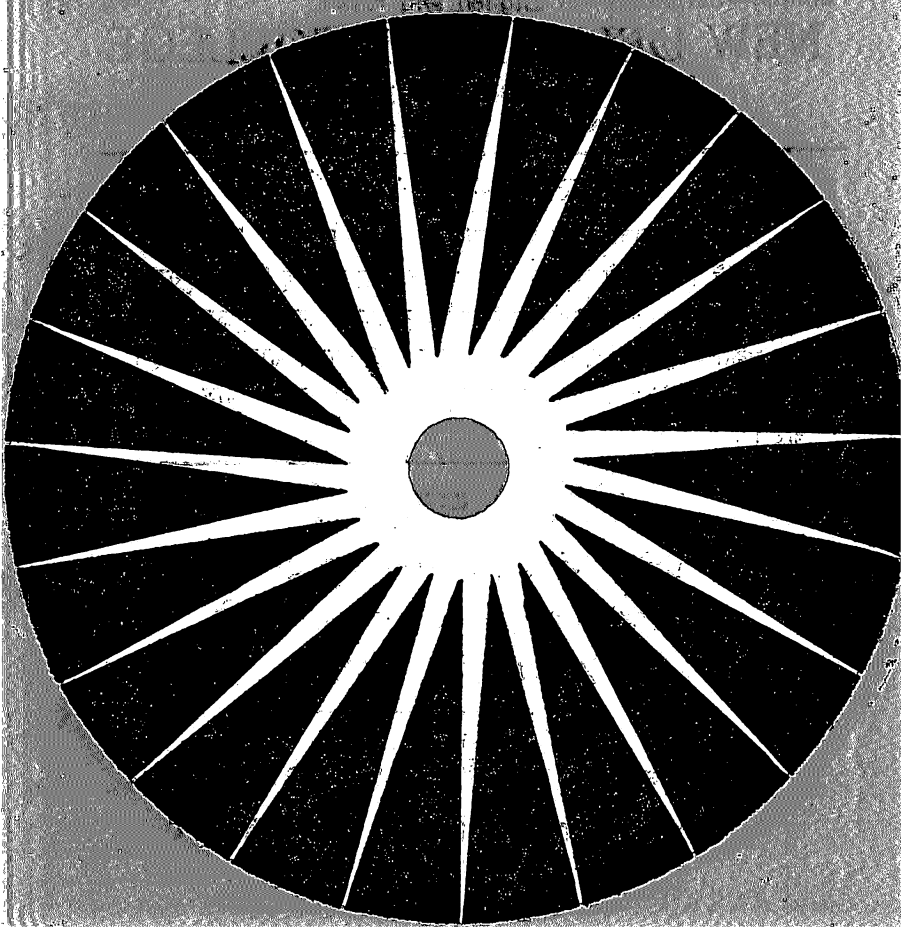


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THE BIBLE TEACHER

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EDITORIAL

Is Christianity A Foreign Religion

Sometime we hear it said that Christianity is a foreign religion or that it is from the West. Others have said that it is the white man's religion. Of course those who make such statements are obviously the enemies of Christianity. They suppose that the people are ignorant of where Christianity came from, and who it was intended for, and so they are willing to use this kind of propoganda to stir up emotions and feelings that will poison and prejudice their minds against the religion of Christ.

Those who know the truth on these matters know that Christ himself was born in the city of Bethlehem near Jerusalem. (Matthew 1 and 2). It was through the teachings of Christ, his death, burial, and resurrection, and ascension to heaven, and then the preaching of the gospel in Jerusalem, that resulted in around 3000 people obeying the Lord and being added to the church, that made it possible for the religion of Christ or Christianity to have its beginning there and to go out from there to all parts of the world. During these past almost two thousand years Christianity has gone

to all parts of the earth. It is spread through teaching and good works only and is accepted on that basis.

Christianity has never belonged exclusively to one area or to any particular group of people. It concerns all and is for all. If it is in the Western part of the world then it is because people there have heard the word of the Lord, believed it, obeyed it, and therefore they are Christians because of it. Most of what we see there, however, is the result of the blending of the teachings of man with the teachings of Christ. This is not pleasing to the Lord at all. (Romans 16 : 17, 18). What he wants is for one and all to accept his will and by doing so to be Christians and Christians only (I Peter 4 : 16). There are some in the West who are attempting to do just that.

Whether Christianity is found in Asia, Africa, the islands of the seas, or any other place in the world, it is there because there are people in these places who believe that Christianity is what they need to change their lives and to discipline them and to prepare them for the next life. Since Christianity began in Asia then that means that the Christians of Asia in the beginning took the message to the West. With the passing of time, and with the people of the East drifting away from the religion of Christ, then the believers of the West began to bring it back to the East. So those who have it take it to those who are without it. That is the way it has always been and no doubt this practice will continue.

The Lord intended for all people everywhere to have the opportunity to be Christians. He commanded the apostles "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost : Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you : and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." (Matthew 28 : 19, 20). Again, he said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved ; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16 : 15, 16). Christianity, then, is for all people as long as time shall continue. It must be taught and re-taught in every gener-

ation. Therefore Christians have the responsibility in every generation to take the gospel into all the world.

Again, we have the New Testament in written form and Christ himself described it as the seed. (Luke 8 : 11). That means then that as the seed is spread throughout the world by word of mouth or through literature then those who receive it and obey it will become Christians. Here in India or wherever the Lord's word may be found it is possible for the local people to read and study and obey its teaching on their own and without any outside help. And if there are those who want to do that, who has a right to say that they shouldn't or that they can't? Religion that is forced on a people is worthless. Unless one has the freedom to decide what he will be religiously then he has no freedom at all. If he wants to reject and deny Christianity then that is his business. But if he wants to accept the religion of Christ then he should be allowed the right to do so. That is real freedom.

