

THE BIBLE TEACHER

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EDITORIAL

What Does The Bible Teach?

“Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered.”

The word blessed actually means to be happy. In other words, the passage cited above from Romans 4:7 is saying that those whose wrongs have been forgiven by God and whose sins He has covered, are the most happy people on earth. From the world's standpoint, those who have money and health and wealth, positions and possessions, are the happiest people. But this is not what the Bible teaches. Because the Bible contains the words of God and the mind and thoughts of God. It tells us what God thinks and how God looks at things. Nothing is more precious in the sight of God than the soul created after His likeness and in His image. Every human being is born with a soul. Each baby is born as pure as an angel in heaven. (Matthew 19:14). But when that baby grows to be a person of understanding; where he/she can differentiate in right and wrong; and through the lust of the flesh and lust of eyes and pride of life does that which is against the will of God; God holds that person a sinner, one who has committed lawless deeds. (1 Jon 2:15-17; James 1:14-15; Ezekiel 18:20). The Bible further teaches that in that fashion all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23), that is, they have separated themselves from God because of sin. (Isaiah 59:1-2). The Wages or the

punishment of sin is death, according to Romans 6:23. Death means separation (James 2:26). Thus, sin bring a separation between God and man. In sin, or because of sin, every person lives away or separated from God; and when such a person leaves this world to go to the next world that person is going to live there without God forever, and that state is called hell. Hell is such a horrible place that Christ taught: "if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands, to go to hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched, where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched." (Mark 9:43, 44).

Seeing this we do realize that how important it is that our lawless deeds be forgiven and our sins be covered. Because the eternal happiness of our souls depends on this. This must be the first and the foremost priority to us all. God is in heaven. He cannot live with sin or sinners. We must get rid of our sins from ourselves. How do we do that? Can we give anything to God so that He might forgive us of our sins? What do we have? What can we give to Him? What does He need? Or can we do enough good works, as we see them or call them "good works" to please or appease God? The fact is that we can give Him nothing, because everything belongs to Him. And we can do nothing to cover our sins, because we are already in sin.

How wonderful it is to know then that God cares for us. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever, believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." (John 3:16). It is the love of God that promises us the forgiveness of our sins and the covering of our sins. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, died for our sins (1 Corinthians 15:3). He is the propitiation for our sins (1 John 4:10). According to God's will, as revealed in the Bible, when a person believes in Christ that He has died for me, and repents of sins, and confesses Him to be the Son of God, and goes down in the water to be baptized or buried in water for the forgiveness of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 8:35-39; 22:16), the assurance comes to that individual that his/her lawless deeds are forgiven because of the sacrifice of Christ, and sins are covered in the blood of Christ which was shed by Him on the cross. Blessed or happy is the person, therefore, who has this assurance from God.

Rightly Dividing the Word

J.C. CHOATE

Many become confused when they read the Bible because they may open it to any book, chapter, and verse, and think that the Lord is personally speaking to them. In doing this, they may conclude that God would want them to build an ark, offer animal sacrifices, or go to Jerusalem once a year to worship. Others are convinced that they are to worship on the Sabbath Day, give tithes of their income, and keep the "Ten Commandments". Of course, their problem is that they are not *rightly dividing the word*.

The Apostle Paul said, "*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth*" (2 Timothy 2:15). If one is to know God's will, it is a *must* to study His word, but one may study the Bible and still be confused and not know what to do. As Paul said, the key is to *rightly divide the word*. But what does he mean?

We must realize that the Bible was written over a period of about fifteen hundred years! Surely, not all of it was written and directed to you and me—and it was not. So, let's look into this matter of "rightly dividing".

To begin with, the word "Bible" means "the Book" or "the book of books". The Bible actually consists of 66 separate books, grouped into two major divisions, the "Old Testament" and the "New Testament". There are 39 books in the Old Testament, covering two major periods of time. The first period is called the "Patriarchal Age", beginning with Adam and Eve and continuing to the time of Moses, about twenty-five hundred years. During this period of time God spoke directly to the fathers of the households of those who were obedient to Him. There was no written law from God. The history of this "age" is to be found in the book of Genesis.

The second period is called the "Mosaical Age". It covers some 1500 years, dating from Moses to the death of Christ. This was the time in which God's people—the nation of Israel, the descendants of Abraham—were governed by the written law which God gave through Moses. The reason for choosing those

people, and for giving the law itself, was to prepare the stage for the birth of the Son of God.

