

# THE BIBLE TEACHER

*Pleading for the Restoration of Pure New Testament Christianity*

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## *EDITORIAL*

### **What Does the Bible Teach?**

***“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”***

There are many who believe and teach that the passage above from Romans 3:23 teaches that all are born as sinners; that when a baby is born he/she is born with sin, inherited from Adam and Eve. This is not, however, what the Bible teaches. Notice, if you will, the Bible says, “All have sinned,” and not, “All are born with sin.” There is a difference. This erroneous belief that babies are born with sin of Adam and Eve, which they had personally committed in the beginning, has led millions of people all over the world to commit another sin, that is, to get their babies baptized. Because they began to teach that if a baby was to die without baptism then that baby or child would go to hell. Yet, again, this error led people into another error, and, that is, when such people grow up who have been “baptized” in their infancy or babyhood, and when they are taught from the Bible, that the Bible teaches that one must, before baptism, believe in Jesus Christ and repent of sins then be baptized for salvation or forgiveness of sins (Mark 16:16 & Acts 2:38); they refuse to be actually baptized. Arguing and contending they maintain that they have been already baptized. Some even go to the Bible to justify their error and say that in Ephesians 4:5 it says that there is one baptism. And since

they had been "baptized" in their babyhood already therefore, it would be wrong for them to be baptized "Again."

Now, what does the Bible teach? The Bible teaches that sin cannot be inherited. Notice, what it says: "The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself," (Ezekiel 18:20). Next, the Bible teaches, that the kingdom of heaven belongs to little children, and that if older people want to enter into God's kingdom of heaven then they must become like little children; trusting, humble, obedient, without malice, and yes, without sin. Listen to what Christ told His disciples; He said, "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 18:3). Again, Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not forbid them, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 19:14).

In the Old Testament, in the book of 2 Samuel chapter 12, we read about king David's child, who was sick. As long as the child remained ill, David prayed to God for him and fasted; and continued in sorrow. But the child died. You know, what David did, after the child passed away? The Bible says, "So David arose from the ground, washed and annointed himself, and changed his clothes; and he went into the house of the Lord and worshiped. Then he went to his own house; and when he requested, they set food before him, and he ate. Then his servants said to him, "What is this that you have done? You fasted and wept for the child while he was alive, but when the child died, you arose and ate food." Now, listen to what king David said to them, And he said, "While the child was alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, 'Who can tell whether the Lord will be gracious to me, that the child may live?' But now he is dead; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me..." Was David contemplating going to hell? No. He knew that the child had gone to heaven because that child had not sinned.

Some have problem in understanding Psalm 51:5, where David had said "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me." Here David was speaking of his mother. He was "brought forth" by his mother in iniquity. And, his mother had conceived him in sin. It is just like saying, "In anger my friend

left me." Evidently, it is saying that the friend was angry and he had left. How could David sin, when he was not even born yet? 1 John 3:4 says, "Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness." Sin is committed, not inherited.

## *Deacons in the Church*

J.C. CHOATE

The Lord's church not only had elders to serve as its leaders, but there were also deacons to assist them. We do not read of "an" elder or "a" deacon in the organization of the church, but there were always two or more of each. The churches of men may have a *Bishop* (singular) as their leader, or a *Pastor* (singular) who is actually their preacher. In the scriptures, however, we read of a *plurality* of elders and deacons. For example, when Paul wrote to the church at Philippi, he addressed the church *with the bishops and deacons*. Notice that he did not address his letter to *the bishop* or *the pastor* at Philippi, but to the bishops or pastors or elders at Philippi, along with the deacons—all designations given in the *plural* form.

Christ was the head of the church as it existed throughout the world (Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:22,23), but each congregation that had qualified men as listed in 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:5-9, were to have elders and deacons. The elders were to serve as bishops, pastors, overseers, and shepherds of the flock. In other words, they were to lead and care for the needs of the congregation over which they were appointed. The deacons were to serve under the elders, to assist them with their work. Some have defined the work of the elders as caring for the spiritual needs of the congregation and the deacons as being those who cared for the physical needs of the church.

For the appointment of elders, two or more were to be chosen from the men of a congregation, based on their ability to meet the qualifications Paul listed in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. Likewise, two or more were to be chosen from the men of the same congregation and asked to serve as deacons. The qualifications of the elders were a little more restrictive in that they were to have believing children who had, themselves, become members of the church. The reason given by inspiration of the Holy Spirit was that if they

were unable to rule their own house well, how would they be able to take care of the Lord's church? Some argue that one child is enough, but here Paul speaks of *children*. Surely the logic behind the requirement is that each child is different, and in bringing up *children* he is able to deal more effectively with a number of different personalities in the church.

The deacons were also to be chosen on the basis of specific qualifications. Paul said, "Likewise must the deacons be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 3:8-13).