Pure Christianity has no earthly head and neither does it have an earthly headquarter. Rather, Christ is its head (Colossians 1 : 18 ; Ephesians 1 : 22, 23) and he is in heaven. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3 : 16). "Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons : But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." (Acts 10 : 34, 35). "The Lord is not slack concerning, his promise, as some men count slackness ; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (2 Peter 3 : 9). Speaking of the Lord, Paul says, "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." (2 Timothy 2 : 4). Christianity has universal appeal because it deals with personal needs.

No one can exclusively claim Christ and his religion. Neither should anyone feel that Christianity is Western relig-

ion or an Eastern religion. Rather, it is international and world wide for all people everywhere. On the other hand, all many consider it local and personal, meeting their needs, and at the same time leaving them with the responsibility of taking it to others. Do not be afraid of it or oppose it. It will not hurt you, your country, or anyone else. It is not interested in politics, land, or in using force, that is, if it is the true religion of Christ. Judge it not by those who bear it but by its teachings and what it can do for you and others who accept it. Before passing final judgment on it, at least be honest enough to investigate it in order that you may see what it is all about. If you will, surely you will change your mind about it.



**associate
editorial**

Why I Am A Christian

Friends, through this article I would like to tell you why I am a Christian. I hope that you will read this article seriously and thoughtfully, because I have some wonderful things to tell you.

1. I am a Christian because I have hope of being saved. When I first believed in Jesus Christ, and repented of my sins, and owned him as my Lord by confessing him as the Son of God, and was baptized (immersed in water) in the name of Christ for the remission of my sins, according to the commands of the Lord Jesus Christ, as revealed to me in His word (Mark 16 : 16 ; Acts 2 : 38 ; Matthew 10 : 32), then I got the assurance that my past sins were forgiven, and I was added by the Lord to the body of the saved people. (Acts 2 : 47). Then,

I also entered the race—the Christian race—and have hope of winning the eternal prize. Apostle Paul explains this in a better way than I, hear him, “Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run that ye may obtain, and every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air.” (1 Corinthians 9 : 24-26). The writer of the book of Hebrews also exhorts in these words, “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnessess let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.” (Hebrews 12 : 1). Therefore, being a Christian I am running in a race, and thus I have a hope that if I continue to run this race then in the end I will receive the incorruptible crown as my prize from my Lord. But I must complete this race patiently and faithfully, because the Lord has said, “.....Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” (Revelation 2 : 10).

2. I am a Christian because I hope Jesus is coming again. He has gone to prepare a place in heaven for me and for all faithful Christians, and one day he will come back, and he will take me and other Christians with him and we will live with him forever in heavenly mansions. I remember, as I read, in John 14 : 1-3, Jesus promised to his disciples, “Let not your heart be troubled : ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions : if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself ; that where I am, there ye may be also.” So I am a Christian because I know Jesus is coming again, and even if I die before his return, I know I will rise again by his power when he will return. In 1 Thessalonians 4 : 13-18, Apostle Paul exhorted Christians by saying, “But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and

rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God : and the dead in Christ shall rise first : Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air : and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

3. I am a Christian because I hope, that when Jesus will take me with him, I will live with God, in heaven, forever. There I will lack nothing because I will live in the presence of God every second through all eternity. This assurance also comes to me from the pages of God's word. Jesus Christ himself revealed this fact to Apostle John, who later wrote, "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes ; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain : for the former things are passed away." (Revelation 21 : 3,4).

ARE YOU A CHRISTIAN? If not, then you have no hope, you are lost in your sins ! There will be no hope for you to be saved when Jesus comes back. There is no hope for you to receive the crown of life, the eternal life, because you have not even entered the race by completing the conditions set forth by the Lord.

If you are not a Christian then you cannot sincerely hope for Jesus' return, but you live in fear. Because when The Lord will come back, he will not only take his people with him, but he will also punish with everlasting destruction all those who obey not his commands upon this earth. Again, Apostle Paul said, ".....When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking venge-

ance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ : Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." (II Thessalonians 1 : 7-9).

My friend, if you are not a Christian then you do not have hope to live with God in heaven forever. But you are going to face the EVERLASTING DESTRUCTION ! Did you hear this ? I ask you to consider these things seriously, because it is the matter of eternal life and eternal death !

Then why not become a Christian by believing in Jesus Christ, and repenting of your sins, and confessing Jesus as your Lord, and by being baptized for the remission of your sins ? (Mark 16 : 16 ; Acts 2 : 38 ; Matthew 10 : 32). Then you can live as a Christian based upon the teachings of Jesus Christ as found in the New Testament. Then you can die as a Christian, and one day when the Lord will come back, you will rise again as a Christian, ready to go with the Lord to your eternal home in heaven. Lastly, I urge you, once again, to kindly think upon these things seriously.

Prepare To Meet God

Mike Sina Piades

Toward the end of the Old Testament, God gave a stern warning to His people through the prophet Amos : "..... **Prepare to meet thy God**" (Amos 4:10). There is a time for preparation, but after that comes the time for reckoning and recompence. In view of the certainty of this meeting why not prepare ourselves for Heaven ? After all, Heaven is a prepared place for prepared people, Christ stated, "I am the way.....no man cometh to the Father but by me" (Jn. 14:6), and since "all authority hath been given unto (Him) in Heaven and on earth" (Matt. 28:18), let us turn to Him for proper guidance and advice.

