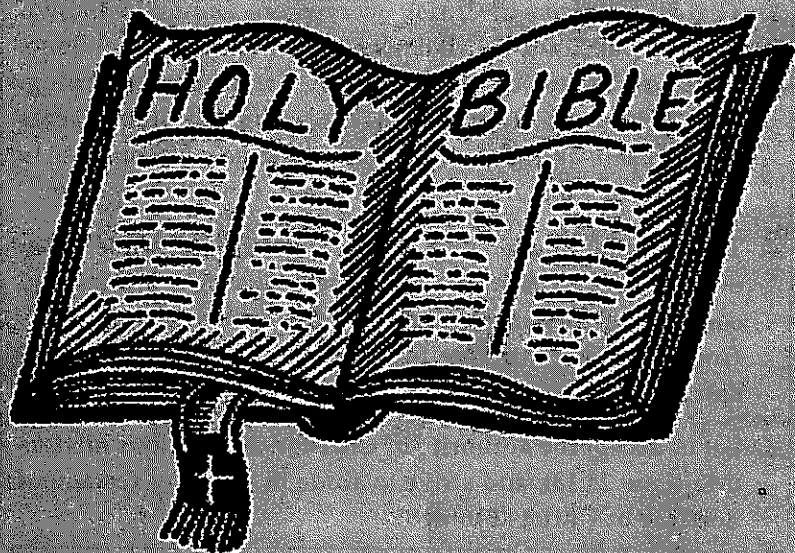


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THE BIBLE TEACHER



Our Plea

Let the Truth Prevail

1. That there should be only one church today, as it was in the beginning—Church of Christ—Which Christ Himself built, and about which we all can read in the Bible (Matthew 16:18; Col. 1:18). That congregations of the one church of the Bible everywhere may be known as churches of Christ, as we read at Romans 16:16. That there should be no denominations or sects in the name of the Church. (1 Corinthians 1:10; John 20:20, 21).
2. That there should be only one plan or guideline of salvation, as is revealed and taught in the Bible, followed everywhere. All must believe in Christ, repent of wrong, confess Christ the Son of God, and be baptized for the forgiveness of sins. (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:36-38). Those who obey these commands to be saved are saved by the Lord and He Himself adds the saved ones to His church (Acts 2:47); which is His Spiritual body. (Ephesians 1:22, 23; 4:4).
3. That all followers of Christ, everywhere, should be known as Christians, and Christians only, after His name alone, with no Prefixes or Suffixes, as it was in the beginning. (Acts 4:12; Acts 11:26; 1 Peter 4:16). That all other names which exalt and glorify any other name of a man, or a doctrine, or a day or a movement, etc., must be forgotten.
4. That all man-made creed books must be put aside, with other books written by men which contain doctrines and commandments of men, and only the Bible which contains God's inspired message for man must be followed in all spiritual matters. (Matthew 7:21-23; John 12:48).
5. Let us accept the authority of Christ in all religious matters (Matthew 28:18), and strive to abide in the New Testament doctrine of Christ (2 John 9).

THE BIBLE TEACHER

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Editorial

What Does the Bible Teach?

About The Observance Of Easter

HISTORICALLY SPEAKING, the word Easter is derived from Eostre, the name of the goddess of dawn of the Pagans, who celebrated the festival of spring when the nature was in resurrection after winter. It was called Norse Ostara or Eostre, meaning the festival of spring at the vernal equinox, when nature is in resurrection after winter. The Jewish Passover was celebrated at approximately the same time or season when the Pagans celebrated Eostre. Influenced by the Pagans celebration of Eostre and Jewish celebration of Passover at the same time, some Christians later began to celebrate the resurrection of Christ and called it Easter. Thus, Easter, in fact, is a religious observance of human origin, unauthorized by God.



The New Westminster Dictionary of the Bible says: "Originally the spring festival in honor of the Teutonic goddess of light and spring known in Anglo-Saxon as Eostre. As early as the 8th century the name was transferred by the Anglo-Saxons to the Christian festival designed to celebrate the resurrection of Christ. In A.V. (Authorized King James Version translation of the Bible, 1611) it occurs once (in Acts 12:4), but is a mistranslation, the original is Pascha, the ordinary Greek word for Passover." In fact, K.J.V. of the Bible is the only translation where the word Easter appears, though only once. Instead of "Passover", as in all other translations, the K.J.V. translators translated the word "Pascha" as "Easter." This

translation occurs even though the Greek word "Pascha" obviously means "Passover" and is elsewhere translated "Passover" even in the K.J.V. by the same translators! Perhaps the man-made celebration of Easter was so important in their day that they wished to include the word in the Bible. Passover was observed by the Jews and was also known as the Feast of the Unleavened bread (Exodus 23:15), it was instituted in Egypt to commemorate the culminating event in the deliverance of the Israelites when God smote all the first born in the land of Egypt, but passed over the houses of the Israelites where the blood of the lamb was applied as God had commanded. (Exodus 12).

The Bible teaches that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, all inform us that Christ was raised after the Sabbath on the first day of the week or Sunday. Christians in the first century commemorated Christ's death and resurrection by partaking in the Lord's Supper every week, on the first day of the week, as we read in Acts 20:7 and 1 Corinthians 11:23-26. Sunday, the first day of the week therefore is called the Lord's Day (Revelation 1:10), And this is the only day Christians observed every week throughout the year. There is no mention anywhere in the Bible of Easter or Christmas celebrations in the apostolic teaching. When Christ, after His resurrection and before His ascension into heaven, sent His disciples to declare His gospel to the world, He said, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you...." (Matthew 28:19-20). He did not command to observe Easter or Christmas. In Matthew 15:9 Christ said, "And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men." God did not intend for Christians to observe Easter or Christmas. Had He, He would have told us in the Bible.



