

# THE BIBLE TEACHER

*Pleading for the Restoration of Pure New Testament Christianity*

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Vol. 32

November 2001

No. 7

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## EDITORIAL

### **What Does The Bible Teach?**

***"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also"***

During the time Christ lived on earth, it was common practice for people to store their valuables under the earth, since they did not have the facilities of banks, etc. For them it was common to dig the ground somewhere in the house and place in it their money, jewelry and other precious things and then cover it with the earth or soil. But, thereafter, they had to guard it with their life. They had to constantly keep a watch over it, so that the moth or the rust may not destroy it. All the family members wouldn't want to go together anywhere leaving behind the house unwatched, because they feared that thieves might break in and steal their savings. No matter where they might be, their heart or mind was always there where they had buried their treasure.

In His sermon on the mount Christ was teaching them spiritual lessons, but He knew that most of the people in the crowd were really not present there, and listening, because their hearts were away in the places where their treasures were buried. Therefore, He said to them: "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure

is, there your heart will be also." (Matthew 6:19-21).

What really was Christ teaching, in the passage cited above? Was He condemning the prudent accumulation of money, or wealth, or property against anticipated earthly needs? No. He was, in fact, teaching the uncertainty of the treasures on earth. Riches make themselves wings and fly away (Proverbs 23:5). But the treasures accumulated in heaven will remain forever, because there are no moth, and no rust and no thieves in heaven. All that one does or gives for the cause of God or His kingdom will accrue to his eternal credit. (Matthew 10:32). As Christ taught at another place, "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you. (Matthew 6:33). Man's principal concern, therefore, should be accumulating treasures in heaven. Because, "where your treasure is," as Christ said, "there your heart will be also."

## ***Preaching Another Gospel***

**J.C. CHOATE**

Paul knew what the gospel was because he had preached that gospel. It was the good news of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:1-4), along with the commands that one must obey to be saved. (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). In believing in the Lord, repenting of one's sins, confessing Christ to be the Son of God, and being buried in the waters of baptism, one would not only be obeying the gospel (2 Peter 4:17), but he would also be picturing the Lord's death, burial, and resurrection through his obedience (Romans 6:3-6).

In writing to the Galatians, Paul said,

*"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.*

*"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man*

*preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:6-9).*

Now did you hear and understand what Paul said? He said that even though the Christians at Galatia had heard the one and only gospel of Christ, he was surprised that they had so quickly left the truth to accept another so-called gospel. That "gospel" would have been a perverted message, a false gospel, one that would not save. Paul warned sternly that even though **he, himself, or even an angel from heaven** should preach any other gospel than the one they had already received, that false teacher would be accursed. To add emphasis to what he had said, Paul repeated, *"As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."*

My friends, how much plainer could the warning be than that? How much more emphasis could be placed on the necessity of preaching the one gospel? What greater penalty could be placed on a teacher for presuming to change the truth of God into "another gospel" than to actually be cursed of God? And Paul said that even he, as an Apostle of Christ, or even an angel from heaven, would not escape this curse—this terrible punishment—if they dared preached another gospel. Of course, God did not commission angels to be the messengers to preach the gospel—that responsibility was given to men—but Paul used an angel, a heavenly being, as an extreme example of what would happen even to such an exalted being if he should dare to come and preach a gospel different to the one that had already been preached.

All of this serves to emphasize the importance, the seriousness, and the necessity of staying with the Lord's teaching and not changing it or perverting it in any way. The truth will save one's soul, but error will condemn. The Lord's way will lead one to heaven, but the ways of men lead to eternal destruction.

This warning in the Scripture alerts us to the fact that there were false teachers, and false gospels being preached, in the days of Paul. The same problem continues even to this day! As a matter of fact, man will tell you *dozens* of ways to be saved, which means that they are teaching dozens of different gospels!

The sad part is that even though the true gospel, and all that the Lord wants one to know and to do to be saved and to go

to heaven, is clearly revealed in his word, along with the consequences for accepting error, still most people go blindly on and follow the teachings of men in preference to the Lord's will. Not only is that a fact in the religious world, but even some of our own brethren have begun to join the enemy, accepting their false teachings, and proclaiming those "gospels" as "truth". They are certainly not angels but they stand accursed before God for preaching another gospel.

The Lord himself condemns those who teach the doctrines and commandments of men (Matthew 15:9). He says that not everyone that says Lord, Lord shall go to heaven (Matthew 7:21-23). Again, he says that the majority are on the broad way but that only a few are on the narrow way that leads to life (Matthew 7:13-14). Paul says to avoid those who cause division among you (Romans 16:17,18). John wrote that those who abide not in the doctrine of Christ have not God (2 John 9).