I. Preparation Through Faith :

The Hebrew writer points out : **“Faith is the substance (ground, or confidence) of things hoped for the evidence of things not seen.”** A few verses later he adds, **“Without faith it is impossible to please God.....”** (Heb. 11:1, 6). No matter what you say or do, no matter what kind of exemplary life you may live, unless you have faith you cannot please God. But what is faith?

Faith is believing in the existence of God; but it is more than that. It is also faith in Jesus as the Son of God, faith in the redemptive work which God Himself performed on the cross; faith in the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ; faith in the Word of Christ as the Inspired Word of God. Faith is not personal opinions but guiding precepts derived from the infallible Word of God the Bible.

Of the importance of faith Paul states: **“Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.....”** (Rom. 5:1). But faith, to be a saving faith, must of necessity be an obedient faith. Once again we read in the Word of God, **And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them THAT OBEY HIM”** (Heb. 5 : 9 emphasis ours M.S.). The apostle James so logically points out, **“Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well : the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works, (works here means obedient faith) is dead ? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he offered Isaac his son upon the altar?”** (Jam. 2:19-22). Yes, we must prepare ourselves to meet our God, and the first step in this preparation is our genuine belief in Him. Since faith comes by hearing God’s Word (Rm. 10:17), let us diligently begin studying His Word.

II. Preparation Through Repentance :

The philosophy of a successful coach was summed up in this motto, **“Prior preparation prevents poor performance.”** Our Lord taught the lesson of preparation in many of His statements, none better perhaps than in the parable of the ten virgins (Matt. 25:1-13).

Before the purchase of anything the need for such must first be felt. Similarly, before we repent we must see, realize and accept our wrongs. The truth of the matter is that when we commit a sin we hurl an insult against God. Therefore, before we can receive His gracious forgiveness, sincere repentance from our past sins must be experienced.

Often men think of repentance as a burden placed upon them, a rigid requirement, a law to be obeyed before they can enjoy pardon, when in reality they should consider repentance a privilege and a blessing granted by the grace of God. Repentance therefore is far from a heavy yoke around our neck. Another thing repentance is not is that of a few tears, shed mostly because we have been caught. In order for such tears to be profitable, the understanding must first exist that every sin committed yield an evil influence upon our character to be followed by evil consequences in our lives. And since the effects of sin are always damaging, the divine requirement for repentance is not for God's personal gain but for our own betterment.

What is Repentance? True repentance is not just being sorry, even godly sorrow leads to it but is not itself repentance (II Cor. 7:9). Repentance, to be acceptable to God and of benefit to man, must have a change of mind followed by reformation of life. Repentance without reformation is like continual pumping in a ship without stopping the leaks. When therefore our Lord stated : **except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish**" (Lk. 13:3), He simply was asking for a change of mind and life. In the New Testament the word repentance comes from the Greek word **metanoeo**, literally meaning "to have another mind", for a real change of mind will lead to a change of life. Consider this final thought : **"Say unto them..... I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live ; turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways....."** (Ezek. 33:11). In the true and genuine repentance anything less than change of mind and life is a cheap substitute.

III. Preparation Through Confession

In I John 4:15 we read, "Who soever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God abideth in him, and he in God." In the gospel of John we also read, "Nevertheless even of the rulers many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God" (Jn. 12:42, 43). In these two statements we detect the way of life and the way of death. "One is a great affirmation of faith; the other a base denial of the only Saviour of mankind." In Matt. 10:32, 33 we read, "Everyone therefore who shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father Who is in Heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him I also deny before my Father who is in Heaven."

As one studies very carefully the requirement for confessing Christ publicly, and importance which the Holy Spirit places such, one concludes that confession and salvation are truly inseparable. Confessing Jesus Christ always has played a very important part in the life of the Church: In the early ages, "the blood of the martyrs was shed because of the supreme confession." Even Jesus Himself "before Pontius Pilate witnessed this good confession" (I Tim. 6:13) at the expense of his own life.

The pages of the New Testament abound in testimony of the beautiful confessions made by the early Christians. In fact, "in expressing their faith, His early followers put into words the only acceptable creed of the church." The Ethiopian nobleman said to Philip, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." (Acts 8:37). "Thou art the Christ," was Simon Peter's statement, "The Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16). Martha stated, "I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God" (John 11:27).

In addition to acknowledging Christ as the Son of God by word of mouth, the New Testament further shows confession to be a way of life, which was and is a requirement of all

baptized believers. The apostle Paul instructed, **"Hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering....."** (Heb. 10:23). Certainly there will be no joy among sinners as they will be forced to confess Him in the last day. Man's privilege of confessing Christ is given to him—before the grave. We may confess Him now by choice; later, **"Every tongue shall confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father"** (Phil. 2:11).

IV. Preparation Through Baptism :

Our Lord stated : **"If ye love me, keep my commandments"** (Jn. 14:15), of which baptism is one of them. If we truly desire salvation, He told us to believe in him (Heb. 11:6), to repent of our past sins (Lk. 13:3), to confess His name before men (Matt. 10:32, 33), and to be baptized. His very words in fact are : **"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, he that believeth not shall be damned"** (Mark 16:16).

For the serious student of the Word of God we raise this question : Does faith, repentance or even confession of Christ's name save ? Certainly not. That which saves is the precious blood of Christ. Please think seriously on this. Similarly, does baptism within itself save ? Certainly not, it is the blood of Christ that saves. Then why do we have to be baptized ? For the same reason that we have to believe, repent and confess His precious name before we are saved. Since Christ is our Saviour, and the only way (Jn. 14:6), then to come to Him we must "travel" the very way He has appointed. Part of this "road" involves baptism in the "name of the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19).