THE WORD OF GOD

J.C. Choate

GOD TRULY BLESSED MANKIND with his gift of the scriptures. It would be well for every soul to realize this and express his appreciation of the same through a study of them and an earnest endeavour to abide by such. It matters

not how smart a man may become, he'll never outgrow his need for God's revelation.

The Bible is the greatest book the world has ever known, and there are many reasons for this. It is not just another book, but is unique and unusual. Here is a collection of writings which has been handed down through the years, and yet, remains the most timely and useful book ever penned. It has had many foes but has outlived all of them, being victorious in every battle. It still remains the best seller from year to year, although many popular books are being brought out continually.

One reason for the greatness of the scripture is due to the fact that it is all given by inspiration of God. Every word of it is all given by inspiration of God. Every word of it is of a divine nature. Therefore, man may read and believe it all without having to fear that portions of it may be spurious or uninspired. Along this line, Peter has said: "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (1 Pet. 1:21). Paul echo's Peter's statement, and carries the thought further, as he says. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction In righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (2 Tim. 3:16,17). Doubt not God's word then, but believe it. To doubt one word of the Bible is but to deny all of it as far as the Lord is concerned.

Since all scripture is inspired of God, it is to be respected as such. Man has not been given the authority to add to it, subtract from it, or substitute for it in any way. As a matter of fact, God has warned against such. John informs us, "For 1 testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book. If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book : And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." (Rev. 22:18,19). Then Paul adds: "As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." (Gal. 1:9). It is a serious thing, then, to deal with the word of God. Moreover, it is a serious thing not to understand this fundamental truth.

The word of God is powerful; it has the power to save all who will believe and obey it. (John 8:32; 17:17). Not only will it save a soul, but it will keep him in the pathway of light, thus, perfecting his

soul for the world to come. (Ps. 119:105; Rev. 22:14).

The Bible is an all purpose book; it will comfort one in sorrow; encourage one who is in despair; strengthen one who is weak; give hope to the lost, etc. If a soul has a need, the book of all books can supply it; yea, if an individual has a question, the Bible will answer it. The scripture tells where man came from, his purpose here, and where he is going. Then too, the Bible serves as man's guidebook, his roadmap, etc.

The word of God is eternal in nature in that it will never pass away. Christ says, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." (Matt. 24:35). And finally, the Bible will judge us, for we read: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."

Friend of mine, believe the word of God; make it your daily companion; obey it and let it govern your life in all that you say or do, and it will bless you in this world and in the world to come. Just remember the word will stand forever, and one day, judge the world. Hence, the word can save, but it can also condemn.

STANDING ON SOLID GROUND

Hollis Miller

SOMETIMES I THINK I would like to know all the answers. But I don't, and I never will. I don't know where today is going; I only know where it is at this very moment. I don't know when angels were created; I can only believe they were. I don't know the fullest meaning of eternity; I can only believe it must be.

Life is filled with unknowns of every description. Some things that are not known today might be known tomorrow. There was a time when men believed the earth was the center of the solar system, but Copernicus changed that belief. Until Louis Pasteur, men did not understand germs. Astronomers are currently reevaluating what they believed they knew about the planet Jupiter. Placing oneself at the mercy of the latest "in thing" is not always a wise thing to do.

Believers in Jesus Christ are just that—believers in Jesus Christ. Their lives are guided by Him because they believe certain things about Him. They believe Jesus was the Word that became flesh and dwelled among men (John 1:14). They believe He was involved in creation. "*All things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made*" (John 1:3). They believe

Jesus is truth. *"I am the way, and the truth, and the life..."* (John 14:6). Standing before Pilate, Jesus said: *"For this I was born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth"* (John 18:37).

Even though Jesus brought truth to the world, there are many things He did not discuss. He did not talk about mathematics, all the events of history, or everything about the future. The concern of Jesus was *our way of life* and our *eternal destiny*. He taught us that in the end He will be there when all else will have vanished.

In 2 Corinthians 5:11 Paul used an interesting word about his preaching. *"Knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men."* The **mind** is persuaded, not the feet or the elbows. One who would follow the truth of Jesus must be persuaded *in the mind* to do so. His reasoning powers must be brought into harmony with the truth Jesus brought to the world.

When you lay this article aside, please do so persuaded that Jesus has been in the world. His faith is here; His church is here; the memorial of His body and blood is here; the New Testament is here. Jesus is truth! Standing on Him is to stand on solid ground.

THE LOVE OF GOD

Don W. Walker

"HE BROUGHT ME to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love" (Song of Solomon 2:4).

Truly the love of God exceeds our broadest imaginations. In Jeremiah 31:3 we read, *"The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee **with an everlasting love**; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee."* Again concerning God's love, we read in Ephesians 2:4,5, *"But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ."* These statements come as no surprise when we really understand the fact that *"God is love"* (1 John 4:8). Thus, when we look at God's love, **we see love in its purest and fullest sense.**

1 Thessalonians 1:3 speaks of the *"labor of love,"* while 1 John 3:18 also mentions the *active nature* of genuine love. We see this attribute of love powerfully demonstrated in Jehovah. Romans 5:8 declares, *"God commended His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."* *"God so loved the world, He gave his only begotten Son"* (John 3:16). Thus **the active nature**

of genuine love.

In Revelation 3:19 we learn another principle concerning love. Jesus said, "*as many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.*" When we read Hebrews 12:11 we can see and realize **the love that prompts discipline.** "*Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.*" So it is, "*charity [love] shall cover the multitude of sins*" (1 Peter 4:8) when one shall convert the sinner from the error of his way and save a soul from death (James 5:20).

