

THE BIBLE TEACHER

Editor :

J. C. CHOATE

Associate Editor :

SUNNY DAVID

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Taking A Stand

Life demands many things of us. For example, we are constantly having to make decisions. These are not always easy. There are times in which we may go along with our friends and loved ones on some point. There are other times that we may even be able to go along with the crowd. These are easy decisions to make because we want to agree with those around us and be accepted by them. However, there are other times that our choice may mean going against the majority. We have weighed the situation and have come to the conclusion that we must take a stand and stay with it regardless of the consequences. It is at this place in our lives that we really begin to live. Unless something is worth standing for and working for it may be of little consequence.

The same is true in our religious life. It is easy to go along with the family members, our friends, the crowd, the majority. We believe what they believe, do what they do, worship where they worship. There is no opposition, no arguments, no problems. This is where many find themselves today regardless of their religion. This is easy. There is the feeling of being accepted, of being in harmony with those

around us. There is no bother, no worry, and so the years pass by. But this story can have a sad ending. This kind of indifference and complacency can destroy us. One cannot even be just a "nominal Christian" and expect to go to heaven.

Indeed it is nice to be in a position where our beliefs and practices are in harmony with those around us. It is natural with most of us to want to be like our associates, to have their approval, and to feel that we fit into the picture. We want to be at peace with all, especially in spiritual matters. But this may be a luxury that we can ill afford. If our minds are active, if we like to think for ourselves, if we take the time to read and study so that we may know the facts, then it is possible for us to come to know the truth. Once that is realized then one can no longer be satisfied with the status quo. Now there comes the time of re-assessing, of re-evaluating, to see how much we value the truth, our souls, and even our friends and our loved ones. If we place the value on these that we should then we will find ourselves having to take a stand. This stand may put us against all that we have known in the past. We may be left to stand alone in this world. Our only consolation may be that we have the truth, that we have the Lord, and that we are right. Is it worth the cost? Can we pay the price? Will we? If we are conscious of our souls, of the souls of others, of God who made us, the truth, and the hereafter, then we will. How could we ever live with ourselves unless we have accepted and followed the truth that we have learned?

History is a good teacher. It shows that the majority of mankind has always been wrong, in error. All we have to do is to think about such epics as the flood that was sent to destroy all the wicked. (Genesis 6). Only Noah and his family members were spared and only then because they were righteous before God. (Genesis 6:9). But think how difficult it must have been for Noah to carry out God's instructions. There had never been a flood. Up to that time it had not even rained since the needed moisture for the earth was provided in other ways. Then he was commanded to build an ark or a boat on

dry land. Most people must have thought he was out of his mind. They surely laughed at him. But Noah obeyed God and because of it he and his family were saved while all of the scoffers were drowned in the flood.

We could go on to tell the stories of Sodom and Gomorrah, Job, Daniel, the Three Hebrew children, and dozens of others. In the days of the Apostles we could point to the Apostles themselves, Cornelius and his household, Saul, and all of the others who once when they learned God's will were compelled to take a stand on it. It was not always easy but the truth and righteous living will be victorious in the end.

Jesus said, "And this is the condemnation that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God". (John 3:19-21). The Lord also said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John 14:6). Concerning those who were worshipping him according to the teaching of men, he said, "Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." (Mark 7:7).

The Bible reveals God's word and his word is truth. (John 17:17). By reading and studying it then you may know God's will for yourself and for all others. It will tell you how to be saved: it will tell you about the Lord's church and the importance of it; it will tell you how to worship and how to live. It will tell you all that you need to know so that you may believe all that you should believe and do all that you should do. It will tell you about sin and warn you against religious error. It will tell you about heaven and hell and who is going there. Now once you learn the truth on these matters then it is up to you to believe them and to obey them. How could you do otherwise unless you completely reject them, refuse them, and close your mind to them? How could anything substitute for them?

Here in India in particular you might have come across

a tract, this magazine, a Bible correspondance course, a book of sermons, or you may have read and studied your Bible enough to know the truth from error, to know what you must do to be saved, to be a member of the church of Christ, to be just a Christian. But you might reason that if you do that then you will be left all alone with no one to fellowship. You might reason that there is no local congregation and therefore no meeting house to go to. Or even if there is a congregation nearby you might reason that it is so small in comparison to the other religious groups in the city and in the area. But wait just a minute, please! Are you desirous or doing what God wants you to do, or had you prefer to go along with the religious groups around you regardless of what they teach and practice? This is the question you must ask yourself and the question you must answer. What if you did go along with the larger group, the one that has the nicest meeting house, and the one that is generally accepted in your community? What have you gained? Can you please God by being a part of something that God has not authorized? Can you take a substitute route to heaven? My friend, it would be far better to stand alone on the truth and be right, be saved, and have the hope of heaven, than to go along with the majority and be lost. If you know God's will, how can you settle for any less?

If you are not sure about what you believe, whether it is all the truth or not, then I want to urge you to read and study your Bible until you know what it teaches. Surely your soul is important enough for you to do that. Then once you know the truth then let me urge you to believe it and obey it and to take a stand on it. Don't allow anyone to deceive you, mislead you, and to misdirect you. Stay with the Lord and he will stay with you. He has so much more to offer than all of the others put together. God will help you and bless you as you put him first. Try him and see if he won't.



associate editorial

What The Bible Teaches About The Day Of Judgment

The Testimony of Christ : "Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them : But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh : go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you : but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage : and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh." (Mathew 25:1-13.)

