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EDITORIAL

The Keys of the Kingdom

In Matthew 16:19, after Peter had confessed Christ as the Son of God, and after Christ had responded by saying that on the fact that he was the Son of God he would build his church, he went on to say, "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven".

In the beginning of this conversation, Christ had asked the apostles as a group what they thought of him. Peter, being a leader of leaders, was the one who responded by confessing him as the Christ the Son of the living God. That confession, however, was not only a statement of Peter's faith in Christ, but voiced the faith that all of the apostles had in him. So, all of the apostles would have been included in the promise concerning the keys of the kingdom.

The question that comes to mind is this ; What are the keys

of the kingdom? First of all, let us define the kingdom in this setting. In the context, reference is made to the church. Christ, being acknowledged as the Son of God, said that he would build his church upon that fact or that rock or that foundation. The church, therefore, is the subject under consideration in this passage of scripture. Yet, he goes on to talk about the kingdom. Is he talking about two different things? Not at all. Actually, the church and the kingdom are the same. These terms are used interchangeably and have reference to the same institution, that is, those who have obeyed God and have been added to the church or have become a part of the church (Acts 2:47), the Lord's family (Ephesians 3:15; 1 Timothy 3:15), the spiritual body of Christ. (1 Corinthians 12:27). In the book of Acts we read of the establishment of the church (Acts 2) but also in the same book reference is made a number of times to the kingdom of God, as in Acts 1:3; Acts 8:12; Acts 20:25, and so on. There can be no doubt but that the kingdom and the church are the same in all of these instances. In Colossians 1:13 Paul is speaking to the church at Colosse, but he says concerning the members of the church there, including himself, "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son". In other words, he is talking here about the church being the kingdom of God or the kingdom of Christ.

With the kingdom being as the church, our next concern is, what are the keys of the kingdom or the church? We know that a key locks and unlocks entrances such as a gate or a door. The keys of the kingdom would therefore have reference to the opening and closing of the door of the kingdom or the church. The Lord said then that he would give these keys to the apostles. But we know that the keys he had in mind would not be literal or physical but spiritual. That being so, we now need to find out what those spiritual keys would be. Let us keep in mind that when the Lord gave the apostles the Great Commission, he commanded them to go and preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15, 16), to teach all nations. (Matthew 28:19). What was the purpose of this? To tell them what the Lord required of them, to make known his will, to state the conditions of pardon, and therefore to produce faith that would lead them to obedience and salvation—salvation

that exists only in the kingdom. So we see that when the Lord gave the apostles the keys of the kingdom, he was simply giving them the power or the authority to reveal to man what God would have them to do to be saved so that they might enter the kingdom or church.

Now, turn with me to the book of Acts, chapter, two. Here we have the apostles preaching the gospel for the first time to a large gathering on the day of Pentecost in the city of Jerusalem. The record says that after they had received the power of the Holy Spirit to enable them to speak in other languages, to remember all the things that Jesus had taught them, and to perform miracles, that they pointed out that what was happening was according to what had been prophesied: that Jesus Christ had come to this world, that he had performed miracles to prove that he was the Son of God, that he had been crucified on a cruel cross, had been buried, had arisen from the grave, and had returned to the Father in heaven to sit down at the right hand of God to reign as King of kings and Lord of lords. Going on, it says, "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the Apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls". (Acts 2:37-41). Then in Acts 2:47 we read, "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved".

From the foregoing, what have we learned? That there were people, who were not in the kingdom or church. They were lost. They knew not the Lord and his saving power. Then the apostles preached Christ to be saved. As a result they became believers and then they repented of their sins and were baptized for the remission of their sins. The Lord saved them, adding them to his

church or kingdom. What does this mean? That the apostles taught them or revealed to them or gave to them the terms of admission, instructing them in what they would have to do to be saved and to enter the church. These instructions, then, were the keys of the kingdom.

What they taught on this day, being guided by the Holy Spirit, would be bound in heaven. As a result, these things would continue to be binding, eventually being written down and incorporated in the pages of the New Testament, so that they would continue to be binding on man as long as time should stand. This means that the things that were binding then are still binding now. On the other hand, the things that they loosed or did not bind, would be loosed in heaven or would not be binding on man from that day to this. Therefore, when one turns to the book of Acts and reads what the apostles taught that one must do to be saved, he must believe it and obey it if he wants to be saved and to become a member of the Lord's church. One cannot change that law or ignore it and still be saved. He must do exactly what they taught, for it is binding on one and all alike. So the apostles opened the doors of the kingdom through their teaching, and those who heard it were able to enter the kingdom as they received the teaching and obeyed it. Those who would not believe it and obey it were not able to enter in. The same is true today as we deal with the teaching of the apostles in the pages of the New Testament.