PLEASE do not dare to preach another gospel.

*Especially For Women*

## ***Search for Truth The Voice from Afar***

**BETTY BURTON CHOATE**

Rachel had worked hard all morning with spring cleaning and preparation of food to take to Elizabeth's for the evening meal. Elizabeth had not fully recovered from recent surgery, so the women in the church had made a sign-up sheet for volunteers to prepare food for the family.

Tired, she sat down to rest for a few minutes and turned on the radio. The music playing on the station was a familiar hymn. What amazed Rachel, though, was that she heard only the beautiful blending of human voices, with no accompanying instrument. This was so different from the typical religious broadcasts that she was curious to know more about this one.

The speaker began with a plea: "There is one God, one Lord, and one Bible. Yet there are many differences among believers. Let us all—those who profess belief in Christ—return

to the Bible for all that we say and do in religion. If we would put aside our personal opinions and preferences, we would be united in Christ. All of us would be members of that church which was begun by our Lord on the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem, just after His resurrection from the grave and His ascension to the Father in heaven. All of us would be called Christians. All of us would obey the same commands to be saved. All of us would worship in the same way. We would be one spiritual family in the entire world, working together to bring the message of salvation to those who don't know God.

"You might ask, 'But how can such unity exist? And does it matter if there are many names and many churches, as long as we believe in the same Jesus?'

"Yes, it does matter, my friends. Jesus Himself warned in Matt. 7:21-23, '*Not everyone who says to Me, "Lord, Lord," shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name; cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?" And then I will declare to them, "I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!"*

"Jesus also prayed in John 17:20,21, '*I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me*'.

"Among those of other religions, the statement is often made, 'You say that there is only one God, and that the Bible is His book, yet there are many churches, teaching many, many different things. If Christians are so divided, not knowing what God wants you to do, how can we who are outside understand what He wants?'

"It's just as Jesus said: divisions among those who believe in Him cause confusion in the rest of the world. But what a convicting power it would be if all of us only believed and practiced exactly what the Bible teaches, and by our lives we showed the beauty and unity in Christianity. The effect of that unity would be as Jesus prayed: the world would believe that God had sent Him.

"If you would like to know more about this plea of the church of Christ, we invite you to write to the address which will be given

at the end of this broadcast.

"Of those who are believers in Christ, I would ask: Have you confessed Jesus as your Savior, as we read in Matthew 10:32: *'Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven'*. Have you turned away from a life of sin, in order to obey God with a penitent heart? Have you been buried with Christ in baptism, as we are taught in Romans 6:3,4, being born of water and the Spirit (John 3:3,5) into the kingdom of Christ, which is His spiritual body, His church?

"We plead with you to consider these truths and to become a part of God's family on earth, by obedience to His gospel."

Rachel quickly wrote the post box number and address given in the closing announcements. Then she sat back in her chair, feeling stunned, excited, wondering. "Everything he said—everything—could have been said by one of us," She thought aloud. "O-oh—could this be? Could this really be the Lord's people?" Tears began to run down her cheeks at the thought that, after all of the years of standing alone, they might be on the threshold of finding other Christians in many other places in the world!

When she heard Andrew coming home after work, she ran to the door to meet him. "What's wrong, Rachel?" he asked, in alarm, seeing the tears that had begun to flow again.

"Oh, Andrew!" she exclaimed. "—not wrong, but maybe *so very right!* This afternoon I heard a radio program and—you won't believe it!—you could have preached the same sermon and made the same plea! In such a few words he pointed out the Scriptures concerning salvation. He even talked about the church being the spiritual body of Christ, and he was saying that all believers should be united so that the world will believe that Jesus is from God!"

"How wonderful!" Andrew said, hugging Rachel close in joy and thanksgiving. "You surely wrote the address where this man can be reached?"

"Oh, yes!" laughed Rachel. "Here it is. We must write and ask about all of this. I can't wait to get the answers back!"

"Won't the other brothers and sisters in the church be excited?" asked Andrew. "Let's pray, Rachel, and thank God for this wonderful thing that's happened."

