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No. 2

EDITORIAL

You Can't Force People To Become Christians

It is a well known fact in history that some religions have extended their borders by the use of the sword or some other force. With the passing of time this has resulted in millions and millions of people being counted in one religion or another.

This is not the only way, however, that force may be applied. Where there is no freedom of religion, when persecution is used to keep people in line, where millions are kept in poverty and destitute conditions, where politics and religion are mixed, then you have people being forced, pressured, and encouraged to accept a certain religion, or not to leave the one they have already accepted.

While this may be the order of the day with some religions, this is not the procedure of pure Christianity. I say "pure Christianity" because there is a difference between the Christianity of the Bible and the Christianity that is represented by Catholicism and Protestantism. In this case I am speaking concerning the former and not the latter.

Sometimes when we go out to preach to a group of people for a while we eventually hear from some quarters that we are trying to force them to become Christians. Perhaps they mean that we are trying to persuade them to obey the Lord, but

certainly we have never tried to **force** anyone to accept Christianity. This has never been our practice and no one will ever be able to truthfully accuse us of this in the future.

We do not believe in using force when it comes to dealing with those of other religions and neither would we resort to such a tactic when it comes to those who already believe in Christ. We would never threaten anyone, use money or material things to bribe them or to be over persuasive in dealing with them. We would not, and could not as Christians, persecute them or promise them rewards for their actions.

The Bible clearly shows that Christianity is based on love, gentleness, respect for one another, and doing to the other fellow as you would have him to do to you. In reading of the Christians of the first century, you find them preaching the gospel, giving the people an opportunity to understand the truth, and leaving them to make a decision for themselves. The invitation of the Lord was extended to all, but only those who wanted to accept it became Christians. Those who chose to reject it were left as they were.

Christ invited people to follow him. He did not force them or drive them to do so. He said, "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). Again he said, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." (Revelation 3: 20). Notice that Christ said that he stands at the door of the heart and knocks. He wants the individual to open the door and let him in so he can sup with him and abide with him. However, look again. It is up to the individual to open the door of his heart. Christ will not force his way in. If the one he is dealing with will open his heart then Christ will come in. On the other hand, if that person doesn't want Christ to enter his heart then he may refuse to open the door to him.

Let it be understood that one cannot be forced to obey God. One may be forced outwardly to accept something but that doesn't mean that he has accepted it in his heart. One may be pressured to go along with something formally but in his heart he may reject it and hate it. The Bible tells us that God doesn't look on the outward form but he looks on the heart, and that one must obey him from the heart to be accepted by him. (I Samuel 16 : 7; 2 Corinthians 4 : 18; Romans 6 : 17, 18). That is why it is necessary to teach the word of the Lord. (Matthew 28:19, 20). One and all must be given the opportunity to hear the word, to know it, and to make a decision as to whether he will accept it or reject it. If he decided to obey it then that is up to him. No one else can make that decision for him.

Let us go on to point out that the husband cannot decide for his wife, nor can the wife decide for the husband. Neither can the parents decide for the children. Rather each one must make his own decision as to whether he will believe Christ or deny him. Each one must decide to obey or not to obey. One cannot be physically born into Christianity and neither can he be forced to accept it.

Now when we go out to preach and teach God's word we try to encourage people to obey the Lord. We try to show them the wisdom of making such a decision. At the same time, we do not want to over-persuade them to act. We know they need Christ, and we know what it will mean to them to be Christians, and we approach them on this basis. We do so because of our love for their souls. Should they not want to respond to our preaching and teaching then that is their decision. We do our duty when we take the word to them. If they reject it then they will have to answer to the Lord for it.

This is true in all of our preaching, writing, and work. We extend the Lord's invitation. Those who accept it come because they want to. When someone says that force is being used to make them Christians then they are either ignorant of what is happening or else they are deliberately putting out false reports in an attempt to hurt the cause of Christ and to try to safe-guard their own religion. Such people are in error and

this is an indication of it. If we had to resort to such tactics then we would not only be guilty but we would be wrong. Please remember that.

ASSOCIATE EDITORIAL

Six Steps Into Heaven

In the world there are three kinds of people living. First, there are some who believe that there is no God, or Creator of the world. Secondly, there are a few of those who say that there might be a God; in other words, they are not sure whether there is a God or not. Then thirdly, the majority of people in the world believe that there is a God, the Creator, the Supreme Being.

