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THE BIBLE TEACHER

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Opposing the Truth

Through the years the majority of preachers and teachers have spent much of their time in not only teaching error, but also in preparing their hearers to resist the truth should they ever hear it. They have taught them argument after argument to use, and wherever you go throughout the world these same arguments may be heard. By using these arguments, people are kept ignorant and prejudiced against the truth. They stay so busy trying to defend their beliefs that they can never learn the truth.

Most people who believe in Christ are so full of denominational teachings that all of their thinking, reasoning, and actions are influenced by them. They are constantly assuring one another that one church is as good as another, that the name isn't important, that it doesn't matter what you believe in religion just so long as you are honest and sincere, that there are many ways to heaven, that you can join the church of your choice, that baptism isn't essential to salvation, that faith only saves, etc., and so on. When they do get into trouble they find strength in going to the preacher or to some denominational friend who reminds them again that they are all right in their religious beliefs and practices.

The sad part about all of this is that these people have not only been deceived, but they are so convinced of what they believe that it is difficult to ever get them to go to the Bible to see if their beliefs and practices are in harmony with the scriptures. If they could be encouraged to do this, then perhaps it might be possible to teach them the truth.

Why is it that so many people are willing to let someone else do all of their thinking for them? I guess they are too lazy to study the scriptures themselves and so they put their trust in some preacher, a friend, or some other such person. They reason that surely this individual will not deceive them, but it may be that he is deceived too. Of course there are those who have been taught that they can't understand the Bible; or that if there is division among us in our beliefs, it is because different ones interpret the scriptures in different ways. Peter says, however, that the scriptures are not to be of our own private interpretation. (2 Peter 1 : 20).

Why can't we realize that God has not only given us his word but he has also given us minds with which to read, study think, and to reason. Therefore, anyone in his right mind can go himself to the word of God and learn the truth. He doesn't need to have someone tell him what it teaches, for that person might tell him the wrong thing. Even when he listens to a preacher he needs always to go to the scriptures to see if what he has heard is the truth or not. (1 John 4 : 1).

If an individual had any knowledge of the scripture, and would think just a little, he would realize that denominationism could not represent pure New Testament teaching, and therefore, it could never be according to the word of God. How people need to open their eyes to the truth, and the only way this can be done is through a study of the scriptures themselves.

Friends, why be religious at all if you are not going to be right? Think of all the time you are using, the money you are spending, and the risk you are taking with your soul. Why

waste all of this on something questionable? Why take a chance with your soul?

Why do all you do in question and doubt when you can be sure? But if it is not important enough to go to the effort to investigate to be sure you are right, then why bother with religion at all? Again, if you are going to be religious, then determine that you are going to be right. Check up on all that you believe and practice. Check on the church of which you are a member. See what the scriptures say about these things. If you are right, then you have lost nothing, but you are more certain now that you are right. But if you find that you are in error, you can correct it. It would be better to acknowledge now that you have made a mistake, and to correct it so you can be saved, than to refuse to admit it and end up being lost because of it.

Did it ever occur to you that you can be just a Christian and a member of the church that you can read about in the Bible? Why would you want to be anything less than that? You can be just what the Bible teaches, and you will be, if you will read and study your Bible alone and do what it says.

We are pleading with you and with all people everywhere around the world to go to the Bible and to follow its teaching only. What is wrong in encouraging people to do that? If you do this, will that mean that you are following me or some other man? Certainly not. Rather, you'll be following Christ.

There is so much division and confusion on every hand. People are deceived into thinking that this is God's will at work. All kinds of names, churches, doctrines, and practices are being encouraged. What a shame! How terrible! How we plead with one and all to do what the Lord has said. When this happens, then all believers will be united. Remember, we cannot improve on the Lord's way. Think on these things.

*ASSOCIATE EDITORIAL***Face the Facts**

There are two aspects of human life, that is, physical and spiritual. To live both physically and spiritually we must have some certain things which are essential and without which we cannot survive. Now these are the facts and no sensible being would ever refuse to accept them as the facts.

Firstly, to live physically we need four things essential to our physical bodies, they are—food (bread), water, air, and sunshine. Now, all of them are very very important for us to live physically. We cannot just accept any one of them, and say we can live by it alone. In fact, it would be rather foolish to say that. Neither can we take two or three things from the four, ignoring any one, and say we can survive by these two or three alone. The fact is that you have to accept all the four, as essential to your physical growth, i. e., food, water, air to breathe, and sunshine for warmth. Now, for a while, imagine, if a person says I will just eat food and will not take any water, neither do I need air to breathe or sunshine for warmth. Now, what will happen to such a person? Surely, he will die. Again, he might say, I will take just two of the four essential things, i.e. food and water, but can he survive without air and warmth. Then, he might say, well I will accept the three things also, either air or warmth, and leave off the other things. Again, will he survive? No, no, never. The inference is that you have to accept all the four things. You cannot escape the facts, but you have to face the facts.