These are the ways God has displayed His love for mankind. Let us do the same.

Understanding The Concept Of Deity

Samuel A. Matthews

THIS STUDY IS dedicated to the many believers in God who do not understand that Jesus is not *only* the Son of God, but **is also God the Son.** Since no greater truth is affirmed in the Sacred Text, one cannot read the Bible (especially the New Testament) without recognizing the One Who is God the Son (Hebrews 1:8). This doctrine in fact permeates the Word of God from Genesis to Revelation; only a materialist would fail to see it.

Many people misunderstand the term "God". So, let's talk about Deity! Deity is a name of the Supreme Being (from the Latin, "Deus", God). The term signifies in a concrete sense Him whom we call God. Concerning our Lord Jesus, the term means to assert that He was the very and ETERNAL God.

The word "GOD" is not the name of a *personality*, it is the name of a *nature, a quality of being* (as opposed, for example, to the angelic or human natures). It is simply a name for the Divine nature. Therefore, when the Bible affirms there is but one God (Mark 12:29), the meaning is that there is but *one Divine nature, one Deity, or one Godhead.* And because there is but one divine nature, it follows there is but one God.

There is a unified set of traits or characteristics that distinguish a personality as being "God". And those persons possessing these attributes are referred to as "God" in the Bible. So there is no contradiction whatsoever in the biblical teaching that there is but ONE divine nature or one God. The Bible reveals that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (three persons) each possess the divine

nature—the infinite characteristics of deity. There is but one divine nature, but there are three possessing this unified set of qualities. Thus, each is called God (John 6:27; 2 Peter 1:17; Hebrews 1:8; Acts 5:3,4).

Indispensable to a clear understanding of Deity is an awareness of the difference between “nature” and “person”. Deity is eternal! Jesus, the Father, and the Holy Spirit are ETERNAL in nature. Jesus said, “/ and the Father are one” (John 10:30; John 17:20-23). Some falsely teach that this means they must be one *in person*. But everyone knows that persons and things can be *one* in one sense and *more than one* in another sense.

For example, God has declared that husband and wife are one (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:5,6) but this certainly does not mean they are ONE person. They are still two separate persons, yet in another sense they are one. The word “one” must here be recognized as neuter gender which has to mean one in “nature”. Jesus and the Father (and the Holy Spirit) are “one” in doctrine, unity, aim, essence and purpose—but not one in person!

As further proof that John 10:30 does NOT teach (as the “Jesus Only” Pentecostals falsely contend) that Jesus and the Father are one person, Jesus prayed in John 17:20-23 that His followers might be ONE “even as” the Father and He were one. We who believe and follow Jesus certainly are not one big fat person! Neither are the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit one person.

Some conceive of God as a mathematical unit; and as a thing cannot be both mathematically singular and plural—one and three, at the same time and in the same sense—they deny the true and proper divinity of the Son of God and the Spirit of God. But it would seem that they reason NOT in harmony with the sacred style of inspiration. Why should we imagine that there cannot be a plurality of personal manifestations in the divine nature, any more than in the angelic or human, especially as man was created in the image of God (Read 1 Timothy 3:16).

Deity means God. God is Deity. The Son is Deity. Therefore, the Son is God. Deity, when complete, requires three Beings. Thus, the Spirit and the Son merge with the Father to form the Godhead (Genesis 1:1; Acts 17:29). When Deity is referred to, and the word “God” is used, it is necessary to determine from the context whether it is God—the Father (John 17:1, 3, 5), God—the Son (John 1:1), or God—the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3-4).

Jesus is also called **Holy child Jesus** (Acts 4:30). The adjective word, “Holy”, is applied to all three persons of the Godhead at

different times in the Bible. Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit, the Spirit thus being Holy and not evil. God—Jehovah—is a Holy Spirit, but NOT the same Spirit or Person, as God—the Holy Spirit. Jesus is called God, but that doesn't mean that Jesus is God—the Father! He couldn't be the Father because He is the Son.

In John 3:16 it is revealed: "*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*" Is it possible to read even this one familiar passage of scripture without understanding that there are two distinct persons referred to in the passage: God—the *giver*, and the Son—the *given*?

There is not a single individual upon the face of God's earth who is able to prove from the Bible the false teaching that the Godhead consists of only one Divine Being. It is an unprovable proposition because the Bible nowhere teaches such. It is simply not a part of God's truth. The Bible does teach, however, that there is one perfect, eternal, divine *essence* Who alone is the Creator and Sustainer of the Universe. And, that this ONE divine essence or nature belongs equally to THREE separate and distinct persons, designated in the Bible as *the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit*.

Please SEARCH THE ABOVE SCRIPTURES and see whether these things are so (Acts 17:11). The churches of Christ are neither Catholic, Protestant, nor Jew. We are CHRISTIANS (1 Peter 4:16)! We teach only the Bible; and the Bible ONLY makes Christians ONLY and the ONLY Christians.

HONORING CHRIST

Johnny Ramsey

PAUL GLADLY PREACHED Christ crucified in order that brethren would stand solidly in the power of God rather than in the wisdom of men (1 Cor. 2:1-5). No one has ever had the impact upon the world that Jesus of Nazareth did. Soldiers sent to arrest Him affirmed this truth when they returned empty-handed, saying, "*Never man so spake*" (Jno. 7:46). What a marvelous blessing it is to uphold the banner of Prince Emmanuel in an age that squanders time and money on sports stars, entertainers and actors who are not worthy to unlatch his sandals! No king, soldier, poet, musician, scholar or president can even be compared to the only perfect One who ever lived—our Redeemer and Friend, Jesus the Christ! He has "*the name that is above every name*" (Phil. 2:9). An ancient preacher

proclaimed these powerful thoughts: "Were the highest heavens my pulpit, the numberless angels my audience and eternity my time, Jesus Christ would always be my text."

