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LET THE TRUTH PREVAIL

1. That there should be only one church today, as it was in the beginning—Church of Christ—Which Christ Himself built, and about which we all can read in the Bible (Matthew 16:18). That congregations of His one church everywhere may be known as churches of Christ, as we read at Romans 16:16. That there should be no denominations or sects in the name of the church. (1 Corinthians 1:10).
2. That there should be only one plan or guideline of salvation, as is revealed and taught in the Bible, followed everywhere. All must be told to believe in Christ, to repent of wrong, to confess Christ the Son of God, and to be baptized for the forgiveness of sins. (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:36-38). Those who obey these commands of salvation are saved by the Lord and He Himself adds the saved ones to His church (Acts 2:47); which is His spiritual body. (Ephesians 1:22, 23; 4:4; 5:22).
3. That all followers of Christ, everywhere, should be known as Christians, after His name alone, as it was in the beginning. (Acts 4:12; Acts 11:26; 1 Peter 4:16). That all other names which exalt and glorify any other name of a man, or a doctrine, or a day or a movement, etc., must be forgotten.
4. That all man-made creed books must be put aside, with other books written by men, and only the Bible which contains God's inspired message for man must be followed in all spiritual matters. (Matthew 7:21-23; John 12:48).
5. Let us accept the authority of Christ in all religious matters (Matthew 28:18), and strive to abide in the New Testament doctrine of Christ (2 John 9).

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EDITORIAL

What Does The Bible Teach?

“God is not a man that He should lie, nor a son of man that He should repent . . .”

Interestingly, these words were spoken by Balaam, one of the prophets of God, through whom God communicated His will to people, before the Bible was written and given to man. (Hebrews 1:1&2). Balaam lived during the time Israel was journeying to go to the promised land under the leadership of Moses. Evidently, since God was with Israel they were able to defeat all kings and armies whoever met them on their way. so when they came to Moab all the Moabites and their king were sorely afraid of the Israel. It is at this point we are told of Balaam, in the book of Numbers chapters 22 and 23. Balak, the king of Moab sent messengers to Balaam to call him to his rescue, saying, “Look a people has come from Egypt, See, they cover the face of the earth, and are settling next to me. Therefore, please come at once, curse this people for me, for they are too mighty of me. Perhaps I shall be able to defeat them and drive them out of the land, for I know that he whom you bless is blessed, and he whom you curse is cursed.” When the messengers of Balak came to Balaam, he told them, “Lodge here tonight, and I will bring back word to you, as the Lord speaks to me.” This sounds wonderful. Isn't? Balaam wanted to

consult God. He wanted to do what God would tell him to do. But God told Balaam that night, "You shall not go with them; you shall not curse the people, for they are blessed." Next day in the morning, Balaam told the messengers of Balak, "Go back to your land, for the Lord has refused to give me permission to go with you." What a fine attitude. God spoke, Balaam heard, and did exactly as God had said. But Balak wasn't going to be quiet so easily. So he again sent Princes, more numerous and more honourable than they, and they came to Balak and said to him: "Thus says Balak the son Zippor, Please let nothing hinder you from coming to me; for I will certainly honour you greatly, and I will do whatever you say to me. Therefore, Please come and curse these people for me. Then Balaam answered and said to the servants of Balak, though Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not go beyond the word of Lord my God, to do less or more." What a fine example of putting God's word above everything else and trusting in His word! But right there the prophet was going to make a serious mistake which shows that his heart was not right with God. Because he told the princes of Moab, "Now therefore please, you also stay here tonight, that I may know what more the Lord will say to me." Didn't Balaam already know what God wanted him to do in this matter? God had already told him not to go. He knew God's will. No matter how many times Balak had sent his servants, or if Balak himself had come to him with the same request, Balaam's answer should have been the same, what he had told the servants of Balak the first time. Because God does not change His will. But Balaam was sold to covetousness; he was deceived by his covetous attitude into thinking that God might change His will. So he told them princes to stay there that night and he would find out "What More" God wanted to say him in that regard. As we read the story further, we see how God permitted him to go, just to teach him the lesson that God means what He says and what He says He means exactly that. On the way God even opened the mouth of the donkey Balaam was using for his transportation, whom Balaam had to beat constantly on the way because the donkey was disobeying Balaam, as God's angel with a drawn sword in his hand was blocking the way of the animal. And when the Lord opened the mouth of the donkey, and the donkey said to Balaam, "What have I done to you, that you

have struck me these three times?" Balaam said, I am angry with you because you have disobeyed me. "Then the Lord opened Balaam's eyes and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way with his drawn sword in his hand; and he bowed his head and fell flat on his face. And the angel of the Lord said to him, why have you struck your donkey these three times? Behold I have come out to stand against you, because your way is perverse before me." Realising his mistake, Balaam said, "I have sinned." Yet the Lord let him go, but told him that he would speak only what the Lord would tell him.