Secondly, as all of us realize that we have a soul, therefore having souls we can live spiritually forever if we accept and take the essential things which are necessary for the saving of our souls. Now, to live or be saved spritually, the Bible, the New Testament, teaches, one must accept the four essential things that God has specifically described in His word, namely, Faith, Repentance, Confession, and Baptism. (1) Faith. In John

8:24, Christ, the Saviour, said that except we believe in him we cannot live or be saved. Thus, we have to have faith to live spiritually. (2) Repentance. The same Jesus commanded that except we repent or turn away from our sins we will die. Therefore, we cannot avoid repentance and be saved. (3) Confession. The Saviour said, we must confess him before others (Matthew 10:32), and in Romans 10:9,10 we are told that confession is made unto or to obtain salvation. Thusly, we cannot leave confession out of the plan of salvation. (4) Baptism. Finally, Christ commanded all those who would believe in him to be baptized. He, in Mark 16:16, very specifically said, "He that **believeth** AND is **baptized** shall be **saved**." There are also many other verses of scripture which tell us that baptism is an essential step to salvation. Baptism means burial or immersion in water, it signifies Christ's death, burial and resurrection. Believers are baptized, in water, for the remission of sins. (Acts 8:36-39; Acts 2:38).

Just as we need to have bread (food), water, air, and sunshine (warmth) to save ourselves physically, it is just that important that we should believe in Christ, repent of our sins, confess our faith in Christ, and be baptized for the remission of our sins to be saved.

Now, all of the four things essential to our physical lives are very important as individuals. We cannot deny the importance of any one of them. Likewise, all of the four things that God has commanded us to do to be saved spiritually are very important, that is each one of them, and we cannot, without being stubborn, deny their essentiality to our salvation. Let us not try to escape the facts, but face the facts.

There are verses in the Bible, like John 3:16, which teach that we are saved by faith. But there are also verses in the same Bible which emphatically teach that we are saved by repentance (Luke 13:5), by confession (Romans 10:9,10), by baptism (1 Peter 3:21). In fact, faith does not eliminate the essentiality of repentance, confession and baptism, and neither

do. the others eliminate faith, but they support each other. Now, one might say, I live by bread or food. Well that's okay. But does it mean he lives by bread alone? No. Naturally, all other essential things, i. e., water, air, and warmth, must go with it too. I might say, I am saved by faith. Well that is also right. But does it mean I am saved by faith only? No. But repentance, confession, and baptism must also be there logically. So I say again, no, we cannot escape the facts, but we have to face the facts.

The Hearts of the Bible

C.A. Titus

Kurnool, A.P.

We know by the many scripture references of the different hearts of the Bible. They are as follows :

1. Blind heart. Ephesians 4 : 18.
2. Wicked heart. Jeremiah 17 : 9.
3. Froward heart. Proverbs 17 : 20.
4. Deceitful heart. Proverbs 12 : 20.
5. Perverse heart. Proverbs 12 ; 8,
6. Proud heart. Proverbs 16 : 5.
7. Foolish heart. Proverbs 15 : 7.
8. Sick heart. Proverbs 13 : 12.
9. Heart of mercy. Proverbs 15 : 13.
10. Wise heart. Proverbs 10 : 8.
11. Broken heart. Psalms 34 : 18.
12. Tender heart. Ephesians 4 : 32.
13. Clean heart, Psalms 51 : 10.
14. Glad heart. Psalms, 4 : 7.
15. Rejoicing heart. Psalms 105 : 3.
16. Pure heart. Psalms 24 : 4; Matthew 5 : 8.
17. Truthful heart. Psalms 15 : 2.
18. Sound heart. Psalms 14 : 30.
19. Understanding heart. 1 Kings 3 : 12.
20. Christian heart. Philipians 2 : 5.

Dear friends, I want to say a few words regarding our heart searcher who is our saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. What does the Bible teach? The Psalmist explains: "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." (Psalms 139 : 23, 24). The wise man, Solomon, picked up the same refrain by saying that "the eyes of the Lord are in every place beholding the evil and the good." (Proverbs 15 : 3).