And "When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory : And before him shall be gathered all nations : and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats : And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the 'goats' on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the

foundation of the world : For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat : I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink : I was a stranger, and ye took me in : Naked, and ye clothed me : I was sick, and ye visited me : I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee ? or thirsty, and gave thee drink ? When saw we thee an stranger, and took thee in ? or naked, and clothed thee ? And the King shall answer and say unto them, verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels : For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat : I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink : I was a stranger and ye took me not in : naked, and ye clothed me not : sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison and did not minister unto thee ? Then Shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment : but the righteous into life eternal." (Matthew 25:31-46).

The Testimony of the Apostles : "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent : Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." (Acts 17 : 30-31).

And "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad". (2 Corinthians 5:10)

Again, "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. But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape." (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 5: 1-3).

Yet again, "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?" (2 Peter 3:8-12).

The Conclusion of the wise man: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." (Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14).

Christianity Cannot Be Localized And Kept At Home

When Jerusalem wanted to keep Christianity, God got it out by persecution. And now it makes a direct appeal to the church at Antioch for missionaries to go out into the great pagan world to preach Christ. It got the missionaries. They were men of courage and vision and spirituality and brains. They were not weaklings. They were giants. That is the kind to send where the need is greatest, where the task is most challenging and where the work is most trying. If we have weaklings in the church, let us keep them at home. If we have spiritual giants, let us send them to the foreign field, if they will go. In other words, the best men and women we have are they who alone can do the biggest piece of work to be done in the world.

This is not the popular idea of this task. The church as a whole is not yet possessed with this notion. There are thousands of Christians who scarcely have any notion at all of the importance and bigness of the task of missions. It is the most difficult undertaking to get them to think at all about the world program of Jesus Christ. We have members who are as lukewarm toward the universality of the Christian task as they are indifferent to the thought as to whether Mars is inhabited or not. We have hard-headed business men in the church who continually protest against sending out brilliant young men and women to difficult fields of paganism. They regard such a procedure as a criminal waste of brain power that might have been kept here and dedicated to the task of managing a corporation alongside of building the spiritual empire of the King of kings in the waste places of the earth? Build the latter and corporations and big business will follow. That has always been the order of things. Get first things first and secondary things will follow. The missionary is always the pathfinder. He always lays the foundation.

The fact of the matter is we would have a better and more prosperous world for everybody if we had more Pauls abroad upon the face of the earth. It may be a very long and winding way back to the day when the church at Antioch sent forth Paul and Barnabas, but if we could find that way and go over it, we should see that our modern civilization owes a great deal to that day. We should find that a great many forces were in the process of liberation upon the world that day—forces that worked for a new order of things. Never was a great mind and a big soul given to the world but that the world was different thereafter. You never can lift men to higher planes of usefulness and character and at the same time not lift their social and economical interests. Put a regenerating idea into the man's head and you have given to the world a more useful and protective citizen.

So it would be a new day for the world if we could get the church to be in dead earnest about the mission task at home and abroad. What we want business men to see is that business is better when we put more gospel into the world. The fear of God, love of our fellow men, honesty, brotherhood, peace-making power, a sense of ultimate values, a response to the noble and the good and the beautiful are not soul-powers apart from life. They manifest themselves in contact with the everyday world in which men live and of which they are a part. They make life. They give it colour and direction and meaning. They are forces without which every interest in life would ultimately fail. What is the use of living in a world that is nothing more than a human jungle? What is the use of doing business in a world in which there is no character, where there is no one who can be trusted? Let us Christianize Japan and we will have a better field for business in that country. Let us lift the vast hordes of China to Christian levels and the markets for our goods will multiply astonishingly. But of course the greatest missionary motive is not to be looked for in a fattening pocket-book as the result of giving the gospel to the heathen of the countries across the seas.—*Selected.*

A New Creature

Edward White

A Lesson for New Christians

You are now a Christian, a child of God, a new creature in Christ. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (2 Cor. 5:17.) Having been baptized into Christ, you are now to live a new and different life. Baptism is the thing that separates the old life from the new life. After being baptized one must put on Christ. (Gal. 3:27.) That is, he must strive to live a life so patterned after the Christ life that he can say, "Christ liveth in me." (Gal. 2:20.)

The Christian life is a changed life. It is a life of new thoughts, new words and new deeds. After obeying from the heart that form of doctrine (baptism) one becomes a servant of righteousness. (Rom. 6:17, 18.) He no longer serves the flesh, obeying the lusts thereof. This life must be continued in steadfastness until death or it will be of no value. (1 Cor. 15:58.) "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." (Rev. 2:10.)

In this new life one cannot do the things he did before he became a Christian. He cannot always do the things he would like to do. The things one would like to do are not always the things he should do. "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." (Gal. 5:17.) The Christian life is to be an influence for good. (Matt 5:16.) Therefore nothing should be done that would bring reproach upon the Christian calling or upon the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Every Christian is a member of the church of Christ. Becoming a Christian and becoming a member of the church are not two different processes. When one is scripturally baptized he is saved from past sins; he becomes a Christian. He also becomes a member of the church by the same process. The Lord adds the saved to his church. (Acts

2:47.) In order that you may remain a Christian and a faithful member of the church there are certain instructions to be observed and certain warnings to be heeded. Your goal is heaven. You have just begun that heavenly walk. Give careful attention to all that is required of you as a Christian in order that you may finally obtain that heavenly reward.