Verily, exalting the Saviour and His word ought to be the magnificent obsession of every child of the heavenly Father! In Jno. 6:63; 6:68 and 12:48 we find confirmation of this commitment to the Master Teacher. Those verses tell us that the words of Christ give spirit and life because they are eternal and will judge us in the last day. He is the only way to glory (Jno. 14:6) and by none other can we be saved (Acts 4:12). In Jno. 15:3, the Man of Galilee clearly enunciated this premise in clarion tones, "*Now you are clean through the word that I have spoken unto you.*" Some liberal theologians, through the years, have tried to separate allegiance, to Christ and loyalty to His blessed word. But the Holy Scriptures will not allow this arrangement. Notice the following passages that forever bind together the Man and the plan. "*Why call ye me, Lord, Lord and do not the things which I say?... If you love me, keep my commandments... You are my friends if you do whatsoever I command you... Do whatever he commands you*" (Lk. 6:46; Jno. 14:15; 15:14; 2:5).

Just professing devotion to Jesus while failing to do what He says is tantamount to the deepest hypocrisy: "*Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom, of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven*" (Matt. 7:21). Folk who claim deep piety and rich spirituality while making light of Christ's authority are insincere to the core. Usually such people have a disdain for brethren who demand absolute allegiance to the Lord and His cause. We must have the happy combination of genuine, loving obedience. The grace of God and the gospel of Christ go hand in hand. Paul constantly preached, "*The gospel of the grace of God*" (Acts 20:24), and so should we.

The apostles were without success until they reverently exclaimed to Jesus these words of faith, "*Nevertheless, at thy word...*" (Lk. 5:5). In a pungent passage, in a stirring epistle, Paul commands our absolute attention, "*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly*" (Col. 3:16). Since the spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus (Rev. 19:10), we must continue in His word if we would be free (Jno. 8:31-32). When we exalt the Master in obeying His commands, we prove our sincere love for things divine. John wrote to this point: "*He that saith I know him and keep not his commandments is a liar and the truth is not in him*" (1 Jno. 2:4). How can a man exalt Christ while refusing to live in harmony with

His divine mandates? What are the areas of reverential devotion pertaining to godliness that should captivate our attention? Let me suggest two obvious ones.

Christ spoke on the Inspiration of Scripture. Our blessed Redeemer made it clear that He had utmost respect for the Old Testament writings, "*Not one jot or one tittle shall pass from the law till all be fulfilled*" (Matt. 5:18). His perfect life under the law evinced His deep respect for divine mandates. The New Testament, sealed by His blood (Heb. 13:20), provides us with everything we need in the spiritual realm (2 Pet. 1:3-4). We can stand "*complete in Him*" (Col. 2:10) as we follow explicitly the inspired Scriptures (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Any view other than that of the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Bible is virtually infidelity in the sight of God. Our blessed Redeemer believed—and so should we—that "*holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit*" (2 Pet. 1:21). May we always exalt Christ and His word!

THE SIN OF SODOM

Louis Rushmore

FOR US, A PUBLIC discussion of the sin of Sodom is a delicate matter. However, it is a subject that is paraded openly before our families in schools, on television, by famous people, in politics, by religious leaders, and even in children's books. Therefore, the sin of Sodom (homosexuality) must be addressed openly.

Homosexuality is something about which God speaks in the Bible—in both testaments. God considers this conduct not only sinful, but further belonging to a sub-category of sin called "an abomination". Therefore, it is important for us to examine what God says about this topic.

Homosexuality cannot be ignored! It adversely affects our world and often results in death. It also leads to spiritual death for impenitent souls. Homosexuality affects men, women and children. Sometimes, even Christians are involved in the sin of Sodom.

Genesis 19:1-29 introduces the sin of Sodom and the subsequent destruction of this and surrounding cities by God. Genesis 13:13 identifies the men of Sodom as exceedingly wicked sinners. Genesis 18:20 says that the sin of Sodom is "very grievous". Genesis 18:23 adds emphasis to the portrayal of the inhabitants of Sodom as "wicked". Genesis 18:24-33 shows that God could not find even 10 righteous souls in Sodom.

Genesis 19:5 (especially in the NKJV) identifies the specific sin by which the city of Sodom defiled itself. This sin is commonly known to us as homosexuality or sodomy. So, under Patriarchy, God's first system of religion given to man, God condemned homosexuality.

Next, under Judaism, God also condemned homosexuality. Leviticus 18:22 reads, "*Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination.*" The seriousness of this sin to God is apparent from Leviticus 20:13. "*If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them.*"

God mandated capital punishment under Patriarchy and Judaism for homosexuality. Though God especially warned men and women in Israel against this sin (Deuteronomy 23:17), the sin of Sodom is one of the sins that Israel learned from the nations around them (1 Kings 14:24; 15:12; 22:46; 2 Kings 23:7).

The New Testament likewise condemns homosexuality. Three passages refer to the biblical record of the sin of Sodom found in Genesis 19. "*And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an example unto those that afterwad would live ungodly*" (2 Peter 2:6). Jude adds that the sin of Sodom also results in the punishment of "eternal fire". "*Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.*" See also Luke 17:29.

Additionally, homosexuality is elsewhere condemned in the New Testament. Romans 1:26-32 addresses this sin. "*For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another: men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet*" (Romans 1:26-27).

Also, two lists of sins further warn against the sin of homosexuality. In 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 (NKJV) the words "homosexuals" and "sodomites" appear among other sins cited. The apostle Paul by inspiration named "sodomites" again: as sinners, among others, in 1 Timothy 1:9-11 (NKJV).

