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THE BIBLE TEACHER

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The Meeting House

One of the great curses of our time is the idea of having to have a church building or a meeting house in which to worship God. Political organizations, societies, and clubs of all kinds sweep across the world and influence millions and millions of people but in most cases never own their own buildings. Rather, they meet in homes, in offices, in school buildings, in conference rooms, in hotels, in factories, in the streets, and wherever else people can arrange a convenient place. They send forth their propaganda by word of mouth through literature, radio, television, and by making news. They do not spend all of their money on buying buildings where only a few can meet. They do not spend all of their energies in building buildings and maintaining them. They believe in an ideology so strongly that they are willing to give their all to it, to fight for it, and to die for it. Why then do we think as the Lord's people that we must have a meeting house of our own if we are to worship and work for the Lord?

If we go back to the New Testament and read all the way through it we will not find any mention of a meeting house as we are familiar with today. We know that the church (the called out, the saved) met for worship (Acts 20:7), but the nearest thing to a regular meeting place being spoken of is that in various places it is said that the church met in some particular home. (Philemon 2). In those days the church was just in the process of beginning, there was much opposition to it, and it was very poor. For these reasons, it would not be assumed that Christians would have had time and resources to be buying property on which to erect meeting houses. Rather, this is something that emerged with the passing of centuries of time.

Should one make a study of the introduction of the meeting house to Christianity then he would find that it had its beginning with the Catholic Church which was composed of those who had departed from the original church of the Lord, (Acts 20:28-30; 1 Timothy 4:1-3). No doubt they followed the practice of the pagans in having their own temples and buildings, and of course this practice has been going on since time immemorial. With the rise of Protestantism in the fifteen hundreds and modern day denominationalism, the tradition of the meeting house was continued and spread. They so popularized it throughout the world that most people are so addicted to it that they think it is impossible for Christianity to exist in any form without such buildings. Even most Christians feel the same. It has even gotten to the point where traditional Christianity is recognized by the architecture of its buildings, and the average person thinks of the meeting house itself as being the church instead of the people meeting in it. This is a shame and a disgrace to those who call themselves Christians.

The Catholic church throughout the world has built its mighty cathedrals at the expense of the poor people. They have adorned them, decorated them, coated the images in them with gold and jewels, assembled works of art within them, and brought in "sacred" articles so as to draw the

people to them and in the end the buildings, and what is in them, have themselves become the objects of the worship instead of the God they are supposed to exalt. With the passing of time, and because of their architectural beauty and the treasures of art (paintings, sculptural work, etc.) within them, many have become museums.

The corruptness in the organization of such man-made churches, and the excessive expenditure in the buildings they occupied, were two of the main factors that led to their rejection and to the acceptance of Communism in several European countries. Because of the peoples' utter disgust with religion they went to the other extreme and accepted atheism. It is such a pity that they could not have known of pure New Testament Christianity as set forth in the scriptures.

The Western world today has untold numbers of church buildings of all shapes, forms, and sizes. Enough money has been spent on these to have evangelized the world many times over. Often times there are several such meeting houses in the same block or on the same road within a short distance. Of course they represent different churches or denominations which is another shame within itself...people trying to worship God when they are opposed to one another and therefore they are opposed to God. But most of these meeting houses are used only two or three times a week and then for only an hour or so at a time and this is likewise another reason why they are a curse to man. They cost money to build, take up space, cost more money to maintain, give false security, become an object of worship, comfort, and hope, but in reality they do very little for the needs of man and the world. Jesus said to take the gospel to the world but the owners of these meeting houses call people there to hear the gospel.

The denominations have gone into the poor countries of the world and have taken their idea of meeting houses with them. They think before they can do anything else they must construct their enormous meeting houses. As a result, here in Delhi and throughout India you may see such buildings.

They were not built for the local man but by the foreigner for the foreigner's ego. They actually become great hindrances inasmuch as in many cases the local people cannot even keep them up after the departure of the foreigners. Not only so, but because of the example already set, then the average local person thinks that if new congregations are to be begun then they likewise must construct such buildings.

How wonderful it would be if we could realize here in India that such buildings are not necessary and neither are they practical. Perhaps in the western part of the world, where most everyone has his own personal transportation, centrally located meeting houses may have a place. But here in India where most people are without a car or even a scooter, and where even public transportation for a family can be both expensive and physically difficult, such buildings are not the answer. It is not necessarily that it would be wrong for a group of local Christians to buy some property and build its own meeting house, but even then, would this be the wise thing to do? Even if it was done it should not be done with foreign support, but rather it should be handled and financed by local people according to their abilities and needs. Other religions who likewise put a lot of stress on buildings, like Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, etc., build their own buildings. They are also poor, but still they believe in their religion and they give to it and work and build. The same can be done by members of the Lord's church, if it is needed.

If a meeting house is built through foreign support, it will not be appreciated, nor will it be properly used. Furthermore the local Christians will not feel that it is theirs and neither will they feel any responsibility toward its upkeep. They will count it as being owned by foreigners and it will therefore never be worthwhile. If the local people are not able to build their own meeting house then they don't need one. When they are ready for one they will build it and use it.

Here in Delhi and in the large cities throughout India property and buildings are too expensive to think about buying

or building. Even if you had one in a particular location of the city, what about the other areas? Could and would people throughout the city come to one location because of its building? This would be very doubtful because of distance and transportation costs. But surely such meeting houses could not be build in every section of the city. What then is the solution? For the large cities it would seem that the church will have to be content to meet in halls, schools, or perhaps in some other public facility. Even this poses a problem because in many cases these must be rented. The next thought would be to meet in the home of the members. This of course has its problems since most people look upon the meeting house as they do. As a result it may be difficult to get people to go to a home for worship, it may not be conducive to growth, and it may leave the church scattered with small gatherings in different parts of the city, which can be discouraging. But when people are truly converted to Christ, working hard to teach and influence others for the cause of Christ, they can and will grow and find a way to spread.