There is a beautiful passage tucked in the book of Numbers 22:18 which states, **".....If Balak would give me his house full of silver, and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more."** The most significant point in this verse is the man's attitude toward his God, **"I cannot.....do less or more."** In the area of being baptized into Christ this is the attitude all of us should

employ and leave the endless arguments alone. The Lord emphatically and categorically stated: "**He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.....**" (Mk. 16:16). What else can you understand from this passage except that in the spiritual union of faith and baptism the offspring is always salvation.

V. Preparation Through Faithfulness:

After a person has obeyed the Gospel, he then needs to "**Leave the principle of the doctrine.....of repentanceand of faith.....(and) baptism**" and continue on **unto perfection.**" (Heb. 6:1,2). In the words of our Lord, "**Be thou faithfull unto death, and I will give you the crown of life**" (Rev. 2:10). Too many believers, because the Lord did not say be thou **perfect** unto death, they continue to "believe", but fail to strive unto perfection. But what does it mean to be "**faithful unto death?**" For after all, these words of our Redeemer, imply that a sacred trust has been confided to our keeping.

Faithfulness is the diligent abiding within the Lord's Word (Jn. 8:31). Else, the Lord will have no fellowship with those "**who draw back.**" (Heb. 10:38). There is a dire need for all believers to continue learning of Christ to continue in His love so that we may continue in its power. Again, faithfulness involves the spirit of sacrifice, and at times, the sacrifice of even those which are the nearest and dearest to ourselves (Lk. 14:33). Paul, more than any one else understood the meaning of these words when he stated: "**But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ**" (Phil. 3:7,8). "**A man had better not attempt this discipleship who is not satisfied with everything which promotes it.**"

A sublime revelation is given to us by Paul in Ephesians 2:8-10. This passage clearly states, that we are saved by

God's grace and not by our works. But while our works will not save us, the presence of such in our lives will loudly proclaim the assurance of our salvation. Notice carefully the tenth verse: "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." While God does not save man for his good works, He saves them unto good works. "When men hear of salvation irrespective of works they are apt to fancy that works are of little use, and do not need to be carefully attended to. On the contrary, they are part of the Divine decree, and if we are not living a life of good works, we have no reason to believe that we have been saved by grace." Faithfulness then is fruit bearing in the vineyard of the Lord (Jn. 15:8). As the fruits of the Spirit were abundantly manifested in the life of Christ, so will they be in the lives of those who are His disciples (Phil. 1:11). To "be faithful unto death," also means the non-conforming attitude toward this world (Rom. 12:2). While we are in the world we should not "love the world, neither the things that are in the world...." (I Jn. 2:15). Keeping ourselves pure and unspotted from this present age is another aspect of our being faithful to him unto death (Jam. 1:27; I Tim. 5:22). Finally, and by no means we have exhausted the subject, faithfulness unto death is the increase of our knowledge of God (Col. 1:10), the increase of our faith (2 Cor. 10-15) the increase in righteousness (2 Cor. 9:10) and the increase of love toward the brethren as well as all men (I Thes. 3:12).

God, in His infinite mercy, has provided the way of salvation through the blood of His own dear Son. He offers this salvation freely to all, without respect of persons; but He does not force it upon those who do not care. Rather, He offers salvation to all who will come and receive on His simple terms of faith, repentance, confession, baptism and a faithfull life, realizing that in this way we Prepare To Meet God.

“Eating Yourself To Hell”

Thomas F. Eaves

In teaching God's will concerning worship it is entirely possible to overemphasize the overt act and neglect the purposes or the manner in which it is to be engaged. The same book, the Bible, which tells us what to do as we worship, also instructs us how we are to worship. Acceptable worship depends on more than just participating in the outward form, i.e., singing words, uttering prayers, eating unleavened bread, and drinking fruit of the vine, etc. Acceptable worship in God's sight is that which originates from the inner man as Jesus taught in John 4:24, "God is a Spirit and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth."

From God's word we read that when Jesus instituted the Lord's supper he "took bread, and blessed, and brake it; and he gave to the disciples and said, take eat; this is my body. And he took a 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. But I say unto you, I shall not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's Kingdom." (Matthew 26:26-29) The elements to be used in this memorial feast are already identified; bread (v. 26), and the cup (v. 27), which is the fruit of the vine (v. 28).

The Apostle Paul in I Corinthians 11:23-34 wrote to the Corinthian Christians and identified the elements to be used in the supper and the purpose of the observance. (The bread v. 24, and the cup which could be drunk (v. 25), i.e., the fruit of the vine.) According to the Apostle Paul the Lord's supper is to be observed for three purposes:

1. To Remember Jesus, I Corinthians 11:24-25.
2. To Proclaim his death, I Corinthians 11:26.
3. Looking for his return, I Corinthians 11:26.

In addition to these instructions the apostle also warns

against partaking of the Lord's supper in an unworthy manner or without discerning the body of Jesus. (I Corinthians 11:27-29) Paul's language is very strong; whoever eat the bread or drinks the cup in an unworthy manner shall be guilty of the body and blood of the world's Savior. Again, if we do not discern the body of Jesus when we partake of the Lord's supper we eat and drink damnation to ourselves. These Biblical truths must not be recognized by many who are members of the body of Christ since their conduct during this great memorial feast is sadly lacking in reverence. Has this feast been relegated to the point of "just something to do to be obedient?" When questioned concerning the conduct of some who talk, entertain children, laugh, write notes, chew chewing gum, and generally conduct themselves as if they were attending some sporting event, one of my high school students stated, "they are eating themselves into Hell." This is excellent commentary on I Corinthians 11:27 and 29.

Let's continue to teach God's word concerning the Lord's supper:

1. Observe on the first day of the week, Acts 20:7.
2. Elements to be used in this memorial feast are bread and fruit of the vine, and both are to be given to the worshipper, Matthew 26:27-29, I Corinthians 11:23-29.
3. It is to be observed in the memory of Jesus, I Corinthians 11:24-25.
4. It proclaims the Lord's death, I Corinthians 11:26.
5. Looks forward till His return, I Corinthians 11:26.