# ***Marriage Is Honorable***

**FRANCIS DAVID**

We live in an age where divorce has become a common thing and the marriage is not considered honorable. The word of God, Bible tells us that Marriage is a sacred and honorable thing. The writer of Hebrews says: "Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled . . ." (Heb. 13:4). No matter where we live and what our nationality is, marriage is an honorable thing. It's a worldwide accepted thing. If you take the word honor from your marriage then you will have access to other things which are not right in the sight of God. If you take the honor from marriage then you will have no hesitation to change partners and to indulge in wrong kinds of relationships.

Today what we see, many families are affected with broken marriages. Many innocent children are suffering because their parents are no more together, they are separated. Many men and women are emotionally sick because they are no more together and are reaping the consequences of divorce. Maybe we have not taken our marriages seriously and that is why we are facing the bad effects of separation. Sometimes these things happen when our homes are full of immorality, drinking alcohol, mistrust, unfaithfulness, adultery, etc. We must be careful and watchful.

Why divorces take place? Why this word divorce is catching up with the people like HIV? This is all because we have taken away the word honor from marriage. Divorce is an evil and this is what prophet Malachi told the people in his days, He said: "And this is the second thing you do: you cover the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping and crying; so He does not regard the offering anymore, nor receive it with good will from your hands. Yet say, "For what reason?" Because the Lord has been witness between you and the wife of your youth, with whom you have dealt treacherously; yet she is your companion and your wife by covenant. But did He not make them one, having a remnant of the Spirit? And why one? He seeks godly offspring. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let no deal treacherously with the wife of his youth. "For the Lord God of Israel says that HE HATES DIVORCE. . . (Malachi 2:13-16). God does not want

that people should take divorce. He hates it. He wants that husband should behave nicely with his wife and the wife should behave nicely with the husband. How do you treat your wife? The Bible gives an advise to the husbands that they should honor their wives. Apostle Peter says: "Likewise you husbands, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel. . . . (I Pet. 3:7). And to wives he says: "Likewise you wives, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives. (I Pet. 3:1). The root cause of your divorce might be the selfishness on your part. Do not be selfish. Someone has said these words which really make a sense: "A little commonsense would prevent most divorces and marriages too."

Both should try to love and respect each other. If love, kindness, and trust is lacking then there is something wrong somewhere. If these things remain in you then the idea of divorce cannot come in your mind. Jesus once said, that nobody should try to put asunder the husband and wife. The Pharisees also came to Him, testing Him, and saying to Him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?" And He answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female,' and said, "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." "So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate." (Matt. 19:3-6). Today, we see the courts are full of people who want divorce, but how sad God would be to see all this happening on the earth. Our God performed the first marriage, when He gave Eve to Adam. And they were happily living in the garden of Eden. God created only one Eve for Adam. We must understand that Husband and wife should love each other in a way that nothing or the third person should not interfere with their relationship. But what we see in some cases that when a wife or husband gets involve with the third relationship then there is a disturbance in the marriage. Never allow a third person to create disturbance in your relationship.

God could have created more than one Eve for Adam but He did not. He wants that there should be one man to one woman,



and this union should go on continually till death separates them. Its good to know when people say: "I have been married for thirty, forty or fifty years." Let us honor the word of God which is against divorce and let the marriage be considered honorable. We need to teach our children, our young people the evil of divorce. Tell them what divorce brings. It brings unhappiness for both the partners, If they have children even they suffer and their parents and loved ones they also have to face the heartaches, and this goes on for life.

Lastly, I would like to mention here that you should consider that your marriage is permanent. We are different from animals. Animals change their partners often but we humans, created in the image of God should not even think about it. Your marriage is your life time contract. If you are an unfaithful wife then repent and come back and if you are an unfaithful husband then you must also repent of your wickedness and come back. If you are not taking interest in your family and want to go forward and make lots of money then you must think about it seriously. By your action you may damage your married life. If you are not careful about morals then better think about it right now. Because when you decline morally, your married life will also be on the decline. Maybe as a wife you want to feel more independent and want your own status and make lot of money, then think again, is it effecting your family life? There should be a mutual understanding between the both. There are sometime misunderstandings which can also damage your marriage. We must go forward in maturity and make our relationship strong. All this would be possible when both are united in the bond of love, of which the Bible also speaks. Love is the key which can take you on to maturity in your marriage. The word of God says that LOVE suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, hopes all things, endure all things, LOVE never fails. . . . (1 Cor. 13:4-8). Yes, you can make your marriage a success. Do not ruin this sacred relationship just for petty things. Let us honor the marriage because marriage is honorable before God.