In the small cities, and especially out in the villages, a meeting place for the church does not present the problem that it does for those who live in the large cities. They can always meet in a home, rent a place at a small expense, or put up a prayer shed out of local materials that may be donated by different ones.

A true Christian will be a Christian with or without a meeting house. His Christianity does not depend on such a place but rather can be a hindrance. He is converted to Christ, not to a material building. He is willing to worship in his home, in another Christian's home, in a hall, under a shade tree, or wherever he happens to be.

If we can only realize that our Christianity does not depend on a building, then we are making progress. If Christians throughout the world could be convinced of this then the church would be in position to do the work the Lord really intended for it to do, and moreover, it would then be free to do it. Surely we do not read where Paul and others went through-

out the world building meeting houses or raising money to help brethren in various places to build places of worship. Neither should we do these things. Our commission is to preach the gospel and to serve the Lord. We do not need a meeting house for that.



**associate
editorial**

The Man Jesus

JESUS was born in the beginning of the first century A.D., in one of the oldest towns of Palestine, called Bethlehem, located five miles south of Jerusalem. But there are a number of marvellous events connected with the birth of Jesus and his wonderful life that he lived upon this earth. More than seven hundred years before his birth, a man named Isaiah lived and he prophecied concerning his miraculous birth in these words: "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call his name Immanuel." (Isaiah 7:14). Several other prophecies were also made, of course, by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, concerning his coming into the world. And finally, in the fulness of time an angel of God appeared "To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall

reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I no not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that Holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." (Luke 1:27-35).

Jesus was his personal name, meaning the Lord is salvation. He was the **Christ**, the Greek translation of the Hebrew word Messiah, meaning The Anointed. Thus he is called often in the scriptures, Jesus Christ. Jesus, when he grew up did hundreds of wonderful things before people, and many believed in him and confessed that he was truly the Son of God. His works and powerful teaching are recorded in the second part of the book called the Bible. The Bible, which was written by such men who were inspired by the Holy Spirit of God, reveals Jesus Christ as the Son of God, the Saviour of mankind. He was with God, in the beginning, but in the fulness of time he came down upon the earth to save people from their sins. He took upon himself the form of a man, lived among men, had a perfect life, and revealed to man the nature of God. Jesus had chosen certain men to be his disciples, whom he educated to carry on his teachings, after he would finish his work on earth, and return to heaven, to be with his Father, God.

We are told once a great multitude of people followed him to hear his teachings, and the record in Matthew chapter 14, verses 14-21, says, "And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick. And when it was evening, his disciples came to him, saying, this is a desert place, and the time is now past; send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves victuals. But Jesus said unto them, They need not depart; give ye them to eat. And they say unto him, We have here but five loaves, and two fishes. He said bring them hither to me. And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves, and the two

fishes, and looking upto heaven, he blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitudes. And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve basketsful. And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside women and children." By showing this miracle, Christ manifested the power of God in him, and beside this he taught a great lesson to all people, that is, as he was aware that people were hungry and needed food. Secondly, he provided them before they would ask for it. And finally, he gave all the food to his disciples, so that they should distribute it among the people. However, obviously, if any person did not want to accept, it was his own will; he had made available and was now offering it to all of them through his disciples, but it was for the people to accept it or reject it. Likewise, in the setting of this great miracle, Christ wanted to show that he was aware that people are in need of salvation from their sins. Secondly, to provide them salvation freely he came down from heaven, took upon him the form of a man; and then died on the cross to pay the penalty for the sins of the whole world, and was resurrected on the third day, after his death, to prove once again that he was truly the Son of God, and that he was not a dead, but a living Saviour. And finally, when he had made salvation available he commanded his disciples to go and preach, or give, the Good News of salvation to all people upon the whole earth. However, it was for the people to either accept the available salyation with faith and obedience to His commands, or to reject it by simply not believing in him.

Still another lesson which may be learnt from this foregoing passage is to have genuine hunger for the food which would lead to its acceptance. On another occasion, Christ exhorted a great multitude of people, by saying, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." (Matthew 5:6). David, the writer of the Psalms, in the Bible, referring to God says, "All the commandments are righteousness." (Psalms 119:172). Now since it is a blessing to hunger and thirst for righteousness, and since all the commandments of the Lord are righteousness, hence,

by doing or obeying the commandments of the Lord our need of salvation from sin shall be filled.

Beside teaching, Jesus performed several other miracles but in each miracle there was a great lesson taught. Finally, the time came when Jesus, being perfect, by the grace of God should taste death for every man. It is said for him, and only for him, "Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Philippians 2:6-8). In fact, it was his sole purpose in coming upon the earth that he should reveal God through his wonderful teachings, and perfect life, and then give himself as a perfect sacrifice for the sins of the world, so that through him the sinful world should be reconciled with God. It is therefore the Bible, in 1 Timothy 2:5, that exhorts us in these words: "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, THE MAN, CHRIST JESUS."