BUT, let us also teach that for worship to be acceptable it must be in spirit and truth which necessitates reverence and worship from the heart. To do otherwise in regard to the Lord's supper is to "eat ourselves into Hell."

Understanding The Bible

Dick Cupp

Have you ever wondered why so many people read the same Bible and understand it (or misunderstand it) in so many different ways? And on the other hand, some give up studying, saying that they can't understand it at all. Still others understand its message, but for some reason it doesn't affect their lives.

The reason may be that we don't approach the study of the Bible with the proper attitude, or with the proper understanding of certain basic truths about the Bible we're studying. If our Bible study isn't based on a solid foundation, it will be to little avail.

W. Robert Palmer, in his book, "How To Understand the Bible," suggests nine basic truths about the Bible that should be the foundation of our study of it. I'd like for you to consider them very carefully before you sit down with your Bible.

God has spoken. The entire Bible is based on this truth, and so must our study be. God spoke, and the world, and all its creatures came into being (Genesis 1). After creating mankind, God communicated with His creation by speaking to him: first through the prophets (Hebrews 1:1), and in these days through His Son (Hebrews 1:2). This divine communication—God speaking to us—is the Bible.

The Bible is a revelation of His will. The Bible is not man's effort to reach up to God but God's effort to reach down to mankind—with a message. (See 2 Peter 1:21).

The Bible has been accurately translated. Although there are some ultramodern versions of the Bible that are in some instances untrustworthy, because of the bias or the unscholarliness of the translator, there remains with us certain

basic versions of the Bible that are dependable translations of the original scriptures (which were written in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek). Among the giants and most trusted of these translations are the King James Version (1611) and the American Standard Version (1901).

The Bible is infallible. It was written by inspired men, and therefore we can trust the message implicitly. Any confusion, error or contradiction in the religious world comes not from the word of God, but from the mind of man.

Archeology, a relatively new but a vastly important and widely accepted science, is turning up thousands of discoveries from hundreds of diggings in Bible-oriented lands that not only do not discredit, but many times tend to prove the Bible account. Archeology is lending testimony to the veracity and authenticity of the Bible.

“The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.” (Psalms 19 : 7)

The Bible is complete and final. The Bible is sufficient for our needs; it leaves nothing to be desired for our knowledge of life in this world and in the world to come. It is not just a key to truth; it is truth. It is, as Jude said, “The faith which was once delivered to the saints.” (Jude 3) (See also 2 Timothy 3 : 16-17 and Galatians 1 : 6-9).

The Bible is intelligible. It's not a magical charm or blessing; it's not something to be framed or displayed on a table; it is a message from the mind of God to the mind of man. (Romans 15 : 4)

The Bible, then can be understood through man's reasoning power. The mind is not our God but the mind should be used to know God. Romans 10 : 17; Ephesians 3 : 4; 2 Timothy 2 : 7, 15.

The Bible, when rightly understood, is authoritative.

The Bible can be wrongly understood, or misunderstood, because of prejudice, pre-conceived notions, etc. (See 2 Peter 3 : 16 and Matthew 13 : 14-15) But when we study it with an open mind, and we understand its message to us, that message carries the full authority of God behind it.

The authority of the Bible demands submission (obedience). As we hold the Bible in our hands, we stand before God..... "Who will render to every man according to his deeds : to them who by patience continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life ; but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile." (Romans 2 : 6-9)

When one begins to rebel against the truth even while in the process of studying it, he will soon lose his understanding of it—it will become meaningless to him. Only as we accept the Bible as authority, and submit ourselves to that authority, will we come to have a proper understanding and appreciation of it.

The Bible is God's word; it is speaking to you. You must now submit yourself to its authority by obeying its precepts and commands.

Have You Wondered-About Baptism ?

W. N. Jackson

Have you, been baptized into Christ? Have you been baptized in the manner specified by our Lord? Was your baptism for the express purpose given by our Lord in the New Testament? And, if you have never been baptized, is it because you feel that it is not essential, not necessary? Do you feel that there's so much controversy on the

subject that God's will just cannot be seen? These are vital questions, and it is our purpose to help you see God's truth on baptism, and to invite you to examine yourself in the light of this truth.

Baptism is indeed one of the hotly—disputed issues in the religious world. In our approach to the subject, we need to ask, "Has God given us sufficient information on the matter?" If not, then man is left to his own devices, to do his own pleasure in the matter, and the dispute will continue to rage. If God has given us the needed information, man is obligated to know it and respond obediently to it. Long ago Moses declared that the secret things belong to God, "but those things which are revealed belong unto us..." (Deut. 29:29) In examining the New Testament, we find that the word "baptize" or one of its forms appears over 75 times! Clearly, God has revealed the subject to us! We wish now to deal with some questions on the matter.

Have you Wondered About the Authority Behind Baptism?

Authority is supremely important in religion. We are subject to the Lord's authority, and one day will answer to the authority of His Word in judgement. (John 12 : 48) During the Lord's ministry, he once centered on the authority behind baptism—John's baptism at the time and asked, "The baptism of John, whence was it? From Heaven, or of men?" (Matt. 21 : 25) Insincere men, knowing they were caught in a trap of their own making, since they had brought up the matter of authority in the first place, replied that they could not answer. They knew the baptism of John was from Heaven!

