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Editor, J. C. CHOATE

Associate Editor, SUNNY
DAVID

Staff Writers :

Vipul Rai, K. Matthew, Bangalore, Karnataka.

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EDITORIAL

What is a Local Congregation ?

It is amazing to think that so many people who claim to believe the Bible, and claim to be members of the church, do not even know what the church is. I am not speaking of denominational people at this time because it is certain that they don't know what it is or else they wouldn't be in some man-made organization to begin with. Rather, I am talking about Christians and members of the church of Christ who are ignorant of the church. It makes one wonder if a lot of those who claim to be members really are members, if it is possible to be members of something that they don't even know about or understand. Let us therefore begin this study by attempting to learn what the church is.

The term church comes from the Greek word *ekklesia* and it means "the called out." That is, the church consists of a group of people who have been called out of the world by Christ to serve him. They are spoken of in the scriptures as the saved (Acts 2:47), as Christians (Acts 11:26), as the body of Christ (Ephesians 1:22-23), as the house of God (1 Timothy 3:15), as the kingdom of Christ (Colossians 1:13), and so on.

The word church is used in the New Testament in two senses. It is spoken of in the general or universal sense as the church and this term incorporates all of the many congregations or local congregations throughout the whole world. That is, any time the church is spoken of and the scriptures do not mean the local congregation, then it is the church universal that is under consideration. For instance, when Christ said, "I will build my church", in Matthew 16:18 this was the way in which he was speaking of the church. In this case he was not thinking about a specific location of the church but the church as it would exist throughout the world. That church is the called out, the saved, the body of Christ wherever it is found in the world. It is the one that was built by Christ, the one that wears his name and the one over which he is the head. (Colossians 1:18). The word church is also used in the local sense. The church universal is made up of hundreds and thousands of local congregations all over the world but the local congregation is made up of a specific local group of Christians. It is simply the saved of the local community. Paul spoke of a group of local congregations when he was writing to the church at Rome and he said, "The churches of Christ salute you." (Romans 16:16). Likewise, Paul spoke of the local church or congregation at Corinth (1 Corinthians 1:2), the local congregation at Thessalonica (1 Thessalonians 1:1), and so on with others. Now isn't that simple? That is all there is to it! The local congregation is made up of a group of local people who have obeyed Christ and the universal church is made up of all the combined local congregations around the world. But for you and me, if we have obeyed the Lord and are Christians, it is necessary for us to be members of a local congregation since we have to settle down and live somewhere. But while we are members of the local church in one place, on the other side of the world, or wherever it may be that people have obeyed the Lord, the local church exists there also. Then all of us together are able to say that we are in fellowship with one another, that we are brethren, and that we can work together, and when we travel we can visit with one another, because we are all members of

the same church, the Lord's church, the universal church of Christ.

Let me go on to assure you, however, that the church of which I am speaking is not a meeting house, a political organization, a social club, a denomination, or any other kind of man-made organization or society. Instead, as already pointed out, and for emphasis' sake I will explain once more, that the church is the church of Christ, or the church that belongs to Christ; that the saved, Christians, a group of human beings who have obeyed Christ and who continue to follow Christ in the way that he specifies in his word make up the church.

But let's not stop with this. Let us go on now to talk a little more about the local congregation and to try to explain what it is, where it meets, what its work is, etc. This is altogether necessary since so many do not know what a local congregation is or what its functions are. Let's suppose the Lord's church does not exist in a certain city, a fact that is true of many cities throughout India. But a preacher of the gospel goes in and he begins to make friends and to arrange some meetings in various homes. As a result of these meetings, a few of these people believe in the Lord, repent of their sins, confess Christ as the Son of God, and express their desire to be buried in the water for the remission of their sins. Now when this is done, if they have obeyed from the heart as the scriptures teach, then the Lord saves them and adds them to the church. So you have the beginning of the church in that city. It may begin with only two or three or five or ten members. But whatever the number, the church has had its beginning. Now what happens? The first thing these new Christians must think about is beginning to assemble on the Lord's day for the purpose of worship. They can meet in the home of one of the members, in a hall, in a school building or wherever they can find a place where they can assemble for worship. (Acts 2:42; Acts 20:7; Philemon 2). Each member should make it a point to meet (Hebrews 10:25) every Lord's Day to partake of the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:23-28),

to sing (Ephesians 5:19), to study God's word (2 Timothy 2:15), to pray (1 Thessalonians 5:17), and to give. (1 Corinthians 16:2). Perhaps during this time others can be invited in study and in time some of them may want to obey the Lord. So the local congregation is growing.

This newly formed congregation should do things in decency and in order. It should be understood that according to the teaching of the Bible the men are to take the public lead in worship. The women of the congregation can teach other women as well as the children, but they are not to have authority over men. (1 Timothy 2:11,12). The men should have a business meeting at least once a month to plan the work and to discuss the business of the church. At that time they should decide who will teach the classes and who will take the lead in the preaching. Maybe one or more could participate in this by taking turns. Also, two of the men should be chosen to see after the collections taken up each Sunday and they should be responsible for records on what is taken up and should make it available when asked to do so. Decisions may have to be made about the purchase of Bibles, obtaining tracts and other materials from sister congregations, and so on. Other decisions may have to be made on where to meet, the need to conduct special meetings to help the work to grow, the possibility of helping certain members who have physical needs, and any other matters that may arise.

