

# THE BIBLE TEACHER

*Pleading for the Restoration of Pure New Testament Christianity*

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## EDITORIAL

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

***“We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him.”***

Being born of God is equal to being born of the word of God or being born of the water and the Spirit. To Nicodemus, Jesus taught, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” And to the query of Nicodemus, “How can a man be born when he is old?” Jesus said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.” (John 3:3-5). The apostle Peter wrote Christians: “Having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, because, All flesh is grass, And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, And its flower falls away, But the word of the Lord endures forever. Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.” (1 Peter 1:23-25).

“The seed,” Christ taught, “is the word of God” (Luke 8:11). As every seed produces after its own kind, so does the word of God produces children of God. The natural seed is sown in the earth. The word of God is sown in the heart or the mind of a person. When an individual hears or reads the pure word of the

gospel of Christ, and believes it, and obeys what it teaches; that is, after believing in Christ that he has died for man's sins, repents of all sins and is immersed (baptized) in water for the forgiveness of sins in the name or by the authority of the Godhead, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, it results in the new birth—one is thus born of water and the Spirit. (Matt. 28:19; Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:35-39). And the one born of God or by the word of God, does not sin.

This does not mean, however, that the one who has believed and has obeyed the gospel and thus has been born again, cannot sin or is not capable of sinning. But he does not sin willingly or knowingly, but he keeps himself away from doing wrong as the passage in 1 John 5:18 teaches.

When Christ was tempted by the devil, as we read from Matthew 4 and Luke 4 chapters, Satan wanted Him to sin, but Christ did not yield, and therefore the wicked one was unable to touch Him. Christ, on earth was a man, like any man (John 1:14; Philippians 2:7). He was capable of sinning, Satan knew this. Otherwise why would Satan tempt Him? But Christ did not sin. He kept Himself away from doing any wrong, because He wanted to do only God's will. So how do we know that whoever is born of God does not sin? That is, he does not willfully and knowingly sin. Because he keeps himself away from sin, by following and emulating Christ in everything (Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 2:21,22).

## ***Subtracting and Adding***

**J.C. CHOATE**

The Christian life is a life of *subtracting and adding*, a life of growth. Many bad things must be subtracted from one's behaviour before there can even be a Christian life, however. This is what we call *repentance*. We repent or turn away from our sins, from the bad things that would prevent us from being saved and living a better life, the "Christ-like" life.

Those bad things, those sins that must be subtracted include pride, hatred, gossip, thievery, lying, immorality,

dependence on our own goodness, and whatever else is in our lives that would prevent us from being a Christian. Christ said that we must repent or perish. (Luke 13:3). Paul declared, "*And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent*" (Acts 17:30). How could one claim to be a Christian if he has not repented, if he is going on with the sin in his life as in the past? The thing that sets the Christian apart from sinners in the world is that he or she has repented.

But repentance isn't all that is required. There has to be forgiveness, but forgiveness is *the result* of our own behaviour toward God: One is forgiven *because* he has become a believer in God and in the Saviour Jesus Christ, *because* that belief led him to turn away from a life of sin, *because* he was willing to acknowledge that Christ is the Son of God, and *because* in obedience to the Lord he was baptized for the remission or the forgiveness of his sins. We read in Acts 2 of those who did these things. They had heard the gospel preached by the Apostles, and they wanted to know what they must do to be forgiven of their terrible sins. Peter told them, "*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).

Further in the book of Acts, we read where Saul was convinced that Christ was the Son of God. Having become a believer, he repented of his sins, acknowledged Christ as his Lord, and was then told to arise and be baptized to wash away his sins. (Acts 22:16). Through obedience to these commands, those people on the day of Pentecost and Saul washed away their sins in baptism, being "born again," becoming "new creatures" in Christ. They were, therefore, ready to live the Christian life. (John 3:3-5; Romans 6:3,4; 2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 Peter 2:3).

Now if one has been born again, has been saved, has become a Christian, it is time for him to *add to his life*, to grow! He begins by partaking of the milk of the word, the simple teachings of the Lord that will enable one to grow in faith. Some of the things that one must add to his faith, are these: virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity. Of course, these lead on to other attributes and qualities that might be summed up as faithfulness in Christ unto death.

Peter says, "But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins" (2 Peter 1:9). In other words, one cannot survive unless he grows in his knowledge, in his ability, and in bearing fruit for the Lord.

Peter also says that as we add these Christian graces, they make us that we shall be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Continuing, he says, "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:10,11).