We're plainly told that John was sent from God (John 1:6) and that he was filled with the Holy Spirit (Luke 1 :5). His message, then, was indeed from Heaven! And on the specific point of his baptism, we're told that "...the Pharisees and lawyers rejected The Counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him." (Luke 7: 30) Upon meeting with his disciples just before he ascended, the Lord gave them the

charge to go and teach all nations, "baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." (Matt. 28 : 19) This also showed the authority behind the baptism—the authority of God ! So reader, let no man lead you astray and cause you to believe that baptism is an unimportant, man-made device resting only in man's merit.

Have you Wondered About the Necessity of Baptism ?

We have seen that the one who first taught baptism was sent from God, was filled with the Holy Spirit, and taught the counsel of God on baptism. John's baptism, when presided by belief in his message, repentance from sin, and confession of those sins, was FOR the remission of sins ! (Mark 1 : 4) In the Lord's giving the Great Commission, he stated that upon the gospel's being preached that "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." (Mark 16 : 15-16) The book of Acts tells of the apostles going forth to carry out that commission. Upon the preaching of the gospel for the very first time in the name of the resurrected Lord, those who believed and asked for instructions (Acts 2 : 37) were told to "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ" (v. 38) Thus, it was necessary that men, under the preaching of John, to be baptized, and it was necessary for "every one" there in Acts 2 to be baptized.

Here, the man-made creeds enter in. One of them, still in use in a prominent denomination, states that while "baptism is not essential to salvation, it is necessary for obedience." This is a puzzling and ridiculous statement, in view of obedience itself being the condition upon which salvation is granted. Christ "became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that **Obey Him.**" (Heb. 5 : 9)

In that Book of Acts, the "Book of Conversions," it can be noted that in each and every conversion account baptism is specifically mentioned. We urge the reader to review these, and now give them and the verses stressing the baptism:

Those on Pentecost (Acts 2 : 37-38) Household of Cornelius (Acts 10 : 47-48)

The Samaritans (Acts 8 : 12) Household of Lydia (Acts 16 : 14-15)

The Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8 : 35-39) Household of the Jailor (Acts 16 : 30-34)

Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9 : 18 ; 22 : 16) The Corinthians (Acts 18 : 8)

Have you Wondered About the Purpose of Baptism ?

In Acts 2 : 38, now completing the statement, we have baptism commanded, along with repentance, and the expression there is "baptism **For** the remission of sins." The word "**For**" means "in order to obtain, unto the end of" **Remission of Sins !** This is the fact so repeatedly denied in the religious world today. Yet, if any had doubts regarding Acts 2 : 38, God has provided other verses to help us see His truth. God's wisdom has provided this, surely, so that any doubts remaining after one passage is studied can be resolved as one looks into other verses on the same subject.

In pursuing baptism's purpose, we note the following statements of benefits received, and all of them **After** the baptism. Surely these are sufficient to show the honest and sincere person that, baptism is **In Order to be Saved**

The baptism-and then the salvation. (Mark 16 : 15,16).
The baptism-and putting on of Christ (Gal. 3 : 27)

The baptism-and then remission of sins. (Acts 2 : 38) :
The baptism-and then salvation. (1 Pet. 3 : 21)

The baptism-and then the newness of life. (Rom. 6 : 4)

Look at these verses, and remember that God has made it so, **Not Man !** Because of the prominent false doctrine that man is saved by faith "only," and in support of that doctrine, man has designed other purposes for baptism. Some of these are, "to get in the visible church," or "to profess faith publicly," or "to show out-wardly the sign of God's inward

grace," etc. A man could follow that doctrine, and go through all of these, and never be scripturally baptized in the sight of God. **Baptism is For the Purpose of Having sins Forgiven !**

Have you Wondered about the Method of Baptism ?

There are three proofs that settle the matter of baptism's "mode" or "method." (1) The word "baptize" literally means to "dip, plunge, submerge." It then, by definition, refers to immersion. (2) In the New Testament accounts of baptism, where the action is seen, immersion is the picture : Jesus, in being baptized, "went up straightway out of the water" (Matt. 3:16) and the evangelist Philip and the eunuch "went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch ; and he baptized him," then both came up out of the water ! (Acts 8 : 38-39) It then, by description, is immersion. (3) Finally, as if to lay all doubt to rest, God has told us the action, **Twice !-A Burial !** We are "buried with Him" in being baptized. (Rom. 6 : 4, Col. 2 : 12) Therefore, by description and by express statement the Lord shows us that baptism is by immersion !

Finally, have you Wondered about your Condition ?

This is no plea for salvation based on "baptism alone." Indeed, man is not saved by anything "alone," but God has provided His own action to work with man's action in obeying Him, in order for man to have redemption. When God has provided His love, His mercy, His longsuffering, His Son and His Word ; and when Christ has provided His love, His mercy, His life, His death, His blood and His gospel, man still must obey that gospel which is God's power to save Him. (Rom. 1 : 16)

That obedience must include faith (Heb. 11 : 6), repentance (Acts 17 : 30), confession of the Lord (Rom. 10 : 10) and then the **One** baptism (Eph. 4 : 4). Yes, there's only **One** baptism, and we've seen its authority, necessity, purpose and method. The baptism must be correct on these points,

or it is defective, and not acceptable to God at all!

We urge you to obey the gospel, fully and completely, **now!** The churches of Christ stand ready to assist you at any time, day or night!

Joseph—Tempted By Potiphar's Wife

Mark H. Nunley

The Bible tells us in many places that we are to overcome temptation and that the Lord will help us to overcome temptation if we will let him. And a man in the Old Testament that tells us so much about overcoming temptation is Joseph.

