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Editorial

What Does the Bible Teach?

“Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.”

Christ, the Saviour, Himself made this statement in speaking to Nicodemus in John 3:3. It is, therefore, indubitably obvious that to enter into God's eternal kingdom, which is His heavenly home, one must be born again, anew, and that that new birth must be “of water and of the Spirit.” How is one born of the water and of the Spirit? Notice the parallel readings, and Christ Himself made both the statements: In John 3:5 He said, “Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” and in Mark 16:16 He said, “He who believes and is baptized will be saved.” Who will enter heaven? The saved. Who will be saved? One who believes in Christ and is baptized. One must be born again of water and of the Spirit to be saved and to enter the kingdom of God. It is something that one must do individually. It is not a mystical experience bestowed upon the person by the Lord, which is “better felt than told.” Such a concept, in fact, is not even once mentioned in the Bible.

According to the Bible, no one is a Christian by physical birth, that is to say, no one is ever born physically a Christian. Sometimes people make the statement: “I am a Christian by birth!” Who is a Christian? A Christian is a disciple or a follower of Christ. How does one become? Again, we read from Matthew

28:19 wherein Christ instructed His earlier disciples to "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

Every individual who has been born of water and of the Spirit is a Christian, and a member of the Lord's church, His spiritual body, and has been promised therefore, the entrance into God's kingdom. Take note: *A Christian is not born again. But one must be born again to become a Christian.* The statement made "born again Christian," is not according to the Bible. A Christian is not born again. But one is born again, born of water and the Spirit to become a Christian.

The Bible must be our standard of authority for becoming a Christian, and not a "statement of faith," formulated by some church. According to the Bible's teaching one becomes a Christian when one hears the gospel of Christ preached, and believes in Christ, repents of sins, and is baptized (immersed) in water for the remission or forgiveness of sins. (John 3:16; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38).

It was by the Spirit of God that the word of God was delivered to man (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20&21). When man obeys that word, it leads him to salvation. Salvation does not come as a result of a sudden mystical experience "better felt than told." (Read the following passages in your Bible: Acts 2:25-41; 8:9-13; 8:29-39; 16:14-15; 16:25-34; 22:12-16). And, now, listen to Peter, "Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another with a pure heart, having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever." (1 Peter 1:22,23). How did they purify their souls? In obeying the truth that was brought to them by the Spirit, when they had heard it preached to them. How were they born again? Through the word of God.

The Unknown Tongue

J. C. CHOATE

There is a lot said about "the unknown tongue" in the religious world. Especially among the Pentecostal people there is the claim that those who have the baptism of the Holy Spirit

can speak in tongues, and since no one understands what is said then they refer to it as "the unknown tongue".

What is "the unknown tongue"? Is it a tongue or language that no one understands? Is it a "heavenly language" that only God understands? First of all, the word tongue as used in the Scripture does mean language. In the King James Version of the Bible, this Greek word was translated as *tongue*, but the more modern translations define this same Greek word as *language*.

In Acts 2 of the King James Version of the Bible, we read of the Apostles receiving the baptism of the Holy Ghost, or the Holy Spirit, as the modern translations render His name. The record says, "*And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost....*" Who received the Holy Spirit? The Apostles, as Christ had promised in John 14:26, Luke 24:49, and Acts 1:8. But to show that they had received such power, the record continues, "*...and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.*" As you can see here, one of the reasons why the power of the Holy Spirit was given was to enable them to speak in other tongues or languages so that they could be understood by the many people gathered there, speaking seventeen different languages. Going on, the record says, "*Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?*" (Acts 2:4-8).

Now if the Apostles had spoken to these people only in the Aramaic language, they would have been speaking to them in an "unknown" tongue, for most of the people would have understood nothing. The result would have made the entire effort useless. The Apostles would have been unable to communicate with the people. No one would have heard or understood the message of the gospel, so they could not have learned what to do to obey Christ and to be saved. As it was though, the Apostles received the power of the Holy Spirit which enabled them to speak in the languages of all of those who were present. Not only was this proof that they were speaking by the authority of God, which made believers of the listeners, but the message of the gospel in the various languages was so clear that the crowd was able

to understand and to obey the Lord. The record says that some 3,000 were baptized and the Lord added the saved to His church. (Acts 2:41-47).

Paul said that those who speak in an "unknown tongue" or language, speak not to man but unto God. This particular situation seems to be saying that a Christian might have been given the ability to speak in a local language he had not studied, but then if he went somewhere else later in his life, the people there might not be able to understand him. In this case, if no interpreter was present (someone who knew the gifted language as well as the local language), he was forbidden to speak (1 Corinthians 14:27,28). If he spoke in the gifted language, both he and God would know what he was saying, but no one present would be benefited (1 Corinthians 14:2).