*Especially For Women*

## **Teaching Our Children Priorities**

**BETTY BURTON CHOATE**

Through the marvels of TV it is now possible for us to travel to the remotest ends of the earth, while sitting in our most comfortable recliner in our own living room.

I made such a trip recently. I journeyed over impossible terrain to reach the fabled land called "Ladakh". There I saw a culture which has remained largely unchanged through the centuries.

These mountain people live isolated lives of hardship and deprivation, primitive by the standards of the twentieth century. Looking from the outside, a visitor might think, "How quaint! What an interesting place! Visiting here is like turning back the clock. Oh, I hope outsiders don't come in here and corrupt this perfectly charming culture and turn it into just another twentieth century mess of 'modern' life!"

But to a person living and dying there without comforts, or good doctors and medicine, or the advantage of machinery to ease the burden of his daily work, the idea of preserving that intriguing "other world setting" might not seem so romantic. Even

worse, the absence of the gospel of God is a modern tragedy.

The people of Ladakh are predominantly Buddhist. Much of daily life revolves around Buddhist religious practices.

One very unusual custom was stated: that the oldest son, or the favoured son, is set apart from an early age—even from birth, in most cases—to become a priest of Buddhist. These children are reared with that *one option* held before them. As young boys they go to live in the monasteries, as companions of the priests, and as trainees.

We might ask, "How can parents so control their children's lives that they will do whatever the parents decide? It would never work that way in other parts of the world."

The answer must lie in the emotional and mental connotation attached to being a priest in Ladakh. That position is reserved, remember, for two very special people: the firstborn son, or—even more special—the favourite son! If a child is taught from earliest memories that the best and most coveted life-work is designated as his, he is likely to feel honoured that he was so chosen. He believes wholeheartedly that his parents have exalted him above the other children. He has been named as the "special" one to serve the gods for his family.

This insight into the culture would seem to indicate that there would be almost as many priests as there are families in Ladakh!

Contrast that number with the very small percentage of Christian families that have blessed the world with a preacher of God's gospel, and an interesting question arises. Why? Why do so few young people from Christian homes decide to devote their lives to spiritual service, to preaching, to performing the work of a true "priest" in Christ?

Could the answer lie in the perspective of the parents and of the church regarding such a dedication? Do we unconsciously teach our children from an early age that we expect them to be "successful"—meaning, "the bigger your salary, the most successful you are." Do we speak in positive terms about "the professions"—doctors, lawyers, bankers, teachers—but criticize and even belittle the preacher? Do we treat full-time workers as though they are third-rate Christians, beggars living off of the working members while performing no valued service?

If our son (or daughter) expresses an interest in being (or

marrying) a preacher, would we discourage it? If they dreamed of growing up to go to a foreign country and work as a missionary, would we reason against it?

Do we, first urge them to develop their secular talents? Do we reason that if they show a real flair for math or business or music or art or sports or anything else, they must pursue that line? Do we remind them that there is no "security" in "the ministry"?

Could it be that the reason so very few of our children become preachers of the gospel is that we don't exalt the life as the highest choice they could make? Do the people of Ladakh believe more deeply in Buddhism— and revere the work of Buddhist priests more highly— than Christians believe in the work of an evangelist in the family of God?

What's wrong with our perspective? What's wrong with our emphasis? What's wrong with our priorities?

Even under the Old Testament law, God said, "*Sanctify to Me all the firstborn, whatever opens the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and animal; it is Mine*" (Exodus 13:2).

We live under the better covenant, the New Testament. Would He expect less of us?

## ***Pollution Control***

**FRANCIS DAVID**

There is much awareness now for our environment. Our environment is getting polluted day by day. People are much concerned about it. Many big cities are affected by the pollution. In Delhi the Government has introduced CNG gas to bring the pollution under control. There are other numbers of measures taken by the people to control the pollution, which is very essential.

The world is also getting polluted by sin. Sin is the major cause which is affecting the spiritual environment. The Bible says: "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." (Rom. 3:23). The wages of sin is death. (Rom. 6:23). Sin

destroys the soul of man. We know the deadly nature of Pollution, but we must also be aware of the deadly nature of sin. We must protect ourselves from the pollution in order to save ourselves from infectious diseases. We must be careful and protect ourselves from environment of Sin. There are many attractions in the world which can ruin our spiritual health. As Christians we must avoid evil companionship, because this will damage our spiritual environment. The Bible says: "Be not deceived: evil companionships (Company), corrupt good manners (Morals)" (I Cor. 15:33). What kind of associations do we have as Christians? We must be careful while having friendship, and associating with people. If we have bad company, we may damage our spiritual environment.