A local congregation therefore is a local group of saved people who are Christians only and who are gathering for worship on a regular basis and who are endeavouring to carry on a program of work for their own spiritual growth and in order to help the congregation to grow as the word of God is taught and souls are saved and are added to it. This is what the Lord wants...a group of people who are worshipping the Father, and who are growing and spreading.

Now what is your idea of a local congregation? What kind of a congregation are you a part of at this time? Do you feel that you are an active part of it? Is it alive, functioning, and at work for the Lord? Please study the congregations of

the New Testament and see what they did. Of course in time if such a congregation as I spoke about continues to grow and develop, and it has men who are qualified (1 Timothy 3; Titus 1), it will want to choose two or more of its male members to serve as deacons. With them giving leadership to the work, then this local congregation should be well on its way to being in position to accomplish more and more for the Lord in its own city and to have a part in reaching out to other areas in an attempt to spread the gospel of Christ. This, then, is the kind of congregation that the Lord wants.

ASSOCIATE EDITORIAL

A Challenge

I as a gospel preacher have often found myself among such people who sincerely profess to be Christians, and even leaders in their particular sects, but they would not allow me to preach the gospel of Christ to them or to their people. My recent experience of this kind was in the Punjab where I had an opportunity to visit some of the so-called Christian institutions. Often the excuse is made that you and your brethren do not preach exactly what we believe to be the truth. Some of them would point to our literature and specially to "The Bible Teacher" and that we publish in it articles contrary to the teachings of the Bible.

But actually speaking, these are, in fact, their excuses and not reasons for disallowing us, as gospel preachers, to preach the Bible in their institutions, etc. I admit the fact that we do not preach and teach according to what the majority of so-called Christians and churches believe and practise. And no doubt, it is the chief reason responsible for their attitude toward us. It is not because we teach contrary to the Bible's revelation, but because of the fact that we preach contrary to their belief, and what they feel to be the truth. It is just like Paul and other disciples on several occasions were disallowed to continue their ministry because people said they preached not according to their belief.

The second reason is that people do not want to change. They do not have courage to step out of their old shells and put on Christ in reality, and thus to be a Christian only, without being a member of any denomination or organization. It is an established fact that majority of people in the so-called churches of today are aware of the existence of too much denominationalism, division and faction, which is caused by human doctrines and creeds. But, alas, yet they do not want to accept our plea for completely going back to the Bible. No doubt, some of them may, with their lips, say that it sounds reasonable, and that this is what we all need to do today. But in their heart they reject it. Like I have said, they do not have courage to change. They would prefer to stay in their denominational type of religion, even though they may realize that they are not according to what the Bible teaches.

It has been reasoned that we should not condemn or oppose the errors that are being taught and practised among so-called Christians and churches. But, I ask, why? Is it because of the fact that they call themselves Christians, and have accepted some form of Christianity and thus profess to be the religious people? People think that as long as they are religious, no matter what way they practice it, they are safe. But let me remind you of the fact that religion is not a token for heaven. You may be trying to be Christian in your own efforts, and even supposedly trying to do many things in the name of Christ, yet if you are not doing the will of the Lord, as revealed perfectly in the New Testament, all your efforts, no doubt, sincerely made, would be in vain, and instead of entering into heaven you will end up in hell. (Matthew 7:21-27).

When Christ was upon earth the Jews or Israelites were God's chosen people at that time. They had the law of God and were supposedly following God. But on several occasions Jesus had to condemn them, and also their religious leaders, i. e. Pharisees, Saducees, and scribes, because of their errors. (See Matthew 15: 1-9 and chapter 23).

Today, Gospel preachers also need to be courageous and bold enough to reprove, rebuke, and exhort people with all

longsuffering and teaching. Preachers should never be respecter of persons, but they should always preach the truth as revealed in the Bible, whether people like it or not. But alas, most of the preachers today are not this way. They want to preach what people like to hear, or what they have been taught in their so-called seminaries of Bible Schools, rather than to proclaim what the Bible actually teaches. I have met many preachers or teachers who would admit that they have been wrong in their preaching and teaching, but would not want to change because of the fear they would lose their job, or people would no longer respect them if they do so. Paul truly said of such preachers that they serve not the Lord Jesus Christ but their own belly. (Romans 16:18).

Preachers today have a great challenge, and the most serious responsibility of preaching the Word of God in its purity. I wish that every preacher today would become like Timothy and take the charge of the Apostle Paul personally, "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the living and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom: Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when people will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry." (II Timothy 4:1-5).

And now, finally, I would extend this challenge to all of those people who think that our preaching and teaching is not according to the Bible. First, you should take your Bible and with an open mind compare our teaching with God's word. And then, if you would like to discuss any subject with me personally or through correspondence, I shall be very happy to do so.

The Authority Of Jesus Christ

Nehemiah Gootam

Disobedience is the tendency of humanity. It has been true from the patriarchal age of Adam down to the present Christian age. At one time Jesus Christ was teaching in the temple and the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him and said, "By what authority doest thou these things? And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one question, which if ye tell me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John whence was it? from heaven or from men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying if we shall say from men; we fear the multitude; for all hold John as a prophet. And they answered Jesus and said, we know not. He also said unto them, neither tell I you by what authority I do these things." Mt. 21:23-27. In other words, these people are trying to disobey the authority of Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ has authority. He got it from God because Jesus Christ is His son. And in fact, God acknowledged him so when he was baptized by John the baptist at the river Jordan. "A voice out of the heavens saying, this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased." Mt. 3:17. Also God told us to "HEAR HIS SON". Jesus was transfigured on the mount before Peter, James and John. There appeared Moses and Elijah talking with Jesus. Peter wanted to build three tabernacles, one for Jesus, one for Moses, and the other for Elijah. But God intervened and said, "This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased, HEAR YE HIM". Mt. 17:1-5. If God says that we should hear Jesus, it is a proof that Jesus has authority and the one that said hear ye him has given him that authority. God gave him "ALL AUTHORITY" for Jesus Christ declared soon after his resurrection, "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth". Mt. 28:18.