As we read on, we find that when Balaam saw that he had sinned against God and had also displeased Balak by blessing Israel instead of cursing them, he uttered this prayer: "Who can count the dust of Jacob, or number one-fourth of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my end be like his!" Balaam wanted to die the death of the righteous. But one must live the life of the righteous, by obeying God's will, to desire to die the death of the righteous. To Balak he said, "Rise up Balak, and hear! Listen to me, son of zippor! God is not a man that He should lie, nor a son of man, that he should repent. Has He said, and will he not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?" (Numbers 23:18,19).

Today God speaks to us through His book, the Bible, specifically, the New Testament portion of the Bible. What we must do to be saved (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38); What church we should be members of (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:47); How we should worship acceptably to God (John 4:24; Acts 2:42; Ephesians 5:19; 1 Corinthians 16:1,2); and how we should live as His followers (1 Peter 2:21). What He says, we should obey and what He asks, we must do. God doesn't have to repeat himself. He changes not.

The Lord's Prayer

J.C. CHOATE

Most of those today who believe in Christ speak of "The

Lord's Prayer," they say it in their worship, and they sing it. Those who do not use it in these ways are questioned and criticized.

The prayer that is referred to as "The Lord's Prayer" is found in Matthew 6. There Jesus says to His disciples, "*After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen*" (Matthew 6:9-13).

In our discussion of this prayer, it is not our intention to be different simply for the sake of being different. It is not our desire to be negative and to disturb people. Yet, we must point out that this is not "the Lord's prayer". It was never intended to be His prayer and the Scripture does not designate it as "the Lord's prayer." So, what is the purpose of these verses?

In this setting Christ was teaching the disciples about worship. First, he was condemning the motivation of the hypocrites in their giving. Many of them were giving of their alms only to be seen of men. Some would even sound a trumpet before they presented their gift, to get the attention of everyone. Jesus taught that they should rather give in secret and the Father, knowing of their gifts, would reward them openly.

Jesus also found fault with those who prayed in public long and repetitious prayers to be seen and heard of men. Rather, He said that they should go into the closet and shut the door and there pray to the Father. He said the Father already knew what they needed any way.

After saying all of these things, the Lord begins to teach His disciples how to pray. This was not *His prayer*, as such, but it was a *prayer of example*. If you really want a prayer that could be called "the Lord's prayer", go to John 17 where Jesus, with supplication and tears, calls on the Father on behalf of His disciples, **that they all might be united as one in order that the world might believe in Him.**

Not only was Matthew 6 not "the Lord's Prayer", but He never intended it to be our prayer, either. As you go through the words of the prayer you will see that it was fitting for that day, but

not for our day, in its entirety. Let us consider some reasons why:

1. In John 14:13, looking toward the time when He would return to the Father, and the kingdom would have been begun, Jesus instructed the disciples to pray to the Father in *His name*, and to honour and glorify Him in this way. But, in the prayer of Matthew 6 you will notice that nothing is said about Christ, and neither is the prayer in the name of Christ.

2. Obviously, when the example prayer of Matthew 6 was worded, the Lord's spiritual kingdom had not yet been established. It had been prophesied and promised, but it was yet to come. Therefore, the Lord taught the disciples that they should *pray for the coming of the kingdom*. Now this would not suit our present day setting because shortly after the Lord taught the disciples to pray for the coming of the kingdom, the kingdom came, and it came with power, being established in Jerusalem in A.D. 33.

Most believers in Christ today, thinking that this prayer is "The Lord's Prayer", repeat it word for word, even praying for the coming of the kingdom [the church] after it has already come, having been in existence now for nearly 2000 years! That would be like a man praying for a wife when he has already been married for many years! Such a prayer should surely not go over very well, especially with his wife, would it? Neither does it sound right when one prays for the coming of the kingdom when we know by Scripture that the kingdom has already come. Of course we can pray for *the spreading* of the kingdom or *the growth* of the kingdom, but not for the *coming* of the kingdom, because it is already here.

As far as the rest of the prayer is concerned, it is brief and to the point. It calls for God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven; that acknowledgement be made of one's physical needs, and especially of our spiritual needs; that the speaker be willing to forgive those who have sinned against him, as well as to ask the Father for forgiveness, realizing that one cannot be forgiven unless he is willing to forgive.

While this was a wonderful prayer for the disciples of Jesus' day, and there are many good points that we can incorporate into our prayers as Christians, the prayer as a whole was not

intended for us to repeat, word for word. Because of the very nature of its content, we cannot scripturally repeat all of it as our own today. In fact, Jesus condemned *repetition* in prayers, wanting us to pray our own words sincerely from the heart, rather than to follow a form or ritual prayer. Those who personally say this prayer as their own, and groups that pray it in unison, are ignorant of what Jesus' lesson was all about.