Notice that the deacons can be younger than the elders and have young families, but that a deacon must be married and have children. Again he speaks of more than one. He does not, however, indicate that they must be older children, having become Christians themselves.

Let's list the qualifications of the deacons:

1. Be grave or reverent.
2. Not double-tongued — talking out of both sides of the mouth.
3. Not given to much wine — not to be an alcoholic or drunkard.
4. Not greedy of filthy lucre or not greedy of money.
5. Holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience.
6. Let them be proved or shown to be faithful.
7. Let them be servants.
8. Let them be blameless.
9. Must have faithful wives.
10. Must rule their children and their houses well.

When the deacons of the church have their qualifications, and serve along with the elders, then Paul says they obtain for themselves "...a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus." (1 Timothy 3:13).

As deacons serve and grow in the office, in time they may

qualify to become elders in the local congregation.

## **Many Will Miss Heaven**

FRANCIS DAVID

In our lives we must have had many experiences of missing something. What about missing your train. Suppose you are leaving and you have the confirmed train ticket but somehow you are not able to reach at the train station on time, and train leaves on schedule, and you miss your train. How would you feel? I know, you would be frustrated, extremely sad, but you can still go and catch another train. Somehow, you can plan and you can make your journey.

I was thinking, can a person get another chance to go to heaven? Heaven is a place where God dwells. We have heard so many excellent things about heaven. Everybody wants to go there. Nobody wants to miss heaven. Heaven is a real place. Faithful people will meet God face to face there. In the book of Revelation Chapter 21, we read about the description of heaven. In Chapter 22 first five verses, we read it says the throne of God is there. It further says, "And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and the lamb shall be in it. And His servants shall serve Him. They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. And there shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord GOD gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever. What a wonderful thing it would be to enter heaven and dwell with our creator forever and ever. But sad, that many will not be able to enter heaven and will miss it and it would be a really tragic thing to miss it.

The Bible says those who are on broad way and are worldly will miss heaven. In Matt. 7:13-14 verses as Jesus says there, "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." The way to heaven and eternal life is narrow and difficult. Majority like to walk on broad way because of worldly pleasures. Only those who do the will of God will be able to enter heavenly city. Jesus said in Matt. 7:21, "Not everyone who says to ME, 'Lord, 'Lord', shall not enter the

kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven."

There are people who do not want to repent of their sins and because of their sins and iniquities, they would not be able to enter heaven. Jesus told the people, if they do not repent they will perish in their sins. (Luke 13:3). Isaiah the prophet told the people in his days, that your sins and iniquities have separated you from your God. God wants, that we must repent of our sins and wrong doings and come back to Him.

Some will not enter heaven because of their pride. This is a major barrier for many to come to God. Such people don't accept that they have done any wrong or they are sinners in the sight of God. The inspired word of God says: "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. "(Rom.3:23). The wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23). We must come to God and please Him, because it is impossible to please Him without faith (Heb.11:6). Jesus said in Mark 16:16, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved, but he who does not believe will be condemned." We read in Acts chapter 2 and verse 38, that when Peter preached to the people they heard Him and asked him what they are supposed to do, he replied them by saying "Repent and let everyone of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins: and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Friends, let us leave all the pride and prejudice and remove this barrier by believing in Jesus, repenting of our sins, confessing Him and by being baptized.

What if we miss heaven? There will be no second chance. The Bible clearly mentions that death is certain and after that the judgment. (Heb.9:27). All those who refuse to obey God and His commands would not be able to enter heaven. All who are disobedient will go to eternal damnation. They will gnash their teeth (Mt.25:30), there will be great pain (Mt.25:46), all torment and no hope of getting out. In heaven you will be with all the good and righteous people but in outer darkness, you will be with all the wicked, people. Do we want to live with righteous in heaven or with the wicked or unrighteous in hell. After we leave this earth, then there would be no second chance to take decision. Now is the time and day to decide where we want to go after we leave this earth, then there would be no second chance to take a decision. Now is the time and day to decide where we want to go after we leave this earth. Today is the day of salvation (2 Cor.6:2).

But please remember there would not be a second chance to enter heaven if we leave this earth without obeying the gospel or if we are unfaithful to God, Christ and His church, we must repent and get reconciled to God and be faithful unto death (Rev.2:10), if you are faithful, then the crown of righteousness will be yours.

## ***Forgiveness***

THOMAS R. DOHLING

In Mark 11:25, our Lord says, "Whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your sins." God can forgive us only when we have forgiven someone who has wronged us, otherwise, He can't and won't forgive us. This is God's rule, His law, and His principle. This is what Jesus is teaching.

In 2 Corinthians 2:7, Paul admonishes the Corinthians to forgive the erring brother and reaffirm their love for him.

Paul speaking to the Ephesians says in Eph.4:31,32 "You must put away every kind of bitterness, anger, wrath, quarreling, and evil, slanderous talk. But instead, be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ also forgave you."