A close reading of the book of Acts shows two things: (1) that miraculous gifts were given only through the laying on of the hands of the Apostles. (Acts 8:17,18) and (2) individual Christians were given single gifts - that is, only the Apostles had the power to do *all kinds* of miraculous things. Therefore, by way of illustrating what Paul is discussing in 1 Corinthians 14, a person from Galilee might have been given the power by one of the Apostles to speak in the language of the Persians. For a person living and working among those people, this was a valuable gift. But suppose persecution drove that Christian from there to Ethiopia. No Apostle was present to enable him to miraculously speak the language of these people, so using his gift of the Persian tongue will benefit no one. In that case, unless an interpreter was present who could put his message into the local language, he was forbidden to speak.

Paul said, *"Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me"* (1 Corinthians 14:11). That is, unlearned. Again, Paul said that he would rather speak five words that could be understood than 10,000 that could not be understood. (1 Corinthians 14:19). He also said that the ability to speak in other languages was a sign to the unbeliever, not to the believer. (1 Corinthians 14:22). He then concluded that if there were those who spoke in an "unknown tongue", or language, someone must interpret so that the hearers could be benefited. (1 Corinthians 14:27).

The question is, are there those today who speak in "an

unknown tongue"? Yes, many speak in tongues that are unknown to others, but there must be translators to convey their message! The second question is, do we have those today who have been given *by the power of the Holy Spirit* the ability to speak in languages they have not studied, or to serve miraculously as translators? The answer is NO.

Successful, But A Miserable Failure

FRANCIS DAVID

In Luke chapter 12, we read a story. This story is about a rich man who was very successful in his business. He accumulated lots of riches and and was very rich, Jesus tells this story like this, "The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. And he thought within himself, saying, "What shall I do since I have no room to store my crops." So he said, "I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. And I will say to my soul." Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry, But God said to him, "YOU FOOL! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?" So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." (Verses 16-21),

Just imagine and make a picture of this man in your mind. If we tell an artist to make a picture of him, he might paint a picture of a man who is riding on a big horse, in the middle of his farming land. All around there are trees of all kinds of fruits. There are vegetables, grains and so on. Beside his farming land, he shows a big beautiful mansion. This man looks very happy and smiling in this painting. If the painter ask you to write or give a title to this painting, perhaps you might take a brush and write there: "A successful business man" but God takes the brush from you and writes there, "A miserable failure". "How does it sound?" In human eyes, he was a big successful business man but in God's eyes he was a miserable man. We might call him a big rich man but God says he is a poor man. We might call him a

genius but God calls him a Fool.

Why did God call him a fool? Because he was so selfish that he left God out of his life. The Psalmist says, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." (Psalm 9:17). He was so selfish that a number of times he repeats, "My barns, my crops and my goods." He forgot who made him successful? We do the same thing on many situations. He forgot that God gave him good health to work and earn. He must be thinking that what he got is all on his own strength, and what we see that God is not in the picture. Are we thankful to God for what he blessed us with? We have good sunshine, rains, house to live, food to eat. Or, do we take it for granted? If we don't keep God as our partner in our day to day business, then we are miserable failure.

The other foolish thing we see in this rich man that he forgot his fellow-men. He was so selfish that he wanted everything for himself. He could, have said to his wife, we have so much crop, grains, rice, let us give some to the poor and widows and the needy. No, he said, "what shall I do with my goods?" For him material things were the top priority. He was satisfied with his materials. He was not worried about his soul, Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." (Matthew 4:4). Apostle Paul says, "But godliness with contentment is great gain." For we brought nothing into this world, and it is written we can carry nothing out." (I Tim. 6:6,7). In the same chapter and verse 17, we read, "Command those who are rich in this present age, not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God who gives us richly all things to enjoy."

Friends our souls cannot be satisfied with silver and gold or lots of money. The wise man says, "He who loves silver will not be satisfied with silver; nor he who loves abundance, with increase. This also is vanity. (Eccl. 5:10). We are here on this earth for short period. What should be our duty? The preacher says, "Fear God and keep His commandments for this is the whole duty of man." (Eccl.12:13).

Christians - Foreigners And Pilgrims

T.R. DOHLING

"Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul." - 1 Peter 2:11.

Talking about the host of people who trusted in God down through the ages, the writer to the Hebrews says, ***"These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland"*** (Heb. 11:13-14).