We are taught to pray, and under the law of Christ we have prayers of example. We should therefore pray accordingly (Acts 2:42; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; Philippians 4:6; James 5:16). Only God's children are blessed with the privilege of prayer, and even they should always pray according to the will of the Father, if their prayers are to be heard and answered (1 John 5:14,15). We should not ask the Father for things that He cannot give or ask Him to do something that He has not promised to do. Our prayers should always be to honour God, to acknowledge our need for His physical and spiritual blessings, and they should be made in the name of Christ.

Especially For Women

Search For Truth Miracles — Tongues

BETTY BURTON CHOATE

"We'll continue where we left off last week," smiled Andrew as he welcomed Mr. Seville into his home. "I've done a lot of studying on the subject, and I hope you have, too."

"I don't know as much about the Bible as you do," Mr. Seville said. "It's enough for me that I know about the working of the Holy Spirit in the world today. You know Jesus warned that those who blaspheme the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven!"

"And I would never want to deny anything God's word teaches, or any power he has promised or does promise," Andrew assured him. "My one concern is to understand the truth and to obey God."

"Then why do you deny the Holy Spirit?" Mr. Seville insisted.

"I'm not actually denying Him, or that he works in our lives today, as is shown in the verses I mentioned before in 1 Corinthians, Romans and Ephesians. Without His life in us, we would be dead in sin! But it concerns me that both of us are trying to follow the same book, as it speaks on the same subject, and yet our conclusions are so different! *Something is wrong*, and we need to *prayerfully* and *carefully* study what God says in His word, in order to know where we've gone apart in our understanding.

"if we begin in Acts 2 with the outpouring of the Spirit on the apostles and the giving of the gift of the Spirit to those who were baptized as is recorded in verse 38—"*Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit*"—, we can ask, 'Is this what happened in my life'?"

"Yes," answered Mr. Seville. "I was baptized with the Holy Spirit, and then I was baptized in water."

"But that isn't what the apostles told the people on the day of Pentecost. You don't claim to be an apostle and that you were baptized as they were on that day, do you?"

"All I know is that in our church all the saved people are baptized with the Holy Ghost."

"But after the Spirit was poured out on the apostles in Acts 2, thousands of people were simply baptized in water in the days and weeks following. They were saved as a result of their obedience, and they were given *the gift* of the Holy Spirit; yet **the Scriptures don't say that any of them were baptized with the Holy Spirit,**" Andrew reminded. "In fact, it wasn't until Cornelius and his family were converted, even several years after Pentecost, that another case is given of baptism of the Spirit. Explaining what had happened, Peter referred back to Jesus' promise ' . . . *you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit. . .*' and he said, '*the Holy Spirit fell on them, as on us at beginning.*' (Acts 11:15-16). The fact that Peter had to refer all the way back to Pentecost to show another time of baptism with the Spirit shows that only the apostles and Cornelius (the first Gentile converts) had such a baptism! For all others, water baptism for the

remission of sins was commanded. Have you and the members of your church been baptized for the forgiveness of your sins?"

"That baptism is not of any real importance, only as a sign. It's the work of the Holy Spirit that is stressed in our church."

"Yet, Jesus said in John 16:13 that when the Spirit came, He would glorify Christ, not Himself! The Holy Spirit seems to be the subject of your gospel. This isn't what Jesus said the Spirit would do when he guided the teaching of the apostles.

"But when we continue to read in Acts, Mr. Seville," Andrew went on in a quiet voice, "we see that in Acts 6, seven men were especially chosen to work. Verse 3 says that they were *"full of the Holy Spirit"* yet it was only **after** the apostles had prayed and laid their hands on them (verse 6), that they began to do wonders and signs among the people (verse 8)! Going on in our search, we come to Acts 8 where Philip—one of the chosen men of chapter 6—went down to Samaria to preach the gospel. He proved that He spoke from God by the miracles he did (Verse 6), and people were convinced. Verse 12 says that *'when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized.'*

"Because the New Testament had not yet been written to guide the young churches in their development, when the apostles heard that a church had been established in Samaria, they sent two apostles—Peter and John—to them **so that they might give special gifts of the Spirit.**

"But, Mr. Seville, why didn't those Samaritan Christians receive the *baptism of the Holy Spirit* at the point of their conversion? Or why weren't they told to **pray** to be baptized with the Holy Spirit? Or why didn't *Philip* lay his hands on them and give them miraculous gifts? Neither of those things happened, because **that was not the way the Holy Spirit was given to people other than the apostles—then or now. It was only through the prayers of the apostles and the laying of their hands on selected people that the miraculous gifts were given!** We have this shown clearly, because verse 16 says that *'when Simon [who had been a sorcerer, deceiving people by claiming to do miracles] saw that through the laying on the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, saying,*

“Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit” (Acts 8:18,19).