**associate
editorial**

Lost For The Love Of Possessions

There is a beautiful and yet a sad story recorded in the books

of Matthew, Mark and Luke in the New Testament of the Bible. There are many powerful and practical lessons that we can learn from this story. In Mark's record we read, "And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God. Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother. And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth. Then Jesus beholding him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me. And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions. And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard it is for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved? And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible". (Mark 10:17-27).

Here was a man who was so much excited about Jesus. He had, of course, heard about Jesus many wonderful things. Now as he came to know that Jesus was going through a certain way, he came running to him to meet him. He didn't just casually walked, but he ran to come to him. He saw the opportunity and realized the seriousness of it. He didn't want to miss Jesus, because he believed Jesus has the right answer for his question. During his ministry Jesus has said, "For the Son of man is come to seek and save that which was lost". (Luke 19:10). He still invites people, saying, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest

unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light". (Matthew 11:28-30). Today his name is being preached and his gospel is being declared. But not all who hear about him are coming to him. Therefore many in the day of judgment will be lost for procrastinating. Many do not realize the importance of coming to Jesus, and the seriousness of the opportunity they have in this life and the value of the soul they possess. The message of God is still as fresh as it was in the first century, "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". (John 3:16).

Next, we see, the man in our story, when he came to Jesus he kneeled before him, worshipped him. He had respect for Jesus. He humbled himself before him. His attitude therefore is commendable. The Bible says, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time". (1 Peter 5:6). Jesus taught, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven". (Matthew 18:3, 4). There are some today who want to come to Jesus, but their pride stop them from coming to him. They are like the rulers of the synagogue who were afraid that if they would come to Jesus they would be thrown out of the synagogue and would lose their position. People love their power and position more than the Lord and His word. But one should humble himself to come to Jesus.

Then we read, the man who came to Jesus addressed him as "Good Master". No doubt he had good intention, he had learned about the powerful teachings of Jesus, so he wanted to praise and honour him, therefore he said to him, "Good Master". But how did Jesus reply? Jesus told him, "Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God." Surely, Jesus was worthy to be called Good Master, because he was the Son of God, and the brightness of God's glory and the express image of His person. (Hebrews 1:3). But he chose to live on earth as a common and ordinary man. In fact, the Bible says, that he took upon him the form of a servant, that is, he lived like a servant. We read, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who,

being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross". (Philippians 2:5-8). What a striking contrast we observe between Christ and those who claim to be his ministers and teachers of his word! When Jesus would not accept to be called Good Master, such people desire to be called "Reverend", "Father", and "Pope", etc., etc. Dear reader, do you know, all of these names belong to God? The Bible says, God's name is Reverend. (Psalm 111:9). *Padri* and *Pope* means Father. And Jesus said that we should not call any man our father, religiously. He said, "But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren, And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted." (Matthew 23:8-12).

The question that the man of our story asked is very much more worthy. He asked, "What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" This shows the man was very much concerned about his soul. He was very rich because he had great possessions, but he knew that nothing of this world could lead him to eternal life. He realized that there is something that he must do to be saved, to inherit eternal life. So he wanted to know from Jesus, "What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life". Are you concerned about your soul? I am sure you have asked many questions in the past few days, such as, "How much should I pay?" or "What will I get?" But have you ever considered the most important question: "What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" "What should I do to be saved from my sin?" Have you?

Since the man lived under the law of Moses, as the New Testament of Christ was still in future, it had not yet come into force (Hebrews 9:15-17), Jesus told the man, who had asked him the question, to keep the Ten Commandments of the law of Moses.

However, the man replied, "Master, all these have I observed from my youth". What an excellent thing. The man was so much religious that he observed the law of God from his youth. Usually our young people think that religion is some thing for the old people only. They want to wait until they get old enough to be religious. But I would like to encourage you to read in your Bible from Ecclesiastes chapter 12, the wise man exhorts, "Remember now thy creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years daaw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them". Yes, remember and serve your Creator NOW when you have time and opportunity, and when you have strength to serve him.

Another thing about the man in the story we note that he was honest and sincere, but he was lost. And therefore Jesus beholding him, felt pity for him, and said to him, "One, thing thou lackedst: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor; and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me". The mere giving of his possessions was not in itself to save him, it only tested his fitness for the discipleship. Jesus could see right in his heart and he found one thing lacking in him, that is, he loved his possessions more than any thing else, even more than his soul. But one cannot serve God and mammon together. (Matthew 6:24). Before one can follow Christ to have the eternal life he must repent, that is, turn from loving his possessions to love Christ. He must quit the love of his possessions, sin, or any thing else that he loves more than Christ or is first in his life. Jesus taught, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish". (Luke 13:3). But the sad part of the story is that the man was not willing to repent, he didn't want to leave his possessions, even though the Lord promised him that he would have treasure in heaven. What a sad thing! He was a fine religious man, he was honest and sincere, but yet he was far from the eternal life just because he lacked ONE THING! Friends, this ought to humble us, this should be a warning to us, because, in the day of judgement many good and honest and sincere and religious people will find themselves outside the boundries of heaven, eternally lost, maybe just because they would lack one thing. (Matthew 7:21). Yes, one thing! Do you believe in Christ with all your heart? (John 8:24;

Acts 8:37). Have you repented from your sins? (Acts 2:38; 17:30, 31). Have you been baptized, immersed in water, for the forgiveness of your sins? (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16). Are you faithfully following Christ? (Revelation 2:10). None of these things can be left out. To be saved one must do all of them. What do you lack? Remember one thing can make all the difference.