The writer mentions Abraham and his family (Sarah, Isaac, and Jacob) who were promised the land flowing with milk and honey. We know that, ***"These all died in faith, not having received the things promised."*** They did not personally experience the possessing of the Promised Land. Yet, they lived with a sense of guarantee that God would fulfill His promises: ***"but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them."*** They fully accepted the certainty that the Lord would some day give that land to their seed. Meanwhile, ***they confessed that they were content to live as strangers concerning this world and as pilgrims anticipating the world to come: "acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth."***

It is in this sense that Peter, inspired by the Holy Spirit, writes to Christians in order that they should have a proper perspective of their lives.

Let us press on to consider a strategic extension of Abraham's testimony concerning his obedient, earthly sojourn, by faith. We see him traveling through ***life on earth*** as an alien, a stranger (in the world, but not of it). Here we see Abraham's patient, ***heavenly pilgrimage***, by faith. His previous testimony concluded with this pilgrimage theme: ***"For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God."*** (Heb. 11:10). Early in the present continuing testimony, the two themes are coupled. ***"They were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."*** A stranger (sojourner) is one who does not belong to the given locale. The pilgrim is one who is ***marching toward a***

given spiritual destination. The Lord wants us to set our daily course toward heaven, rejecting earthly cravings that diminish spiritual vitality.

So in our present passage, the same theme is echoed, ***“Beloved, I beg you as foreigners and pilgrims, to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul”*** [1 Peter 2:11]. Elsewhere, the inspired Apostle Paul says, “If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory” [Col.3:1-4].

God wants us to focus on Him. He wants us to realize who we are as His people. He wants us to realize that we have died to “self” and the carnal “fleshly” life when we were baptized into Christ and that Jesus is to shine forth in us and through us. He assures us of the fact that when Christ our Lord, “who is our life appears” we also will appear with him in glory.

Good News — You Are Worth It

DAVID THURMAN

Do you ever feel unimportant? Do the people in your life (family, friends, co-workers) treat you as if you don't count? Does it ever seem that you are not even noticed? Our world has the power to make us feel so unworthy. Life can beat us up and leave us feeling as if we don't matter at all.

Our God has good news for those who feel unimportant. He wants you to know that you are precious to Him. He wants you to know that you are worth it! Romans 5:1-11 tells each of us just how valuable we are to God. Being in Christ means we are right with God. *“Therefore having been justified by faith”* (Rom. 5:1) is how Paul begins this great passage. He reminds us that we are just before God, that God is no longer angry with us. Since we are justified before God, several great blessings follow.

PEACE WITH GOD THROUGH HIS SON

“Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with

God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1). God is no longer angry with you. He sent His only Son into the world in order to create peace between Himself and man. There is no lingering animosity toward you, in spite of your past. There is no wrath aimed at you any more, in spite of your sin. When we are in Christ, we have peace with God.

However, this peace is more than just between man and God. It is an inner peace that enables us to face life. In place of stress, we can experience an inner calm. In place of worry, we can enjoy serenity. God offers us peace that stills the troubles in our hearts.

This peace is also between us and others. When we were guilty of sin, we were defensive, guarded and self-protecting. Now that God has justified us, we no longer need those defenses to protect us from others. God has forgiven us and we can now leave behind the issues and problems that cause conflict between people. Being justified by Christ means we are at peace with God, with self, with others.

This is how important you are to God. He wants to fill your life with peace. Peace with Him by having a relationship to Him as Father. Peace with others, and inner peace for yourself. God values you so much. He has provided a way for you to be content.

ACCESS TO GOD THROUGH HIS GRACE

"We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God" (Rom. 5:1-2). The avenue of our justification is God's wonderful grace. We could not, and cannot, live in such a way as to deserve justification before God. We cannot, impress God with our good deeds or our performance. The only thing that allows us access to God is His unmerited favour.

We have peace with God and are able to enjoy a full, unhindered relationship. This happens, not because of our goodness, but because of His grace. God's grace is given to let you know just how precious you are to God. He would not reach out to sinners like us if He didn't see the value in each and every soul. When God sent Jesus to die in your place, God knew, and wants you to know, that you are worth it to Him.

JOY FROM GOD THROUGH HIS SPIRIT

"And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us" (Rom. 5:3-5). Paul describes the inner peace we can enjoy. We may face tribulation, but we still have confidence because of what God has done for us. God has poured out His love into our hearts through the Holy Spirit.

How valuable are you to God? He looks at you and sees someone who is just right to be the temple for His Spirit. God wants His presence to be with you and in you. He would not do that for you unless His love for you, His confidence in you, His appreciation for you was not immense.

Paul says we can exult, or rejoice, even in our afflictions. We can face the cruelties of life unafraid, because God has poured out His love for us through His Spirit. Even if the world treats you as worthless and insignificant, God treats you as if you are the most important thing there is. He proves this by His love and His Spirit. These blessings we enjoy are so wonderful. Especially when we see what we were before we came to Christ.