The sins of homosexuality and adultery are forms of "fornication". Several passages condemn "fornication" irrespective of the form in which it appears (Jude 7; Matthew 5:32; 19:9; 1 Corinthians 5:9;

Galatians 5:19-21).

The world says that genetics may be responsible for “sexual orientation”. We are told that God made homosexuals. Many religious people, therefore, claim to practice homosexuality with God’s approval. These people are unaware of or ignore the preceding Old and New Testament passages that clearly condemn homosexuality.

According to God, sins in general, including “fornication”, are only acted out after they are conceived in the heart or mind (Matthew 15:19). One’s uncontrolled “lust” leads to sin and spiritual death (James 1:14,15). Though certainly outside influences may contribute to temptation, sin can be resisted (James 4:7). Further, God will not allow anyone to be tempted beyond his ability to resist (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Happily, even homosexuals can repent or change. The apostle Paul acknowledged that some of the Corinthians were formerly homosexuals (1 Corinthians 6:9-11). God will forgive any sin for which a sinner will repent (1 John 1:5-10). God also forgets the sins that he forgives (Hebrews 8:12; 10:17).

Though it is distasteful to the child of God, Christians must learn what God says about homosexuality and sodomy. Godly parents must guide their children in God’s Word in this matter as well as in other areas of biblical instruction. Every citizen must give special attention to politics, school boards, libraries and television programming since each of these is a vehicle through which the homosexual message is promoted. Christians ought to voice their objections to the homosexual movement.

The Unknown God Is Now Known

Shan Jackson

THE APOSTLE PAUL was addressing a gathering of Athenian philosophers who had come to a place called Mars’ hill. Their desire was to hear and discuss “new things” (Acts 17:21). Paul speaks, “*For as I passed by (on his way to Mars’ hill in Athens) and beheld your devotions (statues and other objects they worshipped), I found an altar with this inscription, ‘To The Unknown God.’ Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him (God) declare I unto you.*” Then Paul began to preach the Word of God to them.

The apparent reason they had a statue addressed to the

unknown God was just in case they accidentally missed some unnamed or unknown deity. Obviously they tried to the best of their ability to recognize and worship every deity under the sun. However, if they inadvertently missed one, then they had an extra altar to cover their oversight. Finding this statue gave Paul an opportunity to start helping them find the true God. But let's go to the conclusion of Paul's teaching. In Acts 17:30, and continuing to the first part of verse 34, we find him saying,

"And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man (Jesus) whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

"And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, 'We will hear thee again of this matter.' So Paul departed from among them. Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed."

The word "assurance" is from the Greek word PISTIS, which refers to our faith in Christ. With this believing faith (and remember that Jesus is the "author and finisher of our faith," (Hebrews 12:2), we are enabled to perceive the spiritual realities of God. Ephesians 2:8 says, "For ye are saved through faith." This is the saving faith we have in our Savior Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:22-26), and with this faith Jesus becomes our Lord and Master, helping us perceive God in the genuine light that His Word shines into our understanding.

Rather than God being unknown to us, or just out of our grasp, we can learn the true joys in obtaining the realities of Him through Jesus Christ which come to us by hearing "the Word of God" (Romans 10:17).

THE INCREDIBLE JESUS

Ed Short

BOOKS, MAGAZINES, TV and radio programs, movies and other forms of media all enable us to know people and to empathize with them. Through a novel or a biography, we can become very close to someone we've never met or someone who doesn't even exist. Untold millions of Chinese practically consider Bao Yu of Dream of the Red Chamber a blood relative.

Through the four gospel accounts of the New Testament (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John), readers meet a man named Jesus.

These four writers tell us that Jesus made incredible claims, did incredible things and spoke incredible words.

Jesus made incredible claims. Think about it! Jesus claimed to be the Savior of the world, King of kings and Creator of all things! Jesus said, *"I am the way and the truth and the life."* He called Himself the Bread of life, the Lamb of God and the Son of God!

If we were to meet on the street today someone who makes claims like these, what would we think? Most of us would question his sanity. But Jesus dared to say these things!

Jesus did incredible deeds, including miracles: The blind received sight, the lame walked and the dead were raised back to life. Jesus fed the hungry, encouraged the depressed and gave new life to sinners who repented. He knew what was in people, He understood them. Jesus was with people, He contacted them and touched them.

I once was at a children's home when a group of well-dressed women came to visit and make a donation to the home. It was obvious, however, that the women did not want to contact the children. I guess the women thought the children were dirty as they avoided even touching them.

Jesus, on the other hand, didn't fear dirt, wasn't afraid of poverty, didn't fear the unfamiliar; he only cared about people. Most wonderful of all, however, is that Jesus gave himself for mankind, was crucified and was raised back to life on the third day. Through Jesus' death our sins can be forgiven and we can receive a new life. Yes, Jesus did incredible deeds!

Jesus spoke incredible words. Please listen to some things Jesus said: *"Happy are those who know they are spiritually poor; the Kingdom of heaven belongs to them... You are like salt for all mankind... You are like light for the whole world... Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you... If you forgive others the wrongs they have done you, your Father in heaven will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive the wrongs of others, then your Father in heaven will not forgive the wrongs you have done"* (Matthew 5:3,10,13,14,44; 6:14,15, TEV). Those who first listened to Jesus speak these words really appreciated His messages; today you and I can also admire the words of Jesus, as they will greatly encourage and benefit us.

