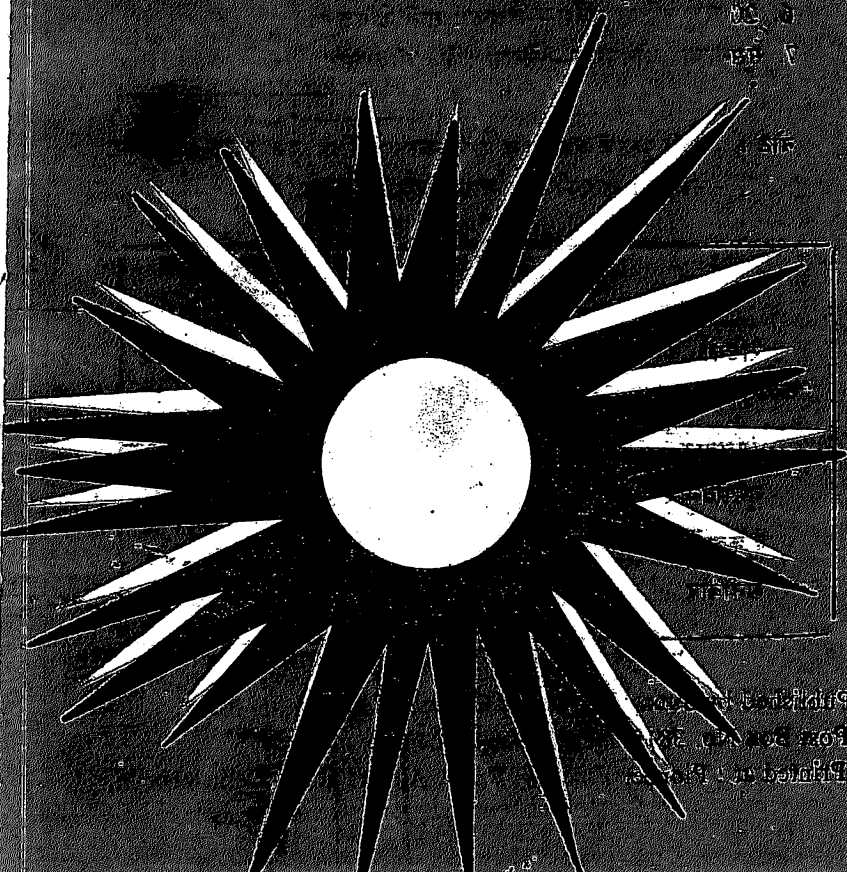


THE BIBLE TEACHER

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क्या आप जानते हैं ?

रेडियो श्री लंका से प्रसारित प्रवचनों को अब आप पुस्तकों के रूप में प्राप्त कर सकते हैं। प्रत्येक पुस्तक को मुफ्त प्राप्त करने के लिये, डाक व्यय के लिये, केवल 25 पैसे का डाक टिकट हमें भेजिए। इसी के साथ पुस्तक का नाम भी लिखना न भूलें।

1. सत्य सुसमाचार—लेखक : सनी डेविड
2. उद्धार की योजना—लेखक : सनी डेविड
3. क्रूस की कथा—लेखक : सनी डेविड
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5. 15 प्रभावशाली रेडियो प्रवचन—लेखक : सनी डेविड
6. 20 लघु रेडियो संदेश—लेखक : सनी डेविड
7. सुसमाचार बोनेवाला—लेखक : जे० सी० चोट

(अनुवादक सनी डेविड)

नोट : सारी पुस्तकें एक साथ प्राप्त करने के लिये रु० 1.75 के टिकट भेजिए। आपका पता साफ़ लिखा होना चाहिए।

कृपया ध्यान दें :

रेडियो श्री लंका से प्रसारित होने वाले हमारे कार्यक्रम "सत्यसुसमाचार" अब सप्ताह में चार बार इस प्रकार सुने जा रहे हैं :

मंगलवार	(Tuesday)	रात ६:०० से ६:१५ तक
बृहस्पतिवार	(Thursday)	रात ६:०० से ६:१५ तक
शुक्रवार	(Friday)	रात ६:०० से ६:१५ तक
शनीवार	(Saturday)	रात ६:४५ से १०:०० तक

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EDITORIAL

Wherefore Didst Thou Doubt ?

The Bible teaches that we must believe. "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (Hebrews 11:6). Christ said, "Ye believe in God believe also in me." (John 14:1). If we believe in him we will likewise believe his word and obey his teachings. He said, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." (John 15:14). Again, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." (John 14:15). In contrast to this, Christ said, ".....but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:16). Doubt is another word for unbelief. This is a sin that has plagued man from the beginning.

Going all the way back to the beginning we have the story of the serpent placing doubt in the mind of Eve to the point that she went on to sin against God. Please read with me: "Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the tree of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall

be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden. And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And he said, who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat." (Genesis 3:1-13).