We learn that Jehovah searches the mind and tries the heart. He searches the minds and hearts (intellect and emotions). God knows the hearts of all men. The thoughts of every heart shall be revealed. He alone truly knows men's thoughts and imaginations. (Jeremiah 17 : 10 ; 1 Kings 8 : 39 ; 1 Chronicles 28 : 9 ; 1 Samuel 16 : 7 ; Luke 16 : 15). In the view of these sobering truths, let us notice the basic points that should help us to think on things that were true, pure, just, honest, lovely, and of good report, for these are virtuous and praiseworthy. (Philippians 4 : 8).

God knows our hearts. Our Lord can search out the greatest secret. Let us then be sincere devotees of the religion of Christ. Quit "playing a part (hypocrisy)" and truly show forth to the world "an unfeigned faith." (2 Timothy 1:5).

Let us examine ourselves (2 Corinthians 13:5) to see if we are genuine instead of counterfeit Christians. The Psalmist informs us in Psalms 133:13, "The Lord looketh from heaven, he beholdeth all the sons of men." What does the heart searcher see in you and in me? My friend, this is a real thought provoking question, isn't it?

Note : Should you not want to receive this magazine, please let us know immediately and it will be discontinued.

Colours Of The Cross

by Ann Engle

White lips drawn back in agony,
 White-hot the frenzied crowd,
 White with brilliant purity,
 The soul of Jesus bowed.
 White, His eyes were Heavenward rolled,
 White linen for a shroud.
 Dastardly ! The blackest crime
 Ere commit by men,
 Black the darkened cloud that swelled,
 Black, black the plague of sin,
 Black, my chance without His Grace,
 Love greater than my kin.
 Red, the scourge marks on his back
 Bright red His smitten face,
 Scarlet, scornful mockery's robe,
 His Kingly form embraced,
 Red flowed compassion from His side,
 Eternal stream of Grace.
 White, God blotteth out my sins,
 Forever left behind,
 Blackness in my soul dispelled
 No more my fetters bind,
 Joy's rainbow in my heart,
 Colours of a Holy Shrine.

Instrumental Music In Christian Worship

William Walker

I. THE REASON FOR THIS LESSON

- A. Most religious organizations today use instrumental music in worship. When people attend the church of Christ they think it strange that we do not use such. The question is often asked as to why we don't have it.
- B. We believe those who have instrumental music in worship have more responsibility to tell why they have it than we do to tell why we don't. However, since we don't have it and are asked so much about it we are glad to explain the reason.

II. WORSHIP MUST HAVE DIVINE AUTHORITY

- A. This truth has been abundantly set forth in our lesson on "Four Kinds of Worship". A brief review of that lesson might be in order here.
- B. There is Divine authority for singing in Christian worship.
 1. "At midnight Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises unto God" (Acts 16:25).
 2. "...For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name" (Romans 15:9).
 3. "...I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also" (1 Cor. 14:15).
 4. "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Eph. 5:19).
 5. "Let the word of Christ dwell in your richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Col. 3:16).

6. "I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee" (Heb. 2:12).
 7. "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name" (Hebrews 13:15).
 8. "...Is any merry? let him sing psalms" (James 5:13).
- C. These are all the passages in the New Testament which could possibly have any connection with music in Christian worship. Singing is all that they authorize. Instrumental music is not found in any of them. Where is the passage of Scripture which authorizes or enjoins instrumental music on Christians in worship? If none can be found then instrumental music will have to fall in the classification of worship that is after the doctrine and commandments of men (Matt. 15:9; Col. 2:22,23).
- D. The above passages of Scripture on music in Christian worship enjoin upon us the following things :
1. "Speaking"
 2. "Teaching"
 3. "Admonishing"
 4. "Singing"
 5. "The fruit of our lips"
- E. Instrumental music cannot meet these specific requirements. Not only this, instrumental music may keep them from being performed, either by the fact that the instrumental music is so loud that no one can hear the "teaching and admonishing", or by the fact that the singing may be dispensed with entirely and the music be all instrumental.

III. HISTORICAL EVIDENCE AGAINST INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

- A. There is not the slightest doubt that instrumental music

was not in Christian worship in New Testament times. Let us notice some questions from outstanding authorities.