When Jesus told the man what he should do to inherit eternal life, we read, "And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions". What a tragedy. The man was not willing to give up the temporary for the eternal. Certainly, he was the man of poor judgment. At the end of his life's journey with Jesus he was going to get treasure in heaven and the eternal life to enjoy, but he chose worldly possessions in its place, and went away grieved. Many today are not ready to follow Jesus because they are not willing to give up the love of money and the love of things and the love of people. Thus by loving their possessions and positions more than Christ and eternal life they are repeating the mistake the man in our story made. Jesus warned: "Who soever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. Whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mark 8:34-37). How far are you from the eternal life? What do you lack? Are you ready to follow Jesus? Are you willing to give up any thing for him?

Absolute Necessity Of New Testament Authority

Terry Lee Preston

The need for Divine approval, permission, or authority in matters pertaining to God is clearly indicated by Hebrews 7:11-14. In this great text the author argues that the Old Testament Law had to be removed in order for Christ Jesus to become God's High

Priest. His argumentation is simple: Jesus sprang from the tribe of Judah; but the Law of Moses said **nothing** concerning one from Judah serving as priest: therefore Jesus could not serve as High Priest under the Law of Moses. But Jesus was made High Priest by God, with an oath, and since he could not serve as High Priest under the Law of Moses, the Law was first removed, or abolished. Preachers would do well to study and learn this argument. for the Priesthood of Christ nullifies the Law of Moses forever. The point of this particular reference, however, is this: **the silence of the scriptures with regard to Judean Priesthood did not PERMIT, but rather FORBADE Judean Priesthood.** It was not necessary that God say, "Thou shalt not." The very fact that God did not **authorize** them to serve meant that He did not **want** them to serve.

The necessity of Divine authority in matters pertaining to God is an eternal principle. Neither the Old Testament nor the New Testament allows man to **assume** that a belief or practice is acceptable. On the contrary, the New Testament clearly commands man to "Prove all things" (1 Thes. 5:21). Furthermore, the New Testament specifically commands that we have Divine authority for all that we teach or practice in matters pertaining to God (Col. 3:17). If God does not authorize an activity, then obviously He does not want it done. If, on the other hand, God wants us to do something, then we can find authority for it in the New Testament of Jesus Christ, which is the only source of Divine authority for today.

THE COMMAND

"And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus..." (Col. 3:17). God has delegated to His Son all authority in heaven and in earth (Mt. 28:18). It follows, then, that God would require man to respect and submit to the authority of His Son. Considering that matters pertaining to God must be **authorized** before they are permitted, it follows that those in submission to His Son must have the Son's approval or authorization in these matters.

The full importance of Colossians 3:17 may be better realized when broken down: **Whatsoever—i.e. anything or everything :Ye—**

Saint and faithful brethren (Col. 1:2): Do—i.e. actively bring to pass: In Word—by teaching or communicating; In Deed—by practice; Do All—not just some; In The Name Of—i.e. with approval, permission, authority, and on behalf of; The Lord—i.e. absolute monarch, Jesus—Possessor of all authority. Standing alone this passage teaches that for anything and everything that God's children do, whether in doctrine or practice, they must have the approval of the Lord Jesus. The Scope of the command is limited to "Those things which pertain to God"—for these are the things of which the apostles spoke in their preaching (Rom. 15:16-19), and in which Christ Jesus serves as High Priest (Heb. 2:17). Consequently, in matters pertaining to God, whether in doctrine or practice, whatsoever we do must be authorized by the Lord Jesus. If a belief or practice is not authorized, then it is not permitted. It is not necessary that Christ say "Thou shalt not," in matter pertaining to God. The very fact that Christ did not authorize a belief or practice is proof that he does not approve of it.

APPLICATION OF THE COMMAND

The New Testament does not say "Thou shalt not use milk and pork chops in observing the Lord's Supper." Does this mean that we may use milk and pork chops in the Lord's Supper and have his blessing? No. The silence of the Scriptures with regard to milk and pork chops does not permit, but rather forbids their use. It was not necessary for Christ to say, "Thou shalt not." The very fact that Christ did not authorize them means that he does not want them used. Furthermore, since no authorization is given, their use would violate the principle taught in Hebrews 7:12-14 and the direct commandment found in Colossians 3:17, and would be, therefore, sinful.