WE WERE POWERLESS

"For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly" (Rom. 5:6). Because of our sin, we were unable to make life better. We could not obey God well enough to fix our problems. We could not make up for the mistakes we had made. Life was a mess all around us. Yet, we were helpless to do anything about it.

This is our dilemma outside of Jesus. We can see the problems about us, but we are helpless to make it better. Without Christ the world tries to improve life, but the harder it tries, the more problems it creates. That is why we needed a Saviour. He was powerful to save us from our mistakes. When sin was leaving us helpless, Christ died for us.

WE WERE SINNERS

This is not a popular concept any more. The idea of moral right and wrong seems to be disappearing from our culture. But Paul says it plainly. *"For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to*

die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:7-8). We were yet sinners, still in our sins, when Jesus died for us. We had not earned it, we had not even cleaned ourselves up. We were still in sin when God showed His love by letting Jesus die in for us.

Sin is real, and sin causes real pain. The only cure to the world's ills is not found in science. It is not found in sociology or psychology. The only solution to the world's problems is found in redemption from sin. We can pretend there is no such thing. We can label it as a syndrome or personality disorder or whatever. But in fact, some things are just wrong and we were guilty of doing those very things. We were helpless and we were sinners.

WE WERE ENEMIES OF GOD

"Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation" (Rom. 5:9-11). Instead of access to God, we were separated from God by our sin. This is a common misunderstanding many have. They think they can just come to God at any time on any terms and *He* will receive them. While God sees you as precious and hungers to save you, He will not be where sin is. Without Christ none of us would be able to approach God at all.

That is how we know that God sees us as worth all this. He wants us in His presence. He wants us free of sin. He wants us to be near Him. He could not do that while we were in sin, so He sent Jesus to save helpless, sinful, enemies from their wicked choices.

GOD LOVES YOU

"But God demonstrates His own love toward us" (Rom. 5:8). How precious are you to God? He loved you enough to send His own Son to die in your place. He wanted you with Him so much that God paid the highest price, the life of His Son. God didn't just talk about loving you, He did something about it. He didn't just send messages about Himself, He sent His own Son to be the living Word.

GOD SAVES YOU

What are you worth to God? God arranged all of this because He wanted to save you. He saw our helpless state. He saw our sinful actions. He knew we were His enemies. Yet, He saw enough quality in each of us to send His Son to die for us. This salvation is not based on your ancestry. It is not based on your nationality or race. It is not based on your gender, or your education. Your salvation is based on the cross of Jesus, on the grace of God that comes through His death. That is how precious you are.

ACCEPT THIS GIFT

Why live your life as if you don't matter? Why not come to God through Jesus Christ and find meaning and purpose and power, even in the hard times of life? The process is easy. Paul mentions faith in our passage. Later in Romans, he describes how these believers came into God's grace. *"Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life"* (Rom. 6:3-4). The Roman Christians had put their faith in the grace of God by trusting Him and surrendering to Him in baptism. You can find meaning, purpose and power for your life when you demonstrate your love for God by coming to Him in faith and baptism. God has done all this for you, because you are worth it. Come to Jesus and find your worth in Him.

The Way Of The Cross Leads Home

LENNIE REAGEN

The cross of Christ is the central theme of the Bible. The Old Testament looks forward to the cross and the New Testament is founded on the cross of Christ. The message of the first century preachers was centered around the cross. Paul told the Corinthians: *"But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness."*—1 Cor 1:23.

There are good reasons why the preaching and the teaching of the first century church was centered around the cross. First, the cross of **Christ reveals what man is**. As a sinner, we have transgressed the law of God (1 John 3:4). Our sins have separated us from God therefore, man stands in need of a Savior. Read what has been divinely written in relationship to Christ and His role: *"And she shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins."* – Matt. 1:21. In fact, Christ said of Himself: *"For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."*

Second, the cross of Christ reveals what God is like. As we view the cross we are able to behold the matchless love God possess for mankind. Throughout the Bible, we read of God's great love for the human race. The words of Christ, as recorded by John, reveals so great a love that God was willing to give His only Son on the cross (John 3:16). Paul states that: *"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."*—Rom 5:8. The apostle Peter reveals the love for all men in these words: *"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness,' but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."*—2 Pet 3:9. The cross shows us the great love that God has toward all men.

Third, the cross reveals just how terrible sin is. When a man, who is guilty of a crime, receives the just penalty for that crime, there is a sense of justice which prevails. However, when a man (Christ), who is innocent, a man who is not guilty, dies for the crimes of others, we can see how awful sin is. As we examine the cross of Christ, we see sinful men killing the innocent Son of God.