The third and final period of time is called the "Christian Age", dating from the death of Christ and the beginning of His spiritual family, the church, as recorded in the second chapter of the book of Acts. This age will continue until His return, when time will end and He will receive the church into that eternal world which He has gone to prepare (John 14:1-3).

Now it's obvious that we didn't live in the Patriarchal Age, or under the Law of Moses which ended with the death of Christ. Only one period of time, or age, remains—the Christian Age under the Law of Christ—so that is the age in which we live, and the law which we must keep.

Since we are not living in the Patriarchal Period or during the Mosaical Age, those laws do not apply to us! Isn't that logical? Of course it is. So, we read the Old Testament for its example and history, and we learn much that is valuable to us. But God does not expect us to obey those laws.

To this point, we have "rightly divided the word". Now, since we live in the Christian Age, it is logical that we are expected to obey the law of Christ. We don't have to worry about offering animal sacrifices or building an ark—those were commands to other people in other times! But our responsibility is to the Law of Christ *only!* Isn't that simple?

A series of logical questions will help us to rightly divide the New Testament. *First*, who is the speaker? Is it God, Satan, some Bible character, or some other person? *Second*, to whom is he speaking? To the unbeliever, to Christians, to people in general, or to some specific person? *Third*, when was it spoken? Did it apply only to the situation of the infant church (as in the case of the use of miracles to confirm the spoken word), or to all of the Christian Age? *Fourth*, why was it spoken? Is God wanting to reveal some specific truth or guidelines?

Surely by now you are beginning to discover if God is speaking to you through His word, or if the message is to someone else. Answering these questions should enable you to know what God wants you to do, how to do it, and when to do it.

To help you further in your study, you can get a Bible Dictionary to define words, a Bible Concordance to list more, or even all, of the verses on the subject you are studying; you can

get commentaries and other books and materials that discuss the subjects and Scriptures under consideration.

Now, when you read and study the Bible, keeping all of these things in mind, you will find it much easier to understand God's word. As you study, you must be prayerful that you will hunger for the truth, and that you will accept the truth as you learn it.

Another thing to keep in mind is that Satan and his workers would put all kinds of stumbling blocks in the way, to blind you, to deceive you, to make you think it is too hard to learn God's will. Don't allow him to do that!

In the Bible, our Lord has revealed Himself to the world, telling of His coming, of His life, and of His death, burial, and resurrection. The gospel is the good news of salvation for those who will believe in God, repent of their sins, confess Christ as the Son of God, and baptized. The New Testament tells of the church, the spiritual body of Christ and how the Lord saves those who obey the gospel (Mark 16:16) and adds them to His church (Acts 2:47).

May God help us to read and study His word, rightly dividing it, so we can know His will and obey it, to have the hope of eternal life.

Especially For Women

Search For Truth Outreach with the Gospel

BETTY BURTON CHOATE

"Andrew," James said after worship one morning, "I have a cousin who lives just down the road, in Suddoth. I've talked with him about the gospel, and he also took the Bible correspondence course. He's interested in learning more, so I was thinking it would be good if you and I could go to his home for studies on a weekly basis."

"That's wonderful!" Andrew answered with excitement. "When would he like to begin?"

"Both he and his wife will be free on Saturday evenings,"

James said. "If you can make it, we'll plan to go there Saturday."

The study with Matthew and Sara was begun and continued for several weeks. Their attitude was positive, with a strong desire to please God and to have to Christian home. "Both of us want to be baptized," Matthew said at the close of one study. "We realize that we aren't Christians, according to the Bible, and we want to have our sins forgiven."

Following their baptism, the men of the church met to discuss the need for meetings at Matthew's home. "We want to give the people of that area the opportunity to hear and obey the truth, too," Andrew explained. "For this first month, maybe Matthew and his family can make the trip over here to worship with us. In the meantime, why don't we shift our Saturday house-to-house visits there and advertise the meetings we'll begin from next month in their home?"

"I have a suggestion," John volunteered. "Since those people have not heard of the church or the true gospel, why don't we have a meeting the first week of next month, continuing each evening, Sunday through Sunday, with various ones of us doing the speaking, so that we can have a strong beginning for the Sunday meetings there?"