You may be affected by sin slowly, and you might not be aware of that. Sometime, we start doing things bit by bit and suddenly we find our selves in a big mess. What about missing the Sunday worship? We do it occasionally and the time comes that we find our selves sick, spiritually. We don't have the kind of interest, that we used to have in the beginning. James says: "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempt He any man: But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished bringeth forth death." (James 1:13,14). We must be careful and watchful because the pollution of sin is working slowly, and if we are not careful then suddenly we will discover that it is damaging our souls.

Sin is preventable like we can prevent pollution. Christ is the one who can help us to control the pollution of sin. We must come to Jesus, ask His help and remedy to save our souls. Anyone who is affected by this can come to Him, since Jesus's invitation is for all the people of the world. Jesus says: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you the rest. (Matt. 11:28). With Jesus' blood we have the cure for sin. Jesus died, was buried and was risen from the dead and today He is our Living Lord. Today you can enjoy the grace of God, and that is the freedom from sins. Come and believe in Him and be saved (Mark 16:16). If you are not a faithful Christian, then repent and come back, and be faithful unto death. (Rev. 2:10). The blood of Jesus can wash away your sins (Rev. 7:14).

Maybe you were living a faithful Christian life, and you escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, but you are entangled again therein, if this is the situation then the end would be worse (2 Pet. 2:20). You can change your mind and repent, and come to the right track. Are you willing to come?

## ***Put On The Lord Jesus Christ***

**THOMAS R. DOHLING**

**But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof  
(Romans 13:14).**

What a startling statement! How does a person put on another? We'll come to that later. Let us first look at a simple example.

**Ex.** What happens when someone put on a dress?

- He is dressed, clothed and his nakedness is covered (hidden)!
- Being dressed decently makes him presentable to others.
- His being shabbily dressed wouldn't make him very acceptable, would it?

In our example, being decently dressed would make a person presentable and acceptable to others; but first he has to realize that he is naked and needs to be clothed! OR he has to realize that he need a new and better dress and that what he has on at present doesn't quite cover his nakedness.

The same is true in the spiritual realm. Man without God is insufficiently covered and even naked. Isaiah says: "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away" [Isa. 64:6]. By this we understand that our righteousness is as filthy rags in God's sight! All the efforts we make apart from God are insufficient to please God. So, we need a proper dress, don't we? A dress prepared by God



Himself. A dress He wants us to wear so that He may be pleased with us. A dress prepared before time began. A dress so beautiful, so wonderful that it not only pleases the Maker, but also fills the wearer with joy and affects all those around him. The Bible tells us to "put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof" [Rom. 13:14]. What does this instruction/command mean?

- We are to put on/dress/cover ourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ.
- We are not to make provision for the flesh to fulfill its lust [desires].
- In other words, we are to be spiritual, Christ-like and not carnal [fleshly].

So, a person has to realize his nakedness (insufficiency) in the flesh or life without God. He has to acknowledge his spiritual depravity and his need for being clothed. He has to desire to be spiritually clothed. He has to "wake up" to his being naked! He has to go to the Dress Maker and tell Him of his need! The Maker is always ready to take away the "filthy rags" and dress up such a penitent one. The divine plan for man's salvation was drawn up before time began.

When and how does one "put on Christ"? The word of God says it this way: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are 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. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof." (Romans 6:3-12).

This passage tells us that we identify with the death, burial

and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ in the watery grave of baptism and that when we rise up from the watery grave, we "should walk in newness of life," the Christ-like life. We should "reckon" ourselves to be dead to sin, "but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." We are not to allow sin to reign in our mortal bodies because if we do, we "obey it in the lusts thereof." We put on the Christ-like nature at baptism. **Yes, to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ" means to put on His nature and follow His example always.** It means to have His mind (1 Corinthians 2:16), to have His attitude (Philippians 2:5-15) and imitate Him (1 Peter 2:21-25). How does being clothed with Christ affect us?

**(a) It molds our personality into the likeness of Jesus Christ Himself**

"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation. Old things are passed away, behold all things have become brand new." (II Cor. 5:17). The more we can think like Jesus—the more we will act like Him. Would you agree that thinking like Jesus, would help to sweeten some of our dispositions?

*To be continued . . .*

## ***Let The Bible Answer***

**ROBERT MEREDITH**

What is repentance? A classic definition of repentance is, "a change of heart, brought about by godly sorrow, that leads to a changed life." Of all the commands that God gives, I believe that repentance is the most difficult. It requires that one die to self, quit walking in the path of unrighteousness turn to God and seek His ways.