How truly sad it is when we fail to understand that the justice of God required the cross. Many will question the necessity of the bloody cross; but the Bible teaches that the cross was necessary in order that sinful mankind, condemned because of sin, might be saved. It is from Paul's writings that we learn that to some the cross is intellectual foolishness and to others is offensive. In contrast, the child of God views the cross as the revelation of the love, power and wisdom of God. The cross is at the very heart of the gospel message (1 Cor. 1:18-24).

The cross of Christ was necessary for many reasons. **The cross of Christ was necessary because of the nature of God**

and the nature of sin. God is absolute goodness, power, holiness, purity, righteousness and perfection. The prophet Habakkuk said of God, *"Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil"* (Hab. 1:13). Satan and those who follow him are evil and sinful. If man is going to be in the presence of God, man will not be sinful (Rev. 21 :8).

Another reason the cross of Christ was necessary is that the cross is God's divine solution for the sin of all men. Without the cross and on the basis of pure justice, God would have to destroy man just as He did the unrepentant wicked during the flood of Noah's day. As God saved Noah and his family, so the cross of Christ makes salvation available and possible to all who obey God.

The cross is necessary because Jesus is the Way home. *"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."*—John 14:6. It was the apostle Peter who declared that salvation is found only in the name of Christ (Acts 4: 12). If we are going to be saved, we must do it by all means that God has made possible in the cross of Christ. Within the cross we see a mighty paradox in that the cross stands for the judgment of God against sin; but, it also shows His grace and mercy.

Faith

BATSELL BAXTER

Faith forms a very important part in our lives. There are many cities in the world we have not seen. There are many characters in history we have not seen. But we have read about these cities and these historical characters.

London is strongly fixed in our minds through faith. We believe that it is there because testimony in which we have confidence says so. George Washington lives in our minds as the first president of the United States because history says he was. These are matters of faith with us.

The same is true about Christ and God and heaven; these are matters of faith. "Faith is assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1 ASV). We have a conviction from overwhelming evidence that Jesus is the Christ.

We believe all that He taught. His teaching received through our faith gives us our assurance of the heaven for which we hope. Because of our faith in Christ, "we rejoice in hope" (Romans 5:2).

FAITH ILLUSTRATED

Hebrews 11 abounds in illustrations of faith. Abel offered a sacrifice acceptable to God because he offered it in faith. Cain's sacrifice was rejected because he did not offer it in faith. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Romans 14:23).

Faith leads us to do things we would not otherwise do. Noah would never have done such a strange thing as to build an ark if he had not had faith in the word of God. He had not seen any indication of a flood, but God said it was coming. Noah's reason might never have planned an ark to save himself and his family, but God said it would do the work. Noah believed God and built the ark.

The life of Abraham abounds in examples of faith. Human reason would never have led him away from Chaldea; neither would it have caused him to be Willing to offer Isaac.

The life of every Bible character who pleased God was a life of faith. Faith led every one of them to do things that neither human reason nor the wisdom of the world would suggest.

THE SOURCE OF FAITH

A good many deeply religious people have been taught that faith is a direct gift of the Holy Spirit, independent of teaching. They wait for this saving faith. If saving faith comes directly from God, then there would be as many Christians in regions where the Bible has not gone as there are where the Bible is taught. "There is no respect of persons with God" (Romans 2:11). "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).

There are nations where there are millions of heathens and very few Christians because there has been very little Christian teaching done in those countries and much heathen teaching. The very religious denominations that teach that God gives saving faith independent of preaching do as much preaching and persuading as anybody. The fact is, the whole religious world has learned that "faith cometh by hearing ... the word of God" (Romans 10:17 KJV).

Jesus quotes a prophecy concerning the saving of men: "It

is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God. Every one that hath heard from the Father, and hath learned, cometh unto me" (John 6:45). The life and teachings of Jesus were given to produce faith. The things He did and said were written that we might believe. "Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name" (John 20:30-31).

THE IMPORTANCE OF FAITH

Without faith we cannot start in the service of God. The greatest sin is the sin of rejecting God. This sin alone will damn the soul. We cannot repent of this sin until we believe in God. We cannot accept a god in whom we do not believe. "Without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him" (Hebrews 11:6). Faith, then, is the starting point in coming to God.

After we have started to obey the Lord, every act must be done in faith. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Romans 14:23). This same principle continues with us even after we become Christians and as long as we live. When we meet the world with its wickedness and overcome it, this is done through faith. "And this is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith" (1 John 5:4). Our faith is our strength and stay. It keeps us out of evil and keeps us doing good.