As a member of the church the Lord expects you to attend the services of the church. "Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more as ye see the day approaching." (Heb. 10:25.) The worship services are a very essential part of the Christian life. "The true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." (John 4:23,24.) Attend the worship every Lord's Day and enter into the worship wholeheartedly. Attend the Sunday night services, the Bible study services and all other services held by the church. You will find this will help you to grow in the knowledge of the Bible, the Christian's instruction book. It will strengthen you and provide you with the courage necessary to face the trials and persecutions which are to come your way.

Read your Bible. Read it every day. It would be well to have a systematic plan in which you could read the Bible through at least once a year. By reading three chapters a day through the week and five chapters on Sunday, you can read the Bible through in a year. Read part of your daily reading from the Old Testament and part from the New Testament. You will have occasions, of course, for additional reading and study. Do not read the Bible with the sole aim of just reading it through but to know what it says. The Bible is divided into two main divisions—the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament contains the law that was given to the Jews, but the New Testament is directed to those of us who are living under the Christian dispensation. (Heb. 1:1,2.)

Make prayer a daily practice also. (1 Pet. 3:12; Jas. 5:16.) Prayer is an important part of the Christian life. "Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks : for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." (1 Thess. 5:17, 18.) One can and should pray several times a day. Prayer is talking to God. It is your approach to him. In prayer you should thank God for his goodness and make known to him your desires. Through prayer we are made to recognize our dependence upon God. Let not selfishness prevail in your prayers but pray for all men who need your prayers. (1 Tim. 2:1,2.)

Your prayer need not be long to be acceptable. Neither does it need to be phrased in fancy words and sentences. Do not learn a prayer but simply make known unto God your heart's desire. Talk to him as you would to an earthly friend. Remember that God is your friend. Prayer must be offered in the name of Christ and according to the will of God. (John 16:23; 1 John 5:14) If we sin we should go to him with a spirit of penitence in prayer and ask his forgiveness and invoke his help in overcoming evil. There is none but what commits sin. (1 John 1:9; 2:1.)

Christians should refrain from all things sinful, or from things having evil appearance or tendencies, or from anything that would lead others to sin. "Abstain from all appearance of evil." (1 Thess. 5:22.) It will be important, too, not to engage in any practice that might appear questionable to the world. Pure religion partly consists in keeping one's self unspotted from the world. (Jas. 1:27.) Be absolutely fair and square, honest and upright in all your dealings. Practice the principles of the golden rule which says to do unto others as you would have others do unto you. (Matt. 7:12.)

Christians have no place in the dance hall. The influence of moving picture shows is, for the most part, toward the lewd, the lustful, the immoral and the indecent. The moral standards of Hollywood are unquestionably very low and certainly Christians cannot support such conditions.

Neither should a Christian be a drinker of alcoholic beverages of any kind. It is not even good policy to patronize drinking establishments in any respect. Your motives might be pure but the world does not know that, and it might weaken your influence for good. Furthermore, you might necessarily be throwing yourself into the face of temptation. If you have become addicted to the use of tobacco in any form, I would advise to refrain from its use. I know that many brethren use it, but it does not help their influence and in many cases it hinders it. Paul said that we should cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh. (2 Cor. 7:1,)

Christians should refrain from any profane language or unclean or filthy talk. Do not tell nor listen to the suggestive, unclean and indecent stories as told by the worldly minded. "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers." (Eph. 4:29.)

Your obligations to God come first. Jesus said, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness: and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matt. 6:33.) Place your religious duties first and then arrange your worldly affairs to fit in with that program. Do not do anything that would interfere with your whole-hearted service to God. It is well to have some honorable occupation, but let no worldly gain be obtained at the expense of the soul. (Mark 8:36.)

If you are ever troubled with any problem, feel free to seek the counsel of any gospel preacher, elder or any faithful member of the church. The church is always interested in you and it is to your advantage always to be interested in the church. Be not discouraged in your efforts to live the Christian life. Heaven is worth every effort put forth and every sacrifice that needs to be made. If we miss heaven we have missed all. "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." (Gal.6:9.)

Behold, He cometh

By L. L. GIEGER

ELEVEN APOSTLES, fully convinced of Jesus' deity by his resurrection from the dead, stood gazing into heaven. The cloud had received him from their sight. The Psalmist had said the Lord "maketh the clouds his chariot; who walketh upon the wings of the wind" (Psalm 104:3) These words had been fulfilled before their eyes.

Then two men in white apparel appeared and said "...this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:9-11).

Two thousand years have passed since he ascended and there is no more sign of his coming now than when the angels spoke to the apostles. All things continue the same, year after year. Some have given up; other wonder if they should and still other have concluded that his second coming may be figurative, not literal.

But don't forget that God waited 500 years to fulfill a promise to Moses about Amalek (Exodus 17:14; 1 Samuel 15); and several thousand years to fulfill a promise to Adam and Eve about bruising the head of Satan (Genesis 3:15; Matthew 1:21). Let us not be impatient. The Bible teaches that "the Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness" (2 Peter 3:9), and then adds, "though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come" (Habakkuk 2:3). The discussion is not how will he come IF he does but how will he come WHEN he does.