# **Let The Bible Answer**

**ROBERT MEREDITH**

How many churches did the Lord promise to build? This is a question of the utmost importance and one that stirs deep emotions. But, as with all religious questions, the Bible is the only source to which one can turn if he desires religious unity. In the first century there was one church. On the day of Pentecost, when the Lord's church was established (Acts 2), the three thousand who obeyed the gospel on that day were added to the one church (Acts 2:41,47). It was not the case that Peter was the leader of one church, and the apostle John the head of another, and another apostle or individual over another. There was only one body (Eph. 4:4), and they all followed the same doctrine and obeyed the same terms of admission. Why is it thought to be different in this Century? Today there are hundreds of religious bodies all teaching different doctrines and many teaching different things concerning what one must do to be saved. My friends, this is not as God intended. All should strive to be like the first century church.

The Old Testament prophesied of the Lord's Kingdom, the church. In Daniel 2:44, the Holy Spirit revealed that God would set up a kingdom. Isaiah prophesied that the Lord's house would be established in Jerusalem (Is. 2:2-3), and Zechariah proclaimed that the Messiah would build the Temple of the Lord (Zech. 6:12-13). All of these passages refer to the Lord's building one church not many churches.

In the New Testament, one sees where Jesus said, *"Upon this rock I will build My church (singular) . . . I will give unto thee the keys to the kingdom (singular) of heaven"* (Mt. 16:18-19). The Lord's church was established on the Pentecost following His resurrection (Acts 2), and the Lord added the ones being saved to it. Jesus Christ now rules over His kingdom, the church (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22-23; Acts 2:33; 1 Tim. 6:15). The apostle Paul, showing how that unity may be maintained, told the Christians of Ephesus, *"Endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body . . ."* (Eph. 4:3-4). This one body shows unity of organisation. All honest and

sincere people should desire to be what the Lord commands in His Word, and His Word clearly shows that in the first century there was only one church, with many different congregations of that one church scattered throughout the world (Rom. 16:16).

When one does what the first century Christians did to be saved (Heb. 11:6; Acts 17:30; Mt. 10:32; Acts 2:38), worship as they did (Acts 2:42; Col. 3:16-17; Acts 20:7; John 4:24), and is organised as they were (Col. 1:18; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:15), then one will be what they were, children of God belonging to the one body for which Christ shed His blood. It is our plea to return to simple New Testament Christianity and to turn away from all authority except God's.

## ***Two Creations***

**J.K. GOSSETT**

The universe and the church are the creations of God. The universe is physical, the church is spiritual. Both manifest the foreknowledge, purpose, wisdom and power of God. Neither the world nor the church can be destroyed by man. The church will run its God given course and the Lord shall bring down the curtain on the earth (1 Cor. 15:20-28; 1 Pet. 3:10). Time shall be no more!

The universe was begun by divine fiat; God created it! "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." At first, the earth was in a chaotic state and was shrouded in darkness. Light was then created, dry land was made to appear, and the earth was otherwise prepared for various forms of life, including man. While the universe was miraculously created, it is continued by the laws of God. No man can change these laws. They not only are conducive to life, they make life possible. Consider the law of gravity, the law of light and the law of reproduction. We are promised that "while the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease." I am truly grateful that "all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist" and that he "upholds all

things by the word of his power.”

The church, like the universe, is of divine origin. God purposed it, designed it, and miraculously brought it into being. The church had a beginning (Acts 10:15). It was begun in the city of Jerusalem on the first Jewish Pentecost after the Ascension of Christ. The church is continued by the gospel, the seed of the kingdom. The gospel, the seed, is indestructible, and so the church cannot be destroyed.

Only God could create the Universe and only God could create the church. Man has no more power to form a church than he has the power to create another universe. The proliferation of “churches” so characteristic of our day represents the folly of man. Paul wrote in 58 A.D., “The churches of Christ salute you.”

## *Don't Place Limitations on God!*

**DILLARD THURMAN**

As Creator and Lord over all things, God has the right and power to place restrictions upon man! Yet the Lord was long suffering toward His people, Israel! *“But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not: yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath. . . . For he remembered that they were but flesh; a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again.”* But His people still did not respond to His love and compassion: *“How oft did they provoke him in the wilderness, and grieve him in the desert! Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel”* (Psa. 78:38-41). In a figure of speaking, they bound the hands of God and limited what He could do for them as His people!

### **THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL LIMITED GOD!**

Our text speaks of a nation's rebellion against God in turning from Him, even as He sought to lead them to the Land of Promise. Because of their lack of faith, they *“limited God Almighty”!* Therefore it was recorded: *“They soon forgot his*

*works; they waited not for his counsel; but lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert. And he gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul"* (Psa. 106:13-15). Yes, they effectively limited God, but found to their chagrin that they had, in reality, limited themselves! God recorded for us, *"And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness: And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt."* (Ex. 16:2-3).