The worship of God is certainly within the scope of "Those things which pertain to God." This being the case, then, whatever is done in worship of God must be authorized by the Lord Jesus, and only those things for which His authority can be found are permitted. Christ has authorized in His New Testament singing (Col. 3:16), praying (1 Tim. 2:8), Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11:23-25), giving (1 Cor. 16:1,2), and preaching (Acts 20:7). Had He wanted

other forms of worship He would have authorized them—but He did not. Christ nowhere authorized bowing before sacred images, burning incense, counting beads, or using mechanical instruments of music such as pianos, organs, guitars, tambourines, saxophones, etc., and since no authorization is given for such practices they are therefore sinful.

The church of the living God is also within the scope of things which pertain to God (I Tim. 3:15). The necessity of the authority of the Lord in matters pertaining to the church is made more evident by the fact that Christ Jesus is the head of the church (Eph. 5:23). Only he has the right to set policy, and to determine organization, requirements for entering the church, its laws, and its mission. Through His inspired apostles and prophets, Christ built His church in the first century and gave His New Testament as its only standard of authority. This New Testament authorizes ONE universal church (Eph. 4:4) comprising individual congregations (Rom. 16:16), each having its own qualified overseers and servants (Phil. 1:1), each teaching the same doctrine (2 John 9-11) and functioning as the "pillar and ground of the truth" (I Tim. 3:15). The New Testament does not authorize dividing into denominations and teaching different doctrines. Nor does it sanction the organizational machinery of the various sects. The idea of a group of people controlling a plurality of churches is also foreign to its pages. Other unauthorized matters include wearing the names of men, voting on new members, sprinkling or pouring instead of baptism, religious titles such as reverend, women preaching or leading prayer, and fund-raising gimmicks such as bazaars and bingo. In view of the fact that no authorization is given for such matters, they are therefore sinful. The silence of the Scriptures with regard to these matters does not permit, but rather forbids them. In order to be permitted an action must be authorized.

CONCLUSION

In matters pertaining to God we may do only those things authorized by Christ in the New Testament. In such matters the SILENCE of the Scriptures means NO. "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus!" (Col,

3:17) This is a command of the Lord (I Cor. 14:37) who admonishes "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). Every thing that Christ desires of man may be found in the New Testament. If he did not authorize a belief or practice, then he does not approve of it. His authority in matters pertaining to God is an absolute necessity, and those who seek the "Way of truth" (2 Pet. 2:2) will base all of their beliefs and practices upon a "Thus saith the Lord".

Why Wear The Name Christian?

John A. Mays

The term Christian is used rather loosely today. To most people anyone who believes in Christ is a Christian. Most religious schools who teach about Christ are called Christian schools, no matter what faith they may be. America is often called a Christian nation. Are we using the word correctly? How is it used in the Bible and what does it mean?

(1) It is the name given by God to His people, the church. In Isaiah 62:2 we read, "And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name." After the gospel had been preached to the Gentiles and many had obeyed we find that they were given this new name, fulfilling this prophecy. "...And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." This is the new name which was given by the Lord. Some would have us to believe that this name was given in derision or as an insulting nickname. Those who teach such are those who call themselves by something other than the name Christian.

This name was given by God and Paul tried to get people to become Christians. In Acts 26:27-29 we find, "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest. Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuaded me to be a Christian. And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but

also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am except these bonds." No doubt, the early followers of the Lord suffered for wearing this name but they wore it just the same. Peter said, "But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busy-body in other men's matters! Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God on this behalf."

We need to wear the name today because this is the name the church wore in the First Century. We do not find where they ever wore the names Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Catholic, Pentecostal, Mormon, Jehovah's Witness, or any of the many other human religious names people wear today.

The name Christian means one who belongs to Christ. We often hear it said that Christian means Christ-like. It is true that a Christian should be Christ-like in that he follows Christ's Word, but this is not the meaning of Christian. Webster says, "an or-ian also can...one that is of or belonging to (American) (Floridian) (Wesleyan)." A Christian is one who belongs to Christ. He has been purchased by the blood of Christ. Paul told the elders of the church at Ephesus "to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). Paul wrote to the Church at Corinth, "What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore, glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor. 6:19, 20). In Galatians 3:29 he said, "And if ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Not all the people who call themselves Christians are Christians. Only those who have obeyed the plan of salvation recorded in the Bible are Christians. One must hear the word, believe the word, believe Jesus to be the Son of God, repent of his sins, confess Christ as the Son of God, and be baptized in water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, for the remission of sins. (Rom. 10:13-17; Mk. 16:15, 16; John 8:24; Acts 17:30; Rom. 10:9, 10; Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:3-18)

Is a person a Christian after he has left the truth and no...

longer obeys the Lord? The answer is yes. He or she still belongs to the Lord. They are unfaithful but they do not have to be born again, but must return to the fold by repenting of sins and asking forgiveness of God and the church in order that they might be forgiven and restored to the fold that they may receive their eternal inheritance.

(3) The name Christian is to distinguish us from others. A wife takes her husband's name in marriage. This shows she belongs to him. In Genesis 5:2 we read, "Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created." They were both called Adam. She now belonged to him as his wife.