Glorious

His coming will be **Glorious**. "Behold, he cometh with clouds" (Revelation 1:7). The number of miracles that will attend his return cannot be determined—but among them will be the appearance itself, the host with him, the resurrection of the dead, the judgment, entrance into heaven, and departure into hell. As lightning flashes in one place and lightens all things around, and thunder peals in one place and echoes

every direction, so the second coming of our Lord will be a display of splendor every-where (Matthew 24:27).

Abrupt

His coming will be **abrupt**. "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye" (1 Corinthians 15:52), and "at an hour that ye think not" (Luke 12:40); the Lord will appear. The appointed moment, year, or even century is unknown to man (Matthew 24:36-42). His coming will be as a thief (2 Peter 3:10).

Personal

His coming will be **Personal** "The Lord himself will descend from heaven" (1 Thessalonians 4:16). As the ascension took him into heaven so the return will bring him back. His station will be short of the earth. The dead will be raised and the living caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. The earth will be burned up (2 Peter 3:10-12). The Lord will appear in person, and with him will be a host of angels (Matthew 25:31). Also, he will bring the spirits of the dead to reoccupy their former bodies, that they may be raised and changed from mortal and corruptible to immortal and incorruptible (1 Corinthians 15:52-53).

Audible

His coming will be **audible**. He will descend "with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God" (1 Thessalonians 4:16). Never heard before, but impossible to misunderstand, will be the single shout that will shatter caskets and rouse all human bodies. The shout will also be heard by every living person. "The hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, and those who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord will be caught up together with them" (John 5:28-9; 1 Thessalonians 4:17).

Visible

His coming will be **visible**. "Every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him" (Revelation 1:7).

Every eye will see him. Every ear will hear him. Every knee will bow to him. And every tongue will confess to God. (Romans 14:11).

Those who long for his appearance and prepare themselves for it by obedience to the gospel, faithful worship, and continued service will find in his coming the fulfillment of every wonderful dream. May we not be among the others !

The End Of The World

Dick Cupp

During the days of Peter, just as during our own days, there were those people who scoffed at the doctrine of the coming of Christ in judgment, and who ridiculed the idea that the earth would some day be destroyed. In the first few verses of 2 Peter, however, the apostle assures that God has promised both the coming and the destruction, and that God will keep His promise. They had forgotten, Peter says, that God also promised a flood during the days of Noah, and that God kept that promise in due time.

Then, in verses 8-12, Peter says, in effect, "You have also foregotten that God is not limited by time." "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years," he says, "and a thousand years as one day!" Therefore, whether it be one day, or 1,000 years, between the promise and the fulfillment, **God will keep His promise !** And one great promise of God is the simultaneous coming of Christ and destruction of the world.

Peter is making a contrast between the promises of men and the promises of God. People may die before keeping a promise ; God will not. People may forget a promise ; God will not. People may refuse to do what they promise to do ; God will not (it is impossible for Him to lie ; Hebrews 6:18). It may be impossible for a person to keep a certain promise, but "With God, all things are possible !" (Matthew 19:26) Therefore, "God is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness....." Because of his loving, patient long-suffering, God has allowed us plenty of time to repent and obey and thus prepare for the coming of the Lord and the destruction of the world. He's given us more than 1,900 years already. But how much more time do we have ?

No one knows the time God has set for Christ's coming. When he comes, Peter says, he will come "as a thief in the night;" unexpected ; with suddenness (see Matthew 24:42-44 and Revelation 3:3). And when he comes, he will appear with his angels in the clouds ; it will be the second coming : the judgment : the end of the world (John 5:28, 29; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10, 2:1-8). But one thing we know for sure about the time of his coming is that it's 1,900 years closer than it was when Peter said it was surely coming.

When the day of the Lord comes, "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."

"The heavens" refers to the sky above us : the part of the universe we can see ; the dwelling place of the birds (Genesis 1:20). This visible "sky" and universe will "pass away with a great noise."

"The elements" are "those basic rudimental things of this earth system ; the minute parts which comprise the whole" (Woods). These physical things of earth will "melt with fervent heat."

"The earth" is from the Greek word *ge*, which means "Land or earth ; the material soil ; the producing soil, the ground ; land, as opposed to sea ; earth, as opposed to heaven" (Berry's Lexicon). Therefore, Peter is prophesying the literal burning up of the literal earth.....and everything in it and on it and of it.

"The heavens will disappear ; the elements of earth will disintegrate ; earth itself will be burned to nothing" (Phillips). And at that moment, the Lord will come to claim the faithful and to judge the disobedient. In view of all this—"Seeing that these things are thus all to be dissolved"—"what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation (living) and godliness.....Looking for and hasting unto (earnestly desiring) the coming of the day of God.....wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?"

We know God is going to keep His promise. We know the Lord is coming. We know that this earth, and everything of earth that we put so much trust, faith and confidence in, is going to be destroyed. Knowing all this, what kind of lives should we live? How we should earnestly seek for godliness and holy living!

Godliness and holy living begin with obedience. Jesus said, "If ye love me, keep my commandment." (John 14:15)

A loving Lord is coming. Although the earth will be burned up. He is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." Are you ready for that day?

Faith In What ?