You will observe that Satan knew what God had said and so did Eve and her husband. They could not excuse themselves on the basis of ignorance. They not only knew God's will but they understood it. Adam and Eve had everything that they could desire. However, there was one tree and fruit that God had placed in the midst of the garden that they were told that they could not partake of, lest they die. But that was when Satan came to them and began to work on them. He chose Eve to tempt and deceive. To do this he began to place doubt in her heart. He explained that even though God had spoken, that surely it was not so. The serpent said, "Ye shall not surely die." Then he went on to offer as a reason for God's withholding this fruit from them that he knew that if they partook of it their eyes would be opened and they would be gods knowing good and evil. Isn't it amazing that from the very beginning, Satan had tried to convince man that it is possible for him to be a god. There are those in other religions that teach that man is God, but those "gods"

die just like those who do not claim to be gods. Who wants to believe in a god who eats, drinks, sleeps, and dies just like all of the rest of us? And how can we be gods when we do all of these things? But this lie goes all the way back to Adam and Eve when the serpent said to Eve that God knew that their eyes would be opened, that they would become as gods, knowing good and evil. Of course their eyes would be opened and they would know good from evil but they would be a long way from being gods. Anyway, the lie worked and the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was pleasant to the eyes and a tree to be desired to make one wise, so she was tempted by the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. She took the fruit and did eat and then gave to her husband and he did eat.

As soon as this was done things began to happen. Their eyes were indeed opened, they knew good from evil, they knew that they were naked and they sewed fig leaves together to make themselves aprons. Then when God came walking in the garden, they hid from him, knowing that they were naked. When God questioned them about what they had done, Adam excused himself by blaming Eve, and Eve excused herself by saying that the serpent was the cause of her actions. Then God pronounced one curse after another upon them and the serpent because of what they had done. And as God had promised, on that day Adam and Eve died spiritually, were driven out of the garden of Eden and away from the tree of life, to make their own living and to suffer the hardships of life and finally to die physically. They did not believe that God would keep his word but He did. They had to pay a heavy price for their doubt and unbelief.

In Genesis 6 we read that man had become so wicked that every thought of his heart was wicked continually. This so pained God that He even repented that He had made man. That is, He was sorry that He had created man since this was what He had come to. Because of man's wickedness God decided that He would send a flood to destroy him from the face of the earth. The record says, "But Noah found grace in

the eyes of the Lord.” (Genesis 6:8). As the story unfolds we see that God chose Noah, his wife, and their three sons and their wives to be spared, along with a specified number of animals so that the earth might be replenished. He commanded Noah to build an ark, gave all of the specifications, with time to build it and time to warn the people. But no one would listen to him. They probably thought he was out of his mind. It had never rained before. How could there be a flood? Nevertheless, the day came in which God commanded Noah, his family, and the animals to enter the ark, and then the door was securely closed. Then it began to rain and rain and rain. It rained for days and weeks. Those left outside were also left without hope. All the wicked therefore were destroyed. They doubted all of this until it was too late. Peter says that God “.....spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness bringing the flood upon the world of the ungodly.” (2 Peter 2:5). So God kept His word.

The next story we will refer to is the one in Genesis 18 and 19 that has to do with the destruction of the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham and his herdsmen and Lot and his herdsmen had separated themselves and the record tells us that Abraham offered Lot and his herdsmen the choice of the land. Lot and family and all that were with him pitched their tents toward Sodom. This was a great mistake. Eventually Lot and his family ended up in Sodom itself. But Sodom and Gomorrah were wicked cities, so wicked that God decided to destroy them. Abraham, learning of this, and knowing that Lot and his family were in Sodom, began to plead with God that He spare them. He approached God on the possibility of saving them if fifty righteous people could be found in them. God agreed that he would. Then Abraham came down to forty-five, and finally on down to ten. Each time God agreed to save the cities, even if no more than ten righteous people could be found. But not even this was possible! Then two angels went to Sodom and told Lot and his family that they should leave in order to be spared. Lot and his wife had two unmarried daughters and they also had some married daughters there with their families. On approaching them about leaving, the sons-

in-laws refused to go. Finally, Lot, his wife, and two daughters left the city of Sodom with the instruction that they should not even look back. But Lot's wife was tempted and she did look back to see the destruction of the cities and, as a result, she was turned into a pillar of salt. Many years later, Peter was inspired to write that God turned ".....the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked" (2 Peter 2:6,7). So, again, doubt and unbelief, refusing to believe that God would actually destroy those cities, led to the downfall of some of the members of Lot's family and even to Lot's wife. (Genesis 19:26). They learned the hard way that God keeps his word.

The scene now turns to the Sea of Galilee with Jesus and the disciples going across to the other side where he went up into the mountain to be alone to pray. But with the evening, and a boisterous wind, the boat with the disciples had evidently been washed out into the sea. Then we read, "And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear. But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid. And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased. Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God." (Matthew 14:25-33). Now why was it that Peter sunk into the water? He was already walking on the water to go to Jesus. Evidently in the beginning he did not stop to think of what he was really doing but since Jesus had bidden him to come then he set out to do

just that. But with the wind strong, and the waves lashing high, all of a sudden, he must have remembered that while he could walk on the land he was not supposed to be able to walk on water, and so because of his doubt or unbelief he began to sink. He could have continued to walk on the water had it not been for his doubt. How often our doubt prevents us from doing that which we have set out to do. But that prompted Jesus to say, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"

Jesus had told the Apostles many times that he would die, be buried, and three days and nights later would come forth from the grave. But they couldn't believe that this would happen to their Lord. Neither did they understand all that the Lord had taught them concerning this. Consequently, when Christ did die and was buried, their world came crashing down. They were left stunned. They felt now that all was lost. But the Lord did come forth as he had promised. Appearing to them, "Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." (Matthew 28:16-18). "But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." (John 20:24-29). Oh, how many times we fail our Lord because

we doubt him ; We just do not believe as we should. We think that surely he will not bind us to all he has said, but that's where we are wrong. How we need more faith, stronger faith, so that we might be moved to show it in our lives. Any other kind of faith is not worth bothering with.