Most of all those who believe in God trust in many different books as the source of their belief. However, a great majority of them believe in the Bible as the Revelation of God to mankind. It is because the Bible is the only book which tells how the world, in the beginning, was created by God. It tells of several such things which have been a great mystery to man for hundreds of years until modern science and archaeology proved them to be true, exactly as the Bible teaches. The Bible is the only book which tells from where man came, what is sin, the wages of sin, how one can be saved from his sins, and thus go to heaven to live in the presence of God Almighty forever.

The Bible teaches God created man out of the dust of the earth, that sin is the breaking or violating of the commandments of God, or not doing what God has commanded man to do, that the wages or the penalty of sin is death, that is, eternal separation of the soul from God, that the whole duty of man is to fear God, and keep His Commandments.

The greatest question that man has always faced is, how can I be saved from my sins? The Bible teaches that to be saved from sins one must take the following six steps :

1. One must HEAR God's word as recorded in the Bible. It says, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Romans 10:17). Christ exhorted, when he said, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life : and they are they which testify of me." (John 5:39).
2. One must BELIEVE in God and Christ. "But without faith it is impossible to please him : for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (Hebrews 11 : 6). Christ said, "Ye believe in God, believe also in me..... for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." (John 14:1; 8:24).
3. One must REPENT of his sins. "God.....now commandeth all men every where to repent" (Acts 17:30). Again Christ said, "I tell you, Nay : but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." (Luke 13 : 5).
4. One must CONFESS Christ as the son of God. "That if you shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shall be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness ; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Romans 10 :9, 10). And again Christ said, "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 10 : 32, 33).
5. One must be BAPTISED (Immersed in water) for the remission of sins. "Repent, and be baptized every of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts 2:38). And once again Christ said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved ; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16 : 16).

6. And finally, the Bible teaches one must remain FAITHFUL to God all his life. Paul, shortly before leaving his body and this world, exhorted Christians by saying, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith : Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day : and not unto me only, but to all them also that love his appearing." (2 Timothy 4 : 7, 8). And conclusively, in Revelation 2 : 10, Christ promised, ".....be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

Bible Questions And Bible Answers

We have received a set of questions from a friend in Jamnagar. Thank you for sending them and we trust that the following answers will be helpful.

1. "From the writings of Mark 16 : 16; Matthew 7 : 12 ; Titus 1 : 16 ; 2 Thessalonians 1 : 7-9, it is quite clear that baptism is essential for entering eternal life. So does it mean that great souls like Mahatmaji, Buddha, or Guru Nanak, who lived sacred lives in practice, have no eternal life ?" As for the dead, we are not in position to judge them since we are told that Christ will be the judge and that he will judge them according to his word. (Acts 17 : 31 ; John 12 : 48). If we know what the Lord requires of us, then we must do that.
2. "If idol worship is condemned, is it not justified to pray to the saints for divine assistance and guidance? Is it justified to establish the idols of God and saints at Holy places like the church ? If not, why ?" God has always forbidden the use of images and idols in worship to him. (Exodus 20 : 3, 4). We are not to pray to saints but to God. (I John 5 : 14).
3. "If we are not justified with the law of Moses, please explain the reason with an example." Under the law of

Moses they were to offer animal sacrifices, go to Jerusalem once a year to worship, etc. Under the law of Christ we are not to do these things. There can be but one law at a time that is binding on man. The law of Moses was binding until Christ replaced it with his law which is better. (John 1 : 17 ; 2 Corinthians 3).

4. "Christ has come to the earth for the salvation of mankind and has suffered and died on the cross for the sins of the people. So does it mean that all those who lived and died before Christ will not receive eternal life ?" Those who lived before Christ had the law of Moses to follow. Those who obeyed the law will be saved. We are now under the law of Christ and we must obey it to be saved.
5. "Christ used to consume wine ; if so, how is the use of wine condemned in Galatians 5 : 19-21 justified ?" Jesus did not drink intoxicating types of wine. Paul is dealing with those who drank for the purpose of becoming drunk and this is to be condemned.
6. "How is the holy Pope appointed ? Was there any married holy Pope so far ? Is this position bound for only the inborns of Italy ?" The Pope occupies an unscriptural office. Christ is the one and only head of the church. (Colossians 1 : 18). It is said that Peter was the first Pope, but he was married. (1 Corinthians 9 : 5). Of course he was never Pope.
7. "Can a bachelor who is not a priest sacrifice a mass ?" The Bible does not speak of mass. On the other hand, all Christians are said to be priests of God whether married or unmarried. (Revelation 1 : 6).
8. "Is 'Brahmacharya' a virtue ? What is the significance ? Is it not a disobedience to the Lord's order to his people to spread, strengthen and enlarge his kingdom ? (Old Testament)" It is not a sin to be a bachelor but neither is it a sin to marry provided one has not been married before, and he is marrying someone who is scripturally eligible for marriage. (Read Matthew 19 : 9). The Bible

says that marriage is honourable. (Hebrews 13 : 4). This goes for preachers as well as anyone else. As for spreading the Lord's kingdom, Christ said that we should take the gospel into all the world. (Mark 16 : 15, 16).