James D. Bales

THE FAITH THAT FUNCTIONS

Faith in Christ is not simply mental assent to His authority but it is also the principle on which we function in our relationship to Him. It is trust in and reliance on Christ. Faith produces action for 'we walk by faith' (II Cor, 5:7). Faith leads us forward.

I. THE FAITH THAT SAVES

(1) **The nature of faith.** Faith implies a **previous knowledge** of the object of faith. None can believe in that of which he has not heard (Rom. 10:14 ; John 9:35-38). Faith requires not only evidence but also a **willingness** to believe the truth (John 5:40 ; II Thess. 2:10-12). Those who refuse to believe will not be persuaded by any amount of testimony. Faith implies a **firm persuasion** of the truth of a given proposition (Rom. 4:20-21).

(2) **The nature of the faith that saves.** Saving faith is based on divine truth (John 20:30,31 ; Rom. 10:17). Its object is Jesus Christ, the Son of God (Acts 8:37 ; Rom 10:8,10), and the Lamb of God. The faith implies a full consent of the

mind and will unto God and His will (John 12:42, 43 ; Matt. 10:32, 33). Thus one trusts in Christ's blood for salvation and follows Christ.

II. THE MANIFESTATION OF FAITH

(1) **Faith must have its works.** The works of faith are those which manifest trust in Christ in that the individual follows His guidance. It takes effort to study the word of God and arrive at a conclusion of trust in Christ. It also takes effort and work to walk by faith and follow Christ. James taught that "by works was faith made perfect" and that man is justified by the works of faith and not by faith only (Jas. 2: 22-24).

(2) **Faith at Work.** Let us notice some of the characteristics as it enables us to do the things required by God. **First** the works of faith are evident when there is no reason to do the thing commanded except that God has required it (Heb. 11:8 ; Gen. 12:14 ; 22:1-19). Faith maintains that when God gives a certain commandment the fact that it is God's word gives us the highest reason for obedience. **Second**, Faith is manifested when we do a thing, commanded by God, when there is no apparent connection between that which He has commanded and the end to be accomplished (Heb. 11:30; Josh. 6:20 ; Acts 2:38 ; II Cor, 5:7). **Third**, we manifest faith when we do God's commandments although reason and experience pronounce such actions foolish (Heb. 11:7 ; Gen. 6:13-22 ; I Cor. 1:21). **Fourth**, faith is manifested when we do God's word although it involves self-denial, sacrifice and danger. **Fifth**, faith is manifested when we try to do everything that God has commanded and to do it exactly as He has commanded it. (Heb. 8:5 ; John 2:4 ; Luke 6:46; Gen. 6:22 ; Matt. 7:21).

(3) **Faith and salvation.** Faith saves because it is faith in the Saviour. Faith on His cleansing blood. It does this in that, in faith, one meets whatever conditions of salvation God has laid down. Just as God did not bring down the walls of Jericho until faith met the conditions (Heb. 11:30), just so faith today must meet God's requirements. When faith meets those

requirements man has not merited salvation, but God saves man by His grace. But faith must meet the conditions. The Scriptures show that faith must produce repentance, and that the believing penitent must be baptized into Christ (Acts 2:38 ; Mk. 16:16 ; Gal. 3:26, 27). Baptism is an act of faith which manifests trust in Christ's cleansing blood, for scriptural baptism is into the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (Röm. 6:2-5).

When our faith works through love it avails in insuring our own victory over sin, and in encouraging others to join the good fight of faith. Have you such a faith? If not, why not do those things which cultivate such confidence in God?

Will Christ Reign on Earth One Thousand Years

DOES the Bible teach that Jesus is coming to reign in Jerusalem upon a literal throne for 1,000 years? This doctrine is taught by most of the religious world today. But it is not Biblical. Notice three things :

First, Jesus must serve as king at the same time he is serving as priest. God taught through Zechariah, "And he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne ; and he shall be a priest upon his throne" (6 : 12, 13). This brief prophecy of 516 B.C. pictures the Messiah as functioning in both Capacities at the same time. The prophet pointed toward a priest who would also be our king ! Since Jesus is now our priest, he must also be our king NOW (Hebrews 4 : 14).

Second, Jesus could not serve as an earthly priest. "Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all" (Hebrews 8 : 4). The first verse of that chapter states, "We have such a high priest, who sat down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens." Under Moses' Law only those of the tribe of Levi could serve as priests. But

Jesus is of the tribe of Judah. Since Jesus cannot serve as an earthly priest, and since he is to serve as king and priest simultaneously, he cannot be a king on this earth.

Third, the Bible teaches that the kingdom of Christ is now in operation. Jesus taught that his kingdom would come in the lifetime of his hearers (Mark 9 : 1). Power from heaven was to accompany its beginning. Jesus added that such "power" would come when the Holy Spirit come (Acts 1 : 8). That power came on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2 : 1-4) Therefore, the kingdom also must have begun on that day.

Jesus taught the Lord's Supper was to be eaten in his kingdom (Luke 22 : 29,30). Since the early churches ate the Supper, they apparently recognized their citizenship in Jesus' kingdom (Acts 2 : 42 ; 20 : 7). Furthermore, Paul declared the Father "translated us into the kingdom" (Colossians 1:13), and John said he was a brother "in kingdom" (Revelation 1 : 6,9).