THE TEST OF FAITH

Our Savior said, "By their fruits ye shall know them" (Matthew 7:16). That is the test. We can just as truly say, "By our faith men shall know us." Faith that is living manifests itself in works. Faith that does not manifest itself in works is dead and will do nobody any good. "But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith apart from works is barren? ... For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, even so faith apart from works is dead" (James 2:20, 26).

The faith of Abraham justified him through works when he offered up Isaac. "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, in that he offered up Isaac his son upon the altar? Thou seest that faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect; and the scripture was fulfilled which saith, And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness;

and he was called the friend of God" (James 2:21-23).

God has given a test of faith to every soul who comes to Him. After one has believed in Christ, has repented of his sins, and has confessed the name of Christ before men, he comes to face a test. God has placed before him an act in which human reason can see no good.

That is the act of baptism. Baptism is the completing act of faith in becoming a Christian. Moses, under the direction of God, led Israel aside from the direct route to Canaan and had them pass through the Red Sea. So Christ, our Lawgiver, leads the sinner into the waters of baptism. Only faith in Christ can lead us to see any good in being baptized. It is God's way of letting us become His children. "For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ" (Galatians 3:26-27).

People who are scripturally immersed have become children of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. When the gospel is preached, the first act of coming to Christ is faith. Faith - working work - continues all the journey through, until finally the Christian dies in the triumph of a living faith.

The Glory of Grace

K.C. MOSER

Grace is almost universally praised. But why? Are we simply the victims of the mob spirit, as were the Ephesians, who "about the space of two hours cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians" (Acts 19:34 ASV)? Are we crying, "Great is the grace of God!" without knowing why we cry? Is divine grace really worthy of the praise of men? If so, why? Let us be sure that we are not rendering lip service when we extol divine mercy. And, again, let us permit grace to remain grace that we may have cause for glorying on its account. Let us note some of the reasons for glorifying the grace of God.

GRACE IS THE CHIEF GLORY OF GOD HIMSELF

This statement will not, I suppose, be questioned. For a minute contemplate God minus mercy. He would still be omniscient and omnipotent. He would still be just. But what consolation to sinful man would be these divine attributes? Infinite

wisdom and infinite power would be moved by infinite justice to detect man's every weakness and every sin only to inflict due punishment. Justice minus mercy must inflict penalties.

Now, contemplating God apart from the quality of mercy, what remains that would logically call forth the adoration of sinners? Nothing! Will hell ring with the praises of God as well as heaven? It is possible that the damned as well as the saved will acknowledge the justice of God. But the application of mere justice cannot generate gratitude in the hearts of the guilty. Neither can it claim the homage of the innocent. For justice would not be justice if it did not bestow rewards according to merit; neither would grace be grace if it did bestow rewards according to merit (Romans 4:4).

Now, contemplate God as the "Father of mercies." His might, His wisdom and His justice find new uses. Divine wisdom, although not blind to the sins of men, is not devoted to men's destruction, but to their salvation. Divine wisdom exercises itself in finding a way of escape for even sinners. It finds a Son!

Divine power cooperates with divine wisdom in the execution of a way of salvation. But these things do the wisdom and the power of God because they are moved by the principle of mercy. Mercy devotes wisdom and power to the salvation, not the damnation, of sinners. Wisdom and power moved, therefore, by infinite grace sends the Word down to earth to become flesh. In the flesh the Son offers Himself as a sin offering for sinners. He is the greatest manifestation of the combined work of infinite wisdom, power and mercy the world has ever seen or ever will see. "Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (1 Corinthians 1:24). "In whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden" (Colossians 2:3). "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (v. 9).

And all of this for the salvation of him who was worthy of death! "For God sent not the Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through him" (John 3:17). Yes, Jesus suffered humiliation and an ignominious death, not to take vengeance on sinners, but to redeem them. The whole mission of Christ on earth was characterized by mercy. From the first to the last "he was moved with compassion" (Matthew 9:36).

GRACE IS THE CHIEF GLORY OF JESUS

"(And we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from

the Father), full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). Note the words "full of grace and truth." We have just remarked that the mission of Christ was one of mercy. He went about doing good. He healed the sick, cured the lame, and forgave the guilty. Finally He did something for us all - for all who lived before Him and for all who were to live after Him: He died for all. Even for those wicked persons who nailed Him to the cross! But how vain are words to say the worthy thing of such grace! Our hearts swell and beat faster, and our tongues grow dumb. We shall have to wait till we are given a tongue more eloquent and a heart more purified and a language more heavenly to render becoming praise.