The Apostle Peter wrote, "This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance : That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour. Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming ? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water : Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished : But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand year, and, a thousand years as one day. 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. 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 ? Nevertheless we according to his promise, look for new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot,

and blameless, And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever. Amen.s” (2 Peter 3).

According to the foregoing passage, Peter said that in the last days, which were in existence even at that time, there would be scoffers, worldly people, asking, “Where is the promise of his coming?” He says that they would reason that from the creation things had continued as they were. They imply by this that evidently the Lord is not going to come. They are therefore doubting the Lord’s promise to return. Peter goes on to say that such people have overlooked several important facts. First of all, it was the Lord who made all things that continue to this time. Second, it should be remembered that with the Lord, time is meaningless. Since he has always existed, and will live forevermore, what do a few thousand years mean to him? True, time is very important to man but with the Lord a day may be as a thousand years and a thousand years as a day. Third, “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). In other words, the Lord has said that he would come, and he will come, but no doubt he has delayed his coming until now so that more might have the opportunity to be saved. Fourth, the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night or at an unannounced time and that is why one and all must be alert and prepared for his coming. He cannot come at a time when each one is most faithful, so that

means it is up to each one to take warning and to be prepared. It also takes consistent faithfulness or else when one lets down that might be the very time when the Lord will come again. Fifth, and finally, for our thoughts at this time, the Lord will come to destroy the present heavens and earth, as they shall be dissolved and melted with fervent heat. They will be replaced with new heavens and a new earth (heavenly of course, and not a remake of this old world) and there the righteous shall dwell forevermore. So let the scoffer and doubter rage on but one day all of these things shall come to pass.

There are many who doubt today. They scoff at God's existence. They raise questions about his word. There is the liberal, the modernist, and such like, even among us. They are worldly-wise and think that they are above religion. They look upon the Bible as a series of fables and myths. They think of those who believe the Bible as backward, superstitious, and ignorant. But what do the atheist, infidel, evolutionist, modernist, liberal, and all others in that category, have to offer? They have nothing but theories, philosophies, and unrealistic and empty talk. We have all the proofs and evidences of God's creation, his word, and all those things that would prove and indicate that God exists and that truly he will keep his word.

Even the majority of religious teachers do not respect the Lord's authority. They do not take his word seriously. They plant doubt in the hearts of millions and even billions. They talk in terms of many churches, many ways to heaven, many ways to worship, one name being as good as another, different faiths, and so on. They leave the impression that God will accept just anything. But they have overlooked the fact that the Lord has spoken, and that He means what he says. It will be sad for all of these people to have to wait until the judgment day to find this out.

Others who would lead men astray say that there is plenty of time to obey God, that if one doesn't get around to the point of obedience surely the Lord will not condemn him. Man is led to believe then that the Lord is really not serious

about punishing anyone, but that in the end he will save all. So what is there to be bothered about? These attitudes express doubt and unbelief because the Lord has spoken on these matters and he will keep his word. Paul tells us that the Lord is coming back to take vengeance on them who know not God and obey not the gospel. (2 Thessalonians 1 : 7-9). It would be foolish to doubt that warning and risk being lost.

Even in the church itself there is a great deal of doubt and unbelief, people not taking the Lord seriously and therefore being careless with their souls. So many don't attend worship as they should, do not give of their money as the Lord has commanded, love the world, and in general they fail to practice Christianity in their daily lives. And yet they call themselves Christians. Such people are deceiving themselves. If you do not believe in the Lord enough to be faithful to him then will the Lord save you in spite of that? If so, why did he ask you or anyone else to obey him? Think again of what you are doing.

Again, all of these people need to remember that the Lord is not slack concerning his promises, and they need to re-read of all those times in the past that he has acted as He promised. They need to remember that he will come again. Don't think that because he has not already come that he will not come. Don't think there is plenty of time. All we have is today and we need to use it to prepare to meet him. Christ said, "..... he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16 : 16). James said, ".....For he that wavereth (doubts) is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord." (James 1 : 6,7). And in Revelation 21 : 8 John tells what the end will be for all doubters or unbelievers : "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone : which is the second death."

The wise will believe, obey, and prepare to meet their Lord when he comes. Are you a believer? If so, will you obey

the Lord today and prepare to meet him? Will you be faithful to him all the days of your life so that when he comes all will be well with your soul? It would be so much better to do that now than to wait until it is too late. Surely all will believe one day, even all the doubters and scoffers, but the time to believe is now, while there is time and opportunity to show that faith, in your obedience to the Lord, in being faithful to him, so that he can take you home to heaven itself.



**associate
editorial**

How Often Should We Remember The Lord ?

During this time of the year, the month of December, we find more people proclaiming their faith in Christ. And especially on the 25th day of December various church buildings are full of people when they come to celebrate the birthday of Jesus Christ. The majority of them are never seen in any other worship services during the whole year, but on the 25th of December they come out in large bands like locusts. They come out, however, of their shells only for a day or a week and then disappear for the whole year until the next season. They want to remember the Lord only once in a year. But even then whatever they do, they do to please only themselves and not the Lord. For instance, they claim that it is the birth day of the Lord, but instead of giving gifts unto him whose birth day they celebrate, they receive gifts for themselves. They buy new expensive clothes and shoes, and spend large sum of money on delicious

food for themselves, when others go naked and hungry for whom Jesus came and gave himself. Do you suppose, if Jesus was upon the earth today, and if he wanted us to celebrate his birth day, would he allow us to go about in new clothes and spend hundreds and perhaps thousands of rupees on us on his birth day, while others go without ?