"Here is a man who was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant women. He grew up in an obscure village. He worked in a carpenter shop until he was thirty, and then for three years he was an itinerant teacher. He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never owned a home. He never had a family. He never went to college. He never travelled two hundred miles from the place where he was born. He never did one of the things that usually accompany greatness. He had no credentials but Himself. He had credentials but nothing to do with this world except the power of his divine manhood. While still a young man, the tide of popular opinion turned against him. His friends ran away. One of them denied him. He was turned over to his enemies. He went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed upon a cross between two thieves. His executioners gambled for the only piece of property He had on earth while he was dying; His garment. Then he was taken down and laid in a borrowed grave through the love of a friend. More than nineteen

wide centuries have come and gone. Today He is the centre-piece of the human race and leader of the column of progress. I am far within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, and all the parliaments that ever sat, and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not effected the life of man upon this earth as powerfully as has that one solitary life." (Phillips Brooks).



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RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD

The Apostle Paul wrote the young preacher Timothy, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (2 Timothy 2:15). Please note in particular that he speaks of "rightly dividing the word". The American Standard Version says "handling aright the word of truth." The Berkley Version of the New Testament translates it: "Correctly analyzing the

message of the truth." These various translations and versions are saying the same thing in substance, that we must be very careful in the way we deal with God's word. In other words, we must study it carefully and reverently to determine what God's message is for us today.

You might be surprised to learn that not all people love the truth. (2 Thessalonians 2:10). That is why all do not believe it (2 Thessalonians 2:12), do not obey it (Romans 2:8), do not walk by it. (Galatians 2:12). There are others who resist it (2 Timothy 3:8), and still others that turn away their ears from the truth. (2 Timothy 4:4). Because of this it is advisable that each person study God's word for himself so that he may come to know the truth as it really is. (Romans 10:17).

You might think that it would be impossible for you to study the Bible on your own to the point that you may know what the Lord would have you to do. But in spite of your fear, you can do just that. God has revealed his will in the Bible and given it to one and all. Surely he has not given a book that we cannot understand. It is true that some of it is very deep and difficult to understand, but other parts of it are easy to read and study and to understand. It is designed so that everyone may be challenged by it but all may know the things God expects of him to be saved. Then as one continues to read and study, he is gradually able to understand more. A person doesn't begin his secular education by going to college but he starts off by learning how to read and write, and the classes that follow prepare him eventually for college itself. The same is true with the Bible.

Let us realize that we cannot let the Bible fall open at any point and begin to read and think that that is God's message for us today. You may be shocked to find that not all of the Bible is directed to man today as a law. As a matter of fact, most of it does not apply directly to us. Continue to study with me and I will show you how this works. For example, in Genesis 6 God commanded Noah to build an ark, but that does not mean that he has commanded us to build

one. Then in Genesis 12 we read that God commanded Abram to depart from his country to a country he would show him, but this doesn't mean that we must leave our country. And so on with many other commands that we read about in the Bible.

All of this clears up when we understand that the Bible is made up of a total of sixty-six books and it is broken into two major divisions, the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament has thirty-nine books, and the New Testament has twenty-seven books. The Old Testament begins with the creation in the book of Genesis and continues through the book of Malachi. The New Testament begins with Matthew and goes through Revelation.

God gave his people a law but later decided to give a new law. This made the first law old and therefore it became known as the Old Testament. The second law being new, it became known as the New Testament. The word Testament itself means covenant, will, or law. Thus, the Hebrew writer said in speaking of Christ and the new testament: "And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth." (Hebrews 9:15-17). In Hebrews 8:7 the same writer said, "For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second." Then in Hebrews 10:9 he said, "He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second." So the writer makes it clear that the Old Testament law was taken away and a new law was given. One under the new law can no more keep the old law than those under the old law could keep the new law that was yet to be given. That is, those who lived under the Old Testament law had to live by it and they will be judged by it on the day of judgment, and those of us who are living under the New Testament law are duty bound to abide by it because we will one day be judged by it:

From the beginning of time up to this time, as set forth in the Bible, there have been three major periods of time. The first was the Patriarchal age which had its beginning with Adam and Eve and continued up to the giving of the law of Moses. You may read about this from Genesis 1:1 up to Exodus 20. The word patriarch means father and during this age God spoke to the fathers or the heads of the families and in turn they spoke to their people concerning God's will for them. This period has often been described as the starlight age which signifies a limited amount of light. It lasted for 2500 years. The second age is the Mosaical dispensation or period of time. This was the time in which God gave his law to Moses and through which he spoke to his people in a written law. It began with Exodus 20 and ended with the death of Christ on the cross. It is described as the moonlight age in which more light was given. It lasted for 1500 years. And finally, the third period of time is said to be the Christian age which began with Christ's death on the cross and will continue to exist until Christ comes again, meaning that it is the third and final period of time. During this age God speaks to us through Christ in the New Testament. (Matthew 17:5 ; Hebrews 1:1, 2). This period is said to be the sunlight age in which full light has been given through Christ. It has already been in force for almost 2000 years and how long it will yet continue we know not. We are therefore living in the Christian age and we are governed by the law of Christ.

When we understand the way the Bible is divided up and the ages that are revealed therein, we are able to know the law that is binding on us. We know at the same time that we cannot go back to the Old Testament law to justify any practice that we want to engage in, such as tithing, keeping the Sabbath, the use of mechanical music, etc. Although we cannot go back to the Old Testament for the Ten Commandments, we must realize that commands such as not to kill, not to steal, etc., are taught under the law of Christ. Just because the Old Testament is not binding on us as a law, this does not mean that it is not inspired of God. It is inspired of God, is the

word of God, and there are many reasons why we should read and study it. The Old Testament tells us about God, his creation, the history of mankind, how he chose his people and dealt with them. It tells us that when people obeyed God he blessed them and when they disobeyed him he punished them, etc. Paul says of the Old Testament: "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." (Romans 15:4). Speaking of the things that happened under the Old Testament law, he said again, "But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people set down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." (1 Corinthians 10:5-11).