Jesus Christ establishes his authority by his commands. He commanded us, "To go and make disciples of all the nations baptising them in to the name of the father and the son

and of the holy spirit, teaching them to observe all things what soever I commanded you.....". Mt. 28:18-20. Likewise he gave us innumerable commands in all the New Testament. And we should obey all of his commands. Observing the Lord's supper in his remembrance is also one of his commands. 1 Cor. 11: 25. This divine institution was instituted by him on the night he was betrayed. "Jesus took bread and blessed it and broke it and he gave to the disciples and said, take eat, this is my body. And he took the cup and gave thanks and gave to them saying, drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many unto remission of sins". Mt. 26: 26-28. And nothing more was said as to the frequency with which it was to be observed when the Lord instituted it. But the apostles were afterwards guided by the Holy Spirit in this and observed it on the first day of the week. "And upon the first day of the week when we gathered together to break bread....." Act. 20: 7. Their example is our guide. Also we see the early church at Jerusalem how they "continued steadfastly in the apostles teaching and fellowship in the BREAKING OF BREAD and the prayers". Act. 2: 42. Paul speaking about the same institution said, "Let a man examine HIMSELF and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup." 1 Cor. 11:28.

So by the above passages we learn that Christ wanted us to observe the Lord's Supper on every first day of the week and while we do so, each man must examine himself.

People disobey God even in the present Christian age. So they changed the pattern set forth by our Lord. They started observing the Lord's supper on every month or once in three months or once in a year. Also they started a new system of examining others that participate in it. This is disobeying the authority of Jesus. They are not only disobeying this command but many of his commands like baptism, worship, church government, etc., are vastly disobeyed. They say you are saved even before your baptism. But the Bible says you are saved after your baptism. Mk. 16:16, Acts 2:38, 1 Pet. 3:21. Also some sprinkle for baptism instead of immersion

in water. Rom. 6:1-5. Some use instrumental music in the church worship instead of mere singing. Eph. 5:19, Col. 3:16. The New Testament church never used instrumental music in their worship. Some brought in Boards, Synods and Councils to govern the church, instead of it being overseen by its own Elders or Bishops (Titus 1:7; Acts 20:17-27) and Deacons. 1 Tim. 3:13.

This is a plain attempt of rejecting the authority of Jesus. Apostle John says in his epistle, "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ hath not God; he that abideth in the teaching the same hath both the father and the son" 2 Jn. 9.

So friends, let us all submit to his authority. Quit making changes of the Lord's pattern and then abide only by his teaching to be with the father and the son. And thus do not have to face the consequences that Adam and others did in that age because of their disobedience.

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THE GODHEAD

The religious world speaks of God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit as the trinity. The word trinity does not appear in the Bible but the concept, the idea of three divine personalities, is there. You also may find a trinity in other religions such as in Hinduism, but that does not mean at all that one of these religions is related to the other. Although we do not read of trinity, as such, in the scriptures we do read of the Godhead which amounts to the same. This expression is found three times in the New Testament and means "the deity."

The first time the term Godhead is mentioned Paul is speaking to a group of idolatrous people, and after pointing to the God of heaven as the creator of all things, he says, "Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device." (Acts 17:29). The next time it is mentioned, the same person is speaking to the Romans about how they had turned from God and had begun to worship the creature more than the creator. Then he said, "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse." (Romans 1:20). Finally, Paul says to the Colossians: "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principalities and power." (Colossians 2:8-10).

There are those who teach that Jesus was at the same time, God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit. These individuals are often spoken of as "Jesus only" people. This is clearly a false doctrine when you study the scriptures because they distinctly speak of God the Father, Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit. For instance, Paul says in Ephesians 4:1-6 that there is one of each. In John 17 we have Christ speaking to his Father and in John 16:13 he promises to send the Comforter or the Holy

Spirit. In Matthew 28: 19, 20 we have Christ teaching that those who obey his teachings must be baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. In 1 John 5:7 John says that there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the word, and the Holy Spirit. In Matthew 17:5 God acknowledges his Son from heaven. In John 1 Christ is spoken of as the word who came down from God. When Christ was baptized by John the record says that the Spirit descended on him like a dove and that the Father spoke from heaven to express his approval of his son. (Matthew 3:13-17). Surely, therefore, these many references would indicate that there are indeed three in the Godhead.

Next, there are those who say that there are three Gods, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. It is true that all three of them are deity and therefore all have divine attributes but at the same time they are not spoken of as three distinct Gods competing with each other or even with each having his own distinctive work. Instead, the Bible teaches us that there is one God, one Lord, and one Spirit. (Ephesians 4:1-6). There are three personalities but at the same time they are one. John says this in 1 John 5:7. Christ said in speaking to the Father concerning the apostles and those who would obey him through their word, "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one." (John 17:21, 22). Even as far back as Genesis 1:1 we read, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." We are told that the Hebrew word for God in this verse includes all three in the Godhead. We read on how God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." (Genesis 1:26). Whom was God including in that statement? It is obvious that Christ and the Holy Spirit were included here.