By their actions, Israel was already limiting what God could do for them because of unbelief and rebellion. Is it any wonder that God would say, *"Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh."* (Prov. 1:24-26). They had spurned the goodness and mercy He desired to give, and thus they limited God! For this they wandered in the wilderness forty years; and because of this they died outside the Land of Promise!

### **MAN'S SINS AND INIQUITIES LIMIT GOD!**

When man stands removed from God's blessings, it is never because God has withdrawn! Always man is the one at fault! *"Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear"* (Isa. 59:1-2). The wall of separation is always built by man, and not God. Man's sinful behaviour leads him away; and in this act, man limits the blessings of God.

To fully see man's futility, read God's answer in Isa. 50:1-5. Surely God desires to bless His people abundantly, but obstinately man turns from Him. Even the patience of God wears thin. Hear Him: *"Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded, but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh"* (Prov. 1:24-26). When man tries to limit God, he finds that God, in turn, will limit man! Calamities and distresses multiply when God is not near to help! Sanity and reason then declares, *"I will lift up mine*

*eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help, My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven, and earth" (Psa. 121:1-2). God stands ready to help, but man holds the key to unlock the trap door that binds him in sin!*

### **OUR WRONG RELATIONS CAN LIMIT GOD!**

Our personal right of prayer to God is a most precious spiritual blessing. However, there must be a right relationship with God for our prayers to be accepted! *"They cried, but there was none to save them; even unto the LORD, but he answered them not" (Psa. 18:41). Those who oppose God need not expect their prayers to be answered. Their own sinfulness limits God so He will not hear and answer prayers. But not so with the righteous: "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16).*

### **MAN'S FAILURE TO PRAY LIMITS THE LORD!**

Many times God's people are bereft of His blessings because they refuse to pray! The Lord appeared to Solomon with the promise: *"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." (2 Chron. 7:14). But there are disciples that limit the Lord by failure to pray often and fervently! James said so! "Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." (James 4:2-3).*

Man's malevolent spirit limits God, and so does a failure to pray! God's children limit Him by not asking! We skirt the shores of His great providence because of weak faith which prevents us from casting ourselves out into the oceans of His love and abundance! Jesus told Simon, *"Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught" (Lk. 5:4). But we are afraid to test the waters! We don't ask for we haven't enough faith to expect; thus, our lack of faith limits the Lord! Yet our Lord promised, "Ask and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened" (Mt. 7:7-8). Jesus didn't tie that up with IFs, ANDs and*

**BUTs!** It is our lack of faith that limits the Lord.

### **WRONG KIND OF PRAYERS LIMITS THE LORD!**

There are those who limit the Lord in their prayers by not presenting the right life to Him! The Lord has decreed, *"He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination"* (Prov. 28:9). Saints limit the Lord in answering prayers by asking for the wrong things! Even Job learned this lesson: *"There they cry, but none giveth answer, because of the pride of evil men. Surely God will not hear vanity, neither will the Almighty regard it"* (Job 35:12-13).

Even as we learned from James 4:3, *"Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts."* As parents refuse to give a child that which is bad for him, so God withholds from us that which is detrimental to our spiritual life. *"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"* (Matt. 7:11). Don't limit God by asking for things to gratify your fleshly lusts!

### **LACK OF BIBLE STUDY LIMITS THE LORD!**

Our attitude toward God's word determines God's attitude toward our prayers! Do you know why the scriptures have been preserved for us? *"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works"* (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Because of this, saints are instructed to *"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth"* (2 Tim. 2:15). Thus God has revealed Himself unto man through His word; but man limits God by failure to study His scriptures!