Finally, in Colossians 3:12-17, Paul urges the Christians in Colosse "Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with a heart of mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, *bearing with one another and forgiving one another*, if someone happens to have a complaint against anyone else. *Just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you too forgive others*. And to all these virtues add love, which is the perfect bond. Let the peace of Christ be in control in your heart, for you were in fact called to this peace, and be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and exhorting one another with all wisdom, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, all with grace in your hearts to God. And whatever you do in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."

When the word of Christ richly dwells in Christians, they have the heart of their Lord Jesus Christ and even as Christ forgave His enemies, His followers do likewise. With Christ dwelling in His

followers, they become different from the world and through their attitudes and actions, the Lord Jesus Christ shines forth as a bright light in a dark world. This leads to GOD being thanked, honoured and glorified.

## *Singing*

**NEHEMIAH GOOTAM**

Some one defined singing as a devotional approach to God in emotion. The earliest record of religion is interlocked with singing. The children of Israel sang the song of deliverance (Ex. 15) when they crossed the Red sea. King David, the Psalmist was a sweet singer. In Song of Solomon, chapter 2 the song, 'Rose of Sharon and Lilly of valley' is a great love song between Christ and His bride, the church.

When Jesus was born, the angels sang (Lk 2:14). At the last supper, when Jesus with His disciples instituted the Lord's supper, He and His disciples sang a hymn and they went out into the Mount of Olives (Mt. 26:30). Finally, when Paul and Silas were put in prison at midnight, "they prayed and sung praises unto God" (Acts 16:25). Thus we notice that singing has been a part of the religion.

In the New Testament, we find individual singing and congregational singing. Just like one can pray to God individually, so also, one can sing praises unto God individually. James says, "Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray. Is any merry? Let him sing songs" (Js. 5:13). Continuing with the same thought, Paul writing to the Corinthians said, "I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the understanding also. I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the understanding also" (I Cor. 14:15). These verses show that individual Christians can express their joy of thanksgiving to the Lord by singing. Speaking of congregational singing, writer of the Hebrew letter quoted David from Psalm 22:12 as, "I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee" (Heb 2:12). The word "Church" in the King James Version is translated as "congregation" in the American standard. Church and congregation are synonymous terms, which refer to a group of people praising their creator. In David's time it was the group of God's people who gathered at the temple in



Jerusalem. Today it is the new group of God's people who meet under the reign of the Messiah.

Why do we sing? We sing to praise God and offer our thanks. He has bestowed us with wonderful salvation on being obedient to Him (Heb. 5:9, Eph 6:17) and is blessing us everyday by granting all our needs (Mt. 6:33). So, we must offer the thoughts of our hearts and bring fruits of our lips to the merciful God of heaven. The writer of the Hebrew letter says, "By him therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name" (Heb. 13:15). We also sing to teach and admonish one another. Paul said, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Col. 3:16). Singing is one means of getting the word of Christ into the hearts of the listeners. The thoughts contained in the words do the teaching and admonishing. In singing we use our lips, tongues, hearts, spirits and our understanding in praising God and sing to Him as we teach and admonish one another (Eph. 5:19). A musical instrument cannot do any of these things.

The command to sing necessitates a song either memorized or written. It may be sung from a book. Several years ago I visited a congregation in a village called 'Lakkidam'. The meeting place was crowded. None in the group except the preacher was formally educated. Yet their singing was beautiful. Of course they were doing it from memory and the preacher there had worked well with them on singing. Since the command to sing is by God, it must be seen that our singing be melodious and unison. If necessary, the local congregation should conduct special classes and teach good singing to their members. Not every congregation can sing from memory like the one at 'Lakkidam'. It helps if every member has his or her songbook and sing from it. The local congregation can make many songbooks available to all their members so that their singing can be in unison at the worship. It should be noted that there is no explicit command by God in the New Testament which refers to the use of musical instruments.

Some times a person may ask, where in the scriptures do you find the use of a song book? At this point, I would like to elaborate the idea of necessary inference. There are some things for which we do not have a direct commandment. For example no

sentence in the New Testament speaks about the erection of church buildings. Yet such constructions are scriptural. When the Lord commands Christians to worship, He authorizes everything necessary for carrying out that command. When He commands that we worship, it becomes necessary to provide a place. Likewise, when He commanded that we sing, it takes all that is necessary (such as committing the songs to memory, writing them on paper and the use of song books) in carrying out the command. So, the use of song books in the worship service of churches is included in the command.

Singing is a command of the Lord. There is no substitute for it (1 Sam. 15: 22) and no one can add anything to it (Lev. 10:1,2). It is just plain singing of the heart and mind through the lips. Singing is neither to feel good nor to satisfy oneself, but to follow the commands of God (Jon .14:21). Leaders of churches generally take time to improve church attendance and Sunday collections. They must also strive to improve singing at the worship services of the church.