It is true that as human beings we don't fully understand the Godhead. To begin, we cannot with human minds under-

stand their eternal nature. Next, we are not able to fully comprehend the Father-Son relationship. For instance, when did Christ become the Son? Then the Holy Spirit and his work often confuses us. Although we do not understand all of these things, we accept them by faith. Surely God has given to us all of the information about himself, his Son, and the Holy Spirit that we need. Had we needed any more then he would have revealed that also. Perhaps the reason we don't know more about them and understand them better is because we have not studied enough. Whatever there is to learn, however, is revealed for one and all in the Bible.

Let us now think briefly about each one in the Godhead:

1. God—the Father.

He was in the beginning (Genesis 1:1), the creator of things (Genesis 1-5), the I AM THAT I AM (Exodus 3:14), and beside him there is no other. (Deuteronomy 4:39). He is Spirit (John 4:24), the Father (Matthew 6:9), and the giver of all blessings (James 1:17). He is one. (1 Corinthians 8:6).

2. Christ—the Son.

He was with the Father in creation (Genesis 1:26, 27; 3:22; Hebrews 1:1, 2; John 1; Colossians 1:9-17), was before Abraham (John 8:51-59), and the only one in the Godhead clothed in the flesh. (Philippians 2:6,7). He was born miraculously (Matthew 1; Luke 1), performed miracles (John 3:2; John 20:30, 31), and died for man. (Philippians 2:6,7). He was resurrected and ascended to the Father. (1 Corinthians 15:1-4; Acts 1:9) and thus became man's saviour. (1 Timothy 4:10). Because of his deity and relationship with God, he was also called God (Philippians 2:5-11; John 1) and worshipped as God (Matthew 29:9). Those who obey him are baptized in his name (Matthew 29:19,20; Acts 2:38), enter his spiritual body which is the church (1 Corinthians 12:13; Acts 2:47), wear his name (Acts 11:26; 1 Peter 4:16), and do all things in his name. (Colossians 3:17). There is but one Lord.

(1 Corinthians 8:6). He will come again some day, at which time he will judge all mankind. (John 14:1-3; Acts 17:31; 2 Corinthians 5:10).

3. The Spirit of God—The Holy Spirit.

He is always listed third in the Godhead. He was present with God and Christ in the creation (Genesis 1: 1, 2). Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. (2 Peter 1: 21). Christ promised the Holy Spirit to the apostles (John 16:13), and he came on the day of Pentecost with the beginning of the church. (Acts 2:1-4). We are to be baptized in the name of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19, 20), and upon our obedience we receive him as a gift to dwell within us. (Acts 2:38). As Christians we are to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit. (Galatians 5:22, 23). There is only one Spirit. (Ephesians 4:4).

These are the personalities of the Godhead as revealed in the Bible. We could say much about each one of them but don't forget that there are many false gods, Christs, and spirits. Therefore you need to thoroughly acquaint yourself with the true Godhead lest you be deceived and led off into error.

These are some of the deep things of God. We can know and understand God and Christ and the Holy Spirit and their relationship to one another and their relationship to us only to the extent that God would have us to. We should be content with that. Remember that Paul said: "Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me." (Romans 15:30). And again, he said; "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen." (2 Corinthians 13: 14).

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Define trinity as it is used in the religious world.
2. Does the word trinity appear in the Bible ?

3. Is it unscriptural to use this term ?
4. Do other religions have a trinity ? Does this mean that these religions are related ?
5. The idea of the trinity is expressed in what way in the Bible ?
6. What is the Godhead ?
7. List three scriptures that speak of it.
8. What are some different teachings about God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit ?
9. How can God, Christ and the Holy Spirit be three personalities and yet at the same time be one ?
10. List some scriptures that would teach three distinct personalities in the Godhead.
11. Does the Bible teach that there are three Gods in Christianity ? In what sense can they be said to be Gods ?
12. Can we fully understand the Godhead ? If not, why not ?
13. How are we to accept the Godhead ?
14. Has God given us sufficient information about them ?
15. Give some facts about God.
16. List the outstanding facts about Christ.
17. What does the Bible tell us about the Holy Spirit ?
18. Why must we be acquainted with the members of the Godhead ?
19. Are there false Gods, Christs, etc ? In what sense ?
20. Does the Godhead live today ? Where ? How ?

Bible Questions And Bible Answers

We continue now with the set of questions that we began to answer last month. These questions and comments come from a reader in Eluru, A.P.

QUESTION: What about prostitution and adultery?

The Bible seems to make a distinction between the two. The former was allowed while the latter was condemned as a

sin, while our morality convinces that one is worse than the other.

ANSWER: The scriptures condemn both.

The writer goes on to discuss both prostitution and adultery, using various scriptural quotations, and seemingly attempts to justify both. In concluding remarks on this section, he asks, "So in the light of the above scriptures can we sympathize with the permissive attitudes of western society to sex? Can we welcome or even accept reformative steps towards legalizing the flesh trade by the Government?"

It is true that in the Old Testament in particular there were cases of prostitution and likewise divorce and remarriage were allowed. However, neither was according to God's will. God said concerning prostitution; "Do not prostitute thy daughter, to cause her to be a whore; lest the land fall to whoredom, and the land become full of wickedness." (Leviticus 19:29). Concerning adultery, Christ said: "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." (Matthew 5:27-28). He continued by saying: "It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery." (Matthew 5:31,32). Again, we read: "The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female. And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts

suffered you to put away your wives; but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whose marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery." (Matthew 19:3-9).