The church is the Bride of Christ. "...that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God" (Rom. 7:4). The Spirit said, "...Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife" (Rev. 21:2). Paul said, "For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ" (II Cor. 11:2). Yes, we are to wear the name Christian because we belong to Christ as His bride.

(4) To wear the name Christian honors Christ. To wear the name "Wesleyan" honors John Wesley. "Lutheran" honors, Martin Luther. "Pentecostal" honors a Jewish feast day of the Old Testament times. And on and on we could go.

What name are you wearing? Are you a Christian? Are you proud to wear that name which shows that you belong to Christ? Does your life honor that name?

Things Not Found In The Book Of Revelation

Clifford Dixon

Some people who are speculating about the book of Revela-

tion need to read and understand the first verse of that book. "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass: and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John." Notice especially that the book contains things which "must shortly come to pass", and that it was written near A.D. 96. So the book contains things shortly to come to pass from the time that it was written. Much in the book that people apply to the end of time came to pass many years ago. The second thing that we need to understand about the book is that it was "sent and signified" by the angel to John. The book of Revelation is written in symbols. I do not know why it was written in symbols but it is crystal clear from the first verse that this is so. To look for a literal fulfillment of the things of this book is to miss the point in it entirely. However, there are many who say that the Revelation contains some things which are not to be found in it. Let us look at some of these.

1. Revelation does not justify instrumental music in worship. Many people who want to use the instrument in worship say that the book of Revelation says that they are used in heaven and if they can be used in heaven they feel that they certainly can be used on earth. There are two passages in Revelation where the harps are mentioned. They need to realize that Revelation is written in symbols. Notice Revelation 5:8—"And when he had taken the book, the four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb of God, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints." Now the vials of odours are symbolic of the prayers of the saints, then why would not the harps be symbolic of the singing? It is stated in the next verse, "they sung a new song."

The second passage is Revelation 14:2-3—"And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping on their harps: And they sung as it was a new song before the throne..." Notice it is "As" the voice of the thunder and the waters denoting a symbol then why would not the harpers harping be symbolical also. It is a fitting representation of what it takes

to have a song service. The sound of waters representing the volume, and the sound of harpers representing the melodies, these being the three essentials to singing being shown in heaven.

As you readily can see these verses in Revelation give little comfort to those justifying instrumental music in their worship. All the plain passages of the New Testament teach us to sing in worship (Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19; Heb. 2:12; James 5:13).

2. Revelation does not teach that only 144,000 will be saved. Many claim this today but the two passages they use from this symbolical book do not so teach.

In Revelation 7:4 we read, "And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel." Are only the children of Israel to be saved? If the number is literal then the people would have to be literal also. This is preposterous! It is plainly taught in the New Testament that "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Rom. 10:13; Acts 2:21). In Revelation 7:9 he stated, "After this I behold, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands." Those before the throne represent those in heaven and clothed in white robes depicts their having robes washed in the blood of the Lamb (Rev. 7:14).

In Revelation 14:1 it seems to imply all the saved but we must realize that a symbolical number is used to represent the saved. When the Lord described heaven He used 12 and multiples of 12 to show what it is like. It had 12 foundations 12 gates, was 144 cubits high, and 12,000 furlongs long and wide (Rev. 21:12, 14, 16, 17).

If multiples of twelves were used to describe the city, why should not multiples of twelves be used to describe the throng that would enter it?

3. Revelation does not teach a literal earthly battle of Armageddon. How people have speculated on the 16th and 19th chapters of Revelation! Such speculative preaching has been known to scare people into most any doctrinal teaching. Connected with the statement of the kings of the earth gathered to battle at Armageddon it is also stated, "Behold I come as a thief." and, "It is done" depicting swift judgment of God coming and no prolonged earthly battle. (Rev. 16:14-17). Armageddon is the punishment inflicted by Christ at his Second coming and not some earthly battle.

Do not speculate on a figurative book. You will contradict the plain passages of the New Testament.

Humanists Lies in the Newspaper

James W. Boyd

The JACKSON SUN carries a column by Ellen Goodman who just loves to cast aspersion against traditional views and who propagates the humanist philosophy as if there just is no other way among intelligent people. To her, any opposition to evolution is "absurd." She deplores efforts being made to teach the Biblical account of origins alongside the evolutionist position. She like most liberals and humanists, cry long and loud about free speech and fair play, except for those who believe the Bible. She would have the public schools indoctrinate the young with the anti-God doctrines but disallow equal time for God's Word. This is one of the reasons our public schools are rapidly becoming one of the most potent enemies of God in this nation, (America).

In a recent column she scoffed at Genesis as being "good metaphor and bad biology." She simply asserts Genesis to be a metaphor, which is a false charge. She, nor can any evolutionists, show one biological fact that the Bible contradicts. Evolution contradicts the proven truth that each reproduces after its kind. But evolutionists ignore that fact.