“Think about this, Mr. Seville. Philip could do miracles, but **he could not give that power to others.** Obviously, from the text, **only the apostles** could give miraculous gifts, through laying their hands on *selected* people—not on everyone, for Simon received no gift!

“You can read through the New Testament and you will find no other way that the miraculous power of the Spirit was given to anyone. It was not ever given as a result of prayer, as people claim today! Not a single soul in the New Testament ever *prayed* to be baptized with the Holy Spirit, and not a single soul was ever *commanded* to be baptized with the Holy Spirit! **Humans cannot command the Spirit of God!**

“So, since the apostles died long ago, who has laid hands on 'Pentecostal' people in this century to give them such gifts?” asked Andrew.

“Ours is not like that. We pray only, and if we are strong enough in faith, we can speak in tongues and some can do miracles. I've even heard that some raise the dead,” answered Mr. Seville.

“But this is not the way it happened in the first century. We have no Scriptural basis for what you're teaching. Don't you see that I can't risk my soul, and the souls of my family members, by following something people only claim but that I can't read for my self in the Bible? I think the problem is that when people pick up only words from the Scriptures—such as 'Pentecost', 'tongues', 'Holy Spirit baptism', 'gifts'—and don't look closely at what is actually being said about those things, then wrong doctrines can develop.

“Mr. Seville, the Holy Spirit Himself directed the writing of the Scriptures. Peter said in 2 Peter 1:21, '*... holy/men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.*' And as that word was being written, it was being confirmed or proved to be the Word of God by the miraculous signs being done by the writers, as we read in mark 16:20. God's revelation is complete. It has been fully confirmed by the power of the Holy Spirit! There is no new message, and no new messenger, so there is no need for miracles today.”

"But the sick still need to be healed, and we need God's wonders to convince people," insisted Mr. Seville.

"Do you remember in 1 Timothy 5:23 that Paul told Timothy to take a little wine for his stomach's sake and his frequent infirmities? In 2 Corinthians 12:7 we read about Paul's *'Thorn in the flesh'* which was never removed. According to 2 Timothy 4:20, Trophimus was left in Miletus, sick but he was not miraculously healed by Paul! And Epaphroditus (Philippians 2:27), whom Paul loved greatly, was so sick he almost died, yet he was not cured by a miracle! Even during the time of miracles, they were not used to heal Christians; they were not used simply to make people well, but their purpose was to make believers, as was the case when Philip preached to the Samaritans! It's different today, though. Big campaigns are advertised, COME BELIEVING, and you WILL BE HEALED! Does that sound like what was done in the first century? And if it isn't the same, would the Holy Spirit teach one thing in the Bible, and yet be leading people to do different things today?

"When the Holy Spirit taught in that time that we are born into the one body of Christ through the waters of baptism (John 3:3,5; Romans 6:3,4; Acts 2:28-47), would He really lead you today to say that water baptism isn't important? Or would He lead people to start individual churches with names like 'Bible House', 'Believer's Church', or 'Revival Hall' when those names are not what He gave in the Bible?

"You see, Mr. Seville, it's a very serious thing to be claiming the miraculous leading of the Holy Spirit today. Jesus said that those who would be baptized with the Holy Spirit would be able to recall *all that He had taught*, and that they would be guided into *all truth*. That means that you who claim to speak by His power today should make *no error* in any of your teaching; there should be *no contradiction* with anything that has been written in the Bible. In fact, you should be able to quote the Bible perfectly because the Spirit would also bring all of those things to your remembrance. But when you can't do these things, and when your doctrines contradict what has already been written and confirmed in the New Testament, this proves that it is not by the power of the Spirit of God that you do anything."

"All this that you're saying confuses me," admitted Mr.

Seville. "I want to come to your meetings and study more on these things. It's important to me, too that we be bale to agree on what the Bible teaches. Surely there can be only one truth."

I Would Have Said 'NO' The First Time

FRANCIS DAVID

For the last few months we have heard lot of things about match fixing. it was a shame for the ones who did it and also for the whole team and the nation. One news item appeared in the newspaper and in this news there was a title which attracted my attention. The captain of the South African team said these words: "I would have said 'No' the first time", when the bookie approached me to fix the match. I think this is a very right thing that was uttered by this man because if he had taken the precaution first, he would have saved himself from all the shame, humiliation and the punishment that was put on him.

When we come to the biblical side, we see we can take many lessons for us if we follow the same attitude. We must try to resist the temptation as it comes to us and entice us with all its sweetness and attraction. In the Bible we read about Adam and Eve. They were in the garden of Eden, enjoying all the good things that God gave them. But we read as Satan approached and enticed Eve, she could not say 'NO'. In Genesis chapter 3 we read about the temptation and the fall of man. The woman said, to the Satan: "but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die' And the serpent (Satan) said: "you will not surely die". So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her and he ate. (Gen. 3:2-6). When Eve disobeyed God and could not say no to temptation we read further that she and her husband were punished and God drove them out of that

beautiful garden.