Also, it has been said that the Old Testament foretells the New Testament and that the New Testament explains the Old Testament. The Old Testament tells about the coming of Christ and his church and there are many many principles there that would apply to any age.

Christ lived and died under the Law, although his teaching and life was concerned with what would happen under the New Testament Law. When one understands this then he understands why he cannot go to the thief on the cross as an example of how one is to be saved today.

There are many Old Testament quotations in the New Testament but both Christ and the various New Testament writers make it very clear that the first law was fulfilled and replaced by the law of Christ. (Matthew 5:17-19; John 1:17; Luke 24:44; 2 Corinthians 3; Galatians 5:4; Colossians 1:14).

They speak of the New Testament as the perfect law of liberty (James 1:25), that we have been given all things that pertain to life and godliness (2 Peter 1:4), and that by keeping the commandments of the Lord we may have the hope of eternal life. (Revelation 22:14). We are likewise warned that we are not to add to his law, subtract from it, or to substitute for it in any way. (Revelation 32:18, 19 ; Galatians 1:7-9).

Finally, to understand the word of God as it may apply to us today, here are some good questions to ask while studying :

1. Who is the speaker ?
2. When was it spoken ?
3. To whom was it spoken ?
4. Is the language figurative or literal ?
5. Is it a command ?
6. Does it seem to conflict with other simple truths, as I understand it ?
7. In what context was it spoken ?

If you will consider seriously the things that have been said and attempt to answer these questions as you study, then surely you will see the wisdom of Paul's statement when he said that we should rightly divide the word of truth. Furthermore, when you apply these rules of study you will indeed be able to see the wisdom of his statement since it really works. When you rightly divide the word it is possible to understand the Lord's will as he intended for you to understand it. When the word is not rightly divided then one is left confused and bewildered. Truly God knows best and when we learn to follow his instruction then we are rewarded,

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Who said that we should rightly divide the word ?
2. What does it mean to rightly divide the word ?
3. Do all people love the truth ?
4. Why should each one study the Bible for himself ?
5. Is it possible to understand the Bible ?
6. Can we allow the Bible to fall open at any point and begin to read it and feel that this is God's will for us ?

7. Are all of the commands of the Bible directed to us ?
8. How many books are there in the Bible ?
9. Name the two major divisions of the Bible.
10. What is the difference in the Old Testament and the New Testament ?
11. Define testament.
12. Which testarment is binding today, the old or the new?
13. List the three major periods of time set forth in the Bible.
14. In which period of time or dispensation time do we live ?
15. Can we go back to the Old Testament for the authority to justsfy the things we are doing ?
16. What is the purpose of the Old Testament today ?
17. Under which law did Christ live and die ?
18. Why can we not go to the thief on the cross as an example of salvation ?
19. Mention some scriptures that tell us that the Old Testament is no longer binding but that we are to be governed by the New Testament law.
20. What are some questions that we can ask that will help us of better understand God's will ?
21. Can you see the value of rightly dividing the word of truth ? In what way or ways ?



This is the third and final set of questions from our friend in Eluru, A.P.

QUESTION: Leprosy?

In the 13 & 14th chapters of Leviticus God gives commandments to Moses regarding Lepers:

- (a) The clinical diagnosis of leprosy is made by the High Priest after isolating the patient for 7 days in observa-

tion period. But as we know, leprosy is a very chronic disease running into years either to contact it or for cure. So that is a definite "fallacy" from the medical point of view.

- (b) The portion of Leviticus 14:33-48 describes even leprosy on a wall and its radical treatment. Leprosy occurs in the body, mainly skin and nerves, but never never on the walls.

So what shall you do with the portion in the light of Revelation 22:19?

ANSWER: The scripture referred to gives the true story and we would be much better off not to question it.

In the first place, please note that the practice of quarantine of persons having contagious diseases is introduced in these verses, a practice unknown to medicine in those days and for many centuries to come. In the second place, the passage does not say that the symptoms described are the beginning of the disease or that the leprosy had developed over night. The indication is that when a person found an unusual spot on his skin, he was to show himself to the priest. Then, based on God's very detailed description of the skin condition, the priest was to observe the progress of the spot. If the spot had begun to dry up (as would commonly happen if the disease were not leprosy) at the end of fourteen days then the person was free to go. If it had not begun to dry up but showed signs of spreading, the person was to be quarantined and continue under regular examination by the priest. All of this was unknown to medical practices of those days, but is in strict accordance with modern day medical knowledge. There is no "fallacy" at all in the scriptures on this point, but the questioner has himself mentally inserted the statements with which he found fault but which are not actually in the scriptures.

Concerning Leviticus 14:33-48 and the question of leprosy in a building, two points need to be considered. The first is that the word leprosy as used in the Old Testament scriptures,

according to Bible scholars, probably was not limited solely to what we call leprosy today, but likely included other skin diseases that were similar in their habits and effect. Some of these might not even be known today. Thus if a person inhabited a house and he found a fungus type growth on the walls, a growth that spread under observation, in order to remove the danger of plague or contagious disease, that house was to be destroyed. If, during the Middle Ages, men had been wise enough to use such measures, many of the sweeping plagues that killed thousands could have been avoided.