She makes the ridiculous lie that, "They (scientists) all support the notion" of evolution as Darwin suggested. This is a blatant lie and surely one of access to facts as she knows it to be false.

She is one of these people who think teachers, not parents, ought to determine what a child is to be taught. She denies the influence of "man from animal" to have any adverse effect on behaviour. She totally ignores the moral influence of the Bible. She just comes right out and asserts that "we are animals." Well, let Ellen Goodman and those who think like her not assign their claimed ancestry on us all!

With the characteristic snobbery of humanists she says, "Creationists don't want them (our children) to know our heritage." That is another lie, the favorite weapon in the arsenal of humanists. The very opposite is true. We DO want our children to know their heritage. And we do not want them to swallow the philosophies of atheists which destroy the dignity of man and the sanctity of human life. Alas! Humanists lie, but what of it, according to their doctrines? Humanism allows it if it accomplishes what they want. Truth has no place in their vocabulary anyway. Everything is relative and evolving.

She contradicts herself in her own article, another characteristic of humanists, when she admits science cannot explain origins. Yet, she bandstands for the schools to teach evolution as fact and would deny any other view being taught.

She closes, but not soon enough, with the statement, "They (creationists) would leave a chill wind for our children to inherit". What a lie! Evolutionists would have us come from nowhere. And creationists "leave a chill"? Only God offers us an inheritance. Evolutionists offer nothing but despair.

But such are the lies pouring into the minds of Americans today in papers, schools, books, TV, etc. But truth will not die!!

The Royal Law

John Stacy

“Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets” (Matt. 22:37-40). Notice that in this text Jesus gives two great commandments, though He was asked for only one. The two go together because they sum up the law and the prophets. They sum up the Ten Commandments. They deal with man’s relationship to God and man. James 2:8 refers to the second commandment as the “royal law”. The royal law that deals with the love of our neighbors began in these verses (Lev. 19:18, 34 and Deut. 10:19). The royal law is alluded to at least ten times in the New Testament. (See Matthew 5:43; 19:19; 22:39; Mark 12:30; Luke 10:27; Galatians 5:14).

First of all let us analyze this text. “Thou” means “you”. “Shalt love” comes from the verb ‘agapao’. It means, “to love the unlovable, the unlovely, those who cannot merit nor deserve our love. It is unconquerable benevolence. It also means to act intensely, to eagerly cling to, and to affectionately admire”. The word “neighbour” simply means, “one who is near”. Note that we are to love neighbour as “self”. There is nothing wrong with self love, if it is handled properly.

Secondly, let us consider the love that is lacking. It was lacking when the Egyptians enslaved the Jews. It was lacking when early Christians were persecuted. The Nazis and Communists have shown a lack of this kind of love. We see it quite clearly today in Afghanistan, and in Iran. Human history in many respects is a record that contains man’s inhumanity to man. We need to be aware of the fact Christians can and do break this commandment. Many disobey it, because they really don’t know who their neighbours are.

Thirdly, let's ask our selves, who is our neighbour? In Matthew 5:43-44 we learn that our neighbours and our enemies could well be the same. For the Jew, the Gentile was his enemy, but I think Jesus also taught, that he was his neighbour as well. Luke 10:25-37 teaches us who our neighbour is. This famous parable about the good Samaritan teaches us that; our neighbour may be one who is not of our religious belief. Our neighbour does not have to be in our own immediate neighbourhood. Our neighbour is not necessarily one, who is easy to love, one who thinks, acts, and dresses like us.

In fourth place we may ask ourselves to what extent should we love our neighbour? We must love them "as ourselves". This principle is not new (Lev. 19:34; Eph. 5:33). Consider the so called "golden rule" (Matthew 7:12).

As we further consider this subject, let us note how should we love our neighbour? Again we must love him as ourselves. We must love him with our attitudes. The priest and the Levites in the parable of the good Samaritan had the attitude, "what is mine is mine and I am going to keep it". The Samaritan had the attitude, "what is mine is thine and I am going to share it". We must love our neighbour with our actions. The Ten Commandments were divided into two sections. One dealt with man's relationship with God and the other his relationship with man. From a negative standpoint our actions toward our neighbours would include refraining from killing or stealing from them. We must not commit adultery with them nor bear false witness against them. We must not covet what they possess (Deut. 5:16-21; Rom. 13:8-10). From a positive standpoint, we must show mercy to our neighbours (Luke 10:36-37; Rom. 15:2; Eph. 4:25; Gal. 6:10). We must also love our neighbors by loving their souls. We must strive to meet their spiritual needs. We can do this by doing the following: Setting the right example (II Cor. 3:2). Exerting the right kind of influence (Matthew 5:16). Teaching them the gospel (MK. 16:15-16). Summing it all up, we could say that loving our neighbour means, that we would do unto them, what we would want them to do for us, if the circumstances were reversed.

Finally we ask ourselves why should we love our neighbour?