## *There Is No Difference Between Us*

CLEM THURMAN

*"Peter rose up, and said unto them, Brethren, ye know that a good while ago God made choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. And God, who knoweth the heart, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Spirit, even as he did unto us; and he made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith" (Acts 15:7-9).*

Peter had been selected by the Lord to be the first to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, which he did with the house of Cornelius (Acts 10). When the Jew-Gentile relationship became a problem in the church, and threatened to divide it, the apostles and elders met in Jerusalem to discuss the problem. Peter then made it clear that Jew and Gentile were just like "two peas in a pod" so far as God is concerned. The apostle Paul wrote later, *"For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ. There can be*

*neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female; for ye all are one man in Christ Jesus. And if ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise" (Gal. 3:27-29).*

It has long been our practice to categorize people: rich and poor, wise and foolish, weak and strong, black and white. We too often strive to find our own identity in the differences between us and other people. But God judges on principles unrelated to such shallow, superficial things. God *"made no distinction between us and them,"* regardless of the category. Let us, then, examine the factors wherein there are no differences at all *"between us and them."*

### **NO DIFFERENCE IN OUR ORIGIN**

Adam was created *"in the image of God"* (Gen. 1:27). All of us sprang from Adam, and thus we bear his image (1 Cor. 15:45,49). Also, we all came from Eve, who is called: *"The mother of all living"* (Gen. 3:20). But essentially, as both Adam and Eve were created by God, all of us came from God! *"Being then the offspring of God"* (Acts 17:29), we should not seek to exalt ourselves above others who are also created by Him and in His image.

God does not recognize, in His family, those superficial differences based on race, colour or nationality (see Gal. 3:28). As the apostle Paul put it when he preached on Mar's Hill in Athens, *"The God that made the world and all things therein . . . and he made of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek God, if haply they might feel after him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us: for in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain even of your own poets have said, for we are also his offspring"* (Acts 17:24-28).

### **NO DIFFERENCE IN OUR PHYSICAL MAKEUP**

All men have the same basic appetites, the same lusts and passions, and all are stirred by the same basic emotions. There is joy and sorrow, hope and despair, gladness and gloom, feelings of triumph and failure in the lives of all of us. Love and hate, hunger and thirst are known to every man. We eat, drink, sleep, work, play,

exercise and grow alike. Any two of us are like "two peas in a pod" with regard to our physical appetites and development.

Even the Son of God followed the same pattern of development as the rest of us. Scripture declares, *"And the child grew, and waxed strong . . . , And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men"* (Luke 2:40,52). People may be tall or short, large or small, black or white, young or old - but we all have the same physical desires and needs, and we all develop just as others do.

### **NO DIFFERENCE IN OUR SINFUL CONDITION**

Even in the perfect Garden of Eden, God gave man the right to choose his course in this life. And Adam and Eve sinned. But that is not unique to them! *"There is none righteous, No, not one . . . For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God"* (Rom. 3:23). The apostle Paul, in speaking of the Gentiles from the perspective of a Jew, wrote: *"What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we before laid to the charge both of Jews and Greeks, that they are all under sin"* (Rom. 3:9).

All of us have the same kinds of temptations, Satan sees to that! *"No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man"* (1 Cor. 10:13). Even Jesus was *"tempted in all points like as we are"* (Heb. 4:15). But there was that major difference between Christ and the rest of us, for the Scripture adds of Him, *"Yet without sin."* As for the rest of us, we are tempted, and we do sin: *"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us ... If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us"* (1 John 1:8-10).

### **NO DIFFERENCE IN GOD'S LOVE FOR US**

*"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life"* (John 3:16). Regardless of our situation in life, God loves us and wants to save us from our sins. In fact, God *"would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth"* (1 Tim. 2:4). We might think of one group of people as being "more sinful" than another. But God doesn't see us that way. He sees us all as sinners in need of a Savior: *"God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us"* (Rom. 5:8).

Surely it can be declared by every person, *"Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him"* (Acts 10:34-35). Even those who have been saved from sin by the blood of Christ must admit, *"We love, because he first loved us"* (1 John 4:19). This reveals God's impartiality in His love. God makes no difference between us in His love.

### **NO DIFFERENCE IN HIS PLAN OF SALVATION**

Jude writes of *"our common salvation"* (Jude 3). That expression simply means that the way God saves one, He saves all. No difference. Our hearts must be *"cleansed by faith"* (Acts 15:9), just as the Jew and Gentile in the first century. And that faith must be an obedient faith, *"Faith working through love"* (Gal. 5:6). As Scripture declares, *"What doth it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, but have not works? can that faith save him? . . . Even so faith, if it have not works, is dead in itself. . . Ye see that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only"* (James 2:14,17,24).