In the same book we read about a man whose name was Joseph. He was Jacob's son. Joseph was favourite of his Father and the other brothers were not happy with this. We read he was sold by his brothers to the Ishmaelites and they took Joseph to Egypt. Joseph was living in Egypt as a slave. There was an army officer in the Pharaoh's army and his name was Potiphar, he bought Joseph from Ishmaelites. Later we read Joseph found favour of his master's sight and he made him an overseer of his house, and all that he had he put in his hand, that the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the Lord was on all that he had in the house and in the field. We read further that Joseph was handsome in form and appearance. (Genesis chapters 38&39). She was attracted to Joseph and she cast longing eyes on him, and she wanted that Joseph should have physical relationship with her. We read, Joseph refused her and said to her, "My master has trusted me and committed all in my hand, how can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" We read that she had been trying everyday to entice him but what a great thing we see here that Joseph refused her the first time. He said "NO". When she was sure she cannot catch him she accused him and complained to her husband against Joseph and we see, that he was put in prison on false accusation. How sad? But it was a great example that we read in this book of a man who resisted the temptation. The Bible tells us that we must resist the Satan and he will flee from us (James 4:7).

How many times we face such situations and we think how to handle it. Just remember when you started drinking alcohol. You could have said 'No' the first time. But you failed to do that, and today you just cannot resist the bottle. What about smoking? Just think when the first time you took your first cigarette. If you had refused the first time, today you will not be a chain smoker. Just remember as a married person someone enticed you and then you got involved with the wrong relationship, and now you are so much entangled in that situation that its hard for you to get out of that. There are so many other things that we can mention here but due to lack of space it wouldn't be possible. But please remember, that we have to learn to say no to the

temptation the first time. In I Peter 5 and verse 8&9 we read and it says: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." Resist him, and be steadfast in the faith. Our Lord Jesus was also tempted and we read about it in Mathew chapter 4. He was fasting in the wilderness he fasted for forty days and forty nights. He was hungry and the tempter the Satan came to him and said to him "If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." Then the devil took him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to Him "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down" Again the devil took him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said "all these things I will give you if you fall down and worship me." In all these temptations that our Lord faced, He became victorious, and Jesus said "Away with you Satan "Then the devil left him. What about you today? Do you have enough courage to face the devil and tell him, get away. We must remember that if we say first time to the temptation "NO" then it would be easier for us to handle the awkward situations in better way. May God give you a good mind and strength to face the devil and say 'NO' to the temptation.

God's Chosen One, The Christ

THOMAS R. DOHLING

"And the leaders made fun of Jesus, saying, 'he saved others, let him save himself if he is God's chosen One, the Christ'" (Luke 23:25).

Jesus was grossly misunderstood by the religious leaders and the general public of his day. The leaders of his day just failed to understand that **it was precisely because Jesus was God's Chosen One, the Christ, that He chose not to save Himself; chose to endure the insults, the pain, the humiliation, and suffering. Had he saved himself, as he was quite capable of doing (Matt. 26:53,54), we would have been lost forever. He came in our interest, not His own. Actually, he did not have to**

come, but He wanted to come and save us from the clutches of the Evil One. He did not come to earth just for the fun of it! He came for a purpose—to save humanity, us. Death on the cross was *the way* whereby we could be saved. Jesus is the way whereby man could be saved. **Since he was God's holy, chosen Lamb, set apart from the foundation of the world to be the perfect sacrifice that would take away our sins that he, the Lord of Life (John 5:26; 1 Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:16ff), submitted himself to death on our behalf. He was slain from the creation of the world so that we could be in his book of life (Rev. 13:8)!**

Many times, we fail to realize that we ought to be fashioned after him. As he was submissive in all humility (Phil. 2:8b), we also have to submit to the scorn, insult, pain, humiliation, and suffering for him (Phil. 1:29) in order to be transformed to his image (Phil. 2:5). As we grow in our Christian life, our focus should be more on Christ and less on ourselves until He becomes our **only focal point**. He should be our **Source of life**. The more we keep looking at the Source the more we would draw from Him and out of us will flow rivers of living water influencing the lives of those around us that would bring glory and honor to God. Then, no matter what Satan hurls at us through the world, we will not despair for we would be firmly founded in Him Who loved us and gave Himself for us. We would be convinced that He who could sacrifice so much for us is **surely mindful of us**. Knowing this, **we would never doubt, but fully trust Him Who is eternal life (1 John 1:2).**

Let The Bible Answer

ROBERT MEREDITH

What does the phrase "*one faith*" mean in Ephesians 4:5? We have been looking at the seven one's of Ephesians four. Now we come to the "*one faith*." The word faith is used in two ways in the Bible: personal faith and a system of faith or set of doctrine. To illustrate personal faith, consider Romans 14:23.