In the second place, the questioner has seemingly failed to note that in Leviticus 14:34 the Lord said that if, "... I put the plague of leprosy in a house..." Since we are in no position to refute or deny what God says he could do, and did do on certain occasions, we would be wise to be cautious about accusing Him.

QUESTION: God and Racial Conflicts?

The Old Testament proclaims in many places that the God of the universe and the creator of mankind chose the Jews out of the races of the world. There were Philistines, Egyptians, Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, etc., etc., and many others. The Jews were as bad as the rest. They had: 1. Polygamy. 2. Slavery. 3. Prostitution. 4. Perversions. 5. Indiscipline.

In those days of narrow outlook, racialism, and racial conflicts for supremacy, did God take the side of the Jews against all others?

Shall we today believe that the Arab-Israeli wars also involved God? If so is God racially prejudiced? Is God a God of war or peace? The message of peace and goodwill at Christmas, it has no relevance and isn't it self-contradictory?

ANSWER: God created man and all races eventually came forth but God is not the author of man's racial conflicts.

God chose the nation of Israel (the Jews) to be his people through which his Son Jesus would finally come. He first chose Abraham (Genesis 12), because he was a righteous

man, and promised to make a mighty nation of his seed. The Jews had evils among them in time but God worked with them and blessed them when they did his will and punished them when they did not. Read I Corinthians 10, for example. As for the other races, their wickedness had reached such proportions that God could not tolerate their existence any longer (Genesis 15:16; Deuteronomy 9:4). God was therefore with his people and made it possible for them to be victorious over all others; that is, as they followed his instructions.

The State of Israel today is not the same Israel that we read about in the Bible. The Israel of the Bible was God's chosen people. The Israel of today is simply a secular group of people who have taken the ancient name of Israel as a name for their Country. God is involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict as he is involved in every event that takes place on the earth but he is not the author of war, although he may use war to accomplish his purposes. He does not cause the war, or any other evil, but when man goes to war, God can use that to accomplish what he wants done.

The Bible does not teach Christmas, but it does teach that Christ was born and that he died for the sins of the world. He died that man might be saved and live at peace with his fellowman. The Bible says that God is not the author of confusion but of peace. God teaches not only that man should not murder and kill, but that he should not even hate his brother, a thing that God considers to be equal to murder. (1 John 3:15).

Thank you, my friend, for your questions, but I would encourage you to read and study the Bible with an open mind and with the desire to know what it teaches instead of reading it and studying it to find fault with it and to attempt to discredit it. You cannot do it, but instead it will destroy you. That is, if you reject God's word then you will have denied yourself of the many blessings that could come to you from accepting it, and one day it will condemn you to eternal destruction. (John 12:48). Take heed therefore how you deal with the Bible, God's word.



Who will go to the Punjab? Here is a State of millions of people, of fertile farm land, and noted as the home of the Sikh religion. The capital is the new, modern, and beautiful city of Chandigarh. Other cities include Amritsar, Bhatinda, Ferozepur, Gurdaspur, Hoshiarpur, Jullundur, Kapurthala, Ludhiana, Patiala, Rupar, and Sangrur.

Denominationalism has been in the Punjab for a long time through preachers, churches, hospitals, and schools, but our major work there as the Lord's church has been through Bible correspondence courses and magazines and tracts that have been sent to interested parties. This past December Bro. Vipul Rai went to the area of Ludhiana for some preaching and Bible studies. He was well received; and then in April Bro. Sunny David went for a visit. He found some opposition this time. With most of the people being associated with religious organizations from which they were receiving their training or support, no doubt they feared that if they accepted the teachings of the New Testament they would lose what they had. Anyway, the truth was preached and we will see what finally comes from it.

The church is yet to be established in the Punjab. Who would be interested in going there? Remember, we can't send you or support you. Neither are we saying that you must go. You may not even know the truth well enough to go. You may still be needed where you are. But this State is being called to your attention in case you are reading these lines and you might be in position to go and you could be challenged to do so.

Someone in the Punjab itself may be reading these lines, and although you may not be a Christian and a member of the church, you might want to learn the truth, obey it, and then put forth an effort to teach and influence others so that the

church might be established there.

Let us pray that the gospel may soon be preached in the Punjab with the result that the church is planted there and that in time all in this area may come to know the truth of God. Again, we ask, Who will go? Jesus has already said, "Go" Is he speaking to you? Will you hear him and obey Him?



**bible
quiz**

"Win A Prize" Bible Quiz, No. 15

Send in all correct answers and you will be awarded 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 the magazine back. Use separate paper for your answers.
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 20p. 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. 15 :

1. Who went to her wedding on a camel? Give the chapter.
2. Who was born first—Abram or Aaron?
3. Who was the first woman to see Jesus after His resurrection?

4. At what pool did the sick and infirm wait for the troubling of the waters?
5. Find : "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth."

ANSWERS TO QUIZ NO. 14 :

1. 2 Kings 5. 2. False. 3. False, the Pharisee in the parable did. 4. Paul, Acts 9:25. 5. Joshua 24:15.

Jesus Christ's Crucifixion

Steven Burton Choate

A good question about Jesus' Crucifixion is why was he crucified? The reason he was crucified was because the Pharisees and Saducees didn't want the people to turn away from them.

At the time Jesus was taken he was in the Garden of Gethsemane praying, "And while he yet spake, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near to Jesus to kiss him." (Luke 22:47). They came to take him, "And one of them smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear. And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him." (Luke 22:50-51). This alone shows Jesus' great love for mankind. How many of us would heal a man's ear if it was in our power, if that man was coming to murder us ?