Jesus made incredible claims, did incredible deeds, spoke incredible words. May I ask what is your reaction to this man, Jesus? Do you believe His claims—Savior of the world, King of kings, Creator of all, Bread of life, Son of God? Do you want Him to do

some incredible things in your life, like forgive your sins and change your way of living? Do you believe His incredible words and will you allow them to influence your life? I encourage you to read the Bible more and get better acquainted with this man Jesus.

“When I Survey The Wondrous Cross”

Jimmy Young

WE HAVE READ many times from the Bible regarding the cross of Christ. Countless lessons have been written about His crucifixion. The theme of New Testament preaching was Christ and Him crucified (Acts 2:22-36; 1 Corinthians 1:17-25). We often sing of the cross of Christ. One of the best of these songs is, “*When I Survey The Wondrous Cross*.” What do you see when your mind goes back and surveys the cross of Christ?

The first thing we visualize is **the power of supreme love**. God’s great love for man is overwhelmingly pictured on the cross (John 3:16,17; Luke 11:56; Luke 19:10; Hebrews 2:9). It isn’t God’s desire that any perish (2 Peter 3:9). He made a way of escape, and that was through the cross of Christ. If you want to know how much God loves you, then take a look at the cross.

When we survey the cross of Christ, we see **the ugly reality of sin**. It was sin that put Christ on the cross (2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 4:25; 1 Peter 2:24; Hebrews 9:28). There would not have been a need for the cross if there had been no sin. But because of sin, Christ suffered great pain and agony at Calvary. At the cross of Christ we see the reality of sin.

In considering that old rugged cross, we see that Jesus became **the remedy for sin**. Jesus was sinless, yet He took our sins on Himself. Man could not save himself from his own sins; he was doomed eternally, without help from God. Christ fulfilled that need (Hebrews 4:15; 7:26; 1 Peter 2:1,2). It is by the blood of Christ that we have redemption (Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14), remission of sins (Matthew 26:28), and reconciliation to God (Romans 5:10). It is by the blood of Christ, coupled with our obedience to God’s commands, that we are able to claim those spiritual blessings promised in the New Testament (Ephesians 1:3; Galatians 3:26,27).

In being obedient to the Lord we will hear His Word (Romans 10:17; John 5:24); believe in Christ as the Son of God (John 8:24; Mark 16:16); repent of our sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 17:30,31); confess Christ as God’s Son (Matthew 10:32; Romans 10:10; Acts

8:37), and be baptized for the remission of our sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16).

When we survey the cross of Christ, we can easily see that the cross proclaims **the supreme love of God, the reality of sin, and the remedy for sin.** We need nothing more.

A Roman Crucifixion

As Described by a medical doctor

THE CROSS IS placed on the ground and the exhausted man is quickly thrown backwards with his shoulders against the wood. The legionnaire feels for the depression at the front of the wrist. He drives a heavy, square wrought-iron nail through the wrist, deep into the wood.

Quickly he moves to the other side and repeats the action, being careful not to pull the arms too tightly, but to allow some flex and movement. The cross is then lifted into place. The left foot is pressed backward against the right foot, and with both feet extended, toes down, a nail is driven through the arch of each, leaving the knees flexed. The victim is now crucified.

As he slowly sags down with more weight on the nails in the wrists, excruciating fiery pain shoots along the fingers and up the arms to explode in the brain—the nails in the wrists are putting pressure on the median nerves. As he pushes himself upward to avoid this stretching-torment, He places the full weight on the nail through his feet. Again he feels the searing agony of the nail tearing through the nerves between the bones of his feet.

As the arms fatigue, cramps sweep through his muscles, knotting them in deep, relentless, and throbbing pain. With these cramps comes the inability to push himself upward to breathe. Air can be drawn into the lungs but not exhaled. He fights to raise himself in order to get even one small breath.

Finally, carbon dioxide builds up in the lungs and in the blood stream, and the cramps partially subside. Spasmodically, he is able to push himself upward to exhale and bring in life-giving oxygen.

The crucified endures hours of endless pain, cycles of twisting, joint-rending cramps, intermittent partial asphyxiation, searing pain as tissue is torn from his lacerated back as he moves up and down against rough timber. Then another agony begins: a paralyzing, crushing pain deep in the chest as the pericardium slowly fills with

serum and begins to compress the heart.

It is now almost over. The loss of tissue fluids has reached a critical level. The compressed heart is struggling to pump heavy, thick, sluggish blood into the tissues. The tortured lungs are making frantic efforts to gasp in small gulps of air. He can feel the chill of death creeping through his tissues.

Finally, he allows his body to die.

All this the Bible records with the simple words, "*and they crucified Him*" (Mark 15:24).

—Author Unknown

Matthew 27:27-37

"THEN THE SOLDIERS of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole garrison around Him. And they stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him. When they had twisted a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand. And they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews!'

"Then they spat on Him, and took the reed and struck Him on the head. And when they had mocked Him, they took the robe off Him, put His own clothes on Him, and led Him away to be crucified.

"Now as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. Him they compelled to bear His cross. And when they had come to a place called Golgotha, that is to say, Place of a Skull, they gave Him sour wine mingled with gall to drink. But when He had tasted it, He would not drink.

"Then they crucified Him, and divided His garments, casting lots, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet: 'They divided My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots'."

"Sitting down, they kept watch over Him there."

"And they put up over His head the accusation written against Him: **This is Jesus the king of the Jews.**"

Can We Live Without Hope?

Peter Mostert

THE BIBLE, WHICH speaks of good news, is a collection of books or writings that were penned during a period of 1,500 years. Moses

wrote the first five books, starting with Genesis, and John wrote the last, Revelation, in A.D. 96.

Throughout the Bible a unique thread of hope is interwoven—Jesus was the promised hope of the Old Testament, He came to earth and died for all, and is coming again on the last day to retrieve the faithful, as recorded in the New Testament.