Not only this, but various things one on this day to celebrate the birthday of Christ are opposite to Christ's teaching and are sinful before him. For instance, idolatry, drunkenness, revellings, dancing, etc. (1 Corinthians 6 : 9, 10; Galatians (5 : 19-21).

Furthermore, the Lord has not revealed to us in his word, the Bible, the date of his birthday, and neither has he anywhere commanded us to celebrate his birthday. Can we speak as the oracles of God if we speak or do something that he has not commanded us in his word ? Yet we are commanded, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." (1 Peter 4 : 11). Can we claim any relation with Christ and God if we do not abide in His word ? The Bible warns : "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son." (2 John 9). Do you want to celebrate the birth day of Christ ? Then first try to find out where in the Bible, that is, in the doctrine of Christ, God has authorized you to do so, and also on what day or date does He wants you to celebrate his birth day, and in what way. However, if you do not abide in the teachings of Christ then you are away from Christ and God. You need to repent and do what the Lord says.

However, the Lord wants us that we should remember him, and he has revealed to us how and when we should remember him. Just before his death on the cross, as he was eating with his disciples, the record says: "And He took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you : this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you." (Luke 22 : 19,

20). A few years later when the apostle Paul was talking to the church at Corinth, he said, "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come." (1 Corinthians 11 : 23-26). The Christians during the time of the apostles, in the first century A.D. met on every Sunday, the first day of the week, to Partake of the Lord's Supper and thus to remember the Lord as he had commanded them to do. So we read, "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples *came together to break bread*, Paul preached unto them." (Acts 20 : 7). Our Lord was resurrected victoriously upon the first day of the week, (Mark 16 : 1-7), the first gospel message was preached, and the church was established upon the first day of the week. (Acts 2). Therefore, it is called in the scripture the Lord's day. (Revelation 1 : 10).

Jesus said, as often as we partake of the Lord's Supper we remember him. Therefore, as Christians when we come together to partake of the Lord's Supper upon each first day of the week, we do not only remember his coming upon the earth to save us, but we also remember what he has done for us, his death, and his resurrection, and his coming again to receive his faithful, who abide in his doctrine. (1 Corinthians 11 : 26),

Conscience

Homer Putnam Reeves

"Let your conscience be your guide" is an exceedingly dangerous dictum !

It is dangerous because one cannot afford always to follow the dictates of conscience.

What is Conscience ?

Conscience is that faculty or power of man which passes judgment upon his deeds, approving that which is good and condemning the evil.

Man's conscience is a witness. If one possesses a pure conscience, he has a reliable witness. If one possesses a defiled conscience, the witness is worthless.

This statement is taken from the Roman letter : "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience bearing witness with me in the Holy Spirit." (Rom. 9 : 1.)

With reference to Gentiles who naturally obeyed the Jewish law, Paul states, "Their conscience bearing witness therewith, and their thoughts one with another accusing or else excusing them."

Conscience then, is that witness which accuses or excuses one. It is that faculty which brings to man great satisfaction if a deed is approved, or great apprehension if the deed is disapproved.

One's conscience will never condemn until that one acts in a contrary manner to what he believes and holds to be right. It matters not whether the deed be right. If one believes an action to be right, right or wrong, his conscience will not condemn him.

Appearance

Conscience will make no appearance until man acts. When man violates his concept of right, or what he supposes to be right, he is condemned by conscience. Where there is no conception of right or wrong, there can be no conscience.

Conscience must be set

Conscience is like a time piece : it must be properly set or it is worthless.

Since conscience is to sit in judgment upon man's deeds, to approve or disapprove, it follows that man's conscience must be synchronized with truth. Man must set his conscience so as to harmonize with the International Date Line of Eternal Truth. Only then will his conscience serve as an accurate guide.

Types of Conscience

Peter speaks of a good conscience : "The interrogation of a good conscience before God." (1 Pet. 3 : 21.)

Paul declared, "I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers in a pure conscience." (2 Tim. 1 : 3.)

Reference is made to a perfect conscience in Heb. 9 : 9.

In writing to Timothy, Paul alludes to a defiled or seared conscience or a conscience "branded as with a hot iron." (1 Tim. 4 : 2.)

The Bible speaks of an evil conscience. "Let us draw near with a true heart in fullness of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience : and having our body washed with pure water." (Heb. 10 : 22.)

There is a weak conscience. Strong Christians are forbidden to injure the weak conscience of fellow Christians. (1 Cor. 8 : 12.)

Man's Objective

Man does not seek to possess an evil conscience or a weak conscience or a seared conscience but a good conscience, a pure and perfect conscience.

To possess such, the individual must have his mind geared with Eternal Goodness. Man must come to respect him whose attributes are purity and perfection.

Man's Inability

Apart from truth, man flounders and falls. It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps. (Jer. 10 : 23.) The way that seems right to man is wrong. Solomon declared, "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man ; but the end thereof are the ways of death." (Prov. 14 : 12.)

One may possess a good conscience and be guilty of wrongdoing, because that one may not know that his action is wrong. The apostle Paul is a good example.

Paul referred to himself as a blasphemer, a persecutor and injurious. He declared that he was at one time chief of sinners. (1 Tim. 1 : 12f.)

Yet, during this period when he persecuted the Lord's church and sought to make havoc of it, he entertained a good conscience. He addressed the Sanhedrin : "Brethren, I have

lived before God in all good conscience until this day." (Acts 23 : 1.)