They took Jesus and although the governor found him innocent it was decided to crucify him, even though they had to release a murderer to do it ! A Murderer !

They crucified Jesus in Golgotha, or the place of the skull, which is also called Calvary, (Luke 23:33). They parted his raiment and cast lots for it, and Jesus said, "Father, forgive them ; for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34). They put a sign over him in Greek and Latin and Hebrew, "This is the King of the Jews." (Luke 23:38).

The ground trembled and the sun was veiled and Jesus said in a loud voice, "Father into thy hands I commend my spirit," and saying this he gave up the ghost. The earth quak-

ed and the rocks were rent, and seeing all of these things one centurion said, "Truly, this was the Son of God. (Matt. 27: 54).

There is one song that I like ; it says : "I gave, I gave my life for thee ; what hast thou given for me ?" That is a good question. What have we given for him ? He died that we might live. Are you prepared for the Judgment?

"Eradicate Sin in Your Life"

P.R. Swamy

The other day, I noticed a sign-board in the cantonment Railway Station, Bangalore, with the following words—"Ticketless travel is a social evil, Help the Railway to Eradicate this evil". We have the "Malaria eradication project" successfully working in our Land. In the same way, sin in the life of an individual must be eradicated. "To eradicate" means (Oxford Dictionary) "to extirpate" or "Root out" or "Tear up by roots".

NATURE OF SIN

"Sin is the transgression of the Law" (1 Jn. 3:4) Sin is not maya, misfortune or weakness. It is a deliberate violation of Gods Law. There are Sins of Commission and Sins of Omission. (Jas. 4:17). We can also commit sin in our hearts. (Math. 5:28).

CONSEQUENCE OF SIN

"All men have sinned" Rom. 3:23, and there is no exception. The wages of sin is death", (Rom. 6:23). This is the spiritual separation. The soul that sinneth, it shall die; (Eze. 18:20). Sin has separated man from God. (Isa 59:1, 2). Sin robs the happiness and peace of man. If sin reigns, he cannot have any fellowship with God and his fellow men. Sin has produced havocs in many homes. Sinful man is eternally doomed to hell. (II Thess 1:7-9 ; Rev 21:8).

GOD'S ATTITUDE TOWARD SIN

God hates Sin, because He is Holy. But God loveth sinners, since he created them, (John 3:16). God is a loving God, (I Jn. 4:16). Also, God is a Just God, in that He has to punish the sinful. (Exo 34:7; Hab. 1:13).

SIN MUST BE ERADICATED

With sin man can't come to God and have fellowship. Man is helpless, can't save himself. Christ is the only hope. Jesus Christ died to take away our sin.

Through Jesus Christ man can be reconciled to God.

The antidote for Sin is the Blood of Christ. (Rom 5:8-11).

HOW CAN ONE COME IN CONTACT WITH THE BLOOD OF CHRIST ?

If he believes Jesus Christ is the Son of God, who died to take away his sins, repents and confess his faith in Christ, and is buried with him into his death. (Rom. 6:3, 4) he can be cleansed. (Acts 22:16).

He can put on Christ. (Gal. 3:27).

Then he is a new creature. (II Cor. 5:17).

Oh man, come out of your sinful life and be cleansed by the Blood of Christ. Oh Christians, be vigilant and let not sin reign in your mortal bodies. As long as Sin dominates in an individual's life, or in a nation or in the church which is the family of God, there is no peace and happiness. Neither is there any hope of salvation. Christian's ! help the churches in their Sin Eradication Programme.

Stop-Turn Back

K. Matthew

It is no wonder that the people of the world, those who do not know about the Bible, say that there is no unity in Christianity. Various beliefs, ideas, and faiths are ruling Christianity. I want you to know the matter is very serious because it has to do with eternal life. If you are a believer in Christ, you should accept his words, what is said in the Bible, because the Bible is God's word. Is there no unity in Christianity? Yes, there is. There is unity among true believers, among those who are practicing first century Christianity today, among those who are accepting the whole Bible as the word of God as being inspired of God. So there is only one way for unity in Christianity. Come back to the word of God. Turn away from man-made creeds and traditions of old.

You cannot be a Catholic, Protestant, Methodist, Pentecostal, or a part of any other sect, but you should be just a Christian. We can see many groups that are mentioned among men that are not spoken of in the Bible. The estab-

lishment of the Lord's church is clearly noted in the book of Acts. (Read Acts Chapter 1 & 2). In the second chapter of Acts verse 47 it says that those who were saved were added to the church by the Lord. Not by a pastor, reverend, or by any other person were they added to the church.

What does salvation mean. It means that it is the result of the change that takes place in a person's heart and life through his obedience to the Lord. Please note this example: A man is in a ditch and someone helps him out. When his friend takes him out of the ditch he is saved from it. While he was in the ditch you could say he was not in the ditch but would that have changed his situation? No, a hundred per cent no. I am sure that all of you will agree with me. Actually, this is the real thing in many so called Christians. They are not sure about themselves and about their salvation.

In the 9th chapter of Acts verses 4 & 5, when Saul was going to Damascus to persecute Christians, he saw a great light and fell down and he heard a voice say, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Then Saul replied, "Who art thou Lord?" (For a clear picture read the whole chapter.) Was Saul saved on the spot? Was he changed in the same moment? The Bible authoritatively says NO! Because the Lord also said to him, "You go to the city, and it will be given to you what you should do." The following verses says that Ananias was sent to him and he told Saul to receive his sight and after he received his sight was baptized. If Saul was saved when the Lord appeared to him on the way to Damascus, why did the Lord say, "Go to the city." If people believe that Saul was saved when he called on the Lord, then what about the people of the world? If it is so for a single soul, will it not follow that all can be saved without preaching because one way or the other most people will call on the Lord. But there is more to it than that.