9. "In light of question 8, if priests are not to marry, why should the scientific procedures of Family Planning not be allowed for Christians?" The Bible teaches that all Christians are priests and they have the freedom to marry or not to marry. It is left up to each Christian to decide whether birth controls should be used or not.
10. "What are the essential functions (like prayer) in daily life for a normal employed Christian to lead a divine life?" Christians are to live daily for Christ. They are to study God's word, pray, be honest, make their living, love their fellowman, etc. (Luke 9 : 23 ; Matthew 6 : 33; Revelation 2 : 10).

We hope that these questions and answers have been informative to all of our readers. If you have any questions that you would like to have answered through this magazine, then please send them to the Editor, The Bible Teacher, C-22 South Extension 2, New Delhi 49.

That Form of Doctrine

V. E. HOWARD

My friends, what form of doctrine, or Bible teaching, have you obeyed? What is the form, or pattern, for your life? There are two great, opposing kingdoms in this world and every responsible person is in one or the other of them. There is no neutral ground on which anyone can stand.

These two powerful kingdoms are the kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of Satan. Which one are you in today? The apostle Paul wrote of God the Father "who delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love; in whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins" (Colossians 1:12, 14). The person who has not obeyed the gospel of Christ is yet dead *in sin*, rather than

dead to sin. He is under the bondage of sin, instead of being redeemed and forgiven by the grace of God. He is living in the kingdom of Satan, under the power of darkness, instead of in the kingdom of Christ. It is one or the other—and what a tremendous difference !

The Great Transition

There is a great transition from the power of darkness when a person repents and dies to sin, when he is buried with Christ in a watery grave and rises to walk in a newness of life. One is thus translated into the kingdom of Christ into Christ's body, the church.

In the profound letter from Paul to the Romans, the Holy Spirit has given us a classic statement of this great transition. Hear the apostle! Are you listening? "Know ye not, that to whom ye present yourselves as servants unto obedience, his servants ye are whom ye obey ; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But thanks be to God, that, whereas ye were servants of sin, ye become obedient from the heart to that form of teaching whereunto ye were delivered; and being made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness" (Romans 6:16-18).

The Facts Set Forth

This great passage contains a number of facts which we would do well to remember. In the first place, the apostle Paul had just affirmed in a previous verse : "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under law, but under grace" (Romans 6:14). God's people today are not under the law of Moses. They are under grace, that is, the gospel of Christ. When Paul addressed the synagogue in Antioch of Pisidia, he declared : "Be it known unto you therefore, brethren, that through this man [Christ] is proclaimed unto you remission of sins: and by him every one that believeth is justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts 13:38, 39).

The second fact set forth in our text is that every person is a bondservant of the master he serves. We are servants of sin unto death, or servants of obedience unto righteousness. The

mission of Christ, the Saviour of men, was to rescue and redeem every responsible individual from the power and bondage of Satan. When the Lord called Paul to be an apostle to the Gentiles, He spoke of the need to "open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in me" (Acts 26:18). Beloved, who has power over you? Whose slave are you? To whom do you render service? *You* are a servant in one of these two camps. By whose fire do you warm yourself continually?

A third fact set forth in our text is that the people under consideration obeyed a form of teaching, or doctrine, which resulted in a change of master. Their obedience was from the heart, that is, it was intellectual, loving, willing and conscientious. Their obedience was not some empty form—some meaningless ritual they performed. This obedience from the heart involves the inner, spiritual man. It embraces the will, the intellect and the affections, or emotions. The intellect must be enlightened, the will must be guided, and the emotions must be stirred before this form, or pattern, of teaching can be obeyed.

It is a matter, then, of sin unto death or of obedience unto righteousness. There is no question but that obedience from the heart is the steppingstone to righteousness. Disobedience is unrighteousness. To obey Jesus Christ is to be His servant. To disobey the Savior is to follow the only other course available—the power of darkness and the wages of sin, both in this life and throughout eternity.

My friends, a fourth important fact set fourth in our text is that the time of this great transition is clearly indicated. At first they were servants of sin, the apostle reveals. Then, being made free from sin, they became servants of righteousness. When—*exactly* when—did they actually transfer their allegiance from Satan to Christ? The apostle affirms that it was *exactly* when they obeyed from the heart!