"That's a wonderful idea!" James agreed. The other men voiced their approval, and soon a list of volunteers had been made for speakers at each of the eight meetings. subjects were discussed, and decided upon as well. Everyone was excited about this new step of growth in their efforts to evangelize. Never did they allow themselves, as a body of people, to forget that they had been saved and that their first priority in life was to share the gospel with others.

The first Saturday of house-to-house visitation in Suddoth was like a holiday. All in the church who could participate packed picnic lunches and left early for the work. About fifty men, women and children met at Matthew's house and prayed together before dividing the city into sections and assigning parts to each one. Having already had much experience at home, they went out with smiles and confidence, sure that they would find some hearts that would be open to the truth, as their own had been.

Andrew reminded them of Jesus' words: '*Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden. . .*' (Matthew 11:28). But he also pointed out that they should not become discouraged if people

showed no interest. "Jesus also said, '*Narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it*' (Matthew 7:14). So many are preoccupied with the things of this world—as we were before our conversion—and because of their preoccupation, not many are looking for the gospel. But it's the ones who are looking that we want to find, and God will help us to do that!"

At every home, some tract or other piece of literature was left, and also an advertisement about the coming meeting. Numerous ones signed up for the Bible course so that some were already beginning to study on their own before the data arrived for the gospel meeting.

Several of the families were enjoying the evening meal together on the last Saturday of the month. "This has been a new experience for us," John said. "I'm so glad this opportunity came, and I don't know why we never thought of going to cities around us before."

"Maybe we thought we had our hands full here," laughed James, "but we've learned that we can do more. After this, I think we should repeat this same thing in Bundi, then in Anton, then move down to Cary and see who is looking in each of those places!"

"And planning together, working together, sharing picnics and fellowship meals at the end of a hard day of work have been good for us as a church," observed Andrew. "We're much closer together, and we have such a good feeling of accomplishment about what we're doing."

A hall had been rented for the gospel meeting, and as many of the church as possible went over for the first gathering on Sunday night. Everyone was eager to see how the community would respond, and it was encouraging when a total of seventeen visitors came the first night. Andrew spoke, introducing the theme of the meetings: *Jesus Christ and His Body*. Each night one of the men developed the subject further, ending with a lesson by John on the last Sunday evening, explaining the wonderful hope of Christians: '*Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to*

Myself; that where I am, there you may be also' (John 14:1-3).

The attendance had grown at each of the meetings, with many coming back each night. A record was kept of names and addresses of all who attended, and thank you notes were sent by the women of the church. During the week, several had stayed after the meetings to ask questions. What an exciting thing it was when five of those who had shown the most interest expressed their desire to be baptized on the last night! A new congregation was in the process of being born!

Who Is A Wet Sinner?

FRANCIS DAVID

The Bible says: "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. (Rom. 3:23). And "for the wages of sin is death. (Rom. 6:23). We are not born sinners but we become sinners when we do the wrong deeds through our actions which displease God.

Nobody can say that I am perfect and without sins. It is a fact that all those who are in the age of accountability are sinners.

The word of God tells us that God has not left us here as helpless or a sheep without a shepherd. He has provided us a way of escape from sins. There is a beautiful verse in the Bible which describes the love of God for all human race. John 3:16 says: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." Jesus our Lord became a propitiation for our sins and He died for all. Today people can come to him and accept him as their saviour through the obedience of the gospel. If you have not accepted Him then I would request you to think about the greatest sacrifice that he gave for you.

If you come to him He will welcome you and He would be happy to see you as one of God's child. There are hundreds of people who have come to Him and now are enjoying the blessing which can only be found in Him. The Bible says: "All spiritual blessings are found in Jesus Christ." (Eph. 1:3). When a

person believes in Jesus, confesses him as Son of God, and repents of his sinful life and then is baptised in the watery grave he becomes a new creature in Him (2 Cor. 5:17).

When a person comes to Jesus he or she must come with pure and sincere mind. The Bible tells us that when a person dies to sin and buried with him in baptism into death, and then raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, he or she should walk in the newness of life. Through baptism and that is while going into water or immersed in water, you obey the command of God and as you come out of the water wet, you are a new person in Jesus. You are a child of God, a Christian.