All, motivated by faith, must repent: *"Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish"* (Luke 13:3). There is no difference, nor exception: *"The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked; but now he commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent"* (Acts 17:30). All sinners must repent in order to be saved from sin. The Lord also said, *"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved"* (Mark 16:16). This was preached very clearly by the apostles, *"Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins"* (Acts 2:38). The result? *"They then that received his word were baptized"* (v. 41). Simple. And it hasn't changed. There is no difference between them and us. When people receive His word they are baptized!

### **NO DIFFERENCE WITH DEATH AND JUDGMENT**

It should be recognized by all that, *"It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this cometh judgment"* (Heb. 9:27). The wise man wrote long ago, *"The living know that they shall die"* (Eccle. 9:5). Death comes to all: rich and poor, black and white, old and young, etc. We know that. But sometimes we don't live like it really matters. But look at Heb. 9:27 again: *"After this cometh judgment."* Death comes to all men (1 Cor. 15:22). And so does judgment!

The Bible says, *"For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God ... So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God"* (Rom. 14:10,12). Again, *"For we must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad"* (2 Cor. 5:10). All of us will be there. All of us will be judged. There will be no difference made between us.

### **BIG DIFFERENCE ON THE DAY OF JUDGMENT!**

Read the description which Jesus gives of the judgment-scene in Matt. 25. Those present will hear, *"Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world"* (Matt. 25:34), or, *"Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels"* (v. 41). What a difference that will be! Those who are *"in Christ"* will enter in to be with God for eternity, for, *"God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son"* (1 John 5:11). And, *"There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus"* (Rom. 8:1).

But for those who are not *"in Christ"* (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:26-27), *"There remaineth no more a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and a fierceness of fire which shall devour the adversaries"* (Heb. 10:26-27). Yes, there will be a big difference on the Day of Judgment; Jesus said of those outside of Christ: *"These shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life"* (Matt. 25:46). All will be present for the Final Judgment. But there will be a tremendous difference made between us at that time.

Jesus said, *"Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment"* (John 5:28-29). God doesn't show any partiality. His love extends to all, He offers salvation to all through Jesus Christ. But it is our response that determines where we will live in eternity. God treats us all the same. But eternity will depend on how we treat Him! If, by faith, we submit to His will for our lives, we will live with Him forever.

# **Missing at the Judgment**

NEAL POLLARD

What will the throne of judgment look like? What will Christ, the judge, look like? Will the Judgment be experienced through the sense of sight? What will be different there from this life? What will be changed?

The Bible speaks often about the moment of reckoning, which is the time the righteous and wicked dead (John 5:28-29), and all living (Matthew 25:31-33), will stand individually before the King of kings to give account for his conduct in the body given to him (2 Corinthians 5:10). As a person attempts to paint a mental picture of the Judgment Day, some things should not be envisioned because they will not be there.

No infidel will be at the Judgment. Paul plainly teaches, "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:10-11).

Does every knee of every man bow in obedience and submission to Christ in the narrow vale of fleshly existence? Paul says, "But they have not all obeyed the gospel" (Romans 10:16). Some Christians "cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine" (Romans 16:17). Many people walk as "the enemies of the cross" (Philippians 3:18).

But what about the coming day? With an introduction only heaven could provide, Jesus will appear. Moved by the Holy Spirit, John exclaimed, "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen" (Revelation 1:7). The lost among men - and that will be the vast majority of God's master creation (Matthew 7:13-14) - will rule their death and the ensuing, inevitable judgment that follows (Hebrews 9:27).

After writing about the saints who died at the hands of unbelievers, John writes this graphic vision about the Judgment: "And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; And the stars of heaven

fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" (Revelation 6:12-17).

According to William Hendriksen in *More Than Conquerors*, this vision of the sixth seal "introduces the judgment day" (p. 107). In his introduction of the second section of Revelation, Hendriksen writes, "In the second section, the final judgment is not merely announced but definitely introduced; we catch a glimpse of the horror which fills the wicked when they see the Judge coming to them" (p. 35).

Thus, John's affirmation is that by the nature of the unfolding of the Judgment, no person will be able to continue in disbelief. Faith will be past tense. Evidence of God's power and of His promise about the time of reaping will be beyond the realm of the hoped for and in the arena of the things finally seen (Hebrews 11:1). The atheistic societies and clubs will immediately fold. Jokes scoffing the divine will not slip off the sin-darkened hearts of the defiant. No skeptics, no agnostics, no doubters and no infidels will be found at the Judgment.

Increasingly, the mass of humanity is engrossed in accumulating and enjoying the material things of life. Although the Lord, through Peter, calls them "corruptible" (1 Peter 1:18), and He calls them inferior treasures (Matthew 6:19), most people seek things rather than the kingdom first (Matthew 6:33). People vainly invest in material things to provide them with a life of joy, peace and comfort. A resulting covetousness makes a person miserable and teaches the individual by experience what Christ said, that "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Luke 12:15). Added to an empty life on Earth for the materialistic is the certain knowledge that a person cannot serve God and material things (Matthew 6:24); by choosing the one, he



has rejected the other.