There are several things involved in repentance. However, let us first notice what repentance is not. It is not sorrow alone. The Bible tells us that Judas regretted his actions (Mt. 27:3-5), but he did not change and ask God's forgiveness, he simply ended his earthly life. Repentance requires godly sorrow not worldly sorrow (2 Cor. 7:10). Realizing that our sins are against God and viewing sin as God does causes true repentance. Furthermore, repentance is not simply being convicted of sin.

Like sorrow, it is necessary or one will not repent, but it alone is not repentance. Those of Acts 2 who later obeyed the gospel (Acts 2:41) were convicted of their sins (Acts 2:37); yet they still needed to repent (Acts 2:38). Conviction precedes repentance.

Jesus taught a parable which illustrates repentance. *"But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work today in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not. Whether of them twain did the will of his father?"* (Mt. 21:28-31). The answer of course is the first. Jesus said he repented. He changed his mind and his actions because he realized he was sinning against his father by not doing what the father had asked. The prodigal son of Luke 15 is also another example of repentance. The scriptures declare that he *"came to himself"* and said, *"I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants"* (Lk. 15:17-19). The prodigal's attitude had changed. No longer did he say *"give me"* but *"make me."*

Repentance is one thing that God requires. One must cease the practice of sin, turn to God, and access His grace. The apostle Paul wrote, *"Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"* (Rom. 6:1-2). God loves all men, but man must repent of his sins and have those sins washed away by Christ's blood (Rev. 1:5; Rom. 6:3-4). See also Lk. 13:3,5; 1 Pet. 3:9; Acts 17:30; Acts 3:19; Lk. 24:46-47.

## **All Hands Point To Pentecost**

**DILLARD THURMAN**

There are many prophecies in the Old Testament Scriptures about the kingdom of God which was to come. And there has been a great deal of controversy in religious circles regarding these prophecies and their fulfillment. When was the kingdom of

God to begin? What kind of kingdom was it to be? Where was to be its beginning? While some contend that kingdom was set up during the days of the Old Testament prophets, others point to the days of John the Baptist, some say it was during the personal ministry of Jesus Christ, while still others assert that it has not yet come.

## LET THE BIBLE END ALL CONTROVERSY

There is only one source of authority for this, as well as all other religious questions. If we would know the answers to all such questions, we must look to the Bible, the word of God, for only He has all the answers. In the Bible we find many references to the "church of God," the "kingdom of God," the "family of God" and the "body of Christ". Yet all of these terms are used to denote the same institutions. Let us look at some of the implications of each of these.

As an organism, it is the BODY of Christ, with Christ as the head and we the members of that spiritual body. In its relationship to God and the world, it is the CHURCH of the Lord (a "called out" people) that is separated from sin and sanctified for the Master's use. As an even closer relationship, it is referred to as the FAMILY of God in which God is the Father and we are the children of God. But with reference to its government, it is the KINGDOM of God over which Christ reigns as the king, and we are His subjects. Each of these terms (and others which could be cited) gives some facet of truth concerning the church of the Lord, as the God of heaven wants it to be portrayed to our minds.

## THE POINTING FINGER OF PROPHECY

We have only to look back into the days of the prophets to see the finger of inspired men point to the time when the kingdom of God would be set up. Space will not allow all of these promises of God concerning the king, but we note a few of them. In Jer. 23:5-6 we read: *"Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah shall be saved, and*

*Israel shall dwell safely; and this is his name whereby he shall be called: Jehovah our righteousness.*" None can deny that this refers to the King who would reign over the kingdom of God, and the hand points to the future.

Isaiah also pointed to a future date when he wrote, *"And it shall come to pass in the latter days, that the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many peoples shall go and say, Come ye and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem"* (Isa. 2:2-3). The prophet therein stated that this kingdom/house (church) would begin (1) *"in the last days,"* (2) it would be composed of *"all nations,"* (3) it would go forth *"from Jerusalem."*

After having divulged, the secret of a king's dream, Daniel declared, *"And in the days of those kings shall the God of heaven, set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall the sovereignty thereof be left to another people; but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever"* (Dan. 2:44). Again, we see the finger of prophecy pointing ahead to some future time, disclosing some of the secrets of a kingdom to be set up by the Lord. The prophet Zechariah also pointed to the future: *"I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies, my house shall be built in it"* (Zech. 1:16). Like the prophet Isaiah, he also pointed to Jerusalem as the place for its establishment.