Beloved, remember, however, that it was a certain doctrine which they obeyed—it was "that form of teaching whereunto

ye were delivered," the Bible says! We must not only obey from the heart, but we must obey the truth. Jesus taught: "If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31, 32). It is not enough just to be religious—to obey *something*. It is not sufficient just to be honest and sincere. As the Roman Christians did, so we, too, must obey from the heart that form of doctrine given by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. This "form of teaching," to which Paul refers in our text, is the whole gospel message—the entire sum and substance of the gospel, including every fact, command and promise. Do you believe in the facts concerning Jesus? Are you willing to obey His commandments and live unto righteousness?

The Form, or Pattern

Ladies and gentlemen, the "teaching" referred to by the apostle is the story of how Christ died for our sins, was buried, and then was raised again for our justification. All the doctrines of the New Testament are based upon or related to these foundation facts concerning the Son of God. These matters constitute the heart of the gospel.

The original word translated form, signifies a pattern, or a mold, into which melted metals are poured to receive a distinctive form. The apostle represents the gospel doctrine as a mold, into which the Romans were placed by their baptism in order that they might be fashioned anew. Paul thanks God that they obeyed from the heart, that is, they obeyed most willingly and sincerely. They freely yielded to that form, or mold, of teaching and were made new men both in principle and in practice. The mold of doctrine was something to which they had already become obedient—and by that obedience they had been delivered from the slavery of sin and had become the slaves of righteousness. In other words, by this obedience they had changed masters. It was not simply an inner condition of the heart that had made this change, but it was an obedience that came from the heart.

Several verses earlier in the sixth chapter of Romans, the apostle had given some of the details of this obedience from the heart. Beloved, hear his words of inspiration: "We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein? Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with him in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection; knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away, so that we should no longer be in bondage to sin" (Romans 6:2-6).

Yes, my friends, the fundamental doctrine of the gospel message is the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. The form of doctrine, or teaching, must include the dying to sin as well as the burial and the resurrection. We die to sin and are quickened by faith and penitence. Then we are buried through baptism, rising to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus.

When Paul speaks of this obedience from the heart, he uses the expression, "...that form of teaching whereunto ye were delivered" (Romans 6:17). The imagery he is using here was taken from the custom of delivering slaves from one master to another. Sin was the cruel taskmaster to which the disciples had been slaves, but he conceives of them now as having been delivered from this bondage. Instead of being in a condition of sinning unto death, they are now servants of obedience unto righteousness—they are free from sin. As the apostle declared in Romans 6:11: "Even so reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus."

The Roman Christians had been delivered, or handed over, to the powerful influence of this form, or mold, of teaching. This is simply indicating that they had received specific instruction in what to do to become Christians. When Christ

gave the Great Commission, He commanded : "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit : teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you : and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:19, 20).

What Were The Romans Taught?

Ladies and gentlemen, what were these Romans taught in order that they might become disciples of Christ and be free from the bondage of sin? They were delivered, or handed over, to a mold of teaching which is the gospel of Christ! The gospel itself is the mold, or pattern, into which the people who obey it are cast. The gospel only, not any thing more or less, must be obeyed if salvation is to follow. In Romans 1:16, 17, the apostle had affirmed to them : "For I am not ashamed of the gospel : for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth... For therein is revealed a righteousness of God from faith unto faith : as it is written, But the righteous shall live by faith."

If the gospel is God's power unto salvation, then obviously the Romans were taught the gospel and how to obey it. But what does it mean to teach the gospel? The answer to this question is found in 1 Cor. 15:1-4. Hear the apostle! "Now I make known unto you, brethren, the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye received, wherein also ye stand by which also ye are saved...For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received: that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried; and that he hath been raised on the third day." Beloved, these are the foundation facts of the gospel!

What Did The Romans Obey?

If the Romans were taught the *facts* of the gospel, what did they do to obey the gospel? The gospel must be believed and obeyed, according to the New Testament. Therefore, the Romans accepted the *facts* of the gospel and then learned the *commands* of Christ to be obeyed.

When the Church was established in Jerusalem, the apostle Peter preached the facts of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. Then he challenged those present to obey the commands of the gospel, saying: "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins" (Acts 2:38). In Romans, chapters five and six, the apostle Paul reminds them that they were justified by faith when they died to sin and were buried with Christ through baptism, being raised to walk in newness of life. Thus, the Romans obeyed the commands to believe in Christ, repent of their sins, and put on the Lord in baptism.