1. **The American Encyclopedia**, Vol. 12, pg. 688 :
 "Pope Vitalian is related to have first introduced organs into some of the churches of Western Europe, about 670; but the earliest trustworthy account is that of one sent as a present by the Greek emperor Constantine Copronymus, to Pepin, King of the Franks, in 755."
2. **The Primitive Church**, by Lyman Coleman, Presbyterian author and scholar, pg. 370,371:
 "Both the Jews in their temple service and the Greeks in their idol worship were accustomed to sing with the accompaniment of instrumental music. The converts to Christianity must have been familiar with this mode of singing, but it is generally admitted that the primitive Christians employed no instrumental music in their religious worship."
3. **History of Music From the Christian Era to the Present Time**, by Dr. Frederic Louis Ritter, director of music at Vassar College from 1867 to 1891, pg. 28: "We have no real knowledge of the exact character of the music which formed a part of the religious devotion of the first Christian congregations. It was, however, purely vocal. Instrumental music was excluded, at first, as having been used by the Romans at their depraved festivities, and everything reminding them of heathen worship could not be endured by the new religionists."
4. **The Church Fathers and Musical Instruments**, by James William McKinnon. This is McKinnon's dissertation for his Ph.D. at Columbia University, 1965. In it he examines all of the more than 150

references to instrumental music in the writings of the early church fathers up to the Middle Ages. He shows that the opposition to instrumental music is virtually unanimous (pg. 261). He states that the things which most characterize "the Christian polemic against instruments are its vehemence and its uniformity" (pg. 260). They had an absolute negative attitude toward instruments which included opposition to their use in the home, at feasts, marriages, etc. The only exception to this was by Clement of Alexandria in A.D. 190 in an article entitled "How to Conduct Ourselves at Feasts" in which he says there is no blame if one wishes to sing or play to the harp or lyre at such feasts. McKinnon shows that after Clement "all subsequent church fathers make a blanket condemnation" (pg. 152).

- B. Many other authorities might be cited but these are all outstanding and reliable so that our point is well-established historically. Instrumental music was not introduced into Christian worship until around 670 A.D. It did not become a general practice until several hundred years after that.

IV. OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED

- A. Many arguments are made in favor of instrumental music, such as: "Where does the Bible say not to use it?", "They had it in the Old Testament", "Harps are mentioned in Revelation", "You have lights, pews, tuning forks, buildings, song books, etc. If these are permissible why isn't instrumental music", "the words 'psallo' and 'psalmos' mean to sing and play", "instrumental music is just an aid", etc.
- B. Specific answers could be given to each one of these objections. However, for the sake of brevity in these lessons, we choose to lump them all together and ans-

wer them all with one point. If any of these arguments prove that instrumental music should be in Christian worship, it is strange that the apostles of Christ did not know it. There is no mention of instrumental music in worship in the New Testament. History abundantly sustains that it was not in the worship of the early church. It was available and the Jews had been accustomed to it in their temple worship, and the heathen in theirs, yet it found no place in Christian worship. If any argument for instrumental music is valid it would have been known by the apostles who were "guided into all truth" (John 16:13) and they would have placed the instrument in worship. Since they didn't, the arguments are not valid and do not fall in the realm of divine truth. Instrumental music has no Biblical authority and therefore is not used by churches of Christ.

Fruits Of Evolution

Jess Willis

This is the last of four articles on "evolution."

The theory of evolution is food upon which atheism and agnosticism thrive. When people are convinced that they have just evolved from a beast and that there is really no difference except the ability to communicate and think, they see no reason for living on a higher moral standard. Evolution is producing a distressingly negative effect upon the world. Some of the most obvious trends of our day are :

1. The trend toward materialism with less concern for spiritual matters.
2. The trend away from the moral principles taught in the Bible and toward a greater and greater degree of permissiveness.

3. The trend toward more and more crime, until crime is presently rising many times faster than the population is growing.

4. The trend away from respect for all forms of authority, including parent, teacher, church, and government.

5. The trend toward less and less self-discipline.

6. The trend toward more atheism and the loss of religious faith.

I believe the widespread teaching and general acceptance of the evolutionary hypothesis is responsible in a major way to these trends. When one does not believe that there is a God who created this world, considers himself to be only a thinking beast, thinks there will be no judgment, or life after this one he has little or no reason for self-discipline. Such a person will live to his own pleasure regardless of who gets hurt. This is why we read of children being deserted, property is stolen, people are beaten, abused, and killed. Evolution says, "Man is in a state of evolving and will some day surpass these harmful traits." But crime is still growing faster than the population.

The Bible is the answer, its fruits are love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance : against such there is no law. Beloved friends let us at least go back to the Bible and live by it for sanity in human relationship.