Church members often effectively shut the mouth of the Lord by leaving the Bible closed on the shelf; and thereby they limit God! They fail to win souls to Christ by not using the gospel; and thereby they limit God, for it is their mouth that HE must use to spread His word! We limit God in failure to *"handle aright the word of truth"* because we *"are unskillful in the word of righteousness"* (Heb. 5:13). God is limited in our lives and influence when abysmal ignorance could be overcome if we

would lovingly read the "love letter" which He has given us! We limit God when we give more time to reading sports and political news than to our priceless word of salvation from our Saviour! How pathetic that it may be said to us: *"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee; that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forgot thy children"* (Hos. 4:6). *It is indeed a rebellious people that turns away from their God who loves them! Yet this is a picture of many who profess discipleship; and then limit the Lord!*

### **REFUSAL TO WORK FOR HIM LIMITS THE LORD!**

The Lord is limited in His church by members who refuse to work for His cause. Parabolically, Jesus taught: *"Go work today in my vineyard"* (Mt. 21:28). Christians must know that Jesus has no feet but *ours* to go; no hands but *ours* to work; and none other than *ourselves* to serve! If we do not answer His call, we limit the Lord! His commission was, *"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen"* (Mt. 28:19-20). This commission was self-perpetuating, and reaches down even to us! If we don't do this work, it will remain undone!

Keep this in mind: YOU have a work to do that no other can effectively accomplish! There are souls YOU can reach that possibly no other can! When each member of the body of Christ begins to perform to the extent of his or her ability, THEN we will take the world for Christ! But until EVERY member is ready to be used by the Lord, we have effectively limited the Lord!

## ***Like A Silly Dove***

**JOHNNY RAMSEY**

Hosea had a broken heart. His wife was unfaithful and immoral. Jehovah had a broken heart, too. His bride was flippant and ungodly, also Israel had wandered back to the world and



committed spiritual prostitution. The book of Hosea is a classic love story that went bad. More sob than sermon is what critics of the Bible call this eloquent Old Testament book. In fourteen graphic chapters, we can see the heartache of a fearless prophet. Hosea reminded Israel that her goodness was like the morning dew. It did not last very long. *"Ephraim also is alike a silly dove without heart: they call to Egypt, they go to Assyria"* (Hos. 7:11). Like a silly dove, God's people would fly here and there as very unstable folk—flippant and undependable! Hosea's wife was so debased that God gave a name to their third child which clearly shows the offspring did not belong to the prophet, but to some lover of Gomer's with whom she had prostituted herself.

God showed the people of Israel that their only hope for spiritual success was *"in the valley of Achor"* (Hos. 2:14-19). In Josh. 7 is the account of the purging of sin from the camp when Achan sinned so tragically and brought defeat to the army of God's people—in the valley of Achor! Discipline has always been a necessary ingredient in God's plan. We err exceedingly when we bypass or overlook the value of keeping the bride of Christ pure and holy.

As a result of their compromise with worldly things, God tells the people of Hosea's day that there would be a spiritual famine of many days without a king or priest. In bondage they would beg for a prophet and none would be found. All of this was the result of their lack of Bible knowledge. The source of all our problems today is still ignorance of the Scriptures. So many seldom ever study the sacred text, and it shows in the worldliness in our midst, and in shallow preaching and teaching.

God warned His people to leave the landmarks alone (Hos. 5:10). In our era of time, everyone cries for change and modern emphasis. But, only the old Jerusalem gospel can save and edify. We must *"go forward, back to the Bible!"* We dare not tamper with the mandates of heaven, but must be content with the *"faith which was once for all delivered to the saints"* (Jude 3). We must be loyal to the ancient precepts found in the Book of Books!

In Hos. 7 and Hos. 8, we learn that Israel was like a half-baked cake. *"Ephraim is a cake not turned"* (Hos. 7:8). This represents folk who were burned on one side and raw on the

other—totally useless. As a result, they had sown to the wind and reaped the whirlwind. Their sins did find them out (Num. 32:23). Years in captivity would teach them the bitter result of apostasy. Horrible actions (Hos. 6:10) caused God to cast them away (Hos. 9:17) into spiritual oblivion.

Israel was challenged to break up their fallow ground (Hos. 10:12) and turn back to Jehovah immediately. There was no time for delay. They were long overdue in pursuing divine matters. Despite Israel's slothfulness, the Lord still loved them and sought to draw them back to Himself: *"I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love: and I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws, and I laid meat unto them. . . . I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him"* (Hos. 11:4; 14:4). God's justice demanded that Israel be given over to bondage, but it broke the heart of heaven to give them up that they might learn to repent (Hos. 11:8).

God reminds us of the great rôle the prophets played in warning, rebuking and leadership in Hosea 12 and Hosea 13. Kings learned to stand in awe of the lonely, devoted and loyal spokesman for Jehovah. The prophets stood as monumental reminders of the sanctity of truth and the sorrow of sin. God had allowed a king in His anger, but took him away in His wrath (Hos. 13:11). Sometimes we get what we ask for and have years to regret it: *"He gave them their request, but sent leanness into their souls"* (Psa. 106:15).