Prostitution is the selling of one's self in sexual activity for pay. In no way can such a practice be justified by the scriptures. Neither can such an activity be legally or lawfully practiced in view of what the scriptures teach. Such sin may be allowed by the law of the land or approved by the Government, but it is nevertheless an immoral thing and those who give themselves to it will have to suffer the physical and spiritual consequences.

Adultery occurs when a man or woman takes a companion unlawfully. That is, if one puts away or divorces his wife without any reason (and the only reason allowed is unfaithfulness on the part of the one being divorced) and marries another then he commits adultery, and so does the one that marries him. This would also be true if it was a woman who was divorcing her husband without a scriptural cause, and she married again. In such a case she would be committing adultery and also the one that married her would be committing adultery. Adultery is classified in the scriptures as being a work of the flesh (Galatians 5:19), and those who involve themselves in such immoral acts will be cast into the lake of fire. (Revelation 21:8).

We cannot sympathise with the western part of the world, or any other part of the world, that becomes permissive in sexual and immoral practices. Actually, it is nothing new. It is as old as civilization itself. But whether it be said to be pre-marital, extra-marital, adultery, prostitution, homosexuality, or dozens of other associated immoralities, they are all condemned of God because they are sinful to man, woman, and child, and to society in general. The Lord would have a man to take a wife, or a woman to take a husband, in order to control their sexual urges. Furthermore, it is the Lord's will that they should be faithful to each other as long as they live. No man or Government can improve on God's laws in these matters.

More next month.

Hour of Triumph

Tommy Exum

For the Christian, the end of life is really a commencement ...the beginning of a far grander life than he has ever known. Death in a sense is a graduation which brings honor and rejoicing to the Christian who has "finished his course."

One might well make a comparison between the typical dread with which a student comes to an examination and the feelings of misgiving with which most people draw toward the end of life. While many students do fear and dread examinations, there are actually two attitudes which are possible. In addition to fear and uncertainty, there is also the attitude of eagerness and anticipation, an attitude held by those who have made adequate preparation for the test.

For the diligent student, the time of testing is actually an hour of triumph. The taking of the examination is a kind of challenge, bringing with it all of the rewards that come from a difficult task well done.

Think of the tremendous joy that will come to those who will some day hear the Lord say, "Well done, good and faithful servant...enter thou into the joy of the Lord." (Matthew 25:23).

On the day of the death of a godly man and great Christian leader, his wife said, "Although I will miss him sorely, and the balance of my life will have a great void because of his passing, I am not grieved over his death. This is the finest day of his life...the day for which he had been preparing through all these years." Truly, for the Christian, the hour of death is an hour of triumph!

Since each one of us are on an irreversable course toward the grave would it not be wise that we prepare for the event? To hear people speaking on the subject, you'd think most people feel that they will go on living forever. Such is not the case, of course. Others pass it off saying, "I don't like to talk about it." Such an attitude doesn't solve anything nor does it prepare us for that day which is sure to come.

Heaven has been described as a prepared place for a prepared people. We need have no fear of physical death if we are prepared spiritually. The Bible says: "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord...from henceforth; Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors." Rev. 4:13. Will death be your hour of triumph?

Proper Tuning

Jess Willis

Christ prayed for unity. He declares that Christianity is to be united. However, He does not desire that we compromise and take in doctrines of men just to be united with others. A house divided against itself cannot stand. Religious groups that boast that they have room for all shades of doctrine is like a man saying, "I have room in my body for malignant cancer. It is welcome." Just as surely as the cancer will destroy the physical body, so will the human divergent doctrines destroy the spiritual body.

One does not tune a number of pianos by harmonizing them with each other. One uses a standard pitch (a tuning fork) to tune each piano. This way the pianos will be in tune with all correctly tuned pianos. Tuning divergent Christian groups to each other by measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves with themselves, is not wise (cf 2 Cor. 10:12). It is only when people are tuned with Christ by the Bible that they can be correctly tuned. When a person or a group in any community of the world is correctly tuned with Christ then he will be tuned in harmony with all others that are correctly tuned.

The need of this generation is simply New Testament Christians who believe the Bible, trust Christ as the savior and obey Him as Lord. Are we not all reaching for the Bible? Are we not desiring to please Christ? The teachings that are found in the Bible do not divide Christians. It unites them. It takes the ideas of men, things not found in the Bible, to divide men religiously.

Religious leaders; will you join with us in striving to discard all man-made doctrines and human names which separate us into diversive bands and also join with us in making an effort to go to the Bible for every rule and regulation for Godly living and Christian worship?

The Four Confessions of The New Testament

Mark H. Nunley

In our world today someone is continually demanding that a person make confession to something. Whether it be confession to a crime or of a creed or whatever else, people are called upon to make different confessions. And in the New Testament we find much emphasis placed upon confession. So we want to examine some of the confessions in the Bible at this time.

THE CONFESSION THAT PRECEDES BAPTISM. In Acts 8:35-39 we find an example of this confession being made. Phillip, a preacher, taught a man from Ethiopia the Gospel of Christ. And upon this teaching, the Ethiopian wanted to be baptized. And Phillip told him that he could if he believed with all of his heart that Jesus was God's Son. And we find this man making this confession by saying, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

And this is the confession (and no other one can be substituted) that must precede our baptism into Christ. Therefore confessing our sins, etc., is not scriptural for the baptism that Jesus commands. Concerning this confession we read these words in Rom. 10:9-10, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

THE CHRISTIAN'S LIFE IS A CONFESSION. In Matt. 10:32-33 we read, "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."