Daniel prophesied that the kingdom was to come during the fourth empire after Babylon (Daniel 2 : 44). History establishes that this was the Roman Empire, the ruling power of Jesus' day. If Jesus did not begin his kingdom under that government, Daniel was mistaken. Also, James affirmed that the Gentiles should be allowed in the church since they were to be included when the "tabernacle of David" was built again (Acts 15 : 13-21). The building of this "tabernacle" referred to the returning of the rule to the family of David. This Davidic rule must have occurred when the church was established, or else James misapplied the prophecy of Amos 9 : 11, 12. Thus, Jesus is on David's throne now.

Jesus is coming the second time to deliver up the kingdom, not to establish it (1 Corinthians 15 : 20-28). A timetable is also included here. First, Jesus died and was resurrected, signaling the conquering of death. Next, Jesus will reign until he abolishes death. This will be done at the end of his reign, when he comes again. Last, he will deliver up that kingdom to the Father. Dispensationalist have Jesus reigning **after** second coming, but Paul stated that he is reigning **before** his second coming.

Peter preached that God's promise to David concerning the one to sit on David's throne was fulfilled (Acts 2 : 29-36). He taught that the resurrection enabled Jesus to be exalted to the "right hand of God," where he was made "both Lord and Christ." The Jews who heard and believed this preaching were convinced that Jesus was the Messiah, the one sitting on David's throne. Acting upon that conviction they repented and were baptized. They continued in the fellowship of others who had responded in the same way to the reigning Jesus (Acts 2. 37-42).

Jesus is not coming to establish an earthly kingdom. The theory that Christ will reign on this earth one thousand years at his second coming has no biblical basis. Scripture does not support this theory.

Revelation 20 : 1-10 is used as a proof text for the thousand year reign. However, here are some necessary ingredients which are conspicuously absent in the passage : (1) The second coming of Christ ; (2) The throne of David ; (3) Jesus reigning on earth ; (4) A bodily resurrection ; (5) All the righteous of all ages ; (6) Jesus on earth ; (7) The establishment of the kingdom ; (8) Jews gathered back to Palestine ; (9) Rome re-established as a world empire. All these points are necessary fibers of the theory, yet none appears in this chapter.

The Bible teaches the kingdom of Christ is NOW in operation. Christians are citizens of it ; Christ is its king ; his teaching is its law ; the world is its territory. The work of kingdom will be complete when Jesus comes the second time.

Let us recognize his kingship now and evermore !

When Does Faith Save ?

Guy F. Hester

One cannot be saved without faith (Hebrews 11 : 6). Jesus said, "For if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John 20 : 30,31). But faith alone will not save, for Jesus said to some believers, "Ye, are of your father the devil....." (Read John 8 : 30-44).

Furthermore "even of the rulers many **BELIVED ON HIM** but...they did not confess it, lest they be put of the synagogue: for they loved the glory that is of men more than the glory that is of God" (John 12 : 42,43 RV). They believed on Christ, but they were still lost, for they refused to confess him, and Paul said, "With the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:9,10). Is a person who loves "the glory that is of men more than the glory that is of God" saved? The faith that saves is the "...faith which **WORKETH** by love" (Galatians 5 : 6). To really love God is to ".....keep his commandments" (I John 5 : 3). Therefore the "faith which worketh by love" is the faith which keeps God's commandments.

The theory that a person can be saved by faith alone contradicts James 2 : 24, which says, "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified and **NOT BY FAITH ONLY.**"

God did not heal Naaman of his leprosy until faith led him to obey the command to dip seven times in the Jordan (II Kings 5 : 14).

"By faith the walls of Jerico fell down....." But not until ".....after they were compassed about seven days" (Hebrews 11 : 30).

Noah was saved from the flood by faith but not until he ".....prepared an ark to the saving of his house....." (Hebrews 11 : 7). In each instance faith had to **WORK**.

"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) Some have imagined that since baptism is not specifically mentioned in this passage that it is not essential to salvation. --Repentance is not mentioned in this passage either! We know that one must repent in order to be saved because Jesus said, "I tell you, Nay : but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3, 5). If we can go elsewhere in the New Testament to find that baptism is also essential to salvation? Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by **EVERY WORD** that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4 : 4).

“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16 : 16). “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins” (Acts 2 : 38). “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved” (Romans 10 : 9). These New Testament scriptures state plainly that belief (faith), repentance, confession and baptism are ALL essential to salvation.

To be saved, a person's faith or belief (Mark 16 : 16) must lead him to repent (Luke 13 : 13 ; Acts 2 : 38), confess (Romans 10 : 9,10), and be baptized (Acts 2 : 38 ; I Peter 3 : 21).

