "I can do all things through Him (Christ) who strengthens me." (*Philippians 4:13*). But if we go contrary to the teaching of *I John 2:15*, which says "love not the world", we sin and are on the road of leaving the church for which Christ died. It is a fearful thing to return to the old life) (*2 Peter 2:20-22*).

Thirdly, if the devil is unsuccessful in causing you to renounce the church, he will work diligently to render you worthless in the church. God pleads for you to grow in knowledge and strength, spiritually, but the *devil* whispers, "You do not have time to study, let the teachers take care of that duty." God wants you to work in His vineyard, but the *devil*, says to you, "You are too busy with your own affairs. Besides, others have more time and talent." God wants you to cooperate in "every good work" (*Titus 3:1*), but the *devil* whispers, "That is not necessary, let others do it." Let us heed the admonition, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

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