After Joseph had been sold into slavery by his brothers, he was sold to Potiphar who was the captain of Pharaoh's guard. And while Joseph was in the household of Potiphar down in Egypt, God blessed Joseph and he was very prosperous therefore. And seeing this, Potiphar made Joseph the overseer of his own household, and therefore God blessed Potiphar both in the house and in the field. And the Bible tells us that Joseph was a handsome young man. And in the course of time, Potiphar's wife began to notice Joseph, and she one day asked him to lay with her, to which he flatly refused. But she, not being content with that answer, tempted him day after day to commit fornication with her. To which Joseph always said "No." But one day when Joseph came into the house to carry out his duties, he and Potiphar's wife were alone in the house. And she grabbed a hold of him by the garment and insisted that he lay with her, to which Joseph turned and ran from the house, thus leaving his garment in her hand. And being furious at him and having her ego deflated by him no doubt, she accused him of what she had been after the whole time. And the result was that Joseph was cast into prison.

So we see Joseph as a man that had the moral courage, the inner restraints to say "no" to the temptation to commit fornication with Potiphar's wife. And there are three

things involved in his inner restraints that we want to notice :

First, these inner restraints were related to his early teaching and training. Joseph had received an earlier foundation which allowed him to withstand the temptation that was set before him. Someone had told him that taking his master's wife would be "great wickedness." (Gen. 39 : 9) His early teaching and training during his childhood years had taught him that the people of God just don't do those kind of things, that such activity is out of the question. And this should teach all of us that we as parents must be training and teaching and disciplining our children so that they grow up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord and are equipped to overcome the temptations that are coming.

Second, his inner restraints were related to God. Besides calling the act of committing fornication with Potiphar's wife "great wickedness", he also called it "sin against God." (Gen. 39 : 9) And it would be a sin against God to do such a thing. All through the Bible fornication (which is any unlawful or illicit sexual intercourse) has been strictly condemned by God. God ordains that one man and one woman commit themselves to each other for life, forsaking all others (Gen. 1 : 24-25). And fornicators will have their part in hell at the second coming (Rev. 21 : 8). So knowing that this act would be sin against God kept Joseph from doing it. And no matter how she pleaded, no matter what excuses she might have offered, he still saw it as "sin against God" and therefore would not do this thing. And this should teach us that we need to bring our motives, our desires, our will so much under the control of God that everything which is sin in the eyes of God is simply out of the question for us to do.

Third, his inner restraints were strengthened by his right actions. By saying "No" and meaning it the first time that he was tempted by Potiphar's wife, he made it easier for himself to say "No" the other times that she tempted him. And it will work the same way for us. The more we resist some temptation, the easier it becomes to resist it. The more we

give in, the harder it is to say "No" to some sinful practice. Besides that, by doing the right thing the first time, he took himself out of that situation where the temptations were present. If we stay away from certain places, if we flee from certain people who tempt us, we will find ourselves facing fewer temptations than if we stayed or went to those places. We have had enough time doing battle with and overcoming Satan without going to those places we know he will be waiting for us.

So Joseph overcame the temptation that was placed before him, and we need to heed the lessons that he teaches us as we face temptation to sin.

Did You Know ?

That Jesus Christ is the most unique person who ever lived ?

Of all the people who ever lived Jesus is the only person who lived without sin. "*Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth.*" I Peter 3 : 22.

When the Bible speaks of you and I, it says : "*All have sinned and have come short of the glory of God.*" Romans 3 : 23. "*As it is written there is none righteous, no not one.*" Romans 3 : 10. Of all the people that ever lived, Jesus is the greatest teacher the world has ever known. His teaching have influenced more people to do good than any other person and His teachings will continue to influence the world as long as it stands.

If every one in the world would follow His teachings, there would be no wars, killing, stealing, cheating, lying, adultery, etc. It would be like heaven on earth.

His influence is so great that history is dated according to His birth. More books are written about him than any other person. His teachings have inspired the building of

more hospitals, schools, and other humanitarian projects than anyone in history.

Philippians 2 : 6-8 : Who being in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Matthew 8 : 20 : The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nest ; but the Son of Man hath no where to lay His head.

These scriptures tell us that Jesus was at one time the richest person in the universe, but gave up all this wealth to become the poorest, so that He might help all mankind. Never before has one so poor and humble had so much influence on so many.

John 1 : 11 : He came to His own (people) but His own received Him not. He was called a traitor, blasphemer, an enemy of God, and was crucified as a common criminal. But to God He was without sin. Holy, righteous, the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all mankind, and now sits on the right hand of God offering eternal salvation to all who will learn of Him, believe in Him and obey His commandments.

Would you like to learn more about Jesus Christ, the Son of God ? We would be happy to study with you or help you in any way we can.

कब, क्यों और कहाँ ?