But let me ask you, whom do you think is a wet sinner? Yes, there are many wet sinners. They are the kind of people who just got wet in the watery grave without any meaning or understanding. They sometime don't understand the real concept of baptism. The wet sinners do not change in many things. They keep the same sinful life style. There is no change in their lives. They claim to be Christians but in their actual life they are not. They do not take Sunday as a day of worship and seldom attend the worship. They do not participate in church activities. There are wet sinners who were baptised because they were in need of some material help. Some wanted to get employment or there are some who wanted to get married with a Christian girl or boy. When people have bad intentions before their baptism, then they must know that before God their baptism is invalid and God will not accept such obedience. It is a clear hypocrisy. If you are baptised with wrong motives or intentions then you must know that you are still a wet sinner.

The Church Will Survive

J.K. GOSSETT

In fulfillment of prophecies of the Old Testament, the church was brought into existence by the wisdom and power of God (Isaiah 2:1-4; Ephesians 3:1-11; Acts 2:1-47). The numerous characteristics of the church are set out in detail in the New Testament. (1) The church has its beginning when the Holy Spirit

came upon the apostles as recorded in Acts 2. This was A.D. 33. (2) The church was purchased with the blood of Jesus (Acts 20:28). (3) Jesus is the builder, foundation, head and saviour of the body which is his church (Matthew 16:18; I Corinthians 3:11; Ephesians 5:22-23). (4) The church is comprised of the saved, the family of God (Acts 2:47; I Timothy 3:15).

Jesus said, when he promised to build the church: "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell (hades) shall not prevail against it (Matthew 16:18).

When the forces of evil failed in their attempt to destroy the Lord, the next great effort of devil was made to defeat and annihilate the church. Once again, truth and righteousness prevailed. When the church in Jerusalem was scattered, "they went everywhere preaching the word" (Acts 8:4). Soon "their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world" (Romans 10:18).

Atheism, modernism, heathenism, the false doctrines of every hue and colour, have fought against the church for which Jesus died. Yet, the church survives. It survives because Jesus is alive for ever more. It survives because the word of God, the seed of the kingdom, can neither be bound nor destroyed.

Local congregations, because of false doctrines and immoral practices, may completely apostatize and cease to be the people of God. However, the true church will never be destroyed. In fact, the only thing which will survive the second coming of Christ and the end of time is the church. The church will survive.

Let the Bible Answer

ROBERT MEREDITH

Do Ephesians 2:8-9 and James 2:24 contradict each other? The Bible does not contradict itself, and if one draws a conclusion which is in conflict with another passage of Scripture, then he has drawn a wrong conclusion. Jesus said that God's word is truth (John 17:17) and truth is harmonious. The two

passages read as follows: *"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"* (Eph. 2:8-9) and *"Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only"* (James 2:24). My friends, obviously the Holy Spirit, who guided both Paul and James, is speaking of two different kinds of works; otherwise the Bible would be contradicting itself.

The apostle Paul, in the Ephesians passage, is speaking of works of merit, or of human origin. If one could be saved by his own method he could boast thereof. However, salvation does not come from man, but God.

The context of James 2:14-26 is dealing with what kind of faith saves. James asked, *"what doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him?"* (James 2:14)? The answer to the question James asked is so obvious that James did not even have to answer it. If one has a faith that is not active, he cannot be saved by that faith. James then gives us an example of an active and obedient faith, Abraham. The great patriarch Abraham was justified when he obeyed the Lord. Likewise, people today are saved by God when they obey him. James summed it up by saying that people are not saved by faith only (James 2:24).

In the scriptures, some works are condemned: works of boasting (Eph. 2:9), works of the Law of Moses (Gal. 3:5, 5:4), and works of human origin (Rom. 10:1-4). However, when one obeys the Lord (Mt. 7:21-23; Lk. 6:46, Heb. 5:8-9), he is putting his trust in Him and will be saved just as Abraham was (James 2). These works that James wrote of are not the source of one's salvation, God's grace is. The apostle Paul informs us in Titus 3:5 that one accesses God's mercy by these works that God has commanded. Paul also wrote, *"Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in by absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling"* (Phil. 2:12). Jesus has died for your sins; put your trust in Him and obey the gospel (Rom. 1:16; Rom. 10:17; Lk. 13:3; Rom. 10:10; Mk. 16:16).

Righteousness

FRED DILLON

"Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people" (Proverbs 14:34).

This time-tested word from God through the wise man Solomon is still just as true and essential to our learning as when it was penned about 3,000 years ago.

Christians are to wear the "breastplate of Righteousness" every day of our lives as we live in an unrighteous and ungodly world (Ephesians 6:13). Only the righteous will inherit eternal life. Heaven will be the home of the righteous. God's crown of glory will be for the righteous (Revelation 2:10b). Peter said to Christians, "And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" (1 Peter 4:18).