THE GLORY OF GRACE IS ITS DISTINCTIVENESS

Grace is not a mere name. It stands for something unique. It is different from anything else. A mighty contrast is implied in John's significant statement: "For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). Grace and law are distinct as their respective mediators, and grace is as superior to law as Christ is superior to Moses. Law is "the ministration of death" (2 Corinthians 3:7) because "cursed is every one" (Galatians 3:10) who does not fulfill every jot and tittle of it. Law had some glory, but "that which hath been made glorious hath not been made glorious in this respect, by reason of the glory that surpasseth" (2 Corinthians 3:10). "For if the ministration of condemnation hath glory, much rather doth ministration of righteousness exceed in glory" (v. 9).

The cross yielded not another law, but something more glorious - grace. The cross is a symbol of mercy, not of justice simply. It means there is hope for the otherwise hopeless. It offers a righteousness to the unrighteous. It ushers in the reign of a favour that is able to bestow salvation on him who deserved damnation.

To define grace as mere favour is a tragedy. Divine grace is no more mere favour than divine wisdom and power are mere wisdom and power. The attributes of God are as infinite as God Himself. There is no God apart from His attributes, and to assert that God was gracious enough to do this or that and then leave man to earn his own salvation as he earns his daily bread is to make void every vestige of grace (Romans 11:6).

To attempt to glorify grace by affirming that it is merely a better law than the Law of Moses is like trying to glorify Christ

by saying that He is a better man than I. Christ is no more mere man than the New Covenant is mere law. Indeed, the chief glory of grace consists in the fact that it is not law. "Ye are not under law, but under grace" (Romans 6:14). To make this fundamental truth read, "Ye are not under the Law of Moses, but under the law given by Christ," is to take all the glory out of the new covenant. All law must operate along the same lines, and if Christ merely brought a better law, He simply brought that which will condemn more surely than Moses' Law. It is the function of law to prohibit sin and to punish or to bless according to the merit or demerit of those under it.

I repeat that the glory of grace depends upon the fact that it is not law, but something entirely different. My eye is not a better ear. It is no ear at all. If it were possible that I be given a third eye, it would have to be used as an organ of sight, not as an organ of hearing. Just so would the New Covenant have to operate along the line of the Old, if each is law. But grace can accomplish "what the law could not do."

Law can only justify the innocent. Grace can, and does, justify the "ungodly" (Romans 4:5). And herein is its glory: It saves sinners, even the chief of sinners; that is, grace can overcome sin. "And the law came in besides, that the trespass might abound; but where sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly" (5:20). Law came "that the trespass might abound." Grace came that it might "destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8).

People who are permitted to enter through the gates into the city of God will know then, if they do not know now, that it will be appropriate for them to sing the praise of redeeming grace rather than their own accomplishments. It was a cross, not a ladder, that was erected on Calvary!

Does The Bible Teach Soul Sleeping?

CECIL CORKREN

Some religious groups seem to think that it does. "For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing,

neither have they any more a reward, for the memory of them is forgotten" (Ecclesiastes 9:5). When they read a verse like the above they feel sure of their convictions. They believe that there is no conscious existence after death. Some question a conscious existence between death and the resurrection of the body, but I seemingly never think of what this leads to when I examined in the light of God's word. This doctrine, with its related tenets, is often referred to as the "soul sleeping doctrine." Those who teach this error deny that man has both an outward and an inward man (II Corinthians 4:16). Such false teachers will boldly affirm that "man does not have a soul, he is a soul." Thus when one dies, he is like the dog Rover - dead all over! If this were correct, "soul sleep" is a misnomer it should be "soul cessation or soul stopping, ceasing to exist," and "resurrection" should be changed to "recreation."

In the Old Testament, the term "soul" (from NEPHESH) was often used to designate the composite person, made up of various parts. The New Testament's equivalent (PSUCHE) also is used in the same way in Acts 7:14. However, the Old Testament uses *soul* to refer to the inner man in contrast with the body (Genesis 35:18). The New Testament develops this usage of *soul* in much more detail. Matthew 10:28 and Revelation 6:9-10 are key passages which show beyond any doubt that the soul of man lives on after bodily life ceases.

The term *SPIRIT* also is used to designate this inner being (Luke 23:46; Acts 7:59) This part of man is that which we share in common with our Maker. When God said, "Let us make man in our image" (Genesis 1:26), He had to mean His spiritual image, since He is *SPIRIT* (John 4:24). Therefore, even though we receive our physical bodies from our parents, our *SPIRITS* come from God. He is the "Father of spirits" (Hebrews 12:9). God is the one who formed the spirit of man within him (Zechariah 12:1), and thus when we die "the spirit returneth unto God who gave it" (Ecclesiastes 12:7).