BOOK OF THE MONTH

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बालकों का बपतिस्मा

बालकों का बपतिस्मा धार्मिक सम्प्रदायों में बहुत अधिक प्रचलित है। परन्तु तौभी, इसका वर्णन पूरी बाइबल में कहीं पर भी नहीं हुआ है। इसका आरम्भ प्रभु के लिखित वचन (बाइबल) के मनुष्य तक पहुँचने के कई वर्ष पश्चात् हुआ। ऑरीजेन नाम का व्यक्ति कलीसिया के इतिहास में पहिला लेखक था जिसने बालकों के बपतिस्मे के विषय में शिक्षा दी। छठी शताब्दि में जब कैथलिक कलीसिया की स्थापना हो चुकी थी, इस रीति को स्वीकार कर लिया गया। इसके कई वर्ष पश्चात् बपतिस्मे के स्थान पर जल छिड़कने की प्रथा का उपयोग किया

जाने लगा, और अन्य कारणों के अतिरिक्त यह भी एक कारण था जिसके परिणामस्वरूप इस कलीसिया में फूट पड़ी। वे जिन्होंने छिड़काव की प्रथा को स्वीकार करा, और आज भी करते हैं, रोमन कैथलिक कलीसिया कहलाते हैं। तथा वे जिन्होंने इसे अस्वीकार किया, और आज तक जल के भीतर गाड़े जाने की शिक्षा को मानते हैं, वे ग्रीक ऑर्थोडॉक्स कैथलिक कलीसिया के नाम से कहलाने लगे।

बालकों के बपतिस्मे की शिक्षा का प्रचलन इस विश्वास के फलस्वरूप हुआ कि सब मनुष्य पापी दशा में ही उत्पन्न होते हैं। अर्थात् यह शिक्षा दी जाती थी कि सब बालक आदम के पाप के अपराध के साथ उत्पन्न होते हैं। यह तो ठीक है कि सब मनुष्य पाप के परिणाम को भुगतने के लिये उत्पन्न हुए हैं, परन्तु कोई भी मनुष्य किसी अन्य मनुष्य के पाप के कारण कभी अपराधी नहीं गिना गया। १ यूहन्ना ३ : ४ से हम सीखते हैं कि “पाप तो व्यवस्था का विरोध है” एक नया जन्मा हुआ नन्हा बालक यह कैसे कर सकता है ? वह तो व्यवस्था को जानता तक भी नहीं। बहुत समय पूर्व, परमेश्वर के भविष्यद्वक्ता ने कहा था, “जो प्राणी पाप करे वही मरेगा, न तो पुत्र पिता के अधर्म का भार उठाएगा और न पिता पुत्र का ; धर्मी को अपने ही धर्म का फल, और दुष्ट को अपनी ही दुष्टता का फल मिलेगा।” (यहेज़केल १८ : २०)।

प्रभु यीशु ने शिक्षा देकर कहा, “मैं तुम से सच कहता हूँ, यदि तुम न फिरो, और बालकों के समान न बनो, तो स्वर्ग के राज्य में प्रवेश करने नहीं पाओगे।” (मत्ती १८ : ३)। और फिर, “यीशु ने कहा, बालकों को मेरे पास आने दो। और उन्हें मना न करो, क्योंकि स्वर्ग का राज्य ऐसी ही का है।” (मत्ती १९ : १४)। सो इस प्रकार से प्रभु ने छोटे बालकों के विषय में बताकर प्रगट किया कि वे निष्पाप तथा निष्कलंक हैं और वे पाप के अपराध से स्वतंत्र हैं। निःसंदेह, यदि वे पाप तथा कुकर्म से भरे हुए होते तो वह कभी भी इस बात की शिक्षा नहीं देता कि मनुष्य फिर और छोटे बालकों के समान बने ताकि वह स्वर्ग के राज्य में प्रवेश करे। और फिर, यदि वे पापी होते तब वह यूँ कभी नहीं कहता कि स्वर्ग के राज्य में इस प्रकार के लोग सम्मिलित हैं जो छोटे बालकों का सा मन तथा स्वभाव रखते हैं।

किस प्रकार से कोई अन्य व्यक्ति, एक अच्छे माता-पिता भी, एक
 अन्य आत्मा के विषय में कोई निश्चय कर सकते हैं? यह सम्भव कैसे हो
 सकता है कि एक बालक को किसी ऐसी वस्तु से, जिसके बारे में न वह
 कोई ज्ञान रखता है और जो उस पर वास्तव में किसी अन्य व्यक्ति की
 इच्छा से लायी जाए, कोई लाभ पहुँचे? प्रश्न में अपनी इच्छा को
 ऐसे लोगों के लिये दिया है जो सत्य को सून तथा समझ सकते हैं (पत्नी
 २८ : ११ ; रोमियों १० : १७), जो इतने बड़े हैं कि अपने मन से
 उस में विश्वास कर सकते हैं (रोमियों १० : १० ; इब्रानियों ११:३),
 जो इतने समझदार हैं कि अपने पापों से स्वयं मन फिरा सकते हैं
 (लूका १३ : ३ ; मत्थियों १७ : ३०), तथा अपने मूँह से कहेंकर
 उसका अंगीकार कर सकते हैं (रोमियों १० : १० ; मत्थी १०:३२),
 और इस प्रकार से स्वयं अपने पापों की क्षमा के लिये वृत्तिमा ले
 सकते हैं (मत्थी ११ : १३ ; मत्थियों २ : ३८) । क्या एक छोटा
 बालक यह सब कर सकता है ? वास्तव में नहीं । क्या एक नन्ही बालक

बालक के पास जाएगा । (२ कोरिंथियों ११ : २३) ।
 वह अपने मन से इतने बड़े हैं कि अपने पापों की क्षमा कर सकते हैं, जो
 परमेश्वर की दृष्टि में निर्दोष हैं । यदि उनकी मूर्खता ही जाए तो वे
 भी उदार की योजना नहीं है । वे निर्दोष हैं, और इसलिए
 दार सिद्ध हो सकते हैं । छोटे बालकों के लिये प्रश्न की ओर से कोई
 गढ़ है, केवल उन्हीं लोगों के लिये है जो न्याय के दृष्टिकोण से बिना-
 उदार की योजना, जिस प्रकार से परमेश्वर के बचन में दर्शाई
 आशाओं का पालन करे ।