"Win A Prize" Bible Quiz, No. 6

Quizmaster, Vipul Rai

ALL THOSE WHO SEND IN ALL CORRECT ANSWERS WITH ALL CORRECT SCRIPTURE REFERENCE/S WILL RECEIVE A FREE BOOK SEND YOUR ANSWERS WITHIN TWO WEEKS TO THE QUIZMASTER, SOUTH EXTENSION 2, NEW DELHI-110049.

1. Which Minor Prophet (Hosea to Malachi) saw a vision of a basket of summer fruit ?
2. Give the chapter in which Jesus prayed for the unity of his disciples.
3. Simon the Sorcerer was commanded to repent and pray that his sins may be forgiven. At this time Simon was not a Christian. True or False.
4. Why was woman created ? Hint : Corinthians.
5. What must one do before one can believe ? Hint : Romans.
6. Who told Cornelius what he must do to be saved ?
(a) The Lord. (b) An Angel. (c) Peter. (d) Paul.
7. Give a passage condemning division in the church.
8. Which New Testament book describes a number of conversions ?
9. Christ is the head of the church. True or False. Give two references proving your answer.
10. Baptism is connected with salvation. True or False. Give two verses at least.

ANSWERS TO QUIZ NO. 5

1. Jeroboam, 2 Kings 14:16. 2. Proverbs 22:6. 3. To see if these things were so, Acts 17:11. 4. Word of God, Ephesians 6:17. 5. Good news of Jesus, Acts 8:35. 6. Avoid them, Romans 16:17. 7. With joy, Luke 15:10. 8. Confess our sin, 1 John 1:9. 9. Teaching human doctrines, Matthew 15:9. 10. True, Matthew 3:16; John 3:23; Acts 8:26-40; Romans 6:4,5; Colossians 2:12.

क्या मृतक जीवित हो सकते हैं?

लेखक : सनी भाई

यद्यपि अधिकांश लोग मृत्यु के विचार तक से दूर रहना चाहते हैं, कुछ तो इस विषय पर बात भी नहीं करना चाहते क्योंकि इस से उन्हें दुख व डर का अनुभव होता है। परन्तु तौ भी हम सब जानते हैं कि जिस प्रकार से यह सच है कि आज हम जीवित हैं ठीक वैसे ही यह भी सत्य है कि एक दिन हमें मरना है। किन्तु जब भी कोई मृत्यु शब्द को सुनता है तो उसे एक धक्का सा लगता है ! अपने किसी मरते हुए सम्बन्धी अथवा मित्र को बचाने के लिये हम अपना धन, समय, व जो कुछ भी हमारे पास होता है खर्च कर देते हैं। परन्तु यह वास्तविकता बनी ही रहती है कि हम सब को एक न एक दिन अवश्य ही मरना है।

परन्तु, एक अत्यन्त ही चौंका देनेवाली वास्तविकता यह है कि अधिकांश लोग जो आज जीवित हैं वास्तव में वे मरे हुए हैं ! वे अपने पापों में, अर्थात् आत्मिक भाव से, मरे हुए हैं, ठीक उसी प्रकार से जैसे कि आदम व हव्वा, पहला पुरुष व पहली स्त्री, आरम्भ में मर गए थे। वे इस वास्तविकता को कोई महत्त्व नहीं देते क्योंकि वे अपने शरीर (बाहरी व्यक्तित्व) की अधिक चिन्ता करते हैं, परन्तु अपनी आत्मा की, जो कि भीतरी सच्चाई है, कुछ परवाह नहीं करते। मृत्यु के विषय में वे केवल शारीरिक भाव से ही विचार करते हैं तथा आत्मिक रूप से नहीं।

बाइबल में उत्पत्ति की पुस्तक यू' वर्णन करती है, कि सृष्टि की रचना करने के बाद, "यहोवा परमेश्वर ने आदम को भूमि की मिट्टी से रचा और उसके नथनों में जीवन का श्वास फूंक दिया; और आदम जीवता प्राणी बन गया।" (उत्पत्ति २:७)। इसलिये, आत्मा होने के नाते हम हमेशा तक रहेंगे। परन्तु शरीर का, जो कि भूमि की मिट्टी से रचा गया था, क्या होगा ? बाइबल, इस विषय में, कहती है, "तब मिट्टी ज्यों की त्यों मिट्टी में मिल जाएगी, और आत्मा परमेश्वर के पास जिसने उसे दिया लौट जाएगी।" (समोपदेशक १२:७)। इन वास्तविकताओं को ध्यान में रखते हुए अवश्य ही हमें बहुत अधिक गम्भीरता से अपनी आत्माओं के विषय में विचार करना चाहिए, परन्तु मनुष्य ने, आरम्भ से, प्रायः ऐसा कमी नहीं किया।