What Were The Romans Promised

My friends, having seen what the Romans were taught and what they obeyed, let us raise the final question of our lesson. What were the Romans promised as a result of gospel obedience? According to our text, and these other passages we have noted, they were promised release from the bondage of sin, the gift of the Holy Spirit, and ultimately the gift of eternal life in Christ Jesus. Do these matters interest you? Are you concerned about where you will spend eternity?

My beloved friends, there is only one form of doctrine, only one gospel, that can save your soul. The world is filled with imitations and deceptions. Search the scriptures! Find the New Testament form of doctrine. Obey the truth of God! Be obedient unto righteousness.

It must be observed that the Romans obeyed the form of doctrine, THEN being made free from sin they became the servants of righteousness. They were not made free from sin until they obeyed the gospel—that form of doctrine. The Bible says it was THEN they were made free from sin (Romans 6: 7, 18). Both the form and the reality are beautiful pictures (Romans 6:3-8). The form: 1. Christ died. 2. He was buried. 3. He arose from the grave. 4. He lived in fellowship with His disciples, after His resurrection for a brief period of time. 5. He ascended to His Father in heaven. The reality: 1. A man must

die to the practice of sin by repentance. 2. As a penitent believer he is buried with Christ by baptism in water—baptized into the death of Christ where the blood of Christ remits his sins. 3. Man is then resurrected unto a new life in Christ. 4. Having been buried in baptism and resurrected unto a new life in Christ, the Christian is to “walk in newness of life” in fellowship with other Christians and God, the Father and Christ, the Son. 5. Then at the end of a faithful Christian life, go home to heaven to spend eternity with God, Christ and the redeemed of all ages. Have you obeyed that “form of doctrine”?

“Win a Prize” Bible Quiz, No. 2

Quizmaster, Vipul Rai

NO ENTRY FEE. ALL THOSE WHO SEND IN ALL CORRECT ANSWERS WILL RECEIVE A BEAUTIFUL, 296 PAGE, HARD-COVER BOOK, ENTITLED “CHRISTIANITY VS. LIBERALISM AND OTHER ESSAYS” BY JOHN WADDEY. MAKE SURE YOU NUMBER YOUR ANSWERS CORRECTLY. THERE IS NO NEED TO WRITE DOWN THE QUESTIONS. JUST PUT THE NUMBER AND THE ANSWER NEXT TO IT WITH THE SCRIPTURE REFERENCES THAT PROVE YOUR ANSWERS. ANSWERS WITHOUT SCRIPTURE REFERENCES WILL NOT BE GIVEN CREDIT.

TRUE OR FALSE :

Example : Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

Ans. True. (John 20:31).

1. Besides Cain and Abel, Adam had no other children.
2. When we are saved, the Church can vote us into her membership.

3. Christians in the New Testament partook of the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week.
4. The Church is the body of Christ and the body is the Church of Christ.

FILL IN THE BLANKS (USE REVISED STANDARD VERSION BIBLE) :

5. Peter said, "Heaving..... by your.....
.....for a sincere love of the brethren,
love one another earnestly from the heart."
6. Paul said in Romans, "We were.....therefore with him
by.....into death, so that as Christ was raised from the
dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in new-
ness of life."
7. Jesus said in John, "If you love me, you will keep my.....".
8. Jesus said in Matthew, "Not every one who says to me,
'Lord, Lord', shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he
who.....the will of my Father who is in heaven."

YES OR NO :

9. The thief on the cross (Lk. 23:32-43) died before the Great Commission (Mk. 16:15-16) was given.

LIST :

10. What descriptive names are applied to the Church in the New Testament. List at least three.

Send Your Answers (with References) within Ten Days To :

The Quizmaster,
C-22, South Extension-2,
New Delhi-110049.

Answers To Last Month's Quiz :

1. Yes (II Tim. 3:16). 2. No (Gal. 1:5; Jude 3). 3. After he was baptised (Acts 22:16). 4. The New Covenant or the Law of Christ (Heb. 1:1-2; 7:12, 22; 8:6-7, 13). 5. 930 years (Gen. 5:5). 6. Joshua (Josh. 24:15). 7. False. These terms are only applied to God (Psa. 111:9; Matt. 23:9). 8. One ("church" Matt. 16:18). 9. Christians (Acts 11:26), believers (Acts 22:19), saints (Eph. 1:1), disciples of the Lord (Acts 9:1), brethren (Acts 9:30), priests (I Pet. 2:5; Rev. 1:6). 10. Prov. 6:6.

बाइबल क्या है ?