Is that why Jeremiah lamented, "Truly in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, and from the multitude of mountains" (Jeremiah 3:23)? What did God mean in that verse? C.F. Keil, in his *Commentary on the Old Testament*, entertains the possibility that Jeremiah 3:23 teaches about trusting things, although Israel would not have been very affluent in Jeremiah's lifetime. He says the verse might be read, "delusive is the abundance that comes from the hills, from the mountains" (Vol. 8, p. 100). Bible history demonstrates this people's avaricious pursuit of the things in this life.

Many people today live such as Jeremiah's brethren, and all such are decried by Jesus who rhetorically asked, "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark 8:36). Peter's admonition is that "the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men" (2 Peter 3:7). Every material thing will be destroyed one day (2 Peter 3:10).

Before the Great I Am, a man will stand to give an account of his stewardship of what God let him borrow (1 Corinthians 4:2). In Judgment, a man will answer "yes" or "no" when asked if he robbed God (Malachi 3:8). Every dollar or rupee given the individual will have been penciled into the heavenly ledger. But no person will bring his possessions or his amassed wealth into the veritable court of justice.

Although the Christian will not be judged by the world, the saints will in some way be in a position of adjudication with respect to the lost and the angels (1 Corinthians 6:2-3). As Christ stood before the judgment seat of Pilate, every person at the great summons will stand before the judgment seat of Christ (Romans 14:10). There, each individual will stand trial (2 Corinthians 5:10). Christ - the true Judge (John 8:16), the universal Judge (Acts 10:42), the righteous Judge (Acts 17:31; 2 Timothy 4:8), the God-ordained Judge (Romans 2:16), and the ready Judge (1 Peter 4:5) - will sit to hear the cases of every individual ever to have reached a state of mental accountability.

Christ is sinless (Hebrews 4:15). Representing the Father and being part of the Godhead, Christ will judge with complete

perfection (Matthew 5:48). Arrayed in unblemished holiness (Revelation 15:4), Jesus will judge without bias (Ephesians 6:9) by relying upon heaven's unabridged record of the individual's life (Revelation 20:12), and He will judge according to the perfect law to which there is accessibility in this life (James 2:12).

Under such circumstances, no person will cry "foul." Each person lives with a sense of knowing how the proceedings of his case will go, even as he lives in his body. For some people, there is "a certain fearful looking of judgment and fiery indignation" (Hebrews 10:27). Other people have a quiet confidence in knowing they will be saved by grace through obedient faith (1 John 5:13; Ephesians 3:12; Hebrews 3:14). Some people will be surprised that they are lost because they have been dedicated to what they mistakenly thought was doctrinally correct (Matthew 7:22-23).

But when the law book is closed and the last judgment is handed down, not one soul will be able to find a loophole or a mistake in the proceedings by which to go free or be retried. No mistrials will be present because no miscues or oversights will be made by Christ at the Judgment.

One interesting facet of the Judgment, although secondary in nature, is all the great mysteries of time and people will be made known. Who shot John F. Kennedy and why he was shot will be public knowledge. Every person will know how Amelia Earhart met her end. How the last moments were for the lost colony of Roanoke will be manifest. The origin of Stonehenge will no longer be covered in a shroud. Who first inhabited each continent will be known. The top secrets of governments will tumble into the public domain. Every conspiracy will be unwound. Fuller light will be shed upon the hearts of infamous men, mass murderers, lunatics and despots whose perverse behavior altered lives and history throughout the centuries. More details will be given about the lives of lesser-known Bible characters such as Jabez, Shamgar, Melchizedek, Zadok, Matthias and Demas.

Will every person be able to keep his secrets at the Judgment? What does the Bible teach? The Bible says God now knows every man's secret sins (Psalm 90:8). Solomon says, "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Ecclesiastes 12:14).

Jeremiah taught about an all-knowing God who said about

Himself, "Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? Saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? Saith the Lord" (Jeremiah 23:23-24). Of God, Daniel said, "He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him" (Daniel 2:22).

The heavenly Father sees all the secret things (Matthew 6:6, 18). Jesus taught, "For there is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested; neither was any thing kept secret, but that it should come abroad" (Mark 4:22).

When the Lord comes, He will "bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts" (1 Corinthians 4:5). There is coming "the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ" (Romans 2:16).

"The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good" (Proverbs 15:3). Whatever sin is not blotted out by the blood of the Lamb (Acts 3:19; Revelation 1:5; 7:14) will be known to all. There will be no secrets at the Judgment. "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (Hebrews 4:13).