एक बालक का जन्म जब इस संसार में होता है तो उसमें कोई
 पाप से भरा हुआ है, और कदाचित् उसे पाप के परिणाम की भी सहना
 पड़े, परन्तु अपने जन्म के समय वह निर्दोष है । वह उस समय तक
 निर्दोष तथा निष्कलना कि दशा में परमेश्वर के सममुख रहता है जब
 तक वह बड़ा होकर उस आयु में प्रवेश न कर ले कि वह न्याय के योग्य
 हो । वह अपने कार्यों के लिये केवल तभी जिम्मेदार ठहरता है जब
 वह भले तथा बुरे में अन्तर देख सकता व उसे समझ सकता है । उस
 समय, और केवल तभी, इसकी आवश्यकता होती है कि वह प्रश्न की

प्रार्थना कर सकता है, प्रभु-भोज में भाग ले सकता है, अन्य लोगों को सिखा सकता है, परमेश्वर का स्तुतिगान, इत्यादि कर सकता है ? आप जानते हैं कि वह यह सब नहीं कर सकता। और तभी ये सब कार्य एक मसीही को करने बहुत आवश्यक हैं। सो परमेश्वर की इच्छा का प्रकाशन शिशुओं के लिये नहीं हुआ है, परन्तु बड़े (व्यस्कों) लोगों के लिये हुआ है, वे जो परमेश्वर की दृष्टि में न्याय के लिये जिम्मेदार हैं, क्योंकि वे पापी हैं।

और अन्त में, बालकों का बपतिस्मा वास्तव में बपतिस्मा है ही नहीं। वह जल का छिड़कना या उंडेला जाना हो सकता है, जिस प्रकार से अधिकांश धार्मिक लोग उपयोग में लाते हैं, परन्तु वह बपतिस्मा नहीं है। सर्वप्रथम, बाइबल के अनुसार बपतिस्मे का अर्थ है गाड़े जाना या दफन होना। सुनिये कि प्रेरित पौलूस क्या कहता है; "और उसी के साथ बपतिस्मा में गाड़े गए, और उसी में परमेश्वर की शक्ति पर विश्वास करके, जिसने उसको मरे हुएों में से जिलाया, उसके साथ जी भी उठे।" (कुलुस्सियों २ : १२)। "क्या तुम नहीं जानते, कि हम जितनों ने मसीह यीशु का बपतिस्मा लिया, तो उसकी मृत्यु का बपतिस्मा लिया ? सो उस मृत्यु का बपतिस्मा पाने से हम उसके साथ गाड़े गए, ताकि जैसे मसीह पिता की महिमा के द्वारा मरे हुएों में से जिलाया गया, वैसे ही हम भी नए जीवन की सी चाल चलें।" (रोमियों ६ : ३,४)। और प्रेरितों ८ अध्याय में हमारे पास एक उदाहरण है जहां हम देखते हैं कि फिलिप्पुस खोजे को जल के भीतर ले जाता है। तब क्या होता है ? वह उसे जल के भीतर गाड़ता या दफन करता है और इस प्रकार से उसे बपतिस्मा देता है। दूसरे स्थान पर, बपतिस्मा उचित उद्देश्य के लिये होना चाहिए। यीशु मसीह ने शिक्षा दी कि मनुष्य को उद्धार पाने के लिये विश्वास करना तथा बपतिस्मा लेना चाहिए। (मरकुस १६ : १६)। पतरस ने कहा, कि मनुष्य को पापों की क्षमा के लिये मन फिराना चाहिए तथा बपतिस्मा लेना चाहिए। (प्रेरितों २ : ३८)। मसीह ने यह भी शिक्षा दी कि यह पिता, पुत्र, तथा पवित्र आत्मा के नाम से करना चाहिए। (मत्ती २८ : १९)। और अन्त में याद रखिए, कि केवल एक ही बपतिस्मा है (इफिसियों ४ : ५), और जैसा कि दिखाया गया है, बपतिस्मा का अर्थ केवल गाड़े जाना है, तथा इसके द्वारा मनुष्य मसीह में तथा कलीसिया में सम्मिलित होता है। (गलतियों ३ : २६,२७ ; १ कुरिन्थियों १२ : १३)।

नहीं, शिशुओं को या छोटे बालकों को बपतिस्मे की कोई आवश्यकता नहीं है परन्तु उनके माता-पिता को चाहिए कि वे प्रभु के आज्ञाकारी बनें। क्या आपका बपतिस्मा पवित्र शास्त्र की शिक्षानुसार हो चुका है ?

“धन्यवाद”

हम अपने उन सभी पाठकों का धन्यवाद करते हैं जिन्होंने ने बाइबल टीचर के पिछले अंक में प्रकाशित “जवाब क्यों नहीं” लेख की प्रशंसा में पत्र लिखकर हमें प्रोत्साहित किया।

“सत्य सुसमाचार”

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१. सत्य सुसमाचार (भाग एक)
२. उद्धार की योजना (भाग दो)
३. क्रूस की कथा (भाग तीन)

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सत्य सुसमाचार
पोस्ट बॉक्स ३८१५
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