So many passages remind us of the importance of being righteous, of doing right, not in man's sight, but in God's sight.

Through His merciful and bountiful grace, God gave us the "perfect law of liberty" (James 1:25), and we need to follow it unflinchingly as we tread the deep waters of corruption which surround us daily in a world which looks lightly, much of the time, on God's eternal instructions.

James 5:16 says, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." It is so necessary that when we pray, we offer the pleadings of righteous lips as we address the Father of lights, The Giver of every good and perfect gift, the One in Whom we live and move and have our being.

"The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayers, but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil" (1 Peter 3:12). Once again, the Holy Spirit tells us that God listens to righteous people but pays no heed to those who live in rebellion against Him.

Christians are told that we must deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and live soberly, righteously and Godly in this present world (Titus 2:11-12). Only then can we look for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and

our Savior Jesus Christ Who gave Himself for us.

The unrighteous are doomed! In I Corinthians 6:9, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."

"All unrighteousness is sin" (I John 5:17). God's wrath is ready for those who are unrighteous and who hold the truth in unrighteousness (Romans 1:18).

It's true today that in these last days, God's last dispensation for man on earth, we live in "perilous times," and many of our preachers seems to be negligent to speak out against the prevailing ungodliness in our world, some of which has found its way into the Lord's church.

Jesus commended the righteous in His wonderful sermon on the mount, when He said, "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:10). Again, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Matthew 5:6).

Christians are to be "servants of righteousness" (Romans 6:18). "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but yield yourselves unto God, as those who are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God" (Romans 6:13).

Our thoughts need to be righteous. Our words need to be righteous.

And, our deeds must be righteous! Paul asked the Romans, "What, shall we say, then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Romans 6:1-2).

It was with this statement that the apostle reminded the saints at Rome that they had been baptized "into Jesus Christ, into His death . . ." that they had been "buried with Him by baptism into death that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:3-4).

Our "old man is crucified with Him," Paul reminded, "that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Romans 6:6).

God can and will cleanse the unrighteous man, if he will turn from his unrighteousness (Acts 17:30-31).

He will also forgive the sins of Christians if we will "confess our sins." John tells us, "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9).

God's Word is the standard for righteousness. Jesus Christ is our example of righteousness. "He went about doing good."

The Baptism Of The Holy Spirit

BROOKS BOYD

After declaring the Deity of Jesus through certain ones, the Holy Spirit is then spoken of in a very special way. John the baptizer stated, "I indeed have baptized you with water: but He (Jesus) shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost" (Mark 1:8). In light of the divergent views about the baptism of the Holy Spirit, we want to know just what does the Bible tell us about this subject.

1. THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WAS A PROMISE

"And being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith He, ye have heard of Me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence" (Acts 1:4-5).

2. THE HOLY SPIRIT WAS TO BE ADMINISTERED BY JESUS

"And I knew Him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me. Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost" (John 1:33). Thus, it was an act of the Lord, not an act of man.

3. THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WAS THE SAME AS THE OUTPOURING OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD SPOKEN OF IN JOEL 2:28-32.

Peter said, "but this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel" (Acts 2:16), and then he quoted the text. The baptism of the Holy Spirit, received by the apostles (Acts 2:14) was in fulfillment of Joel's prophecy.

In Acts 2, we find two baptisms: the baptism of the Holy Spirit in 1-4 and the baptism for the remission of sins in verses 38-41. The baptism of the Holy Spirit was to fulfill the promise of the Father (Acts 1:5-8). The baptism in water was in obedience to the command of inspired Peter (2:38). At least two things become evident when we compare these facts from Acts 2 with Ephesians 4:4-5.

Ephesians 4:5 states, "There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism." Since at the time of the writing of the book of Ephesians (about 64 A.D.), there was only one baptism, we can know that:

1. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit was not that Baptism

It was a promise—not a command. The baptism that was to be taught to all men (Mark 16:15-16) was a command of Jesus (Matthew 28:19-20). That baptism was for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). If the baptism of the Holy Spirit is the one baptism of Ephesians 4:5, then there is no forgiveness of sins today for the baptism of the Holy Spirit is never connected to salvation.

2. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit Ended sometime before 64 A.D.

Because there was only one baptism at the time Paul penned the inspired words of Ephesians 4:5, and it was not the baptism of the Holy Spirit, then the Holy Spirit baptism must have ended before he wrote it.