The Bible is important to us as our source of hope, that Jesus will be returning for “me” and “my” loved ones. The hope that we have in Christ as our Savior, however, is not wishful thinking or an unrealistic expectation or a fantasy. Our hope is an anchor of the soul—secure and steadfast, in His promises (Hebrews 6:19,20).

Our hope is a feeling of confident expectation that will be realized when Jesus returns. It is an intangible thing that many people cannot understand, but for those who have the hope it is the major source of comfort, and those who hope place their trust in God.

There are two major reasons for having such a hope:

The first is in Jesus. He *is* our hope. He defeated Satan and death by His resurrection from the grave and is now preparing a place for us in heaven. He is also our advocate, able to overcome any charge raised against us by Satan, the accuser.

The second is the Bible. The Bible, God's Word or Divine Communication, is the story of man's fall from grace in the Garden of Eden, and his redemption through Jesus. The Bible is not “just a book” to be compared to Shakespeare, Homer, Plato, or others. There is **no other book like it**, not in continuity, circulation, translation, survival, teaching, or influence. It is the *only* book that is truly a universal manual for all people everywhere, any time, and in any culture.

The Bible can be believed today—“not in part, but the whole.” From Genesis to Malachi, Matthew to Revelation, God's Word is inspired, not someone's clever imagination or interpretation!

THE BLESSED TRUTH OF THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS

James W. Farris

THE CHILD OF God today can boldly declare that Jesus Christ did arise from the grave, conquering death and offering hope for every individual in the world. As students of the Bible one of the things in which we *must* believe is the resurrection. It is obvious that

Christianity and the resurrection go together and cannot be separated.

There are three major areas which prove the resurrection did take place:

1. The prophecies and their fulfillment present unshakable evidence to the world

In Psalm 16:10 David said concerning the coming Messiah, "*For thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades; neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption.*" Jesus Christ foretold His own resurrection even when His disciples did not know what was meant by His statement in Matthew 12:40: "*For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so shall the son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.*" And again, "*From that time forth Jesus began to show unto His disciples how that He must go into Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed and be raised again the third day*" (Matthew 16:21). Finally, He promised in Matthew 26:32, "*After I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee.*"

2. The training of the Roman Guards gives great evidence to the resurrection

Some of the best trained men were placed at the door of the tomb for the very reason of keeping watch. The enemies of Christ actually tried to prevent the power of God. In Matthew 27:62-66 the officials said, "*Lest his disciples come by night and steal him away and say to the people, 'He is risen from the dead.'*" Nevertheless, no matter what feeble men tried to do, they could not stop the power of God Almighty and, yes, the tomb was found empty.

3. The actions of the enemies of Christ substantiate the resurrection

It was the enemies of Jesus who made up a lie, stating that the disciples came and stole away the body of the Lord (Matthew 28:11-15). Yet, each of the inspired writers of the gospel accounts declared that, "*He is not here, He is risen*" (Matthew 28:6).

The resurrection was a major truth which the Apostles used to give credence to the Messiahship of Jesus. Peter declared with boldness, "*Him...ye have taken and with wicked hands have crucified and slain, whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death because it was not possible that He should be holden of it*" (Acts 2:23,24). The greatest difference exists between the apostles before and after the resurrection. Previously, they had cowered and

fled from the trial of Jesus, but at Pentecost they claimed to have seen the resurrected Lord, freed from the confines of the tomb.

Paul discussed the significance of the resurrection for Christians today. *"For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive"* (1 Corinthians 15:21,22). The life we shall obtain is based in the fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Without the resurrection we would have no hope. As Paul said, *"If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable"* (1 Corinthians 15:19). Since we know that Christ did come back from the dead, we have the greatest hope and the greatest reason to live for Him.

Is There Conflict Between The Bible And The Theory Of Evolution?

Maxie B. Boren

MILLIONS OF PEOPLE have been misled into believing there is no conflict between the theory of evolution and the Bible. Even many religious people have been so duped. These have tried to harmonize "atheistic evolution" and the Bible by embracing so-called "theistic evolution", accepting the idea that God brought life to be as we know it by the mechanism of evolution. But the fact is that the theory of evolution is incompatible with the Scriptures, regardless of whether one tries to include God to some degree or not. (And just for the record: the vast majority of adamant evolutionists DO NOT BELIEVE IN GOD, and despise the Genesis account.) Why, I ask, would a Christian be inclined to seek "harmony" with a system of thinking that denies God?

Many, if not most, evolutionists say that life came into existence through "spontaneous generation", thus bypassing God as the source of life. In the book, **Biological Science - An Inquiry Into Life**, published in 1963, and produced by the American Institute of Biological Sciences, it is stated: "We know that the world was once without life—that life appeared later. How? We think it was by spontaneous generation!" (p.41). Furthermore, the authors affirmed: "Now if one believes in the occurrence of spontaneous generation, he cannot also strictly believe in an orderly origin of living things."

Let it register in your mind the position taken by the evolutionists: (1) By "spontaneous generation" life came to be; (2) One cannot

believe in “**spontaneous generation**” and at the same time believe in an “**orderly origin of living things.**” Therefore, by the evolutionists’ own declaration, *one cannot believe the evolutionary theory and at the same time believe the Biblical account of creation in Genesis 1.* Yes, there is indeed conflict between the theory of evolution and the Bible! Make no mistake about it! The evolutionists recognize it. And so should believers in God!