Paul wrote: “. . . *for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.*” In Romans 14, the apostle was speaking of matters of personal belief (i.e. the eating of meats or such like). The Hebrew writer tell us, “*But without faith it is impossible to please Him . . .*” (Heb. 11:16). Once again, this would be personal faith, and there are many passages which use faith in this way. (See Hebrews 11). Too, in the scriptures, the word faith is used to refer to a set o beliefs or God's doctrine. We all may have different levels of personal faith. The Bible speaks of some with little faith, others with great faith. This is not the “*one faith*” to which Paul is referring. He is referring to the doctrine of Christ. The phrase “*one faith*” shows unity of doctrine.

In the Bible, whenever the word doctrine is used in a plural sense, it is speaking of the doctrines of men (Mt. 15:9; Mk. 7:7; Col. 2:22; Heb. 13:9), or doctrines of devils (I Tim. 4:1), and it is always condemned. However, God's doctrine, or teaching, is singular. It does not contradict nor change. The first century church continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine (singular).

In our world today, some say it does not matter what one believes as long as he is sincere. Ephesians 4:3-6 disproves that idea. Paul, guided by the One Spirit, wrote that there is one faith. If one is not following what the Spirit revealed in the New Testament, then he is not in the one faith. Consider the churches of Galatia. They still believed that Jesus was the Christ the Son of God; however, Paul said they were “*removed from Him that called [them] into the grace of Christ*” (Gal. 1:6). Later, Paul said they were fallen from grace (Gal. 5:4). What caused them to be lost? They had corrupted the one gospel with Judaism and, therefore, were not following the “*one faith*” which Jude would later tell us to earnestly contend for (Jude 3).

If one desires religious unity, then he must strive to follow the “*one faith*” delivered by the “*one Spirit*” (Acts 20:32; 2 Pet. 1:3; 2 Tim. 3:16-17), which, when obeyed, will cause him to be added to the “*one body*” by the “*one Lord*” (Col. 1:13; Acts 2:41,47).

“Not An Hoof Left Behind”

J.K. GOSSETT

No one has a license to compromise the truth of God. When Pharaoh suggested to Moses that Israel leave Egypt without their cattle, the great ruler and deliverer said, “Our cattle also shall go with us; there shall not an hoof be left behind” (Exodus 10:26). Moses was not a compromiser. It was a luxury he could not afford.

When fleshly Israel entered the promise land, where seven heathen nations lived, they were given the following instruction: “. . . thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them; neither shalt thou make marriages with them . . . but thus shall ye deal with them; ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire. For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God; the Lord thy God hat chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth” (Deuteronomy 7:1-6). Spiritual Israel, the church, should learn a lesson here.

Jesus was not a compromiser! He did not “love” people so much that he condoned their sins and accepted their errors (Mark 7:1-13; Luke 13:1-5). Jesus called the Pharisees “hypocrites, serpents, generations of vipers, blind guides and fools” (Matt. 23). He “came not to send peace but a sword” (Matthew 10:32-39). He said to the Sadducees, “Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God” (Matthew 22:29). Our Lord was not less loving and compassionate because he stood uncompromisingly for the truth of God. Quite the contrary! Jesus' love for the lost caused him to condemn sin and expose error, while leading men to truth and righteousness.

The church is authorized to guard against other doctrines, to preach the word, and contend for the faith (I Timothy 1:3; II Timothy 4:1-4; Jude 3). Paul “gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you” (Galatians 2:5).

Those who compromise on the subject of baptism, scriptural

marriage, worship, distinctiveness of the gospel and those who consort with compromisers of truth and righteousness are a discredit to the Lord.

Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

Will All Good People Be Saved?

ROD RUTHERFORD

Many times we have heard people say, "God will save all good people." This implies that there are good people in all churches who will be saved. It also implies that there may even be good people who have never been members of any church who will also be saved. Will all good people be saved? What does the Bible say?

The Bible teaches that one can never be good enough to be saved by his own goodness. If people could be saved by their good deeds, then it would not have been necessary for Christ to die for our sins. The Apostle Paul wrote: "***For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast***" (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Paul also wrote: "***For when we were yet without strength in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us***" (Romans 5:6-8).

Even the very best people, who have lived long enough to know the difference between right and wrong, have sinned: The Bible says: "***What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one . . . For all have sinned, and come***

short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:9,10,23).

In Chapter 10 of the book of Acts, we read about a man named Cornelius. Cornelius was a very good man. He was also a very religious man, but he was not saved. Please notice the Bible's description of this good man: **“There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people and prayed to God always”** (Acts 10:1,2). Please observe that Cornelius was a worshiper of the true God and had taught his family also to fear God. Too, Cornelius was a man of prayer. He was also kindhearted and generous for **“he gave much alms to the people.”**

In spite of his faith and good deeds, Cornelius was not saved. He was told by an angel of God to **“Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon whose surname is Peter; Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved”** (Acts 11:13,14).