The Sadducees of old taught the same erroneous doctrine regarding the spirit of man (or lack of it) as the "soul sleepers" teach. Jesus assured them that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were yet alive though their bodies had already decayed (Matthew 22:23-32). The fact that a person can live apart from his body is clearly taught in numerous passages. In II Corinthians 5:6-8, We can see that Paul taught one could be absent from the body and

present with the Lord. (Who is the *WE*. if not the spirit or soul of man?) The corpse of Dorcas was present but *SHE* was not present (Acts 9:39). For similar passages see Romans 14:8; Luke 23:43; Philipians 1:21-23 and Luke 18:19-31.

The soul will live on after death. Jesus said at the graveside of Lazarus, "And whosoever liveth and believeth in me **SHALL NEVER DIE**. Believest thou this" (John 11:26). All men die physically, so Jesus was referring to the conscious existence of man after death. We sing, "When my body is lying in the cold, cold clay, I'll live on." Do we believe what we sing? Luke records that Lazarus, was "comforted" in **ABRAHAM'S bosom** (Luke 16:19-31). Sounds like Lazarus, had a conscious existence after he died.

Lessons From the Eunuch

GUY F. HESTER

Of the so many cases of conversion in the book of Acts perhaps more has been written about the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch than any other. (Please read Acts 8:26-39).

PHILIP

Much has been said about Philip's part in the conversion of the eunuch. Philip was a great evangelist who had gone forth from the church at Jerusalem because of the persecutions which came upon the church there (Acts 8:4). He "went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them . . . When they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women" (Acts 8:5, 12). In this chapter we have also the account of the conversion of Simon the sorcerer, his fall and what he was told to do to be restored from his fallen state (Acts 8:9-24). Then in verses 26-39 we have the account of Philip's being instructed to "Arise and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert;" his coming in contact with the Ethiopian eunuch, the queen's treasurer, his preaching Christ unto him, his subsequent confession and baptism. Truly Philip was a great man of God, a powerful preacher of the gospel of Christ, and one eminently worthy of commendation.

THE MAN TO BE CONVERTED

But we now want to change our focus from Philip to the eunuch. Even before his conversion there are some outstanding characteristics in this man that are worthy of notation and imitation.

SINCERE

One of the obvious characteristics of this man was his sincerity. He traveled a distance of approximately 1000 miles to worship God, from Ethiopia to Jerusalem (verse 27). There were no automobiles nor airplanes in his day; but he was so devoted to the old Jewish religion [he was evidently a Jewish proselyte] that he traveled this great distance in a chariot rather than miss worship. People do not miss worship because they live too far from the church building but because they live too far from God. The writer of Hebrews said to Christians: "Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together" (Hebrews 10:25). In I Corinthians 14:23 Paul talks about "the whole church" being "come together in one place." In most places the "whole church" is never together in one place because of members' forsaking the assembly. Christians need the sincerity of the Eunuch when it comes to worship.

HE WAS READING THE SCRIPTURES — VERSE 28

He had time on his hands and was using it wisely. We have time on our hands; how wisely do we use it? Paul said, "Redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Ephesians 5:16). What better way do we have of "redeeming the time" than by reading and studying the scripture (II Timothy 2:15; John 5:39).

DESIRED GUIDANCE

The place of his reading was Isaiah 53:7-8, a prophecy concerning the crucifixion of Christ. When Philip asked, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" the eunuch replied, "How can I except some man should guide me?" Although he was an important man, and was no doubt very learned in many things, he realized that there were some things he did not know, and that he needed the assistance of others in learning of these matters. He was not ashamed to ask questions concerning that

which he did not understand. None of us knows so much but that he can learn from others. Apollos was an eloquent man who "was mighty in the scriptures, but he was taught by Aquila and Priscilla "the way of God more perfectly" (Acts 18:24-26).

HE LOVED THE TRUTH

Not understanding what he was reading he asked, "Of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself? or of some other man?" (verse 34). He loved truth! He was not interested in an opinion, but truth. One must love the truth in order to be saved. Paul wrote of some in II Thessalonians 2:10-12: "With all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they might all be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

HE OBEYED THE GOSPEL - VERSES 36-39

He heard Christ preached; he believed; he repented of sin, including his religious error; he confessed Christ; and he was baptized. These are exactly the same conditions that one today must meet in order to be saved (Mark 16:15,16; Luke 13:3; Matthew 10:32-33; Acts 2:38).

All of those who do not obey the gospel will be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord (II Thessalonians 1:7-9).

HE REJOICED - VERSE 39

"And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the Eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing." And what reason he had to rejoice! He had been "born again," "born of water and of the Spirit" (John 3:3,5). His sins were remitted (Acts 2:38). He was a new creature in Christ (II Corinthians 5:17). He was a Christian (Acts 11:26). All Christians should rejoice. Paul said, "Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice" (Philippians 4:4). Each of us should strive to possess in his own life those same outstanding qualities that characterized the eunuch.