बाइबल, परमेश्वर की पुस्तक, हमें बताती है कि आरम्भ में किस प्रकार से आदम और हव्वा, शारीरिक रूप से जीवित रहते हुए भी, आत्मिक भाव से मर गए। जब परमेश्वर ने आदम व हव्वा को बनाया तो उसने उन्हें अदन में

एक सुन्दर बाग में रखा, और उसने आज्ञा दी, व आदम से कहा, "कि तू बाटिका के सब वृक्षों का फल बिना खटके खा सकता है : पर भले - व बुरे के ज्ञान का जो वृक्ष है, उसका फल तू कभी न खाना : क्योंकि जिस दिन तू उसका फल खाए उसी दिन अवश्य मर जाएगा ।" परन्तु, अभी कुछ ही समय बीता था कि, शैतान, एक सर्प के रूप में, स्त्री के पास आया तथा उससे कहा कि यदि-तुम भले व बुरे के ज्ञान के वृक्ष में से फल खाओगे तो तुम निश्चय न मरोगे परन्तु ऐसा करने से तुम परमेश्वर के तुल्य बन जाओगे । स्त्री ने, शैतान की बातों में फंस कर, उस फल को देखा, व पाया कि वह अच्छा और देखने में मनभाऊ है, तब उस ने उस में से तोड़कर खाया; और अपने पति को भी दिया, और उस ने भी खाया ।

इस तरह से, संसार में पहले पुरुष व पहली स्त्री ने परमेश्वर की आज्ञा को ठीक वही करके तोड़ा जिसे उस ने करने को उन्हें मना किया था । परमेश्वर की आज्ञा का उलंघन करके, आदम तथा हव्वा ने परमेश्वर के प्रति पाप किया, और इस कारण उसने उन्हें अपनी समीपता व उस बाटिका में से सदैव के लिये बाहर निकाल दिया । आदम और हव्वा दोनों मर गए! जी हां, वे उस समय मर गए जब कि वे जीवित थे ! वे आत्मिक भाव से मर गए क्योंकि उन्होंने सर्वशक्तिमान् परमेश्वर की आज्ञा को तोड़ा । इस चौंका देनेवाली वास्तविकता का वर्णन बाइबल की सबसे पहली पुस्तक में मिलता है ।

परमेश्वर की आज्ञा का उलंघन करना ही पाप है (१ यूहन्ना ३:४) । तब क्या आदम व हव्वा ने परमेश्वर की आज्ञा का उलंघन नहीं किया ? निःसंदेह, उन्होंने किया । इसलिये उन्होंने परमेश्वर के प्रति पाप किया, तथा परिणामस्वरूप वे मर गए; "क्योंकि पाप की मजदूरी तो मृत्यु है" (रोमियों ६:२३) ।

स्वर्ग से परमेश्वर ने पृथ्वी पर देखा और पाया, "कि कोई धर्मी नहीं, एक भी नहीं" "इसलिये कि सब ने पाप किया है और परमेश्वर की महिमा से रहित हैं ।" (रोमियों ३:१०, २३) । क्या आपने सुना ? वह कहता है, सब ने पाप किया है । अब, जबकि सबने पाप किया है तब इसका अभिप्राय यह हुआ कि सब मरे हुए हैं, क्योंकि पाप की मजदूरी मृत्यु है, तथा पाप मृत्यु को उत्पन्न करता है (याकूब १:१५) । परन्तु मृत्यु क्या है ? मृत्यु का मतलब अलग होना है । आत्मा का शरीर से अलग हो जाना शारीरिक मृत्यु को

उत्पन्न करता है। आदम तथा हव्वा ने परमेश्वर की आज्ञा का विरोध किया, और अपने पाप के कारण वे अपने बनानेवाले, सर्वशक्तिमान् परमेश्वर से अलग हो गए। इस कारण, अब वे जीवित न रहे, वे आत्मिक रूप से मर गए।

परमेश्वर जानता है कि सब मनुष्य पापी हैं, और यह भी कि वे अपने कामों व प्रयत्नों से अपने आपको नहीं बचा सकते। उस ने देखा कि मनुष्य को एक उद्धारकर्ता की आवश्यकता है। बाइबल कहती है कि, “प्रभु तुम्हारे विषय में धीरज धरता है, और नहीं चाहता, कि कोई नाश हो; बरन यह कि सब को मन फिराव का अवसर मिले।” (२ पतरस ३:६)। इस वास्तविकता के विपरीत कि मनुष्य सदैव परमेश्वर की इच्छा का विरोध करता रहा, परमेश्वर ने उसे बचाना चाहा।