Will all good people be saved? The answer is “no,” for even the best people have sinned and just one sin can keep a person out of heaven. John wrote, **“And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life”** (Revelation 21:27). The only way to remove sin is by the blood of Jesus Christ (Revelation 1:5). This is done in our obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ. We read in Acts 22:16, **“And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”**

All good people will not be saved. Neither will all religious people saved. *It is not enough to be religious, but one must be right religiously.* Jesus said: **“Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up”** (Matthew 15:13). He also said: **“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth that will of my Father which is in heaven”** (Matthew 7:21).

Not all good people will be saved. Those who will be saved are those who humbly submit to our Lord Jesus Christ in obedience to His gospel and who ever after live for Him doing

His will. ***“Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.”*** (Hebrews 5:8,9).

Jesus Christ The Compassionate

J.L. LEIFESTE

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord” (Lk. 4:18-19).

In this world, people are often unkind. They hurt each other physically and in other ways. Some people treat others with contempt, cruelty, or indifference. Some people cheat and lie. Some people gossip, hurting the reputations and the feelings of others.

Christianity involves godly characteristics. One of them is compassion. God is love (1 Jn. 4:8), and love for humanity is the most powerful trait of godliness (1 Cor. 13). Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Born into this world, He took on human form. And He revealed the perfection of God to the world (Matt. 3:13-17; Jn. 1:14; 12:45; 14:1-10; Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:1-3). As the Son of God, and as God personified, we see Him as the most compassionate human who ever lived.

His Ministering To People While He Was Upon The Earth

“And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick” (Matt. 14:14).

“Now a leper came to Him, imploring Him, kneeling down to

Him and saying to Him, 'If You are willing, You can make me clean'. Then Jesus moved with compassion stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, 'I am willing; be cleansed.' As soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy left him, and he was cleansed" (Mk. 1:40-42).

"And behold, two blind men sitting by the road, when they heard that Jesus was passing by, cried out, saying, 'Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!' Then the multitude warned them that they should be quiet; but they cried out all the more, saying, 'Have mercy on us, O Lord, son of David!' So Jesus stood still and called them, and said, 'What do you want Me to do for you?' They said to Him, 'Lord, that our eyes may be opened.' So Jesus had compassion and touched their eyes. And immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed Him." (Matt. 20:30-34).

Jesus Christ felt compassion for people with diseases and ailments. God's power worked miracles through Jesus (Matt. 14:35-36; Lk. 6:19). He healed vast numbers of people while He was upon the earth (Matt. 15:30; 19:2; Lk. 7:21).

We find a comprehensive quality to His ministrations. He did not limit his healing to a few types of illnesses. He felt compassion enough to heal people who had all kinds of infirmities (Matt. 4:23). His generous hand of love touched the child, the adult, the nobleman, the beggar, the leper, the Jew, the non-Jew, the stranger, and those close to Him. See Matt. 8:2-15; 9:18-25; 17:14-18; Mk. 7:24-37; 10:46-52; Lk. 17:12-19; Jn. 4:46-53. Christ even healed the severed ear of a servant of the authorities who were taking Him away to torture and kill Him (Lk. 22:51).

Very often, Jesus healed regardless of place or time. His healing of others might be at a sea, at a pool, inside, outside, at a home, at a synagogue, or at a temple. His healing was not reserved to times of the day or days of the week. He even healed on the Jewish Sabbath day (Matt. 12:8-13; 21:14; Lk. 13:11-13; 14:1-4; Jn. 5:1-16; 9:1-7). No one had a better right to work upon that day than the Lord of the Sabbath (Mk. 2:27-28; Lk. 6:5).

Prophecies which Foretold His great Compassion

"When evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed. And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: 'He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses'" (Matt. 8:16-17; see Isa. 53:4). Isaiah foretold, "But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed" (Isa. 53:5). "Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because He poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors, and he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors" (Isa. 43:12). He fulfilled the prophecies because of His perfection of His love.

Christ also showed His compassion in other ways. He ministered to those who were hungry. *"Now Jesus called His disciples to Himself and said, 'I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat. And I do not want to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way.' Then His disciples said to Him, 'Where could we get enough bread in the wilderness to fill such a great multitude?' Jesus said to them, 'How many loaves do you have?' And they said, 'Seven, and a few little fish.' So He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. And he took the seven loaves and the fish and gave thanks, broke them and gave them to His disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitude. So they all ate and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets full of the fragments that were left. Now those who ate were four thousand men, besides women and children" (Matt. 15:32-38). See also Matt. 14:13-21; Mk. 8:1-9; Lk. 9:10-17.*

He demonstrated a special care for children and blessed them (Mk. 10:13-16). He voiced His love for the people of Jerusalem (Matt. 23:37-39). And, although He showed the righteous anger of the Son of God, He grieved at people's ungodliness (Mk. 3:1-5). He tried to ease the fears of His apostles (Matt. 17:7; Mk. 4:35-41; Jn. 14:16). And He told His

disciples that they were His friends (Jn. 15:15).