Salvation is conditional. Mark 16:15, 16 says that those who believe and are baptized shall be saved and that those who do not will naturally be lost. In Acts 2:38 we read, "Repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Christ for the remission of your sins." Dear reader, what about your situation? You may be a good person trying to unite the people of numerous beliefs and practices. But you cannot achieve this unless there is a turning back to the word of God. If you have a question or doubt please feel free to ask. We are concerned about your soul because the soul is worth more than this world. Realize your situation and turn back to the pure faith of the New Testament. There will be many troubles from your own home, your religious leaders, your friends, your money, but above all consider your soul which is worth more.

आत्महत्या

लेखक—एफ० डेविड

आत्महत्या शब्द का अर्थ है अपने प्राण की स्वयं हानि उठाना अथवा अपने प्राण आप ले लेना। प्रायः समाचार पत्रों में आत्महत्याओं की घटना हमें पढ़ने को मिलती हैं। ऐसे अनेक कारण हैं जिनके फलस्वरूप लोग अपनी आत्महत्या कर लेते हैं। जैसे गरीबी, बिमारी, आर्थिक हानि, अन्याय, परीक्षा में असफल हो जाना, तथा प्रेम में असफल हो जाना आदि। इस प्रकार से आत्महत्या करने के और भी कारण गिनाए जा सकते हैं। क्योंकि लोग अपने शरीर को हानि पहुंचाकर अपनी आत्महत्या कर लेते हैं अतः इस प्रकार की हत्या को हम शारीरिक आत्महत्या भी कह सकते हैं। परन्तु एक और प्रकार की भी आत्महत्या है, इसे हम आत्मिक आत्महत्या कह सकते हैं। शायद आप सोचें की आत्मिक आत्महत्या क्या है? तथा इसे कोई किस प्रकार से कर सकता है? जिस प्रकार से हमने देखा था कि अपने शरीर को स्वयं हानि पहुंचाकर अपनी हत्या स्वयं कर लेना इसी प्रकार से आत्मिक आत्महत्या के विषय में यह है कि अपनी आत्मा को स्वयं हानि पहुंचाकर आत्मिक रूप में अपनी हत्या आप कर लेना। परमेश्वर के वचन (बाइबल) में बहुत सी ऐसी बातें तथा आज्ञाएं हैं जिन्हें न मानकर हम अपनी आत्महत्या कर सकते हैं। तो आइये उन बातों तथा आज्ञाओं को देखें—

परमेश्वर के वचन के अनुसार सबसे पहली बात हम यह देखते हैं कि यीशु मसीह ने संसार में इसी लिये जन्म लिया ताकि वह पापियों का उद्धार करे (मत्ती १:२१)। अनेक लोग इस बात में विश्वास नहीं करते कि यीशु मसीह पापियों का उद्धार करने आया। अतः वे अपनी आत्मिक आत्महत्या कर रहे हैं। आज अधिकतर लोग हैं जो बाइबल को एक प्रकार से अथवा एक साथ मिलकर नहीं मानते। परमेश्वर का वचन (बाइबल) परमेश्वर की प्रेरणा से लिखा गया है। तथा उपदेश, और समझाने, और सुधारने, और धर्म की शिक्षा के लिये लाभदायक है। ताकि परमेश्वर का जन सिद्ध बने..... (२ तीमुथियुस ३:१६-१७)। परन्तु अनेक लोग उसके वचन को इस प्रकार से मानते ही नहीं कि वे सिद्ध बन सकें। उदाहरणार्थ, जैसे पवित्र बाइबल केवल एक कलीसिया के विषय में बताती है तथा यह परमेश्वर द्वारा दिया गया नाम अपने ऊपर रखती है, परन्तु मनुष्य के अनुसार बहुतेरी कलीसियाएं हैं तथा वे भिन्न-भिन्न नाम अपने ऊपर रखती हैं। बाइबल के अनुसार उद्धार पाने के लिए, सबसे पहले विश्वास (इब्रानियों ११:६), पापों से पश्चात्ताप (प्रेरितों २:३८, लूका १३:३), यीशु मसीह के नाम का अंगीकार (मत्ती १०:३२-३३)

तथा प्रभु यीशु के नाम में बपतिस्मा लेना (प्रेरितों २:३८, मरकुस १६:१५-१६) । बहुत से लोग कहते हैं कि उद्धार पाने के लिए केवल विश्वास ही काफी है । और भी ऐसी बहुत सी बातें हैं जिन्हें लोग ऐसे नहीं मानते जिस प्रकार से बाइबल कहती है । इस प्रकार से बाइबल को ठीक प्रकार से न मानकर ऐसे लोग अपनी आत्मिक आत्महत्या कर रहे हैं ।

अनेक लोग मसीही बनने से डरते तथा शर्माते हैं । शायद वे सोचते हैं कि मसीही बनने पर हमें दुःख उठाने पड़ेंगे, लज्जित होना पड़ेगा । यह बात सत्य है कि मसीही बनने पर ऐसा हो सकता है, परन्तु पतरस लिखता है "पर यदि कोई मसीही होने के कारण दुःख पाए, तो लज्जित न हो, पर इस बात के लिए परमेश्वर की महिमा करें (१ पतरस ४:१६) । यदि इस बात से डरकर हम मसीही बनने से इन्कार कर देते हैं तो हम अपनी आत्महत्या कर रहे हैं ।