लेखक : सती भाई

बाइबल, यह शब्द यूनानी भाषा के विचलिया शब्द से लिया गया है, तथा इसका अर्थ है "पुस्तकों की पुस्तक"। यूनी बाइबल एक पुस्तक है किन्तु इसमें ६६ अलग-अलग पुस्तकें हैं, व इन सब पुस्तकों से मिलकर, एक पुस्तक, बाइबल बनी हुई है। इन पुस्तकों को पढ़ने से पता चलता है कि इनका आपसी सम्बन्ध बहुत गहरा है। उदाहरणार्थ, एक पुस्तक को पढ़ने के बाद दूसरी पुस्तक को पढ़ते हुए ऐसा लगता है कि यह पढ़ती पुस्तक का ही एक भाग है। इसी तरह से सब पुस्तकों में एक अर्थपूर्ण एकता व अन्तर्गतता का पता चलता है। बाइबल की लिखासठ पुस्तकों को लगभग चालिस विभिन्न व्यक्तियों ने, भिन्न-भिन्न समयों में रचकर लिखा तथा इनकी लिखने में लगभग १६०० वर्ष लगे। इन सभ्यों को ध्यान में रखते हुए कदाचित् कोई पूछ सकता है कि फिर इन पुस्तकों में एकत्व का क्या कारण है ? इसका कारण यह है कि यद्यपि बाइबल की पुस्तकों को बहुत से व्यक्तियों ने लिखा है परन्तु इनका मूल लेखक वास्तव में परमेश्वर है। बाइबल को लिखने के लिये परमेश्वर ने विभिन्न समयों में कुछ विशेष लोगों को चुना, और उन्हें प्रेरणा दी की व वह सब कुछ लिखे जो परमेश्वर लोगों को बताना चाहता है। बाइबल की प्रत्येक पुस्तक में कुछ अध्याय हैं तथा हर एक अध्याय में कुछ पद हैं। २ तीमथियस की पुस्तक के ३ अध्याय में १६ पद को पढ़ने से पता चलता है कि "हर एक पवित्रशास्त्र परमेश्वर की प्रेरणा से रचा गया है और उपदेश, और समझाने, और सुधारने, और धर्म की शिक्षा के लिये लाभदायक है।" इसमें कोई संदेह नहीं कि बाइबल को मनुष्यों ने लिखा है, परन्तु उन्होंने केवल वही कुछ लिखा जिसको लिखने की प्रेरणा उन्हें परमेश्वर से मिली थी। "क्याकि कोई भी मनुष्यद्वारा मनुष्य की इच्छा से कभी नहीं हुई पर मकल जन पवित्र आत्मा के द्वारा उभारे जाकर परमेश्वर की ओर से बोलते थे।" (२ पत्र १:२१)। इसलिये बाइबल, निःसंदेह, परमेश्वर का वचन है।

बाइबल की ६६ पुस्तकें दो मुख्य भागों में बटी हुई हैं। अर्थात् बाइबल में दो भाग हैं—पूराना नियम तथा नया नियम। पूराने नियम में ३९ पुस्तकें हैं तथा नए नियम में २७ पुस्तकें। पूराना नियम यीशु मसीह की मृत्यु से पहले रचनेवाले लोगों के लिये दिया गया था किन्तु नया नियम मसीह की मृत्यु तथा जी उठने के बाद रचनेवाले लोगों के लिये दिया गया है। सर्वप्रथम पूराना नियम इब्रानी भाषा में तथा नया नियम यूनानी भाषा में लिखा गया था। परन्तु अब तक बाइबल का अर्थवाद लगभग एक हजार से भी अधिक भाषाओं में किया जा चुका है।

वास्तविक विज्ञान, बहुतेरी पुरातन खोजें, भूगोल, तथा लौकिक इतिहास, बाइबल में लिखित सत्यों का समर्थन करते हैं। बाइबल मनुष्य के बहुतेरे कठिन प्रश्नों का उत्तर देती है। बाइबल को पढ़ने से पता चलता है कि मनुष्य कहाँ से आया उसके जीवन का क्या उद्देश्य है, तथा उसे कहां जाना है। अधिकांश लोगों तथा पुस्तकों पर बाइबल का सदैव बहुत अधिक प्रभाव रहा है। इस पुस्तक को परमेश्वर ने सब मनुष्यों के लिये दिया है ताकि मनुष्य अपने विषय में परमेश्वर की इच्छा जान सके। बाइबल के बारे में कुछ अतिरिक्त सत्य इस प्रकार से हैं : बाइबल संसार में सबसे पहले छपनेवाली पुस्तक है। संसार में सबसे अधिक बिकनेवाली पुस्तक है। संसार के अधिकांश लोग बाइबल को पढ़ते हैं।