## NEW TESTAMENT PROMISES POINTING

When we come into that which is commonly called the New Testament, we still find God's prophets pointing ahead. John came preaching that *"the kingdom of God is at hand"* (Matt. 3:2). It had not yet come; but was near at hand. Then Jesus began to preach, saying the same thing as to the time of the promise (Matt. 4:17; Luke 10:9). Later, He was still pointing to the future when He said, *"Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven"* (Matt. 16:18-19). Now, if the

church and the kingdom here referred to are not one and the same thing, then Jesus pulled a colossal architectural blunder in turning over to the apostles the wrong set of keys, and they were guilty of "breaking and entering" the New Testament church!

Jesus often pointed ahead to the beginning of the church or kingdom (Luke 22:16,18; Matt. 4:17). When He gave His disciples the model prayer, He taught them to pray, *"Thy kingdom come"* (Matt. 6:10). It had not, at that time, been set up! He sent out His disciples with instructions to preach, *"The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you"* (Luke 10:9). And, speaking to a gathering of people, Jesus further stated that the kingdom would come during the lifetime of some of His contemporaries: *"Verily I say unto you, There are some here of them that stand by, who shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God come with power"* (Mark 9:1). Here He again pointed ahead, but placed a very definite limitation.

After the death of Jesus on the cross, and His resurrection from the dead, He met with the apostles and told them to wait in the city of Jerusalem until they received *"power from on high"* (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8) and that kingdom was to come *"with power"* (Mark 9:1). We then read, as they were waiting in the city of Jerusalem, *"When the day of Pentecost was now come, they were all together in one place . . . And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance"* (Acts 2:1-4).

## THE FINGER POINT BACK

Now, on Pentecost and from this day forward, the hands point back! The finger turned to that which had already happened. Notice what was preached on that day: *"This is that which hath been spoken through the prophet Joel: And it shall be in the last days, saith God, I will pour forth of My Spirit upon all flesh . . . Brethren, I may say unto you freely of the patriarch David, that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us unto this day. Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins he would set one upon this throne; he foreseeing this spake of the resurrection of the Christ, that neither was he left unto Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. This Jesus did God raise up,*

*whereof we all are witnesses . . . Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified" (Acts 2:16-17, 29-32,36).*

Do you recall the promise God made in Isa. 2:2-3 which we gave above? The "house of God" (which is the church, 1 Tim. 3:15) was to begin "in the last days . . . in Jerusalem." These apostles are in Jerusalem, and Peter then clearly states that these are "the last days." Notice again Jer. 23:5, which we first gave. Study it carefully with reference to Peter's statement above. He states that Jesus was brought forth from the grave to sit on the throne of David! To reign, He must have a kingdom! It had then been established. Peter then concludes that God made Jesus "both Lord and Christ," which implies His reign as king.

Later, we find Philip preaching the "good news concerning the kingdom of God" (Acts 8:12), and people entered it. The apostle Paul also demonstrated in his preaching that the kingdom had at that time been established, "Confirming the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God . . . And when they had appointed him a day, they came to him into his lodging in great number; to whom he expounded the matter, testifying the kingdom of God, and persuading them concerning Jesus, both from the law of Moses and from the prophets, from morning till evening" (Acts 14:22; 28:23). The finger points back.

In His writing, Paul defined the kingdom, always describing it as being in existence at the time of his writing (Rom. 14:17; 1 Cor. 4:20). He even taught concerning the duration of the kingdom and when it would be turned back to God Who gave it to His Son (1 Cor. 15:24-25). He further showed that God had, "Delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son" (Col. 1:13). And thus we are in "the church of the firstborn" which is then described as "receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken" (Heb. 12:23,28). The apostle John also wrote that he was in the kingdom (Rev. 1:9). Thus, we find that every reference in the writings of the apostles about the kingdom had been established. Pentecost had become the pivotal point, because the church had been established on that day (Acts 2:38-47).

## PROPHECY FULFILLED AT PENTECOST

As we look at Acts 2, which records the events of Pentecost, let us notice just how prophecy was fulfilled on what Peter called *"that great and notable day"* (Acts 2:20). First, Isaiah's prophecy concerning *"the last days"* was pointedly fulfilled. Too, we find the prophecy of *"all nations"* fulfilled, as there were *"Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven"* gathered in Jerusalem that day. Later, the Gentiles were brought in by this message that began on Pentecost (Acts 10 and 11:15). Too, the kingdom (church) began, as promised, in Jerusalem (Zech. 1:16; Isa. 2:2).

Jesus had told the apostles the reason for His death on the cross: *"Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. Ye are witnesses of these things. And behold, I send forth the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city, until ye be clothed with power from on high"* (Luke 24:46-49). On Pentecost, for the first time *"repentance and remission of sins"* was preached in His name (Acts 2:38).