प्रभु यीशु मसीह ही एक मार्ग है जिसको ग्रहण करने से हम उद्धार पा सकते हैं । यीशु मसीह के द्वारा हम परमेश्वर के पास पहुंच सकते हैं । यीशु मसीह ने कहा "मार्ग और सच्चाई और जीवन मैं ही हूँ, बिना मेरे द्वारा कोई पितृ के पास नहीं पहुंच सकता (यूहन्ना १४:६) । आज अधिकतर लोग इस मार्ग पर विश्वास नहीं करते, तथा वे उद्धार पाने के इस एक मात्र को ठुकरा देते हैं । इस प्रकार से आत्मिक रूप में वे अपनी आत्महत्या कर रहे हैं ।

प्रभु यीशु मसीह एक दिन सब लोगों का न्याय करेगा । क्योंकि बाइबल के अनुसार न्याय का एक दिन निश्चित है (इब्रानियों ६:२७) । जिन लोगों ने उसकी बातों तथा आज्ञाओं को नहीं माना वह उन्हें अनन्तकाल का दण्ड देगा ।

प्रिय मित्र ! क्या आप तो किसी प्रकार से आत्मिक रूप में अपनी आत्महत्या नहीं कर रहे ? यदि हाँ, तो ऐसा न करें । जिस प्रकार से आप अपने शरीर को महत्व देते हैं उससे भी अधिक अपनी आत्मा को महत्व दीजिए । आपकी आत्मा बहुमूल्य है । आत्मा ने कहीं न कहीं अनन्तकाल का जीवन अवश्य व्यतीत करना है । स्वर्ग में या नरक में ! अतः कृपया आत्मा की आत्महत्या न कीजिए ।

मुझे किसने छूआ ?

लेखिका—बार्बरा औलिवर

विश्वास के विषय में नए नियम में महान् कहानियों में से एक कहानी एक स्त्री के विषय में है । इसका उल्लेख हमें मत्ती ६:२०-२२, मरकुस

५: २५-३४ तथा लूका ८:४३-४८ में मिलता है। हम सब इस स्त्री के विषय में जानते हैं कि उसे बारह वर्ष से रक्त बहने का रोग था। वह इस रोग का हल करने के लिए एक वैद्य से दूसरे वैद्य के पास गई, लेकिन कोई उसे ठीक नहीं कर सका। ज्यों-२ वर्ष व्यतीत हुए, उसकी स्थिति पूर्व की अपेक्षा और बिगड़ गई। तथा पवित्र शास्त्र कहता है कि, “यीशु की चर्चा सुनकर, भीड़ में उसके पीछे से आई, और उसके वस्त्र को छू लिया। क्योंकि वह कहती थी, ‘यदि मैं उसके वस्त्र ही को छू लूंगी तो चंगी हो जाऊंगी’” मरकुस ५:२७-२८ उसने कैसे जाना कि यीशु को छू लेने से वह चंगी हो जाएगी? उसने उसे पहले कभी नहीं देखा था; केवल उसने उसके विषय में सुना था। परन्तु जो उसने सुना था उससे उसका विश्वास बढ़ा। उसने जाना कि यीशु उसे ठीक कर सकेगा। और उसने विश्वास कार्य के साथ निभाया। वह पीछे से आई और उसके वस्त्र को छूआ, और ठीक हो गई।

“यीशु ने तुरन्त अपने में जान लिया, कि मुझ से सामर्थ्य निकली है, और भीड़ में पीछे फिरकर पूछा; मेरा वस्त्र किसने छूआ?” (मरकुस ५:३०) कितना अद्भुत प्रश्न! उसके चारों ओर लोग थे, जो उसके चमत्कारों को देखने के लिए धक्का दे रहे थे व जूझ रहे थे। किन्तु उस भीड़ में से किसी ने उसकी महान् शक्ति में विश्वास करते हुए उसका वस्त्र छूआ। कितनी अद्भुत बात है कि समस्त भीड़ में से केवल एक ही उसके वस्त्र को छूने के लिए आया।

आज हमारे पास बहुत सी समस्याएँ व चिन्ताएँ हैं। कपड़े धोना, खाना बनाना, घरेलू कार्य, बच्चे, पति; इन सबका समाधान भी होना चाहिए और हम स्वयं ही भार उठाना चाहते हैं। इससे बोध होता है कि हम मसीही नहीं हैं, अथवा मसीही होने पर भी हम उससे दूर हैं; गलत विचार, पड़ोसी के प्रति अशिष्ट व्यवहार, पति तथा बच्चों को अपशब्द कहना, फिर भी इस अपराध और पाप का बोझ हम स्वयं उठाना चाहते हैं। कितना अद्भुत! कितनी अद्भुत बात है कि यीशु इतना समीप होने पर भी हम उस मूर्ख भीड़ की तरह यीशु की शक्ति को अनुभव नहीं कर सकते, यह सुअवसर है कि हम उद्धार प्राप्त कर सकते हैं और अपना बोझ उसके द्वारा हल्का कर सकते हैं। उसके विषय में सुनने के लिए हमारे पास बहुत से सुअवसर हैं, उसके प्रेम, हमारे प्रति उसके सम्बन्ध और हमारे उद्धार के लिए उसकी योजना, और हमारे लिए उसकी आशीषों के विषय में हम पढ़ते हैं। क्या आपके पास उसको छूने के लिए विश्वास है? केवल तब ही वह आपको चंगा कर सकता है। क्या आपके पास विश्वास है? (अनुवादक, —सैमसन डेव्रिड)



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