परमेश्वर की उद्धार की योजनानुसार, उस ने अपने एकलौते पुत्र, यीशु को इस पापी संसार में भेजा, ताकि उसके द्वारा सब मनुष्यों का उद्धार हो। यीशु मनुष्य और परमेश्वर का मेल कराने को आया; वह मनुष्य को हमेशा का जीवन देने के लिये आया। बाइबल, रोमियों ६:२३ में यह बताने के बाद कि पाप की मजदूरी मृत्यु है, कहती है, “परन्तु परमेश्वर का बरदान हमारे प्रभु मसीह यीशु में अनन्त जीवन है।” यीशु स्वर्ग से हमेशा का जीवन लेकर आया। उस ने स्वयं कहा, “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।” (यूहन्ना ३:१६)।

यीशु मसीह ने एक निष्पाप व पवित्र जीवन व्यतीत किया। केवल वही एक सिद्ध व्यक्ति था जो कभी भी पृथ्वी पर रहा हो। वह आप के और मेरे लिये मरने के लिये आया। पवित्रशास्त्र बताता है, “परन्तु परमेश्वर हम पर अपने प्रेम की भलाई इस रीति से प्रगट करता है, कि जब हम पापी ही थे तभी मसीह हमारे लिये मरा।” (रोमियों ५:८)। हाँ, यीशु मसीह पापियों के लिये मरा। यीशु मसीह के लिये परमेश्वर की यही इच्छा थी कि वह दुख उठाए और अपने आप को एक सिद्ध बलिदान करके सब संसार के पापों के लिये दे दे। इसलिये, पवित्रशास्त्र के अनुसार, वह परमेश्वर की ठहराई हुई मनसा और होनहार के ज्ञानानुसार पकड़वाया गया, व अधर्मियों के हाथों से क्रूस पर चढ़वा कर मार डाला गया। यीशु मसीह के बारे में, फिलिप्पियों २:८ में, बाइबल यूँ कहती है कि उसने, “मनुष्य के रूप में प्रगट होकर अपने आप को दीन किया,

और यहाँ तक आज्ञाकारी रहा, कि मृत्यु, हाँ क्रूस की मृत्यु भी सह ली।” और फिर बाइबल बताती है कि उसकी मृत्यु के बाद, उसे एक कब्र में गाड़ दिया गया, परन्तु यह अनहोना था कि वह उसके वश में रहता, क्योंकि परमेश्वर ने उसे मृत्यु के बन्धनों से छुड़ाकर जिला दिया। (प्रेरितों २:२४)। हाँ यह एक महान् सत्य है कि यीशु मसीह मुरदों में से जी उठा, और वह अब हमेशा तक जीवित रहेगा ! जी उठने के बाद यीशु अपने पिता, परमेश्वर के पास वापस चला गया। परमेश्वर तथा मनुष्य के मध्य केवल वही एक बिच-वई है।

परमेश्वर के पुत्र, यीशु मसीह ने मृत्यु को, जो परमेश्वर की आज्ञा का विरोध करने के कारण संसार में आई, नाश कर दिया। अब वह सारे जगत के पापों का प्रायश्चित्त है। (१ यूहन्ना २:२)। इब्रानियों की पत्री के पाँच अध्याय के नौ पद में बाइबल कहती है, कि वह, “सिद्ध बन कर अपने सब आज्ञा माननेवालों के लिये सदा-काल के उद्धार का कारण हो गया।” इस पर ध्यान दें कि, परमेश्वर की आज्ञा का विरोध करके, मनुष्य संसार में पाप लाया, और पाप ने मृत्यु को उत्पन्न किया, परन्तु यीशु अपने पिता, परमेश्वर की आज्ञा को मानकर संसार में अनन्त जीवन लाया। यीशु मसीह ने मृत्यु को नाश कर दिया। अब वह हमारे पापों का प्रायश्चित्त व सदा-काल के उद्धार का कारण है। परन्तु, किसके लिये वह सदा काल के उद्धार का कारण हो गया ? परमेश्वर, अपने वचन में, कहता है, “अपने सब आज्ञा माननेवालों के लिये।”