Just before His ascension back to the Father, Jesus was asked by His disciples if He would now *restore the kingdom to Israel?* (Acts 1:6). His reply was: *"It is not for you to know times or seasons, which the Father hath set within His own authority. But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea and Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth"* (Acts 1:7-8). Here it is stated that the power would come with the Holy Spirit, but earlier He had promised the kingdom would come with power (Mark 9:1). As you compare Mark 9:1, Luke 24:49 and Acts 1:8, you must conclude that the kingdom began on Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came (Acts 2:1).

If space permitted, we could go on and on with points fulfilled on this *"great and notable day"* (Acts 2:20).



# ***Life Rich and Rare***

**JOHNNY RAMSEY**

The best way to walk the rugged path of this earthly existence is to stay close to Jesus. Wandering into the road of carnality results in a woeful destination. The beauty of Christianity bestows a life rich and rare. It is a productive journey in the midst of sorrow, sin and shame. This *"new and living way"* (Heb. 10:19-20) provides *"joy unspeakable and full of glory"* (1 Pet. 1:7-8). James 1:17 gives us hope as we follow Christ: *"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning."*

No one needs to be lost, and thus waste his time in the beggarly elements of this world. There is just far too much happiness in the Lord to pass this relationship up in the pursuit of fleeting pomp and popularity. Paul's inspired comment speaks of the value of serving the Saviour: *"Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content"* (Phil. 4:11).

When the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts (Rom. 5:5), we understand the genuine peace surpassing human attainment that followers of the Master know. Showing the proof of our love through generous giving (2 Cor. 8:24) draws us nearer to the cause in which we gladly invest. We realize that we are not yet all that we desire to be as we press on to nobler endeavour.

*I think that I shall never see  
a church that's all it ought to be:  
A church whose members never stray  
Beyond the strait and narrow way,  
A church that has no empty pews,  
Whose preacher never has the blues.  
A church whose deacons always deak,  
None care proud, and all are meek;  
Where gossips never peddle lies,  
Or make complaints or criticize;  
Where all are always sweet and kind,  
And all to others' faults are blind.*

*Such perfect churches there may be,  
But none of them are known to me.  
But still I'll work and pray and plan  
To make my Lord's church the best I can.*

In the New Testament Scriptures there are twenty-one epistles showing us how to live in the manner that adorns the gospel. One of the most concise renderings is 1 Pet. 3:8-9, *"Finally, be ye all likeminded, compassionate, loving as brethren, tenderhearted, humbleminded: not rendering evil for evil, or reviling for reviling; but contrariwise blessing; for hereunto were ye called, that ye should inherit a blessing."*

We must "walk the walk" and not just "talk the talk." Talk is cheap because supply exceeds the demand! The life that is rich and rare is the one that glorifies God in all that we do. When we come to the end of the way and look back over the journey we traversed, only those things that exalted Christ will count and endure.

## ***God's Grace And Man's Response***

**CHARLES BOX**

God made us with the power of choice. We are not robots. By God's grace man has the power to choose the course of his life. What choice are you making? Are you choosing God or Satan? "Behold, I set before you today a blessing and a curse: the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you today; and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside from the way which I command you today, to go after other gods which you have not known." (Deuteronomy 11:26-28.)

To become a Christian, God requires you to hear the gospel (Romans 10:17), believe in Jesus (Mark 16:16), repent of sins (Acts 2:38), confess Christ as Lord (Romans 10:9,10), and to be baptized to wash away sins. (Acts 22:16.) Having obeyed the gospel you are saved by the grace of God! After conversion, "keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." (Jude 21.)

At the heart of Christianity is the grace of God. Paul wrote to Christians at Ephesus and said, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." (Ephesians 2:8-10.)

### **GRACE DEMONSTRATES HOW GOD FEELS ABOUT US.**

God is love. "He who does not love does not know God, for God is love." (1 John 4:8.) Because God's nature is love He looks upon us, His creation, with goodwill and unmerited favour. Unmerited favour is "grace."

When we were sinners, unworthy and undeserving, God sent Jesus to die for us. "For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:6-8.) God is good, providing what we need not what we deserve. We deserve hell but need salvation. Salvation is provided by God's grace.

Our sins separated us from God. "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear." (Isaiah 59:1-2.) "Christ receiveth sinful men." And that is exactly what grace is. Our sins made us unworthy except for the grace of God.

### **GRACE EXPLAINS GOD'S ACTIONS FOR US**

God's plan for our salvation was accomplished by His grace. Jesus is the source of God's grace and truth. "For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." (John 1:17.) God's grace is available to all for salvation. "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age." (Titus 2:11-12.)