There Is One Church

G.F. RAINES

It is a very significant fact that in the New Testament the emphasis is always on one church, which is the body of Christ (Ephesians 1:22-23). And, our Lord Jesus Christ is "the Head of the body, the church: Who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence" (Colossians 1:18).

Jesus said: "I will build My church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18).

Paul wrote: "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Ephesians 4:4-6).

In apostolic times, believers in Christ became members of His body, the church, by simple obedience to His Gospel, involving repentance and baptism. On the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus, Peter answered the question, "Men and brethren, what shall we do" (to be saved), as follows: "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 the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38).

Instead of building and maintaining human organizations characterized by human creeds; human doctrines, and human names, let us restore and perpetuate the church that was built on the divinity and Sonship of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

If we believe and obey the true and unadulterated Gospel, the Lord will add us to the same church that people were added to on the basis of the same faith and obedience in the days of the apostles; and if we organize congregations exactly like those which are described in the New Testament and practice the same worship and participate in the same work, the result of our efforts will not be denominational and divisive, but apostolic, and conducive to "the unity of the Spirit" (Ephesians 4:1-3) in the restoration of the one body of Christ that we can read about in the New Testament.

Let us consider the foregoing facts concerning the church

that Jesus built (Matthew 16:18) in the light of the following unequivocal statements of our Lord made concerning false worship and human religious institutions:

"But in vain they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:9).

"Every plant, which My heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up" (Matthew 15:13).

"And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch" (Matthew 15:14).

Suffering Like Jesus

TOM KELTON

Peter tells us, "forasmuch, then, as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind; for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin" (I Peter 4:1).

All of us want to know more about the power of Christ's resurrection. But, not many want to know "the fellowship of His suffering." For Paul, the two things were part of the same packages; his desire was "that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings..." (Philippians 3:10).

Right from his conversion, Paul knew the meaning of suffering. When Ananias prayed for him, he referred to the great things Paul was to suffer (Acts 9:16). In his many journeys, Paul's message from the Holy Spirit was that "bonds and afflictions" awaited him (Acts 20:23).

Suffering, so far as Paul was concerned, was part of the cost of preaching the Gospel. Suffering with Christ was necessary to being glorified together with Him (Romans 8:17). Live a godly life and you will suffer persecution, Paul taught (II Timothy 3:12). He also knew that he was "filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the church" (Colossians 1:24).

He is saying that Christians will suffer and that the result will be beneficial for Christ's body, the church. So far as the apostle

was concerned, the more his suffering mounted up, the more the consolations were adding up too (II Corinthians 1:4-6). Suffering produced encouragement for the church.

Peter interjects an "if" into the contest of suffering. "But and if ye suffer for righteousness sake, happy are ye" (I Peter 3:14). And he adds, "Let them . . . suffer according to the will of God" (I Peter 4:19).

When Peter urged, "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind . . ." (I Peter 4:1), he is saying, "Be ready to suffer. Be willing to suffer. If it happens, you will be blessed."

A "New" Life

P.D. WILMETH

It is well to remind ourselves of some things which are new in the realm of Christianity. "Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new" (II Corinthians 5:17). The margin in my Bible reads, "a new creation." In the process of becoming a Christian, in the transition from the old world of sin "into Jesus Christ," there is indeed a new creation. This is elsewhere styled in the New Testament as "regeneration," called the "new birth" (John 3:5). Let us consider some of the many phases and aspects of the new life which it is impossible to enjoy out of Christ, yet things which are inseparable linked with the life "in Christ"—which is the life of a new creature.

A NEW FATHER

Christianity is unique in recognizing the fatherhood of God. God is set forth in the Old Testament as Father in only four passages, once in Deuteronomy, twice in Isaiah and once in Jeremiah. Jesus referred to God, His Father, 226 times. Has it ever occurred to you that before Christ came, there was no such word as "mankind." That was wholly foreign to everything else that went before. To the Jew everyone else was a Gentile or dog and unfit for their association. To the Greek, everyone else was

a barbarian. Paul announced on Mars' Hill that God "made of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed seasons, and bounds of their habitation" (Acts 17:26). Jesus taught us to say "Our Father." Never was a more exalted invitation proffered to sinful mortals than that expressed in II Corinthians 6:17-18, "Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