Paul's conscience did not condemn him in his wrong doing, because he thought that he was doing the right thing, but he was not doing the right thing.

Do not Violate

Believing that a thing is right does not make it right. A thing is right if in harmony with God's standard of right.

But if one believes a thing to be wrong, to him it is wrong, wrong or not. That is, one cannot with impunity, violate what one believes to be wrong. Paul declares if one esteems a thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean. (Rom. 14 : 14.)

Therefore, it may be safely said that man can never afford to violate his conscience. But one may possess a good conscience and stand condemned.

Let us take care that we resist not the truth until our consciences become seared. Let us possess a pure conscience.

The Way of Salvation

C. E. Smith

There is much said about **The Way of Salvation**. Those who read the Bible know that God has revealed a way by which sinners are saved from the guilt of sin. In spite of clear Bible teaching many seem to be confused about God's simple way of salvation. Really, this is not needful as God's way is clear and plain.

Many say, "We are all going to heaven, but in different ways." This sounds good to many people. This is suggesting of course that God has many ways, and that man is at liberty to take the way of his choice. This is not true. God has but **one** way of salvation for all men. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life : no man cometh unto the Father but by me." (John 14 : 6). Entering into the kingdom involves doing the will of the Father in heaven. (Matthew 7 : 21.) It is the will of the Father that we hear Jesus. (Matthew 17 : 5 ;

Hebrews 1:1-2.) Those who refuse Jesus and his words cannot expect to be saved.

Others say, "You teach that **your way** is right and everybody else is wrong." This is untrue, because I do not have a way! Neither does any other man have a way by which men can be saved. (Jeremiah 10:23.) God does have a way, and men **must** accept God's way in order to be saved. To reject God's way is to be lost.

When God's way is taught, all false ways are condemned. This has always been true, and is true now. It is not a matter of saying everybody is wrong in their religion, but of teaching the truth as it set out in God's word.

There are only two ways set before men. These are the way of life and the way of death, the way of truth and the way of error, the way of sin and the way of righteousness. Jesus, in the sermon on the mount called them the **NARROW** and **BROAD** ways. (Matthew 7:13-14.) The narrow way leads to life: the broad way leads down to ruin and eternal destruction. God gave man the power of choice. The ways are set before man and he may choose to take the right way or the wrong way (Joshua 24:15; Jeremiah 21:8; 6:16.) To take the wrong way is to choose death, to take the right way is to choose life. (Romans 6:23.) Men should be very careful about the way they take in religion. A way seem good and right but be altogether wrong. (Proverbs 14:12.) Yes, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." Let us beware of false ways. They can cause us to lose our souls.

The Bible says much about God's way. Let us notice some of the passages referring to it.

Isaiah 35:8....."And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: wayfaring men, though fools shall not err therein." Verse 9, says the redeemed shall walk there, that is, in the **WAY OF HOLINESS**—God's way! When we take God's word as our guide we will not be wrong; we will be right and in God's way of holiness.

Isaiah 55 : 8-9.....“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.” This tells us that God is wiser than man, and that God knows best how to provide a way of salvation for man. This should be enough to keep men from either ignoring or rejecting God’s way.

Psalms 25 : 8-9.....“Good and upright is the Lord : therefore will he teach sinners in the way. The meek will he guide in judgments and the meek will teach his way. Sinners, and the meek, are taught the Lord’s way in the Scriptures. (2 Timothy 3 : 14-17 ; John 8 : 32.)

Jeremiah 32 : 39.....“I will give them one heart and one way that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them and their children after them.” The **one way** here spoken of is set forth in the Bible.

Proverbs 10 : 29.....“The way of the Lord is strength to the upright, but destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity.”

Psalms 18 : 30.....“As for God, his way is perfect : the word of the Lord is tried.....” A **perfect way** needs no improvement ! God’s way is perfect. Men should accept it, not try to change it to suit his fancy or opinions.

Isaiah 30 : 21.....“This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand and when ye turn to the left.” In a word God’s prophet is saying, be sure you stay in God’s way where ever you go ! The devil is very busy trying to make men believe they may ignore God’s way and choose their own and still be right in God’s sight. “Many ways are good, take the one of your choice.” says the devil. Don’t be deceived ! Satan seeks to devour men by leading them away from God. (1 Peter 5 : 8.)

Hebrews 10 : 15-22.....A reading of this passage reveals that a “new and living way” has been provided for us by Jesus Christ. A new way by which men now come unto God. This “new way” is set forth in the New Testament. In ages

past God spoke by the prophets and revealed His will unto men. Today, He speaks to us by His Son. (Hebrews 1 : 1-2.)

God's messenger to men in these last days is Jesus Christ. "Hear ye him" is the command of God to us in this Christian age. (Matthew 17 : 5 ; Hebrews 1 : 1-2.) If we reject Christ and his word, we reject the only way of salvation God has for us. Jesus is the **way**, the **truth** and the **life**. No man can come to the Father but by him. (John 14 : 6.) To reject the teaching of Christ and his way of salvation set forth in the gospel is to cut ourselves off without hope. To try and climb up some other way is to become the same as a thief and a robber. (John 10 : 1.)

After Jesus went back to heaven, the apostles went forth, guided by the Holy Spirit, to teach the way of salvation. In a few short years they "turned the world upside down" by their teaching, as people said. Many rejected the "new and living way" as men do today. Thousands, however, did accept the truth and became the children of God. Those who were "servants of sin became servants of righteousness" when they obeyed the gospel. (Romans 6 : 17-18.)