On the cross the one who knew no sin died for sinners. There is no greater demonstration of grace than the cross. "For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Corinthians 5:21.) Jesus died so we might live. He suffered for sins that we might not have to suffer the ultimate penalty for our sins. That is God's "amazing grace."

Each time we see or pick up the Bible we should be reminded of God's grace because the Bible is called the "word of God's grace." Paul and his companions preached "the word of His grace." "Therefore they stayed there a long time, speaking boldly in the Lord, who was bearing witness to the word of His grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands." (Acts 14:3.) Paul commended Christians to the word of God's grace. "So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified." (Acts 20:32.) In our singing, grace in our heart is connected with the word of God. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." (Colossians 3:16.) Without the Bible we would not know the wonderful story of salvation, which is the story of God's grace.

The Christian life is also a demonstration of God's grace. It is God's grace which produces a righteous life. "So that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 5:21.) It is God's grace which blesses you and helps you in your struggle against sin. Acceptable service to God is an out-growth to grace. "Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear." (Hebrews 12:28.) With Paul let us say, "but by the grace of God I am what I am . . ." (1 Corinthians 15:10.)

### **GRACE DEMANDS MAN'S RESPONSE**

What a person is or is not is determined by his response to God's grace. Each individual is responsible to love, honour, obey

and serve God. Man's response to God should be humble obedience. "Though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him." (Hebrews 5:8-9.)

Because God has done so much for us He can reasonably expect our love in return. How man's failure to obey must grieve the heart of the Creator. "But to Israel he says: All day long I have stretched out My hands to a disobedient and contrary people." (Romans 10:21.)

Our response to God's grace is not a single act or decision, but a lifetime response. Paul said, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." (Galatians 2:20). Two elements are at work in our salvation: (1) God's grace is extended, and (2) man responds in loving obedience.

God wants what is best for us in this life and in eternity. By accepting the gospel of Christ and living soberly, righteously and godly man can enjoy everlasting fellowship with God by His grace.

## ***The Prayer Life Of Jesus***

**HUGO McCORD**

Jesus, still wet from his baptism, "was praying" (Luke 3:21), but there is no indication that he was praying out loud. Apparently his was a private prayer, but it was heard in heaven, for "while he was praying, the heavens were opened, and the Holy Spirit—in a bodily form as a dove—came down upon him, and a voice came from heaven, 'You are my beloved Son. I am well pleased with you.'" (Luke 3:21-22.)

There is reason to believe that not a day ever dawned in Jesus' 33 years that he started it without prayer. An unforgettable incident shows what was first on Jesus' mind when he awoke from sleep. He was an over-night guest in the home of Simon and Andrew in Capernaum. In the house were not only the two

men, but also Simon's mother-in-law, and likely the wives of the men. (Mark 1:29-31; compare 1 Corinthians 9:5.)

When the house people awoke, the bed on which Jesus had slept was empty. Where was he? Immediately "Simon and those with him searched diligently for him. They found him, and said, 'All are seeking you'." (Mark 1:36-37.) What had happened? "Early in the morning, while it was still quite dark, he (Jesus) arose, went out, and departed into a desert place, and there was praying." (Mark 1:35.) No doubt this incident inspired Mrs. M.A. Kidder to write this meaningful song:

Ere you left your room this morning,  
Did you think to pray?  
In the name of Christ our Saviour,  
Did you sue for loving favour? . . .  
Balm of Gilead did you borrow  
At the gates of day?

Though Jesus had come into the world "to seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10), mixing with people, he believed that also he personally needed private prayer. On more than one occasion he withdrew himself and went into a mountain alone to pray. (Luke 6:12; Mark 6:46; John 6:15.) After he had miraculously fed "five thousand men besides the women and children," he "dismissed the crowds" and "went up into the mountain by himself to pray. At even, he was there alone." (Matthew 14:19-23.) On another occasion, when "large crowds came together to hear him, and to be healed by him from their diseases" he "then withdrew into the desert and prayed." (Luke 5:15-16.)

Jesus' private praying, at least on one occasion, included praying for a certain individual. Jesus knew that Satan had gotten permission from God "to sift" Peter "as wheat," which caused Jesus to pray for Peter, and he told him about it: "I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail, and when you have returned, strengthen your brother." (Luke 22:31,32.)

Not only was daily private praying on Jesus' schedule, but there is reason to believe that he never ate a meal without first offering thanks, whether in the presence of thousands before he fed them with loaves and fishes (Matthew 14:19; 15:36; John 6:11), or in a home. (Matthew 26:26-27; Luke 22:17,19; 24:30; Compare 1 Timothy 4:4.)