मित्र, यदि आपने यीशु मसीह की आज्ञाओं को नहीं माना है तो आप खोए हुए हैं, आप आशारहित, व सर्वशक्तिमान् परमेश्वर के बिना हैं, और इसलिये अपने पापों में मरे हुए हैं। केवल यीशु मसीह ही। आपको बचा सकता है, आपको आशा दे सकता है, आपका मेल परमेश्वर से करा सकता है, तथा आपको स्वर्ग में अनन्त जीवन दे सकता है।

याद रखें, आपकी आत्मा अत्यन्त बहुमूल्य है। परमेश्वर के लिये यह इतनी बहुमूल्य थी कि उस ने इसे बचाने के लिये अपने एकलौते पुत्र को दे दिया। और मसीह के लिये यह इतनी अधिक महत्त्वपूर्ण थी कि उसने आपकी नाश होती हुई आत्मा को बचाने के लिये अपने प्राण तक दे दिये ! मित्र, आपके निकट इसका क्या महत्त्व है ? यीशु ने कहा, “यदि मनुष्य सारे जगत को प्राप्त करे, और अपने प्राण की हानि उठाए, तो उसे क्या लाभ होगा ? या मनुष्य अपने प्राण के बदले में क्या देगा ?” (मत्ती १६:२६)।

वास्तव में, मसीह आपको बचा सकता है, परन्तु यदि आप बचना चाहें। यह याद रखें कि वह सदा-काल के उद्धार का कारण हो गया, परन्तु, अपने सब आज्ञा माननेवालों के लिये। क्या आप मुक्ति प्राप्त करना चाहते हैं? तब क्या आप मसीह की आज्ञाओं को मानेंगे? आईए अब मसीह, उद्धारकर्ता, की आज्ञाओं को सुनें, उस ने कहा, “...यदि तुम विश्वास न करोगे कि मैं वही हूँ, तो अपने पापों में मरोगे।” (यूहन्ना ८:२४)। और “... यदि तुम मन न फिराओगे तो तुम सब भी इसी रीति से नाश होगे।” (लूका १३:३)। उस ने आगे कहा, “जो कोई मनुष्यों के सामने मुझे मान लेगा, उसे मैं भी अपने स्वर्गीय पिता के सामने मान लूंगा।” (मत्ती १०:३२)। और फिर उस ने कहा, “जो विश्वास करे और बपतिस्मा ले उसी का उद्धार होगा, परन्तु जो विश्वास न करेगा वह दोषी ठहराया जाएगा।” (मरकुस १६:१६) या इसे हम यूँ कह सकते हैं, कि उद्धार या मुक्ति प्राप्त करने के लिये, यीशु मसीह में विश्वास करना चाहिए, अपने पापों से मन फिराना चाहिए, यीशु मसीह में अपने विश्वास का अंगीकार करना चाहिए, और बपतिस्मा लेना, अर्थात् पापी के अन्दर गाड़े जाना, चाहिए। उद्धार पाने के बाद, मसीह उस व्यक्ति को अपनी कलीसिया में मिला लेता है, बाइबल बताती है कि कलीसिया उद्धार पाए हुए लोगों का एक समूह है। जिसका प्रधान (सिर) मसीह स्वयं है। (प्रेरितों २:४७; कुलुस्सियों १:१८) और जो लोग मृत्यु तक, (अन्त तक) विश्वासी बने रहेंगे, यीशु ने कहा, वे जीवन का मुकुट प्राप्त करेंगे (प्रकाशितवाक्य २:१०)।

हाँ, वास्तव में, मृतक जीवित हो सकते हैं। परमेश्वर ने, यीशु मसीह के द्वारा, यह सम्भव कर दिया है। किन्तु, हम में से हर एक को अपने-अपने लिये यह निश्चय करना है कि क्या हम अपने पापों में मरे रहना चाहते हैं, या प्रतिदिन सर्वशक्तिमान् परमेश्वर की उपस्थिति में हमेशा के लिये रहना चाहते हैं। यह अवश्य याद रहे कि केवल दो ही स्थान हैं जहाँ पर आत्माएँ अनन्तकाल बिताएँगी, या तो स्वर्ग में, अर्थात् परमेश्वर के साथ, या नरक में, जहाँ अनन्तकाल का दण्ड मिलता है। जो लोग अपने आप को नरक में पाएँगे वे केवल अपने को ही दोष दे सकते हैं, क्योंकि परमेश्वर की इच्छा किसी भी आत्मा के लिए यह नहीं है। अब, क्या आप सदा के लिये परमेश्वर के साथ स्वर्ग में रहना चाहेंगे? या आप नरक में हमेशा का दण्ड भोगना चाहेंगे? आप ही निश्चय कीजिए।

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