Every day of the Christian's life he is called upon either to confess his Lord or to deny the Christ. We are continually tempted to sin, and to give in is to deny our Lord. But to resist temptation and to live the kind of life that the Lord requires is to confess our faith in Jesus every day of our life. And every Christian must set the right kind of examples in his life by obeying the Lord's commandments if he expects to live in the heavenly city some day.

THE ERRING CHRISTIAN'S CONFESSION. After we confess our Jesus and are baptized to wash our sins away even though we diligently attempt to live every day of our life as a confession of our faith in Christ, we are human and will slip and commit sin. But the Lord has provided a means for us to obtain forgiveness. In addressing Christians we find these words in I John 1:7-9, "... the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.... If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

And then we find in I John 2:1, "And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." When the Christian sins, Jesus is our advocate with the Father (God Almighty), and the shed blood of Jesus will continue to wash our sins away so long as we will repent of our sins, (turn away from them) and confess those sins to God in prayer asking for His forgiveness.

THE JUDGMENT DAY CONFESSION. No one can force you to make any of the above confessions. In this life even God is not going to make you do what you ought to do (even though He has the power to do so). But ALL of us will make the judgment day confession without any exception.

Phil. 2:9-11, "Wherefore God hath also highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: That

at the name of Jesus every knee should bow... And every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

On the day of judgment everyone of us shall bow before the Lord, and we shall confess that Jesus is the Lord. I've often wondered what it would be like to not obey God properly in this life and to bow before the King and confess Him as the Lord and then to hear Him say, “Depart from me, you worker of iniquity.” And that thought scares me. And if you are not serving the Lord like you should be, that thought should shake you up a little bit too: Enough to change!

Let us be sure that we are making these first three confessions in our lives, that when we make the fourth confession we'll be telling the truth. Jesus is not our Lord and Savior if we do not give our lives to Him and serve Him faithfully: He is our judge that will condemn us to hell.

“Win A Prize” Bible Quiz, No. 14

Send in all correct answers with references, whenever asked for, and win a book that will be of immense value to you.

Instructions:

1. Your answers must reach us within 15 days of your receiving this magazine.
2. Do not tear out the quiz from your magazine. Neither should you send us the magazine back. Use separate paper.
3. Keep a copy of your answers to enable you to compare them with the given answers in the next issue.
4. All entries must enclose 20 p. in postage stamps. This will cover only part of the postage required to send you your award. Even if your answers are incorrect, this will not be refundable, as the postage you have forfeited will help send the award to the winners.
5. Use King James Version (Authorised) Bible.
6. Follow the above instructions carefully and send your answers to The Quizmaster, P. O. Box 3815, New Delhi 110049.

Quiz No. 14:

1. Where can you find the story of Naaman, the leper.
2. The word "pope" is mentioned in the Bible. True or False? If true, where?
3. Zachaeus said: "I give tithes of all that I possess." True or False?
4. Who was let down at night, in a basket, over the wall of Damascus? Give the verse as well.
5. Find "Choose you this day whom ye will serve."

Answers To Quiz, No. 13:

1. Exodus 20:1-17.
2. Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them, Matthew 7:12.
3. Matthew 28:19-20.
4. Daniel 5.
5. Song of Solomon 6:3.

Who Will Go?

Who will take the gospel to Rajasthan? The capital is the famous pink city of Jaipur. Other well known cities include Udaipur, Jaisalmer, and Jodhpur.

Rajputs or Rajasthanies are well known here in India and the State is noted for its deserts and arid country. The costumes of the local people are very colorful, and so are their handicrafts. But more important are the millions of souls who live there. They need the gospel.

Up to now, as far as we know, about all that has been done to get the gospel to Rajasthan has been through Bible correspondence course work. A number have been enrolled and continue to study through this medium. Also, back in 1969 and 70 a couple from the United States, members of the church, lived in Udaipur and worked with the University of Udaipur. Although they conducted worship services at their home, and perhaps had some studies along with some of the local people, their efforts did not result in the establishment of the church.

All of this is to say that Rajasthan is a State that is in need of the pure gospel of Christ. Either Jaipur or Udaipur would be a good place to begin the work and then to spread out from there. Who will go? How much longer will the people have to wait for someone to come? How many more souls will have to go out into eternity without having heard God's will before someone will come? Perhaps you can answer these questions.

Who Should go?

We have been asking who will go to one place or another in an effort to get members of the church to think in terms of taking the gospel to various mission fields in India. We are already getting some response with different ones saying that they would like to go. However, they are writing to us as though we should send them with the necessary support. Therefore, this article is an attempt to clear up the matter of support before too many conclude that we will send them.

Please understand that we have no support to give any of you. We know of no foreign brethren who can give you any support. Neither will we be trying to contact our brethren in America, Canada, or anywhere else to give you support to preach the gospel where you presently live or anywhere else in India. There must come a time when you are willing to do something for yourself, for your country, and above all, for the Lord. Why should you always look for someone else to do it? There is no faith or sacrifice in this kind of thing. If you go it will have to be for the reason that you want to go, that you can find a way to support yourself, and that you are doing it because you love the Lord and the souls of men. Any other reason for going will meet with failure.

If India is ever to be evangelized it is going to have to be done on the basis that there are those who are so converted to the Lord that they will rise up and find means and ways to take the gospel to every part of this country. It is not, "Who will send me?" but, "I will go." It is not, "I must have foreign support," but rather, "I don't want such support." One must be willing to say, "With the Lord (not with the dollar or rupee) I can do all things."