At times, Christ worked without a compelling thought of food for Himself. He pushed Himself in His ministry. And His activity, along with the demands of the crowds, sometimes carried Him to the point of requiring relief (Matt. 8:18; Mk. 3:7-12, 20; 7:24; Jn. 4:31-35).

He had so much compassion that He often took care of people in the face of persecution (Matt. 12:22-24; Jn. 5:16-18). We find a very touching example of His love that could be considered related to this. At one time, from the perspective of His being the Son of God, He affirmed that He considered His disciples to be His family (Matt. 12:46-50). However, as He was dying upon the cross, He revealed a godly, yet a very human tenderness. Seeing Mary, His physical mother, He lovingly entrusted her to the care of a dear friend and disciple (Jn. 19:26-27).

Christ cared for those who mourned. *"And when He came near the gate of the city, behold, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother; and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the city was with her. When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said to her, 'Do not weep.' Then He came and touched the open coffin, and those who carried him stood still. And He said, 'Young man, I say to you, arise.' So he who was dead sat up and began to speak. And He presented him to his mother"* (Lk. 7:12-15).

His New Testament teaches that His disciples should share the grief of others (Rom. 12:15). Because of His compassion, He raised more than one person from the dead. He not only raised strangers (Lk. 8:49-56), He also raised Lazarus, who was part of a family for whom He had much affection (Jn. 11:1-44). He offers us a spiritual resurrection, and He will raise us up in the last day (Rom. 6:5; Jn. 5:28-29).

His Commitment For the Healing Of Every Person's Soul

Christ was concerned that mankind did not have someone to lead them spiritually (Matt. 9:36-38; Mk. 6:34; Matt. 2:6; Jn. 10:1-11, 27-28). In relation to this, He spoke of more than being the spiritual Shepherd. He is the spiritual rest, the living water,

the bread of life, and He gives peace to His disciples (Matt. 11:28-30; Jn. 4:14; 6:51; 14:27).

The compassion of Jesus Christ is evident because He let Himself be sacrificed for our sins. Only a perfect, sinless sacrifice could pay the penalty for our sins. He was perfect and gave Himself for us. See Rom. 3:24; 5:8; 8:3; 1 Cor. 15:12-15; 2 Cor. 8-9; Gal. 1:4; 2:20; 3:13; Eph. 5:2; Phil. 2:5-8; Tit. 2:14; 1 Pet. 1:18-19; 2:21, 24; 3:18.

Legions of angels were available to rescue Him (Matt. 26:53). But He refused to call for their help so He could die for us. *"Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends"* (Jn. 15:13). Christ told His disciples that He came to minister to others and to give His life for everyone (Matt. 20:28; Lk. 19:10; Jn. 3:17; 10:10; 12:47). *"For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures"* (1 Cor. 15:3-4).

He showed so much compassion that He asked His Father to forgive those who were torturing Him and killing Him (Lk. 23:34).

He also shows His compassion by telling us how to receive the benefit of His death. To receive salvation from sin and eternal life in Christ, the sinner must believe the gospel, repent of sins, confess faith in Christ, and be baptized in water for the forgiveness of sins (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38; 8:36-38; 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27; Col. 2:12.) Paul reminded Christians, *"Or do you not know that as many of us as were **baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?** Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection"* (Rom. 6:3-5).

Jesus Christ has a special care for those who obey Him. The Father made Him Lord and Christ. *"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ"* (Acts 2:36). His

friends are those who obey Him. *"If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love"* (Jn. 15:10). *"You are My friends if you do whatever I command you"* (Jn. 15:14). We can know what He commands by studying His New Testament. The truth is found there, in His teachings, conveyed to us through His inspired apostles and prophets (Jn. 16:12-13; 2 Pet. 1:3; Jude 3).

We are also aware of the constant compassion of Jesus Christ because, from the moment the church was established, He intercedes for Christians (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25). And His love for His church is powerful and steadfast (Rom. 8:35-39).

Jesus Christ is the most compassionate human who ever lived. His love for mankind is greater than the love of any other person who lived upon the earth (Eph. 3:18-19). He also expects His disciples, Christians, to follow His example by having great compassion (Matt. 5:16; 25:35-46; Lk. 6:35-36; Gal. 6:10; Col. 3:12-14; Heb. 10:14).

To His followers He taught: *"You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many"* (Matt. 20:25-28).

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