We should do it because it is commanded and because it is among the greatest of all God's commandments. We must love our neighbour in order to love God (I John 4:20). We must love our neighbour in order to escape death (I John 3:14). We should love our neighbour so that we will not be guilty of respect of persons (Jas. 2:8, 9). See also Matthew 5:43-48: Summing it up we might say that because God cares, we care. Because God loves us, as wretched as we are, we must love others, as wretched as they are (I John 4:19; Rom. 5:6-9). Loving God and neighbour sums up the Old and New Testament!

Plan of Salvation

All have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23). We are not able to save ourselves by making our own plan or living a perfect life. Our own righteousness is as filthy rags (Isa. 64:6). The Jews tried to establish their own righteousness but they were rejecting the righteousness of God in the process (Rom. 10:1-3).

Jesus came to save us. That is the meaning of His name (Matt. 1:21). John said of him. "Behold the lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). He shed his blood for the remission of our sins (Matt. 26:28). Isaiah prophesied of him. "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed" (Isa. 53:5). He not only died for us but he invites us to come to him and enjoy the water of life (Rev. 22:17).

This salvation must be accepted by faith on the part of the sinner. Just like a father gives his son a gift and the son must take it. So we must receive the gift of salvation provided by the Lord. This is where our faith comes in. There are five plain

steps laid out by the Lord that we must take to accept this gift of salvation.

HEAR

We must hear the Gospel. Faith comes by hearing the word of God (Rom. 10:17). The Gentiles, by Peter's mouth, heard the word of the gospel and believed (Acts 15:7). If there was no gospel then there would be no faith and no salvation (Heb 11:6).

BELIEVE

We must believe the gospel. Jesus said if man does not believe that he is, that they will die in their sins (John 8:24). He told the apostles to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature and he that believes and is baptized shall be saved (Mark 16:15,16).

REPENT

We must repent of sins. Repent or perish is the message of Christ (Luke 13:1-5). All men everywhere should repent (Acts 17:30). Repentance is a change of the will of man brought about by an intellectual change by teaching and an emotional change in that which we love. God wants all to come to repentance (2 Pet 3:9).

CONFESS CHRIST

We must confess Christ before men. He says if we confess Him He will confess us before the Father in heaven (Matt. 10:32, 33). With the heart man believes unto righteousness but with the mouth confession is made unto salvation (Rom. 10:9,10). The Eunuch of Acts 8 confessed, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God," and he was baptized (Acts 8:36-38).

BAPTIZED

We must be baptized in water. This final step in the plan of salvation is the place that the relationship is changed. We are upon

completing this, no longer in sin but are new creatures in Christ. In the great Roman letter where the matter of salvation by the gospel is discussed in detail, the following is stated about baptism: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. Knowing this that our old man is crucified with him that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Romans 6:3-6). At baptism we see that we reach the death of Christ where He shed His blood. Upon reaching that blood we are cleansed from sins (Rev. 1:5,6; Acts 22:16). At baptism we get into Christ where all spiritual blessings are located (Eph. 1:3). At baptism we arise to walk in newness of life. At baptism the old man is crucified with him that we should not henceforth serve sin.

Some may ask, "If salvation is free then why must these steps be taken to obtain it?" We do not merit salvation because we have taken these steps. These are simply the steps the Lord expects us to take to receive His free gift. Whether we understand the reasons God has in this or not we must take them to be saved. Abraham did not understand why the Lord told him to offer Isaac but he readily obeyed the Lord (Gen. 22; James 2:21, 22). That is the reason his faith was imputed to him for righteousness (Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:3). He believed in God so strongly that whatever he told Abraham to do he did it. This was so in leaving his country, believing that God would give him a son, and in setting about to offer his son on an altar on Moriah. "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform: And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness" (Rom. 4:20-22). Here is the kind of faith that we should have. We should want to do everything the Lord commanded and in just the way He has commanded it.

How Men Attempt to Justify Denominationalism

Pat McGee

Isaiah was the prophet who condemned those who sought to "justify the wicked" (Isa. 5:23). On no occasion does the Lord look with favour upon any attempt to justify wicked men or wicked things.

The solution to every problem which men and nations face is to begin to view things as God does and to totally reject human wisdom and philosophy. The Bible warns against false philosophy (Col. 2:8); it is to be avoided like the plague. Only human wisdom will desire to justify the existence of the sectarian situation and denominational division. There is no Biblical justification for denominationalism.

Satan can make men feel good in error. One of the curses of the religious sectarian world is the reliance upon feeling instead of faith and Scriptural knowledge. The Bible talks of those who "have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge" (Rom. 10:2). Just because denominational people think that they're correct, claiming to be Christians, proves nothing. Such certainty is but a product of their being deceived by error and lies (see I Jn. 2:21, i.e. "no lie is of the truth"). The church of Christ knows the only religious message that can bring hope to a lost world; the blessed gospel of salvation.

Satan always has his "arguments." His servants try to offer "reasons" to make men feel good in denominational error. Across the years I have experienced some of the following in man's efforts to "explain" denominationalism.