I for one abhor, denounce, and repudiate the theory of evolution:

(1) Because it attempts to offer an explanation for the existence of the universe and life apart from the Creator, and in so doing robs God of the rightful glory and praise He should receive (read Psalm 33:6-8; 146:1-6; 148:1-5,13; Acts 17:22-28; Romans 11:33,36; Ephesians 3:20,21; Revelation 4:11, etc.). How can a Christian subscribe to anything that does that? Christians should be continually offering God praise for His creative genius, not compromising with the enemies of God by giving credence to their godless theories!

(2) Because by the teaching of the theory of evolution, faith is subverted in the hearts of the susceptible and ill-informed, separating them from God, and planting in their hearts a “philosophical approach” to life that leaves God out (read Hebrews 11:1-3,6; Romans 1:18-23).

(3) Because the theory of evolution, which teaches that life spontaneously arose from non-life, eliminates the basis for proper human conduct. If man is just the “highest rung” on the evolutionary ladder of blind chance development, and there is no Creator to whom man is accountable, then why act differently from the beasts? Such thinking not only lends full support to the philosophies of hedonism and humanism, but also to “master race” Nazism and such like!

My friends, “the theory of evolution” is a diabolical lie of Satan, and is a very real contributing factor to the social and moral decline of our world.

PREACH THE WORD

Avon Malone

PAUL PLEADS “*preach the word.*” To do otherwise is to prostitute the pulpit. To do otherwise is to feed the heavy, hungry hearts with garbage. To do otherwise is to dishonor Christ and to betray the burdened world we would seek to serve.

The devil would divert us. If by diversionary devices he can keep us preoccupied with superficial side-issues, the great work of

preaching the Word will go begging. A powerless pulpit with no real message will be but a prelude to profound and deserved oblivion.

Why preach the wonderful word? Hear the answer given by the Word itself : *"Of his own will he brought us forth by word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures"* (James 1:18). *"For the word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart"* (Hebrews 4:12). *"Sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth ... and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"* (John 17:17; 8:32). *"And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God..."* (Ephesians 6:17). *"And now I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you the inheritance among all them that are sanctified"* (Acts 20:32).

Edmund Burke, the great English statesman, in defining the responsibilities of a member of Parliament to his constituents said, "He owes you not his industry only, but his judgment, and he betrays, rather than serves you, when he sacrifices it to your opinion." *The gospel preacher owes you the judgment of God and His Word, and he betrays you when he sacrifices it to your opinion.*

How timeless the solemn charge, **"Preach the word"!**

By What Standard Of Authority?

Wendell Winkler

BY WHAT AUTHORITY do you practice the things you do in religion? Let us observe the following questions:

Is "the majority" the correct standard of authority? Surely not. Through time the majority has been in the wrong. Where was the majority when the flood came? What about Sodom and Gomorrah? Jesus said many would go in the broad way that leads to destruction (Matthew 7:13,14). The majority is not the correct standard of authority.

Are "kinsmen" the correct standard of authority? Surely not. If they were, then every religion, even those that deny the divinity of Christ and reject the Bible as the infallible guide in matters of religion, would be all right if such was accepted by kinsmen. Kinsmen are not the standard of authority.

Are "the creeds of men" the correct standard of authority? Surely not. They are contradictory to the inspired and infallible Word

of God. They contain the doctrines and commandments of men, concerning which Jesus said, *"But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men"* (Matthew 15:9). The creeds of men are not the correct standard of authority.

Is **"I think" the correct standard of authority?** Surely not. In Jeremiah 10:23 we read, *"O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps."* Also, observe Proverbs 14:12, *"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the 'ways of death.'"* "I think" is not the correct standard of authority.

Christ and His testament is the correct standard of authority. All authority in heaven and in earth has been given unto Christ (Matthew 28:18). His testament is complete, final and all-sufficient (John 16:13; Jude 3). Religious practices are to be based upon His word. Peter wrote, *"If any man speak, let him speak as of the oracles of God"* (1 Peter 4:11). In view of this, can you give book, chapter, and verse from the New Testament for what you practice in religion?

Man's Need For God

Ancil Jenkins

HOW TRAGIC TO have a false knowledge of God. A friend of mine recounted a conversation he had with an acquaintance. My friend said that in the middle of their discussion she suddenly spoke of spiritual matters. She startled him by saying, "There probably isn't a God, and if there is, He might be a she."

What has brought man to this and other false pictures of God? It is not that God has failed to adequately reveal Himself to man. Nature is man's beginning textbook about God (Psalm 19:1; Romans 1:19,20). The Bible is our written source of knowledge of Him. He gave His final, fullest revelation in the person of Jesus (John 5:39; 20:30,31). Jesus told His disciples, *"Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father?'"* (John 14:9; see also Colossians 1:19; 2:3, 9; Hebrews 1:3).

It seems there are two factors that keep man from knowing God as he should. One is man's intentional ignorance. Although God has provided man with the opportunity to know Him, many see little need or use of knowing Him.

The pride of man hinders his awareness of God. Man's only proper response to God is to praise and honor Him for what He is.

This is done by worship in song and prayer. It is characterized by a sacrificial lifestyle. It is even done in the way we eat and drink (1 Corinthians 10:31).

What is the inevitable result of man's refusal to know God and glorify Him? Romans 1 presents two disastrous results. Man degenerates deeper and deeper into sin. His worship becomes idolatry, and his lifestyle becomes sensual. The result is acts that are perverse and are worthy of death (Romans 1:28-32).

Even more horrifying is God's response. Paul speaks of God giving up on such individuals (Romans 1:24,26,28). The inevitable and eventual result of a failure to know God is damnation. When a person deliberately refuses to know God, God reacts the same way.

How these thoughts should cause us to look to God's Word to see if we really know Him as He is! If we do not, let us seek to know Him, for only in Him is life that is life indeed. †

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(See Rule 3)

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I Sunny David, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

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