क्या आप बाइबल के बारे में और अधिक विस्तार से जानना चाहते हैं ? यदि हां, तो हमें आज ही लिखिए। हमारे पास सरल भाषा में लिखे हुए पाठ हैं जो बाइबल के विषय में जानकारी प्रदान करते हैं। यदि आप हमें इस विषय में लिखेंगे तो हम आपको शीघ्र ही बाइबल के पत्रव्यवहारिक पाठ भेज देंगे जो कि मुफ्त हैं। हमारा पता है :

नई दिल्ली बाइबल कॉलेज
सी० २२, सारुथ एक्सटेन्शन-२
नई दिल्ली ११००४६

पाप, और उससे छुटकारा

लेखक : सनी भाई

पाप क्या है

“जो कोई पाप करता है, वह व्यवस्था का विरोध करता है; और पाप तो व्यवस्था का विरोध है।” (१ यूहन्ना ३:४)। “परन्तु प्रत्येक व्यक्ति अपनी ही अभिलाषा से खिचकर, और फंसकर परीक्षा में पड़ता है। फिर अभिलाषा गर्भवती होकर पाप को जनता है और पाप जब बढ़ जाता है तो मृत्यु को उत्पन्न करता है।” (याकूब १:१४-१५) “इसलिये जो कोई भलाई करना जानता है और नहीं करता, उसके लिये यह पाप है” (याकूब ४:१७)।

सबने पाप किया है

“इसलिये कि सबने पाप किया है और परमेश्वर की महिमा से रहित हैं।” “जैसा लिखा है, कि कोई धर्मी नहीं, एक भी नहीं।” (रोमियों ३:२३, १०)। “हम तो सब के सब भेड़ों की नाई भटक गए थे; हम में से हर एक ने अपना अपना मार्ग लिया...” (यशायाह ५३:६)।

पाप का दण्ड

“जो प्राणी पाप करे वही मरेगा, न तो पुत्र पिता के अधर्म का भार उठाएगा और न पिता पुत्र का; धर्मी को अपने ही धर्म का फल, और दुष्ट को अपनी ही दुष्टता का फल मिलेगा।” (यहेजकेल १८:२०)। “क्योंकि पाप की मजदूरी तो मृत्यु है, परन्तु परमेश्वर का बरदान हमारे प्रभु मसीह यीशु में अनन्त जीवन है।” (रोमियों ६:२३)। “क्योंकि जब परमेश्वर ने उन स्वर्गदूतों को जिन्होंने पाप किया नहीं छोड़ा, पर नरक में भेजकर अन्धेरे कुण्डों में डाल दिया, ताकि न्याय के दिन तक बन्दी रहें। और प्रथम युग के संसार को भी न छोड़ा, बरन भक्तिहीन संसार पर महा-जलप्रलय भेजकर धर्म के प्रचारक नूह समेत आठ व्यक्तियों को बचा लिया। और सदोम और अमोराह के नगरों को विनाश का ऐसा दण्ड दिया कि उन्हें भस्म करके राख में मिला दिया ताकि वे आनेवाले भक्तिहीन लोगों की शिक्षा के लिये एक दृष्टान्त बनें। और धर्मी लूत को जो अधर्मियों के अशुद्ध चाल-चलन से बहुत दुखी था छुटकारा दिया। (क्योंकि वह धर्मी उन के बीच में रहते हुए, और उन के अधर्म के कामों को देख-देखकर, और सुन-सुनकर, हर दिन अपने सच्चे मन को पीड़ित करता था)। तो प्रभु भक्तों को परीक्षा में से निकाल लेना और अधर्मियों को न्याय के दिन तक दण्ड की दशा में रखना भी जानता है।” (२ पतरस २:४-६)।

परमेश्वर का अद्भुत प्रेम

“क्योंकि परमेश्वर ने जगत से ऐसा प्रेम रखा कि उसने अपना एकलौता पुत्र दे दिया, ताकि जो कोई उस पर विश्वास करे, वह नाश न हो, परन्तु अनन्त जीवन पाए। परमेश्वर ने अपने पुत्र को जगत में इसलिये नहीं भेजा, कि जगत पर दंड की आज्ञा दे परन्तु इसलिये कि जगत उस के द्वारा उद्धार पाए।” (यूहन्ना ३:१६-१७)। “परन्तु परमेश्वर अपने प्रेम की भलाई इस रीति से प्रगट करता है, कि जब हम पापी ही थे तभी मसीह हमारे लिये मरा।” (रोमियों ५:८)। “जिस ने अपने निज पुत्र को भी न रख छोड़ा, परन्तु उसे हम सबके लिये दे दिया; वह उस के साथ हमें और सब कुछ क्योंकर न देगा?” (रोमियों ८:३२)। “प्रभु अपनी प्रतिज्ञा के विषय में देर नहीं करता, जैसी देर कितने लोग समझते हैं: पर तुम्हारे विषय में धीरज धरता है, और नहीं चाहता कि कोई नाश हो; वरन यह कि सबको मन फिराव का अवसर मिले।” (२ पतरस ३:६)।