(1) Some men adapt "Gamaliels' theory" (see Acts 5:38-39). When he advised, "let them alone, for if it is of man it will fail but if of God we can't stop it". The suggestion is that we should

"leave the denominations alone for it just might be that God's mercy will extend to them and then we would be fighting against God.

(2) In Mark 9:38 we are told of someone who was not in the circle of Christ's closest followers, i.e. "he followeth not us." Some try to make this mean that Christ tolerated or encouraged different kinds of groups of followers during His time. Thus they think that if He allowed diversity then He would also now.

(3) In the vine and branches discourse (Jn. 15:1-2) Jesus talks about the close relation between the Lord and those members of His body. Denominationalists have long tried to make the "branches" in this passage to mean denominations and different religious groups.

(4) One reason that men think justifies the existence of differing Protestant groups is that they supposedly meet the various psychological emotional, spiritual etc. needs of people. If man likes ritual he can find a church that has it, emotionalism he can go to the Pentecostals, formalism he can go to the Methodists, etc. In this view religion is for man alone and God has no consideration.

(5) Perhaps the most popular idea is that every church group is a member of the "invisible universal body of Christ." This view is often set forth under the guise of "the fellowship of believers" theory. The trouble with this idea is simply that the Bible nowhere teaches that there is such a thing as an invisible church or a "fellowship of believers" in which various denominations are unified into one body.

One final fact needs to be emphasised and this is: in the Bible there is absolutely no justification for denominationalism. Error doesn't have a leg to stand on. Let truth stand and error fall.

Martha

James W. Bay

Martha was a friend of Jesus, alongside her sister, Mary, and

her brother Lazarus. One visit by Jesus brought out into the open one problem that Martha had that many fine people may well have even yet. Jesus said to her, "Martha, Martha, thou art anxious and troubled about many things."

Well, who can help being troubled when he looks at the world in which he lives? Is there no reason for anxiety? Who can remain calm and stable when everything that was thought to be nailed down is being pulled up?

Nobody ought minimize the problems facing the world, especially the Christian who cares about the lives and souls of others. It would be foolish to bury our heads in the proverbial sand and pretend all is well, when it is not.

At the same time, let us not be knocked off-balance by the events surrounding us. As children of God, we have an inheritance that surpasses anything this world offers. God is still on the throne and "God is faithful," which means, we can count on God. Our primary concern, along with our concern about the world, is that God will be able to count on us.

He Departed Without Being Desired

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

Jehoshaphat was one of the best rulers of the Southern Kingdom or Judah. Upon his death Jehoram, a son fell heir to David's crown and the Judaeian throne. At the age of thirty-two he became monarch and immediately initiated a bloody purge of any who might lay claim to his throne. His brethren, who were better men than he was, fell before his bloody sword and numerous princes felt the political ax which removed them from being further threats to his throne. His reign lasted eight years and was characterized by his imitation of the wicked kings of the Northern Kingdom. He did evil in the sight of the Lord. His marriage to the ruthless Athaliah, infamous daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, was the worst thing that could have happened to this youthful prince. He enticed

Jerusalem to play the harlot and led Judah astray. Jehovah warned him through Elijah's clarion voice but the stubborn king ignored heaven's entreaties to turn him toward righteousness. For these sins he reaped grievous consequences. Plagues were visited upon the people and a slow but fatal illness brought him nearer to a tormenting death day by day.

One of the saddest things which could be written of a man is suggested in II Chronicles 21:20 where we read that "he departed without being desired..." He was denied a burial place in the sepulchres of the kings. No tears of grief were shed at his death. No honor was bestowed at the time of his interment in Jerusalem. How tragic to live in such a manner that no one feels a loss at the funeral. It would be better for one never to have lived than to die in such infamy and with no tearful good-byes expressed at the graveside. How different was the demise of the saintly Stephen in the latter part of Acts seven and the early part of Acts eight. The Bible says in Acts 8:2, "And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him." But far greater than this is how the Lord feels about our death. God finds no pleasure in the death of the wicked (Ezek. 18:30-32). Relative to those who die in the Lord or in the faith the Bible says, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." One of two deaths will one day claim us: (1) a death in sins of which Jesus describes in John 8:24 or (2) a death in faith or in the Lord as set forth in Hebrews 11:13 or Revelation 14:13.

We Drank... For Nothing

- We drank for happiness and became unhappy.
- We drank for joy and became miserable.
- We drank for sociability and became argumentative.
- We drank for friendship and made enemies
- We drank for sleep and awakened without rest.
- We drank for strength and felt weak.
- We drank "medicinally" and acquired health problems.
- We drank for relaxation and got the shakes.
- We drank for bravery and became doubtful.
- We drank to make conversation easier and slurred our speech.
- We drank to forget and were forever haunted.
- We drank for freedom and became slaves.
- We drank to erase problems and saw them multiply.
- We drank to cope with life and invited death.

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