A NEW FAMILY

Since we have a new spiritual Father, the entire family changes for one who is in Christ Jesus. We now have brethren and sisters in the Lord. We are now united by a bond of perfectness—LOVE. Christ is our elder brother. Old comrades in sin have been forsaken. Even family ties in the flesh have been severed, if need be. Here is new and blessed fellowship not to be enjoyed in the world of sin. A new family means new associates—an entirely different companionship. New friends, and ties of godly people surround the new life, and make it richer, better, more abundant, fuller, for truly, "we are a part of all that we have met." One is this new family learns the principle that "evil companionship corrupts good morals" (I Corinthians 15:33). One follows the counsel "to shun evil appearances" (II Thessalonians 5:22). Among one's chief associations now is Christ Who is regarded above all else.

A NEW WORK

A child of God begins a new work. He has been created for this purpose. "For by grace ye have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God: not of works, that no man should glory. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:8-10). Jesus in parabolic language declares that the kingdom is like unto a man hiring laborers in his vineyard (Matthew 20:1-16). Thus, we read that "we are workers together with God" (I Corinthians 3:9). God has great plans for us. He has great things for us to do. Woe is unto that professed Christian who shrinks in the new work he takes upon himself when he becomes a "new creature." This new work

involves saving the lost, a consecrated life, an unselfish ministry, and unswerving fidelity to God.

A NEW CITIZENSHIP

Our spiritual man is now changed. We are now members of a new kingdom, under a new ruler and obedient to our new agreement. No longer are we in the kingdom of Satan, but have been translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of the Son of His love (Colossians 1:13). We are no longer alienated. Paul, writing to the Ephesians, said to them, "That ye were at that time separate from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" (Ephesians 2:12).

What a blessed privilege it is to be citizen of a free nation. Just so, it is a more marvelous blessing to be a citizen of the kingdom of heaven. We are within a kingdom that cannot be moved. "Wherefore, receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us have grace, whereby we may offer service well-pleasing to God with reverence and awe: for our God is a consuming fire" (Hebrews 12:28). John declared that he was in the kingdom himself. Said he, "I John, your brother and partaker with you in the tribulation and kingdom and patience which are in Jesus, was as in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus" (Revelation 1:9).

One cannot "receive," "be in," or be translated into that which does not exist. Those of Colosse, John the apostle and the Hebrews were all said to be in the kingdom. If they were in it, then it exists. We have the privilege today of being in that kingdom which cannot be moved.

A NEW LIFE

The life of a Christian is new in every sense. There is a new out-look. Everything is viewed in the perspective of spiritual joys. Everything is governed by the principle of "seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Matthew 6:33). Paul draws a graphic picture in the 6th chapter of Romans, "What shall we say, then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein? Or are ye ignorant that all we who were

baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We are buried therefore with Him through baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection; knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away, so that we should no longer be in bondage to sin; for he that hath died is justified from sin" (Romans 6:1-7).

A NEW HOPE

What would life be without hope? Paul declares that we are "saved by hope" (Romans 8:24). As we journey toward heaven, it becomes a saving power to us. It stimulates patience, comforts the faint-hearted, and supports the weak and cheers the sad. It removes the sting of death and gives radiance and immortality to the tomb.

As we look ahead, let us make some deep and abiding resolutions. Let us plan to read and study our Bible every day. Let us visit the sick and shut-in more and see that not a day goes by without speaking to some weary traveler about his soul. If you are not a Christian, resolve that today you will believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, repent of your sins, and be buried with Him in baptism to arise a new creature in Christ.

What Is Truth

T. PIERCE BROWN

When Pilate asked in John 18:38, "What is truth?" he probably was asking with a note of sarcasm or skepticism which suggested that he either thought there was no such thing as truth, or that no one could know it. He sounds almost like some of our brethren today who seem to think that because no one knows all the truth, no one can know any truth, so we should accept all men as equally important. The outcome of such reasoning (or lack thereof) is that no doctrine is important, that striving for soundness in doctrine divides us, and we should strive to be united at all costs. That is, they conclude that we

should strive to be united with those who admit that we are all ignorant sinners, but not necessarily with those of us who are arrogant enough to claim we know anything at all.