The thing that is wrong right now is that too much foreign support has been brought into this country in the name of Christ. Too many want their foreign brethren to give, but they themselves give little or nothing. There are worlds of people here who are willing for their foreign brethren to sacrifice, and even demand that they do it, but they are not willing to sacrifice anything themselves. Brethren, men are

making merchandise out of the preaching of the gospel. It becomes merely a job, a way to make a living, with very little results in actual conversions. In other words, foreign support is doing much more harm than good. When Indian brethren become converted to the Lord and begin to preach the gospel for souls instead of a salary, then the gospel will begin to move across this country as never before.

We are not opposed to support, but let it come from local brethren or else get out and go to work to earn your living, and preach as you have the opportunity. Be your own boss. Make your own living. Preach the gospel without having to answer to any man or to report on every baptism. Wake up, brethren.

If you are unable to move to another area under the circumstances that I have described then perhaps you should stay at home for the time being. If your family obligations are such that you cannot go, then that means you **can't** go. If you are in bad health, you would not be worth much to move into a new area to try to begin a new work. If the work where you are is small and still struggling to get established, then maybe you are needed too much where you are to think about leaving. And likewise, if you are a new Christian and you are not well grounded in the truth, then you are not prepared to go.

In thinking about going to a new area to begin the Lord's work, you should certainly not think that to go will be a means of escaping from problems. You should not go expecting it to be easy or that you will be praised and honored for your efforts. And certainly you shouldn't go to merely find something to do.

If you are going to the mission field you should think long about it and pray much over it. You should learn as much about the place as possible, make any contacts you can, think about what you will do to make a living while there, consider the move for yourself and your family and how you will get there. You should have some plan in mind on what you will do once you arrive. You should have some leadership ability. And certainly you should know the truth, how

to teach it to others, and you should be practicing it in your own life.

These are things that you need to take into consideration before going anywhere. Maybe you shouldn't go. Maybe you are not ready to go. But if you are and you are determined to go, and if your going is governed by the suggestions in this article, then no doubt you will do the job that needs to be done. As you consider these things, we will pray for you. We will also be happy to supply you with literature as we have it available. But above all, God will surely bless you and see you through.

Blood Bought

Jess Willis

Christ loved the world so much that he freely and willingly let the people crucify Him. He willingly poured out His blood that through it "who so ever will" may be redeemed. He endured the pain of the cross that He might motivate men to love and obey Him. He became the author of eternal salvation to all that obey Him (cf Heb. 5:9). But without Christ's redemptive blood all would be eternally lost in sin, "for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). "But God commended his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, now being justified by his blood..." (Rom. 5:8-9; cf Mt 26:28; Eph. 1:7-8; Heb. 9:12-14).

But, nothing is gained by the shedding of Christ's blood unless it is contacted. According to John 19:31-34, Jesus was dead when "the soldier with a spear pierced his side, and forth with came there out blood and water." Thus we need to come into contact with the death of Christ that we may come into contact with the saving blood of Christ. Thus we need to go to the only infallible authority to learn how we may come into contact with the death of Christ. The Bible says, "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 ..." (Rom. 6:3,4).

Conclusion : lost man can be saved through Christ's blood which is contacted by one when he is buried by baptism into death. He is also to rise in newness of life to live and worship according to God's instructions. Beloved friends we ask that you come with us back to doing Bible things the Bible way.

आप किस प्रकार के मूर्ख हैं ?

लेखक-एफ० डेविड

मूर्ख तथा मूर्खता, इन दो शब्दों का उपयोग हम उस मनुष्य के लिए करते हैं, जिस मनुष्य को कोई ऐसा कार्य करने के लिए मना किया जाये, परन्तु फिर भी वह उस कार्य को करे। अपने दैनिक जीवन में भी अनेक बार हम मूर्ख शब्द का उपयोग करते हैं।

परमेश्वर का वचन बाइबल भी हमें कुछ ऐसे मूर्खों के विषय में बताता है जो अपनी मूर्खता से अपनी आत्मा को नरक की ओर ले जा रहे हैं। तो आइये उन मूर्खों के विषय में देखें—

(१) मूर्ख ने अपने मन में कहा कोई परमेश्वर है ही नहीं (भजन संहिता १४:१)। अनेक लोग कहते हैं कि कोई परमेश्वर नहीं है। वे कहते हैं कि परमेश्वर नाम की कोई वस्तु है ही नहीं। सब वस्तुएं अपने आप बनी हैं अर्थात् इस सृष्टि का कोई कर्ता नहीं है ऐसे लोग नास्तिक कहलाते हैं। अतः पहले प्रकार के मूर्ख हमने वे देखें जो नास्तिक हैं।

(२) वे जो अंधेरे में चलते हैं.....मूर्ख अंधियारे में चलते हैं... (सभोपदेशक २:१४) अंधेरे में चलने से अभिप्राय है ऐसे कार्य करने जो अंधेरे के समान हैं। जैसे व्यभिचार, गन्दे काम, लुचपन, मूर्ति पूजा, टोना, बैर, भगडा, ईर्ष्या, क्रोध, विरोध फूट, विधर्म, डाह, मतवालापन, लीलाक्रीडा इत्यादि (गलतियों ५:१६-२१)। इस प्रकार के काम करने वालों को परमेश्वर का वचन मूर्ख बताता है।