मसीह का बलिदान

“इस से बड़ा प्रेम किसी का नहीं, कि कोई अपने मित्रों के लिये अपना प्राण दे।” (यूहन्ना १५:१३)। “जो पाप से अज्ञात था उसी को उस ने हमारे लिये पाप ठहराया, कि हम उसमें होकर परमेश्वर की धार्मिकता बन जाएं।” (२ कुरिन्थियों ५:२१)। “उसी ने अपने आप को हमारे पापों के

लिये दे दिया ताकि हमारे परमेश्वर और पिता की इच्छा के अनुसार हमें इस वर्तमान बुरे संसार से छुड़ाए।” (गलतियों १:४)। “और मनुष्य के रूप में प्रगट होकर अपने आप को दीन किया, और यहां तक आज्ञाकारी रहा, कि मृत्यु, हां, क्रूस की मृत्यु भी सह ली।” (फिलिप्पियों २:८)। “यह बात सच और हर प्रकार से मानने के योग्य है, कि मसीह यीशु पापियों का उद्धार करने के लिये जगत में आया जिनमें सबसे बड़ा मैं हूं।” (१ तीमुथियुस १:१५) “पर हम यीशु को जो स्वर्गदूतों से कुछ ही कम किया गया था, मृत्यु का दुःख उठाने के कारण महिमा और आदर का मुकुट पहिने हुए देखते हैं ; ताकि परमेश्वर के अनुग्रह से हर एक मनुष्य के लिये मृत्यु का स्वाद चखे।” (इब्रानियों २:९)।

खुशी की खबर

“सप्ताह के पहिले दिन भोर होते ही वह जी उठकर पहिले पहिल मरियम मगदलीनी को जिसमें से उसने सात दुष्टात्माएं निकाली थीं, दिखाई दिया... पीछे वह उन ग्यारहों को भी, जब वे भोजन करने बैठे थे दिखाई दिया, और उन के अविश्वास और मन की कठोरता पर उलाहना दिया, क्योंकि जिन्होंने उस के जी उठने के बाद उसे देखा था, इन्होंने उन की प्रतीति न की थी। और उसने उन से कहा, तुम सारे जगत में जाकर सारी सृष्टि के लोगों को सुसमाचार प्रचार करो। जो विश्वास करे और बपतिस्मा ले उसी का उद्धार होगा, परन्तु जो विश्वास न करेगा वह दोषी ठहराया जाएगा।” (मरकुस १६:६, १४-१६)। “सो विश्वास सुनने से, और सुनना मसीह के वचन से होता है।” (रोमियों १०:१७)। “हे मेरे भाईयो, यदि कोई कहे कि मुझे विश्वास है पर वह कर्म न करता हो, तो उस से क्या लाभ ? क्या ऐसा विश्वास उसका उद्धार कर सकता है ?...तुम्हे विश्वास है कि एक ही परमेश्वर है : तू अच्छा करता है : दुष्टात्मा भी विश्वास रखते, और थरथराते हैं। पर हे निकम्मे मनुष्य क्या तू यह भी नहीं जानता, कि कर्म बिन विश्वास व्यर्थ है ? ...सो तुम ने देख लिया कि मनुष्य केवल विश्वास से ही नहीं, वरन कर्मों से भी धर्मी ठहरता है ...निदान, जैसे देह आत्मा बिना मरी हुई है वैसा ही विश्वास भी कर्म बिना मरा हुआ है।” (याकूब २:१४, १६, २०, २४, २६)। इस कारण : “मन फिराओ, और तुम में से हर एक अपने अपने पापों की क्षमा के लिये यीशु मसीह के नाम में बपतिस्मा ले; तो तुम पवित्र आत्मा का दान पाओगे।” (प्रेरितों २:३८)। “अब क्यों देर करता है ? उठ, बपतिस्मा ले, और उसका नाम लेकर अपने पापों को धो डाल।” (प्रेरितों २२:१६)। यदि इस विषय में आप और अधिक जानकारी प्राप्त करना चाहते हैं तो हमें अवश्य लिखें।

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