There are so many things wrong with those concepts that no one article, or small book can deal with them adequately. Even the statement that we are all sinners is used in a way that perverts the truth. The Bible use of the word sinners does not suggest one who sometimes commits a sin because of a weakness or unwittingly in ignorance. John 9:31 says, "Now we know that God heareth not sinner: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth His will, him he heareth." If all Christians are sinners, in the sense the word is used here, then God would not hear our prayers. Galatians 2:15 should help us to understand the meaning. Paul said, "We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles." However, this article is not written to discuss the fact that although we all sin from time to time, we are not thereby classified as sinners. I may plant a tomato seed in my compost pile, but I am not therefore a farmer. Our article has to do with the importance of truth.

When Jesus said in John 14:6, "I am the truth," He was expressing the fact that He was the embodiment of truth. He is the personification of truth. In every aspect of life that He touched, He revealed the truth about that aspect. How to obtain the truth that is in Christ is found in John 17:17. "Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth."

Part of our problem is that which plagued the famed six blind men who went to see the elephant. Each was satisfied with only a part of the truth, and made serious mistakes by assuming that the part they thought they knew was the whole truth. It is sad when a person who has a part of the truth rejects and maligns another person who has another part of the truth, trying to make it appear that one truth contradicts another. It is also sad when one glories in his insight into one aspect of truth, and magnifies that aspect as if it were the whole truth.

These are the kinds of things that characterize denominationalism and those in the Lord's church who have sectarian inclinations. Luther discovered a great truth in the idea that faith is the means by which we have salvation, and not in the merit of our works. Those who followed him did not understand as he did

the fact that baptism, for example, is not a work of merit, but an act of faith by which we accept the salvation offered through the merits of the blood of Christ. Those of us in the Lord's church who are sure that we know the truth about the plan of salvation must never get so arrogant as to assume that there are not deeper truths which we can gain by continuing in His Word, that we may be disciples indeed (John 8:32).

Abel's More Excellent Sacrifice

STANDFAST OYINNA

"By faith, Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous . . . and by it he being dead, yet speaketh" (Hebrews 11:4).

The significance of Cain's offering has eluded many. Cain offered the wrong type of sacrifice. "Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord" (Genesis 4:3) when he should have brought a blood sacrifice. But, it was also the manner in which he offered it that was a significant reason for the rejection.

"Without faith, it is impossible to please God" and "whatever is not of faith is sin." And faith works by love and devotion to God (Galatians 5:6). Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain because he had respect unto what was required by the Lord, and brought of the firstlings of his flock. Abel shed the blood of an innocent creature. As it is written without the shedding of blood there can be no remission of sin. (Hebrews 9:22-b). This "type" (Which God Himself instituted when he expelled the first family from the Garden by "making them coats of animal skins") was the beginning of a long lesson designed by God to teach men the value of the blood of Christ.

We can see by a closer examination of this account in Scripture that "the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering" (Genesis 4:4). The heart of the one performing the sacrifice is a vital consideration "For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not" (II Corinthians 8:12). But, in this

case, the offering itself is also of utmost importance. God had respect unto the offering of Abel, "But unto Cain and to his offering he had no respect. And Cain was very wroth and his countenance fell." Cain's errors were not only associated with the type of sacrifice he offered. It was also a matter of his heart. He was rebellious toward God. In spite of this, God was very merciful to Cain in that he warned him to "do well" and to be the master over the sin which was "lying at the door." This shows the ability of Cain to know and understand the difference between his sacrifice and Abel's.

The fact that Cain was very wroth with God shows the hardness of his heart. Abel surely would have accepted some grain from Cain for a sheep. Instead, Cain chose to remove his brother from the earth. He rose up and slew his brother in the field. But, Abel's blood cries out from the ground.

The testimony of the righteous will not be suppressed in the earth. Men may attempt to stifle and remove the annoyance of righteous people, but they shall not ultimately succeed. Cain could not live with the constant reminder that his brother was righteous and he was not. His actions to remove this reminder only intensified his pain. "Abel's blood began to cry out from the earth." He was dead and yet was still speaking from the grave. His murderous brother would never forget Abel's righteous acts. Cain would live the rest of his life with the reminder of that day unforgettably engraved on his mind.

The faith of Abel was not in vain. He stands as a testimony to every brother who must stand alone in order to do that which is right. While the rest of the world indulges the "wisps of the wind," those who stand faithful to God will be rewarded. God Himself testified concerning the offering of Abel and Jesus will testify to the Father concerning all those who are His because of their reception of the Gospel.

Let us stand as an example to those around us. The faith which you have in God is the powerful means by which you, too, can glorify God with your offerings of faith.

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