(३) वे लोग जो अपने को बड़ा धार्मिक समझते हैं। दूसरे लोगों को दिखाने के लिए ऐसे-ऐसे कार्य करते हैं जिनसे लोग उनको बड़ा धार्मिक समझें तथा उनकी प्रशंसा करें। अर्थात् दिखावटी लोग। एक बार एक फरीसी ने यीशु मसीह से बिनती की कि वह उसके यहाँ भोजन करे। यीशु मसीह उसके घर गये। जब यीशु भोजन करने बैठे। तो फरीसी ने यह देखकर अचम्भा किया कि उसने भोजन करने से पहले स्नान नहीं किया। यीशु मसीह ने उसके दिल की बात जानकर उससे कहा—हे फरीसियो तुम कटोरे और थाली को ऊपर-ऊपर तो मांजते हो परन्तु तुम्हारे भीतर अंधेरे और दुष्टता भरी है। हे निबुद्धियों, जिस ने बहार का भाग बनाया है, क्या उसने भीतर का भाग नहीं बनाया ? आज भी ऐसे दिखावटी लोग देखने को बहुत मिलते हैं। प्रभु यीशु ने ऐसे लोगों को निबुद्धि अथवा मूर्ख बताया।

(४) "इसलिए जो कोई मेरी ये बातें सुनकर उन्हें मानता है वह उस बुद्धिमान मनुष्य की नाई ठहरेगा जिस ने अपना घर चट्टान पर बनाया। और मेह बरसा और बाढ़ें आईं, और आन्धियाँ चली और उस घर पर टक्करें

लगीं, परन्तु वह नहीं गिरा, क्योंकि उस की नेव चट्टान पर डाली गई थी। परन्तु जो कोई मेरी ये बातें सुनता है और उन पर नहीं चलता वह उस निर्बुद्धि मनुष्य की नाईं ठहरेगा जिसने अपना घर बालू पर बनाया। और मेंह बरसा, और बाढ़े आईं और आन्धियां चलीं, और उस घर पर टक्करें लगीं और वह गिरकर सत्यानाश हो गया। अब प्रश्न उठता है सुनने व करने का। यीशु मसीह एक आत्मिक चट्टान है (मत्ती १६:१८)। क्या आप यीशु मसीह के विषय में तथा उसकी आज्ञाओं को सुनने वाले ही हैं या करने वाले भी ?

आपका विश्वास रूपी घर किस पर है चट्टान पर या बालू पर जिसका विश्वास रूपी घर चट्टान पर नहीं है वह आन्धियों द्वारा, बाढ़ों द्वारा गिरकर सत्यानाश हो जायेगा। यीशु मसीह ने उस मनुष्य को मूर्ख बताया जो उसकी बातों को केवल सुनते हैं परन्तु करते नहीं।

(५) और उस ने उन से कहा, चौकस रहो, और हर प्रकार के लोभ से अपने आप को बचाए रखो : क्योंकि किसी का जीवन उस की संपत्ति की बहुतायत से नहीं होता उसने उन से एक दृष्टान्त कहा, कि किसी धनवान की भूमि में बड़ी उपज हुई। तब वह अपने मन में विचार करने लगा, कि मैं क्या करूं, क्योंकि मेरे यहाँ जगह नहीं जहाँ अपनी उपज इत्यादि रखूं। और उसने कहा; मैं यह करूंगा: मैं अपनी बखारियां तोड़कर उनसे बड़ी बनाऊंगा; और वहाँ अपना सब अन्न और संपत्ति रखूंगा: और अपने प्राण से कहूंगा कि प्राण, तेरे पास बहुत वर्षों के लिए बहुत संपत्ति रखी है; चैन कर खा, पी सुख से रह। परन्तु परमेश्वर ने उस से कहा; हे मूर्ख, इसी रात तेरा प्राण तुझ से ले लिया जाएगा: तब जो कुछ तुने इकट्ठा किया है, वह किसका होगा? अनेक लोग इस प्रकार के ही होते हैं। वह अपनी आत्मा को कोई महत्व नहीं देते। बल्कि अपने शरीर को अधिक महत्व देते हैं। उनको अपने लिए धन बटोरना अच्छा लगता है। परमेश्वर ने ऐसे लोगों को अपने वचन में मूर्ख शब्द की संज्ञा दी है। अर्थात् इस प्रकार के लोग परमेश्वर की दृष्टि में मूर्ख हैं।

मित्र ! आज मैं आपसे एक महत्वपूर्ण प्रश्न पूछना चाहता हूँ। परमेश्वर के वचन अनुसार आप किस प्रकार के मूर्ख हैं? क्या आप ऐसे मूर्ख हैं जो परमेश्वर पर विश्वास नहीं करते; जो अंधेरे में चलते हैं, जो दिखावटी धार्मिकता दिखाते हैं, जो केवल सुनने वाले ही हैं करने वाले नहीं तथा वे जो अपने शरीर को अपनी आत्मा से अधिक महत्व देते हैं। यदि आप परमेश्वर के विरुद्ध मूर्खता का कार्य कर रहे हैं तो उस कार्य को छोड़िए। बाइबल कहती है—इसलिए ध्यान से देखो, कि कैसी चाल चलते हो; निर्बुद्धियों की नाईं नहीं पर बुद्धिमानों की नाईं चलो। इस कारण निर्बुद्धि न हो, पर ध्यान से समझो, कि प्रभु की क्या इच्छा है? (इफिसियों ५: १५, १७)।

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