We truly need a fresh application of the brilliant book of Hosea, May our goodness be more lasting than the morning dew. May we never be like the silly dove.

## ***The Destiny Of The Lost***

**CHARLES BOX**

The destiny of the lost is tragedy beyond belief. All one has to do is read Luke 16:19-31 to get a glimpse of this awful calamity. "There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid

at his gate, desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame' But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.' Then he said, 'I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment. Abraham said to him, "They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them." And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' But he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.'"

A "Newsweek" poll found that 94 percent of Americans believe in God; 77 percent believe in heaven; 76 percent think they have a good or excellent chance of getting there. But, only 58 percent of those surveyed believe in hell.

The Bible teaches there are two gates which men may enter, two ways men may walk and two destinies men may reach "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it" (Matthew 7:13-14). "How beautiful, heaven must be," but there is also another destiny. We must not close our eyes to that awful place of torment.

### **HELL IS A PLACE OF VILE ASSOCIATION**

Unbelievers and those who do not obey the Gospel will be in hell (II Thessalonians 1:7-9). Hell will be the eternal abode of the sexually immoral, idolaters, adulterers, homosexuals, thieves,

greedy, drunkards, slanderers and swindlers (I Corinthians 6:9-11). Those who do not love and believe the truth will also be in hell (II Thessalonians 2:11-12). Others among the vile associates in hell will be angels who sin and unfaithful Christians (II Peter 2:4; II Peter 2:20-21). Revelation 21:8 describes some who will be in hell. "But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." Hell is a place of vile or evil associates.

### **HELL IS A PLACE OF SEPARATION FROM THE SAINTS**

Those who die faithful in the Lord will be blessed in heaven. "Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, Write: 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.' Yes, says the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works follow them" (Revelation 14:13). If we are faithful children of God, we will go to heaven. However, many will not be in heaven. Hell will be their eternal home. If we go to hell, we will be separated for all eternity from God's people, from every righteous person, from every good person and from every holy and good influence. "But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of life" (Revelation 21:27). What a horrible end it will be when you realize you are lost and lost forever. "There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out" (Luke 13:28).

### **HELL IS A PLACE OF ETERNAL DARKNESS**

Hell is a place of outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matthew 8:12). Many of us have gone down into caves and have experienced the darkness when the lights are turned out. It would probably do us good just to be quiet for a moment and feel the darkness. Hell is a place of darkness which is darker than any darkness we have known.

### **HELL IS A PLACE OF DESPAIR**

Observe John's picture of hell in Revelation 14:10-11. "He

shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name." There is a false cult which goes about teaching that there is no everlasting punishment in hell. If the Bible is true, if black print on white paper means anything there is a place of everlasting punishment. There is no rest day nor night, no refreshment, no hope of release! Despair! If you die and go to hell, all hope is lost.

### **HELL IS A PLACE OF TORMENT IN FLAMES**

Someone may ask, "Is this figurative or literal fire"? All I can do is preach it like it is written. I would rather face God at judgment and have Him say, "you took My word too literally"; rather than say, "you got so smart you tried to explain My word away." Hell is a lake of fire and brimstone. "The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever" (Revelation 20:10). Someone says, "This is just something to scare people." But, I had rather scare you into heaven than to lull you into hell.

You do not have to go to hell. You can die in the Lord. God wants to save you. "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is long-suffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (II Peter 3:9). Every where we look we see reminders that God loves us and wants us saved. The mountains remind us of God's love piled high at Calvary (Luke 23:33). The stars remind us of Jesus, the Bright and Morning Star Who was sacrificed for our salvation (Revelation 22:16). Each stone reminds us of Jesus, the rock of ages, Who doesn't want any to perish (I Corinthians 10:4). Every flower, says Jesus, the rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valley wants you saved. (Song of Solomon 2:1).

Have you obeyed the Gospel? (Mark 16:15-16). Are you living for Heaven? (I Corinthians 15:58).

# ***Grace, Works, and Salvation***

**T. PIERCE BROWN**

We see an increasing number of brethren who seem to have come to an understanding that we are saved by grace, and not by our good works. This continues to surprise me, for I have been preaching the Gospel for more than half a century, and never remember preaching it any other way. Ephesians 2:8 and Titus 3:5 read just like they did a thousand years ago. However, we have always tried to make clear that the grace offered by our Lord always had to be accepted on the terms by which it was offered, and this is not always made clear by many of the preachers who seem to have only recently discovered this amazing grace, even those who are sound and conservative, as they try to emphasize the glorious truth that salvation is by grace. Note the kind of statements that are sometimes made. Although true as far as they go, they may leave persons with wrong assumptions.