The necessity of baptism for the remission of sins seems to be one of the clearest taught doctrines of the New Testament. If it saves us (1 Peter 3:21), puts a person into contact with the death of Christ (Romans 6:3-4; Colossians 2:12), is "for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38), puts a person in Christ (Galatians 3:27), is the result of gladly receiving the Word (Acts 2:41), washes away sins (Acts 22:16), and puts a person in the body of Christ (Acts 2:47; 1 Corinthians 12:13), then a person must be baptized to prepare for the Judgment.

Of course, much precedes baptism and much follows this act of obedience to be ready to meet Christ. No accountable soul this side of the Cross can be saved without it. No other means of washing away sins is revealed in the covenant of the Lord.

Most people will go into eternity without having been washed, sanctified and justified. As Christ divides the sheep from the goats and sifts the faithless from the saints, it will matter whether a person has fully obeyed the gospel. Perhaps some people will cry out for another person to baptize them. Every person who knew about his need to be baptized but put it off will anxiously wish for

a baptistry to be plunged into. The angst of many people, who in life bargained for a later date to be baptized, will be realized when they stand before Christ without His shed blood covering their sins. No baptistry will be found at the Judgment for the delaying soul.

After many powerful lessons, poor souls have responded during the invitation song. The lost sinner has decided to obey the gospel during that critical point of encouragement. Christians deep in sin and apostasy, having been convicted of sin by the gospel, have wandered back home on trembling knees during the singing of the invitation song. Some of the more emotional experiences on this earth have come during this traditional time chosen to give the sinsick and the heartsick the opportunity to obey God.

The logic of the invitation song is widely seen. Jesus says, "Come unto me" (Matthew 11:28-30; Revelation 22:17). The Bible teaches the urgency of obeying the gospel (2 Corinthians 6:2; Hebrews 3:15). God chose preaching to save people who believe (1 Corinthians 1:18). At what better juncture or in what superior way might we choose to beckon the needy to come? It is sad that the invitation song is disappearing from some worship assemblies.

After the trumpet has blown and all nations are gathered before the Great Shepherd (Matthew 25:34), no sermon will be preached to convince the lost to obey the gospel. There will be no pleading with lukewarm and unfaithful Christians. No song leader will stand before that celestial crowd to appeal to and urge the lost and erring.

Legions of tearful, wailing hearts will be melted by the power of God. Fearful realization will sweep across the minds of people who know they are not ready to meet Christ. Relentless dread will burden the throng until they fall down with a massive thud before Him. Perhaps many people will cry out for another chance. But the last opportunity will have passed - no beckoning, no exhorting, and no invitation will be there.

At the Judgment, there will be a righteous Judge (2 Timothy 4:8) who will give a fair trial to every individual. Every soul - from Adam to the last born at His coming - will stand before the Judge. An eternal sentence will be handed down to each individual. There will be an utter sense of finality with no parole, no stay of execution, and no pardon for the lost.

Not a single infidel will be there. No earthly possessions will

be carried by anyone into the Judgment. No mistrial will be declared at the great gathering. No secret will survive that scene. No person will offer a song of invitation in this assembly, and the time for baptizing will have past.

## ***Conversion***

NEIL MYERS

The word "convert" means to turn; to change the heart, attitude, moral life, habits, aims and goals. "Conversion" is the process of becoming a Christian, or of being born again (Acts 3:19; John 3:3-5). It is not something incomprehensible, inconceivable, or that cannot be understood. Wheat is "converted" into flour, flour into bread, wood into paper, paper into books—all by orderly processes. Bible "conversion" is a mental and moral change in life from wrong to right, from Satan to God, from darkness to light (Acts 26:18). This "conversion" begins in belief and is completed in obedience (John 8:24; Hebrews 5:8-9).

### **WHAT IT MEANS TO BE "CONVERTED"**

When one is "converted" he becomes a new creature. "Therefore if any man be in Christ he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Corinthians 5:17). To be "converted" is to be "in Christ." But one is "in Christ" only after he is "baptized INTO Christ" (Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:26-27; I Corinthians 12:13). "In Christ" is where all spiritual blessings are to be obtained (Ephesians 1:3). To be "in Christ" is to be in his body, the church (Ephesians 1:22-23; Acts 2:47). If we are "in Christ" we are "converted," and Christ is in us (Ephesians 3:17; Galatians 2:20; Colossians 1:27). "Conversion" (or being in Christ) is a saving union and a transforming union. We become "new creatures," and "old things" are passed away. We are the same, yet changed—born again (John 3:3-5). We have the same hair colour, skin, age, all physical features. We still love, hope, rejoice, and fear; but a revolution has taken place. Someone else is in our lives and thoughts. We have new aims, goals and pursuits (Galatians 2:20).

We have been "converted!" We are "in Christ." Our sins are forgiven (Acts 2:38) Our souls are made pure (Acts 15:9). We have found a new Lord, a new life, and a new family (Acts 2:36-37; Colossians 3:1-17; I Timothy 3:15). We have been "converted!"