A reading of the Book of Acts reveals the Lord's way of salvation as taught by the apostles. Faith, repentance, confession and baptism were the specific and essential to be obeyed. Those doing these things became Christians. (Acts 11 : 26.) And the Lord added them to the church. (Acts 2 : 47.) After having obeyed the gospel, they "continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine," (Acts 2 : 42.) Soon these new-made Christians went forth with the message of salvation and won untold thousands to Christ. (Colossians 1 : 23).

Men now need to accept the Lord's plan of salvation and walk in his way. We need to hear what God says and do his will. If we are willing to take the Bible only as our guide, we too can be right in religion. If we do not take the Bible only, then we will be wrong in what we do in religion. What about you ? Are you willing to accept the Bible and walk in God's way ?

The Music God Wants

Mac Layton

The following passages from the New Testament are the sum total of God's will on the kind of music He wants in worship. Read them carefully :

"And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the mount of olives." (Matt. 26 : 30.)

"But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns unto God." (Acts 16 : 25.)

"I will sing unto thy name." (Rom. 15 : 9.)

"I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the understanding." (I Cor. 14 : 15.)

"Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord." (Eph. 5 : 19.)

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly : in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God." (Col. 3 : 16.)

"In the midst of the congregation will I sing thy praise." (Heb. 2:12.)

"Is any among you suffering? Let him pray. Is any cheerful? Let him sing praise." (James 5 : 13.)

"They sung a new song.....they sung as it were a new songthey sing the song of Moses and the Lamb." (Rev. 5 : 9 ; 14 : 3 ; 15 : 3.)

When you have read these statements from the Inspired Word of God you have every word it has to say about music in the worship of the New Testament church! The Divine Will specifies singing as the one authorized, Scriptural music in praise of God.

IS IT IMPORTANT ?

To many the matter of music in worship is a minor and insignificant question. But when we remember the false worship rendered by Cain because he brought the wrong kind of offering, and the terrible death of Nadab and Abihu because they offered a strange fire on the altar, we see God's attitude toward additions or changes. Further, we are warned that to

go beyond the doctrine of Christ in anything is to be without God. (2 John 9.) If God had not clearly specified the kind of music He wants, or if He had said sing and play, we would be at liberty. We must not go beyond the things that are written. (1 Cor. 4 : 6.) We must not presume God will accept another music beside vocal as there is no authority or mention of mechanical instruments in the New Testament church. Noah was told to build the ark of Gopher wood, and if he had used another kind the will of God would have been broken. In like manner God has told us to sing, and to introduce instrumental music in worship is to bring in a competing kind, an unauthorized addition.

RESPECT FOR THE WILL OF CHRIST

While various instruments were used in the Jewish worship of those in the Old Testament period they are left out by Christ in the New Testament church. We are under the law of Christ, and to return to the law of Moses is to fall from Christ. (Gal. 5 : 4.) If the New Testament is our sole authority on how to become a Christian, how to live, and how to worship, we must have a "thus saith the Lord" for all we do in faith and practice.

If instruments of music are used in worship because David used them, then we are at liberty to offer animals in sacrifice, have eight wives, and observe the Sabbath. If they are used because of likes and desires, then those who desire to use images, or prayer wheels, or dismember their bodies, are justified. If they are used because of talent, then those who have the talent to hit home runs, hold political office, or cook, have a place for these in worship. If instrumental music is used because it is supposed there are instruments in Heaven, then marriage is dissolved, for in Heaven they neither marry nor are they given in marriage. If it is used because it is an aid, then those who count beads, burn incense, and bow before images are not condemned.

THE WAY THAT CANNOT BE WRONG

Hence, if we once add or change what God has given, there is no place to stop. A lack of respect for the authority

of Christ is the cause of the confusion and division among believers. But there is a safe side to every question. Singing, unaccompanied vocal music is authorized by God. It is safe and unquestioned. There is no doubt we can please God with this. Since God is not served by men's hands as though he needed anything, why take a chance on instrumental music in worship? (Acts 17 : 24.)

Vocal music meets all the Bible commands. Note :

The Bible Commands :	The Voice	The Instrument
Speak in song. (Eph. 5 : 19).	can	cannot
Teach. (Col. 3 : 16).	can	cannot
Admonish.	can	cannot
Sing with spirit. (1 Cor. 14 : 15).	can	cannot
Sing with understanding.	can	cannot
Praise God. (Heb. 2 : 12).	can	cannot
Make melody in heart.	can	cannot

May we plead with you to be safe and sure in this important matter, respect the authority of Christ and worship as He has commanded ! This is the plea of churches of Christ, and we sincerely invite you to come with us.

The Pre-Existence And Birth Of Jesus

by Wayne Jackson

Almost 2,000 years ago, a babe was born in Bethlehem of Judea. He was named Jesus. The world has not been the same since. Opinions regarding this renowned Jew have been both diverse and numerous. The characteristic concept of modernism is that Jesus Christ was but a man—a good and wise man, but still, only a man. The late James A. Pike once suggested that Jesus was just a country carpenter with clerical aspirations, differing from other men only in degree, not in kind.

Near the end of His ministry, the Lord asked the Pharisees, "What think ye of the Christ? Whose Son is he?"