लेखक—एफ० डेविड

“अन्त के दिनों में ऐसा होगा कि यहोवा के भवन का पर्वत सब पहाड़ों पर दृढ़ किया जायेगा और सब पहाड़ियों से अधिक ऊँचा किया जायेगा; और हर जाति के लोग धारा की नाई उसकी ओर चलेंगे और बहुत देशों के लोग आएंगे और आपस में कहेंगे : आओ, हम यहोवा के पर्वत पर चढ़कर, याकूब के परमेश्वर के भवन जाएं; तब वह हमको अपने मार्ग सिखाएगा और हम उसके पथों पर चलेंगे। क्योंकि यहोवा की व्यवस्था सिय्योन से, और उसका वचन यरूशलेम से निकलेगा।” (यशायाह २ : २, ३)।” अन्त के दिनों में ऐसा होगा कि यहोवा के भवन का पर्वत सब पहाड़ों पर दृढ़ किया जाएगा और सब पहाड़ियों से अधिक ऊँचा किया जायेगा और हर जाति के लोग धारा की नाई उसकी ओर चलेंगे। और बहुत जातियों के लोग जाएंगे, और आपस में कहेंगे आओ, हम यहोवा के पर्वत पर चढ़कर, याकूब के परमेश्वर के भवन में जाएं; तब वह हमको अपने मार्ग सिखाएगा और हम उसके पथों पर चलेंगे। क्योंकि यहोवा की व्यवस्था सिय्योन से और उसका वचन यरूशलेम से निकलेगा। (मीका ४ : १२)।” और उन राजाओं के दिनों में स्वर्ग का परमेश्वर एक ऐसा राज्य उदय करेगा जो अनन्तकाल तक न टूटेगा और न वह किसी दूसरी जाति के हाथ में किया जाएगा। वरन् वह उन सब राज्यों को चूर-चूर करेगा और उनका अन्त कर डालेगा; और वह सदा स्थिर रहेगा; (द्वानिय्येल २ : ४४)। अभी तक जितना भी लिखा गया उससे आप शायद सोचे कि मैं किस विषय की बात कर रहा हूँ। हमने देखा कि तीन भविष्य द्वक्ताओं के द्वारा तीन बहुत ही विशेष भविष्य भविष्यद्वणियां की गईं। और यह भविष्यद्वणी थी यहोवा के भवन के विषय में। बहुत समय पहले यह बात बता दी गई थी कि यहोवा के भवन का पर्वत सब पहाड़ों पर दृढ़ किया जायेगा। अर्थात् परमेश्वर का भवन बनाया जायेगा। परन्तु परमेश्वर के भवन से क्या अभिप्राय है ? पौलूस इस बात को बताते हुये कहता है।” कि यदि मेरे आने में देर हो, तो तू जान ले, कि परमेश्वर का घर, जो जीवते परमेश्वर की कलीसिया है— (१ तीमुथियुस ३ : १५)। बाइबल के इस पद से हमें पता चलता है कि परमेश्वर के भवन का अर्थ परमेश्वर की कलीसिया से है। अब आप समझ गये होंगे कि हमारा लेख कलीसिया के

विषय में है। प्रश्न यह उठता है परमेश्वर के भवन अथवा उसकी कलीसिया की स्थापना कब होनी थी? इसका उत्तर हम पहले ही देख चुके हैं कि अन्त के दिनों में इसकी स्थापना होनी थी। प्रेरितों दो अध्याय में हम पढ़ते हैं कि किस प्रकार से पतरस तथा अन्य प्रेरितों ने किस प्रकार से पित्तुकुस्त के दिन लोगों को प्रचार किया और उस दिन लगभग तीन हजार लोगों ने उनके प्रचार को सुनकर प्रभु यीशु मसीह की आज्ञा को माना तथा उसी दिन कलीसिया की स्थापना हुई।

अब प्रश्न यह है कि कलीसिया की स्थापना क्यों होनी थी? मैं नहीं जानता कि आप इसके विषय में क्या सोचते हैं। परन्तु बाइबल के अनुसार हम देख सकते हैं कि सबसे पहले प्रभु यीशु जो कि कलीसिया का संस्थापक था उसने यह वायदा किया था कि मैं अपनी कलीसिया को बनाऊंगा। और प्रभु यीशु ने अपने वायदे को पूरा किया। एक और बात हम देख सकते हैं कि यीशु मसीह ने अपनी कलीसिया को इसलिए बनाया ताकि लोग उसकी कलीसिया में आने से उद्धार पायें और और अपने पापों से मुक्ति प्राप्त करें। क्योंकि यदि प्रभु यीशु की कलीसिया नहीं होती तो यीशु मसीह का मरना व्यर्थ था। यह अति आवश्यक है कि उद्धार पाने के लिए हम कलीसिया में हों। "..... और जो उद्धार पाते थे उनको प्रभु प्रतिदिन उनमें मिला देता था।" (प्रेरितों २ : ४७); अर्थात् वे लोग कलीसिया में मिला लिये जाते थे। अनेक लोगों का विचार है कि उद्धार पाने के लिए कलीसिया में होना कोई आवश्यक नहीं है। परन्तु यह बात बाइबल के अनुसार गलत है। यदि कोई यह सोचे कि वह प्रभु यीशु की कलीसिया से बाहर भी उद्धार पा सकता है तो यह सत्य नहीं है। अतः प्रभु यीशु ने कलीसिया की स्थापना की ताकि लोग कलीसिया के भीतर होने से अपने पापों से बच सकें तथा उद्धार पायें।

"हमारा आखिरी प्रश्न है कि कलीसिया की स्थापना कहां होनी थी? इस प्रश्न का उत्तर भी हमें यशायाह तथा मीका की भविष्यवाणियों से मिलता है अर्थात् कलीसिया की स्थापना यरूशलेम में होनी थी। और यह बात पूरी भी हुई। प्रभु यीशु मसीह ने कहा था कि मन फिराव तथा पापों की क्षमा का प्रचार यरूशलेम से किया जायेगा। (लूका २४ : ४६-४९)। प्रेरितों को प्रभु यीशु ने आज्ञा दी थी कि जब तक उन पर पवित्र आत्मा न आ जाये वे यरूशलेम में ठहरे रहें। (लूका २४ : ४९)। अतः इस बात का स्पष्टीकरण हो जाता है कि कलीसिया की स्थापना यरूशलेम में होनी थी।

मित्रो, इस लेख के द्वारा हमने देखा कि कलीसिया जिसको कि प्रभु यीशु ने बनाया कब बनाई गई, क्यों बनाई गई तथा कहां बनाई गई। परन्तु एक बात हम याद रखें कि जिस कलीसिया का आरम्भ यरूशलेम के अतिरिक्त कहीं और हुआ हो, वह प्रभु की नहीं है।



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