After Jesus' last Passover Feast his mind was on asking God, in his "infinite understanding" and "wisdom" (Psalm 147:5; Romans 11:33), to think of some way for sinners to go to heaven without Jesus having to give his blood. He knew well that God's arrangements, "almost all things are purified by blood, and there is no forgiveness without the shedding of blood." (Hebrews 9:22.)

But Jesus also knew that the "prayer of the righteous has powerful results." (James 5:16.) So, with his soul "deeply troubled, even to death" (Mark 14:34), he went about midnight "to a place called Gethsemane" to "pray." (Matthew 26:36.) There he "withdrew from" his apostles "about a stone's throw" (Luke 22:41), to be alone. There he "kneeled down," and "fell on his face, and prayed" (Luke 22:41; Matthew 26:39), "Abba, Father, all things are possible with you: take this cup from me; yet not what I will, but what you will. (Mark 14:36.)

The "cup" (poterion) of which Jesus spoke was not a literal "drinking-vessel" nor was it a figurative cup of "prosperity" (psalm 16:5; 23:5; 116:13), but a figurative cup of "adversity" (Psalm 11:6; 75:8; Isaiah 51:17,22), namely, "of the bitter lot (the sufferings) of Christ." (Matthew 26:39,42; Mark 14:36; Luke 22:42; John 18:11; Thayer, 533.)

The "cup" of suffering, pointing to the cross, Jesus dreaded! "And being in agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like clots of blood falling to the ground." (Luke 22:44.) Some have mistakenly said that Jesus "sweated blood," but what Luke wrote (22:44) was that his sweat was "like" or "as" (hosei) blood.

Why was Jesus sweating? Outdoors, that April night 2500 feet above sea level, was "cold" (psuchos), requiring a warming "charcoal fire." (anthrakia, John 18:18.) Thus it was not a hot night that caused Jesus' visible perspiration. It was because of his praying with "loud crying and tears to the One who could save him from death." (Hebrews 5:7.)

Because of Jesus' "godly fear," his "reverence" (eulabeia, Hebrews 5:7), a loving Father listened to his Son's pleading, but even God could think of no other plan of salvation for the world of sinners than by the means of Jesus' blood. (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 1:7.) So, as much as the Father loved his Son (who "always" did "the things pleasing to him," John 8:29), the Father was forced to say "no" to Jesus' begging. Consequently, after

three prayers with "loud crying and tears" (Hebrews 5:7), saying "the same words" (Matthew 26:44), the sweating Jesus "arose from prayer" (Luke 22:45) to go and endure "the cross." (Hebrews 12:2.)

The Father's having to say "no" to Jesus was not only that the world of sinners might have an opportunity to go to heaven, but also it was for Jesus' sake. As "God tested (nasah) Abraham" (Genesis 22:1), whether or not Abraham's faith included such obedience as to kill and burn "your son, your unique one, whom you love, even Isaac" (Genesis 22:2), so God tested Jesus whether or not his "obedience" would include "the things which he" would suffer on the cross. (Hebrews 5:8.)

Thank God, for his sake, and for our sake, he passed the test and was declared as lacking nothing (teleioo, perfect, complete, mature), and equipped to offer "eternal salvation to all who obey him." (Hebrews 5:9.) Thus we see that faith plus obedience is God's plan through the ages: for Abraham (James 2:21-23), for Jesus (Hebrews 5:8), and for us. (Hebrews 5:9.)

On the cross three of Jesus' utterances, during the six hours of agony, were prayers.

First, he prayed in behalf of the ones who were crucifying him, "Father, forgive them, because they do not know what they are doing." (Luke 23:34.)

Second, with "darkness" on "all the earth" from noon to three o'clock, Jesus "cried loudly: My God! My God! why have you forsaken me?" (Mark 15:33-34.) It must be that momentarily, in his pain, Jesus felt God-forsaken, but actually not so, for the unchangeable God (Malachi 3:6) has promised to all godly people, "I will never leave you, and I will never forsake you." (Deuteronomy 31:8; Joshua 1:5; Hebrews 13:5.) Instead of God's ever forsaking a righteous person, Jesus himself in other days in a prayer had affirmed that it was impossible: "I have always known that you listen to me." (John 11:42.)

Third, Jesus' final prayer on the cross, crying out "with a loud voice, saying, 'Father, I entrust my spirit into your hands' (Luke 23:46), shows that he knew that God would take care of him forever and ever.

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