(Matt. 22 : 42). They replied, "The son of David." He then confounded them by quoting Psalm 110 : 1, where David exclaimed, "The Lord said unto my Lord....." He asked, how the promised Messiah could be both David's Lord and his son? They were silent. The answer, of course, lies in the dual nature of Christ. As an eternal Divine Being, He was David's Lord ; as a man, He was the seed of David. (Rom. 1 : 3). Jesus was God and He was man. Two natures were in one Person, fused, but not confused !

Any proper study of Jesus Christ must include not only His earthly span of some 33 years, but His eternal existence as well. The Bible plainly teaches that the Saviour had an eternal existence prior to His earthly incarnation.

In the Old Testament Micah had prophesied that the Son of God would be born in Bethlehem. Yet it is carefully emphasized that this is not to be construed as the beginning of His existence, for His "goings forth are from of old, from days of eternity." (Mic. 5 : 2).

Jesus Christ, as the Second Person of the Godhead, had no origin. In fact, He was the Originator of all things. (Col. 1 : 16 ; Rev. 3 : 14). He was not, as the ancient Gnostics taught, a mere created god or angelic being (a view also held by modern cultists, the "Jehovah's Witnesses"), rather, He was eternal Deity. The gospel account according to John begins with this exalted theme. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (John 1 : 1). The Word (*logos*) is here identified as a Person. "All things were made through *him*....." Specifically, it was He who became flesh and dwelt among men as the Son of God. (John 1 : 14).

There is an interesting contrast between the *eternal existence* of the LOGOS and the *incarnate sojourn* of the Son of God. "In the beginning was (a verb of continual timeless existence) the Word." Yet, "the Word *became* (a verb denoting the commencement of His human existence in time) flesh." In similar fashion, Christ Himself said, "Before Abraham *was born* (definite origin), *I am* (always existing)." (John 8 : 58). Thus, the LOGOS had a pre-human, timeless existence.

The term *logos* itself, makes for an interesting study. It was a familiar term among the Greek philosophers. "God was thought of as infinitely perfect and holy. How could such a glorious Being communicate with imperfect humanity? Was there any means of spanning the chasm between the Perfect and the imperfect, between the Infinite and the finite? There must be a bridge whereby God could communicate with man, the Greeks reasoned, and this mystical bridge they termed the *logos* because it is by means of language that thoughts are expressed in intercourse between human minds. John applies the idea to Christ. He says there is a bridge between God and man, and that bridge is the Jesus of history. Thus, John affirms that Jesus "declared" God to man. (John 1 : 18). He was the "articulation of the invisible God," the perfect exegesis of the Father. No wonder, He could say, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." (John 14 : 9).

The Master asserted His heavenly origin when in debate with the Jews He said, "Ye are from beneath ; I am from above : ye are of this world ; I am not of this world." (John 8 : 23). And shortly before His death, He could pray, "Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." (John 17 : 5). Truly, He was that "living bread which came down out of heaven" to nourish a starving humanity. (John 6 : 51).

By the Spirit, Paul was led to write concerning Christ, "though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor....." (II Cor. 8 : 9) If Jesus did not pre-exist in grandeur and glory before His birth, *when* was He rich? Certainly not while on earth! He was born in a borrowed stable, rowed the Sea of Galilee in a borrowed boat, fed the multitudes with borrowed food, road into Jerusalem on a borrowed beast, ate His last meal in a borrowed room and finally was buried in a borrowed tomb. He once announced, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the heaven have nests ; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." (Luke 9 : 58). He was rich in eternal glory, but He became poor when He wrapped Himself in humanity. Of this passage J.H. Bernard wrote, "There is nowhere in St. Paul a more definite statement of his belief in

the pre-existence of Christ before His Incarnation." Paul elaborates further on the pre-existence of Christ in Phil. 2:5ff. "Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus : who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men ; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, yea, the death of the cross. Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name....." The apostle acknowledges that the Lord "pre-existed in the form of God, yet He did not look upon equality with God as a prize which must not slip from His grasp, but He emptied Himself, divested Himself, taking upon Him the form of a slave." This does not mean that as the Son of man He was less than Divine. His self-emptying was an act of His sovereignty and in no way involved a forfeiture of His intrinsic Deity.

In this context, with one majestic sweep of his pen, Paul embraces Christ's, 1. *Pre-existence* (equality with God), 2. *Incarnation* (made in the likeness of men), 3. *Coronation* (God highly exalted Him). Similarly, the Hebrew writer notes : 1. He made the worlds—indicating His pre-existence. 2. He made purification of sins—having been sent in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin (Rom. 8 : 3)—this involves the incarnation. 3. He set down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. (Heb. 1 : 2, 3). Any view which fails to include the Divine pre-existence of Mary's Son is certainly erroneous.

Jesus' Birth

Jesus' entry into the world was miraculous. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. Some 700 years before, Isaiah in addressing the "house of David" had proclaimed, "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign : behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." (Isa. 7 : 14). The term "sign" as well as the word "virgin" indicated a miraculous event. There has been much needless argument concerning the mean-

ing of "virgin" (Heb. *almah*). Some have suggested that the thrust of the word is simply "young woman." (Cf. RSV). The matter is settled, however, by the apostle Matthew who states that Mary "was found with child of the Holy Spirit" before she and Joseph "came together." (Matt. 1 : 18). He further declares that this is but a fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy. He cites Isa. 7 : 14, using his own *inspired translation*, which is neither from the Hebrew text or the Septuagint in verbatim form. He uses the term *parthenos*, unquestionably a virgin ! If he misrepresented Isaiah's original thought, the indictment must be against the Holy Spirit who guided him in the selection of the word.