"I have come to view human works differently in recent times. I had previously thought they were necessary to ensure our salvation. Now, I simply see them as a loving appreciative response to what God has already done\* for us in providing salvation." It is true that all the good works done before we were saved from our past sins could not earn or "secure" our salvation. It is equally true that all the good works one may do after salvation from past sins cannot earn or "insure" our salvation, as if God's grace had the matter fairly well covered, but in order to "clinch the deal" we had to do a certain amount of good works, the exact amount and kind to be determined by our own private whim. It is possible that some of our preaching has left the impression that God's grace provides most of our salvation, but at least some work of ours, especially baptism, does the little extra job that grace did not do. At least, this is what it may sound like when you knock on a door and find a person who has not been to a church service for ten years, but who says, "I'm a strong Church of Christ. I've been baptized." Or even when some good brother dies, and at his funeral, you hear, "He was the most faithful Christian. The doors of that church

were never opened but that he was there." Whether he ever did anything else for the Lord was not made clear, but he had apparently "worked out his own salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12) by being there when the door was open. So, the impression was apparently gained in some way that there was some merit in "getting baptized" or "being faithful in attendance" and especially some in "giving back to the Lord a small portion of that which He has given us." One may go fishing all day Sunday, but he gets back by the building in time to have the Lord's Supper brought out to his car as he is on the way home, he can reverently say, "I communed" and assume that whatever God's grace did not take care of, his obedience did.

So, when a person is emphasizing that all the good works that you could possibly do will not ensure your salvation from past sins, he is doing what needs to be done. When one emphasizes that all the good works that one may do after he becomes a Christian will not ensure his eternal salvation, he is still doing what needs to be done. But if his teaching is so incomplete as to leave out or misrepresent Jesus' teaching in Matthew 25:30-46, or to teach that God's grace saves a person in spite of what he may or may not do, he has taught a false and dangerous doctrine.

Perhaps we should ask these "new exegetes" to deal in some detailed way with such questions as these: (1) Since doing good works is simply a loving response to what God has already done for us in providing salvation, suppose no one sees any good works such as those mentioned in Matthew 25 or other places? (2) Does this mean that you do not have a loving response to God's grace, and that you have therefore not accepted it on the terms by which He offered it? (3) Then, since you do not have these good works (a loving response to God's grace) and therefore must not have properly accepted that grace, are you saved by it anyway? (4) If we had to accept God's grace by being baptized for the remission of our sins in a faithful, obedient, loving response to that grace, do we have to continue to accept God's grace by continuing a faithful, obedient, loving response to that grace by obeying such commands as Galatians 6:10, "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith?" (5) If we do not try to do that, can we still be saved by grace? (6) If

we do that, do we have any right to assume, "I am no longer saved by grace. I am saved because I obeyed the command of the Lord?"

We must teach in such a fashion that we let persons know they can "do despite unto the Spirit of grace" (Hebrews 10:29). We can "fall from grace" (Galatians 5:4). We can fail to "continue in the grace of God" (Acts 14:23). We must not "continue in sin that grace may abound" (Romans 6:1). It is possible even to "receive the grace of God in vain" (II Corinthians 6:1). One of the most brilliant men I ever baptized now thinks he has learned so much that he rejects various parts of the Bible, such as Hebrews, James and Jude since they present, in his words, "a grace that can be earned through obedience."

I am reminded that Solomon the wisest of men, acted like one of the most foolish ones. No Bible author presents a grace that has to be earned. They all present a grace that could be accepted or rejected. In every case, unless it continued to be accepted on the terms offered, it was rejected, and it might even happen as Jude says, that one can "turn the grace of God into lasciviousness (Jude 4-5) by refusing to do the good works of obedience that are the loving response to what God has done for us.

So, if you are raising the question about something being "necessary to insure your salvation" you may want to ask. "Have I now learned the great truth that "He is the author of eternal salvation to those who disobey Him?" (Hebrews 5:9). For heaven's sake, and we mean that literally, do not teach about the wonderful grace of God in such a fashion as to leave the idea that grace takes care of you regardless of what you do or try to do. It is certainly true that one can think of "good works" as things he may do that obligates God to save him, or he may think of them as things he may do in grateful thanks to God who has saved him. The first attitude is always wrong. The second may be wrong if it leads one to assume that since he was saved without doing "good works" he no longer needs to be concerned about doing "good works."

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