## **Was Peter The First Pope?**

**BOB PRICHARD**

According to Roman Catholic doctrine, the Pope is the successor to the apostle Peter, who supposedly established the papacy by becoming (?) the first Bishop of Rome, and Pope of the church. The word "pope" is derived from a Latin word meaning "father." Today's Pope, in addition to his title of "Pope," holds other titles including Vicar of Christ, successor of St. Peter, Supreme Pontiff of the universal church, Archbishop and Metropolitan of the Roman province, and Sovereign of the State of Vatican City. These lofty titles are claimed, however, without a shred of Biblical authority.

All of the popes supposedly follow the precedent of Peter, and claim their authority because Peter is considered the first pope. While there are TRADITIONS about Peter as the first pope, the historical evidence is lacking, and the Bible itself shows that Peter could not have been the first pope. In actuality, the papacy evolved over many years, and the bishop of Rome did not claim the title of pope until more than two centuries after Peter.

Peter could not have been the first pope because there is no biblical evidence that Peter was ever at Rome. The Apostle Paul wrote a letter to the church at Rome, and as he closed the letter he saluted twenty-seven persons by name (Romans 16:3-15), but he never even mentioned Peter. In his last letter to Timothy from Rome, Paul wrote, "Only Luke is with me," and "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me" (II Timothy 4:11, 16). Clearly, Peter was not in Rome.

He could not have been a pope, because the pope must be celibate, and Peter was married. Matthew 8:14 mentions Peter's mother-in-law; so he must have been married. In following Christ, Peter left many things, but he did not leave his wife. Also, Paul

asked the question, "Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?" [Peter] (I Corinthians 9:5). In I Peter, Peter called himself an "elder," and according to Paul's letter to Titus, an elder must have faithful children. When Peter spoke of the "Chief Shephard" (I Peter 5:4), he was speaking of Christ, not himself.

There is no doubt that Peter was a man of great ability, a special servant of the Lord; but the church was not built on Peter. Jesus promised the keys of the kingdom to Peter and the other apostles, after Peter confessed Jesus as the Christ. This truth—that Jesus is the Christ—is the rock upon which Jesus would build the church, Peter's confession of Christ, not Peter himself (Matthew 16:15-19). Peter was prominent in the early church, but he was not pre-eminent, the "supreme pontiff."

## **Caleb**

**HAROLD BIGHAM**

The account of Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, is briefly told in the Bible. It is recorded in Numbers 13 and 14; Numbers 32:10-13; Deuteronomy 1:19-40; Joshua 14:6-14 and Joshua 15:13-14. Caleb was a godly man. He was one of the 12 spies sent out to spy out the land of Canaan. After 40 days the spies returned and gave their report of the land. Ten spies gave a report of doom and failure. In essence, they were saying that the people of God could not possess the land. They reported that the land eateth up the inhabitants and that there were giants in the land—the sons of Anak. The other two spies, Joshua and Caleb, gave a report of courage and stated that the Lord would bring them into the land to possess it — therefore have faith in the Lord, for the Lord was with them!

The people reacted violently to the good report issued by Caleb and Joshua and wanted to stone them (Numbers 14:10). God was displeased with the people and stated that they would not see the land of Canaan, but would wander in the wilderness forty years until each of them (save Caleb, Joshua and those under

twenty years old) died (Numbers 14:29-33). Therefore, Caleb, Joshua and those under twenty years old were allowed to enter the land of Canaan, a land that flowed with milk and honey.

What are some lessons that we can gain from the life of Caleb?

I. He was a man of faith! He had seen the wonders in Egypt, the Red Sea, and Sinai. He knew first hand the mighty power of God and he knew that God had promised the land of Canaan and he was assured that God could keep his promise (Cf. II Peter 3:9). Caleb would not limit God to human reasoning but he possessed the kind of faith Abraham had.

II. He was a man of foresight! He had made the same journey the other spies made. He had the exact assignment they had. He viewed the same walls, cities, and people they had seen. What was the difference? Caleb saw God! He looked over the giants and realized that God was on his side.

III. He was a man of fortitude! He had the plucks and courage to stand up for what he believed to be right. He went against the majority and would not surrender to their evil reports and threats of violence! He would not be deterred by thoughts of the walled cities, giants, or even a "land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof."

IV. He was a man of forbearance! After returning from spying out the land and giving his good report, the promise of his inheritance into the land was made. After the forty years of wandering in the wilderness and after seven years had passed after the crossing of the Jordan with Joshua, he still had not received his inheritance! It was on his eighty-fifth birthday that he came to Joshua to talk about his inheritance in the land of Canaan. His forbearance and patience is comparable to that of the father of the faithful, Abraham in waiting for the birth of Isaac.

May we all have the faith, foresight, fortitude and forbearance that Caleb possessed!

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