Incidentally, the New English Bible renders the phrase "before they came together" (Mt. 1 : 18), as "before their marriage." This is entirely misleading and raises suspicion regarding the translators. It smacks of modernism. Many young girls are found with child "before marriage." None of them, though, can affirm, "I have never been intimate with a man." (Cf. Lk. 1 : 34).

In listing the "legal" genealogy of Christ from Abraham to Joseph, Matthew used the term "begat" no less than 39 times. Yet, when he came to Jesus, the word is conspicuously dropped from his vocabulary. He simply says, ".....Joseph the husband of whom was born Jesus, who is called the Christ." (Matt. 1 : 16). This is a carefully worded testimony to the virgin birth. Luke also, in a guarded statement, notes Jesus was the son "as was supposed" of Joseph. (Luke 3 : 23).

It is clearly revealed that the Saviour was born of woman (Gal. 4 : 4), but it is nowhere even hinted that He was begotten of man. John describes Him as the "only begotten" Son of God. (Jn. 3 : 16). The expression "only begotten" implies a uniqueness, a "one-of-a-kind" Son. Jesus was the Son of God in a way that no other ever was. He established this when He said, "My Father (not "our Father," but claiming special relationship) worketh even until now, and I work." And John significantly remarks, "For this cause therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only brake the sabbath, but also called God his *own* (in a sense not true of others) Father, making himself equal with God," (John 5 : 17, 18).

On trial before the high priest, Jesus was asked, "Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? And Jesus said, I am..." (Mark 14 : 61, 62). Because of His confession that He was the Son of God, Christ was judged worthy of death. The issue is clear. If Jesus was not the Son of God in a unique way, He was guilty of blasphemy and thus deserving of death according to Old Testament law. (Lev. 24 : 16). It therefore would seem that a denial of the virgin birth of Christ is an affirmation that His death was just !

Furthermore, if Jesus was not virgin-born, Mary "becomes the most despicable parody on womanhood that degrades the pages of history." She stood at the foot of the cross (John 19 : 26), and watched the agony of her Son, whose suffering was due to His claim of being God's Son. Why did not she rush forth and reveal His *true* father and thus, save her Son? Obviously she knew His claim was factual, He had no earthly father !

Conclusion

It is utterly impossible for the Christian to fathom the inexhaustible love that prompted Eternal Deity to clothe Himself with lowly humanity, and all for the sake of wretched man. We can only say with Paul, "Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift." (II Cor. 9 : 15).

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The Church, or Churches, Which ?

By M. Lloyd smith

JESUS PRAYED, for his disciples, "That they all may be one—that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." John 17:21. Paul preached, "That ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you." I Cor. I:10. If all were one as Christ prayed and all spoke the same thing as Paul commanded; would there be some three-hundred or more different divisions, or churches, in the world today ?

CHRIST PROMISED TO BUILD ONLY ONE CHURCH. Matt. 16:18. All the apostles and early Christians were members of that one church. But today, many preachers teach that it makes no difference what church you join and that it is not necessary to be a member of any church. Jesus purchased the church with his own blood. Acts 20:28. He died that he might redeem the church. Tit. 2:14. He gave himself up that he might purify, sanctify, and cleanse the church. Eph. 5:25-27. He is the head of the blood bought institution. How absurd that Christ would die for a church in which one need not hold membership. Did he die in vain? To teach that one need not be a member of the church which Jesus built is a disgrace to Christ.

THE CHURCH is spoken of as the body. "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ." I Cor. 12:12. "And he is the head of the body, the church." Col. 1:18 (also Eph. 1:22-23). Is Christ the head of some three hundred bodies? No! because the scripture just given stated, "The body is one." Again, "There is one body, and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, ONE FAITH, one baptism." Eph. 4:4-5. Paul said that there was one body or church and he also stated, one faith.

THE NAME OF THE ONE BODY, OR, CHURCH. Jesus said. "Upon this rock I will build my church." Matt. 16:18. The church must belong to Christ since he is the builder, therefore, it is Christ's church. Jesus purchased the church with his own blood and the elders at Ephesus were told to "Feed the church of God, which he purchased with his own blood." Acts 20:28. When a person purchases a home, it is called by his name, likewise, the church is called, by Christ's name. In the Bible it is called, "The church of God," (or the Lord) Act 20:28. It is called, "The churches of Christ," in Rom. 16:16.

ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS. After Jesus arose from the dead he told the apostles to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, he also said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Mk. 16:16. He told them, "To teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Matt. 28:19 Jesus also said, That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." Lk.

(See last page)

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24:47. Before the death of Jesus the apostles were taught that "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven." Matt. 10:32. From these statements we find that Jesus intends for people to believe the gospel, repent of their sins, confess him as the Son of God, and be baptized into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. After Christ's ascension into heaven, Peter, guided by the Holy Spirit, convinced the people at Jerusalem that they had crucified the Son of God; being pricked in their hearts they said, "Men and brethren. what shall we do?" Peter said, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of Holy Spirit." Acts 2:37-38. "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized : and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." Acts 2:41, "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." Acts 2:47. When a person obeys the gospel by believing that Christ is the Son of God, repenting of his sins, confessing that Christ is the Son of God before men and being baptized for the remission of sins, the Lord adds him to the church; you do not and cannot join the Lord's church. If one does that and remains faithful unto death the Lord promises to save him. "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and prayers." Acts 2:42. "You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." John 8:32.

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