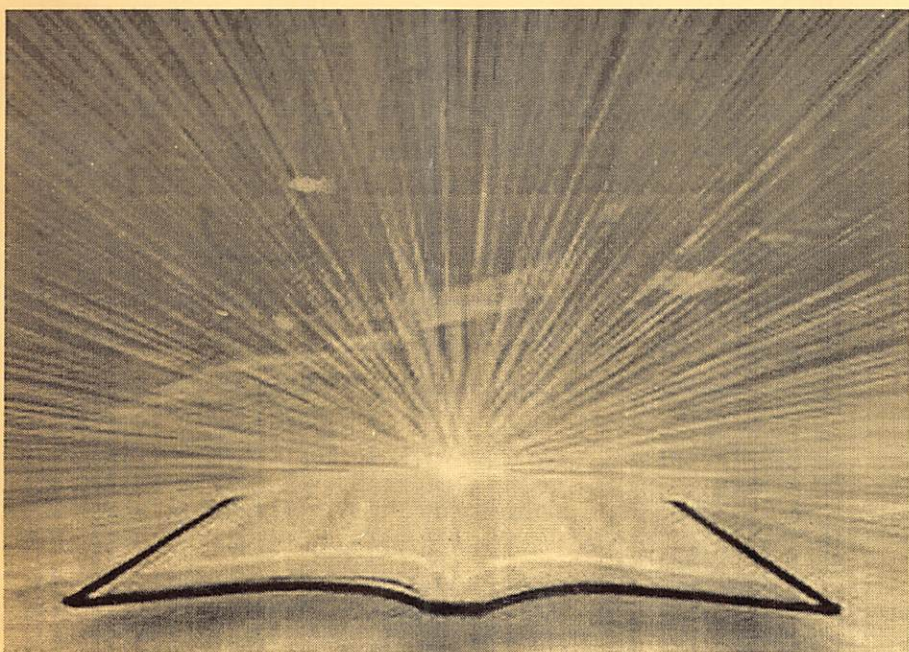


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THE BIBLE TEACHER



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).

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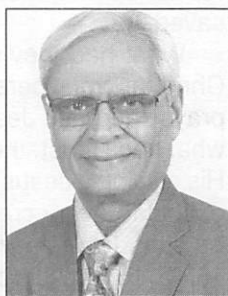
January 2022

No. 9

Editorial

What Does the Bible Teach?

There Is No Salvation Outside The Church



GOD HAS ALWAYS LOCATED SALVATION in a certain place designated by Him. In Noah's day God had placed salvation in the Ark. (Genesis 6). Listen to what the apostle Peter wrote, ".....while the ark was being prepared, IN WHICH a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water." (1 Peter 3:20). Who did the saving? God, of course. But where and how were they saved? **In the ark**, through water. Was the ark important for them to be saved by God? Was the water important for them to be saved in the ark by God? Absolutely true! Likewise, when the tenth plague came upon the land of Egypt, causing the death of the first born in every home, God had instructed Moses, "For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Lord. Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt." (Exodus 12:12,13). For them salvation was located only in the houses on which there was blood of the lamb.

The attitude of indifference of many toward the church is occasioned by a misconception of the church as presented in the

Bible. Usually when people talk of being saved without being members of the church, they actually mean that they can be saved without being members of any denominational church or without joining a denomination. This, of course, is true. Catholic and numerous Protestant churches which exist everywhere today are churches established by men through the years, and came into existence hundreds of years after Christ had established His church, according to His promise (Matthew 16:18), in Jerusalem, in A.D. 33, as we read in the book of Acts chapter number two. According to Acts 2:47, "The Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved." In Matthew 16:18, before His death, Christ had promised "I will build My church" and in Acts 2:47, after His death and resurrection and ascension into heaven, Luke wrote, "And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved." Notice, if you will, there was no joining of the church of man's choice, but the Lord Himself added to His church daily those who were being saved.

What had they done to be saved? Men today teach, "accept Christ as your personal Saviour to be saved", or "say a sinners' prayer and ask Jesus to come into your heart to save you." But what had Christ, the Saviour taught, one must do to be saved? To His disciples Jesus had said, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. **He who believes and is baptized will be saved**; but he who does not believe will be condemned." (Mark 16:15, 16). In Acts chapter 2, when people had heard the gospel of Christ, they asked the apostles, "What shall we do?" They were told to "Repent, and let everyone of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." This is true even today. When people believe in Christ and repent of their sins and all religious wrong practices and beliefs, and are baptized into Christ for the remission of sins, Christ adds them to His church. They do not go and join a denomination. Hundreds and thousands of congregations of churches of Christ exist today throughout the world. The churches of Christ are made up of people who have simply obeyed the gospel. If the church that Christ built was the only one in existence in the days of the Apostles, it is the only one we should be members of today. If we only follow the Bible today, we will not become members of any denomination, Catholic or protestant, etcetera. We will just be members of the church that Jesus built—church of Christ, and Christians, as followers of Christ.

It is true that church can't save anybody. Yet this does not mean

that anybody can be saved outside the church. The church does not save, God does. But where must one be to be saved, is the real question? Let's see what the Bible says. In Ephesians 5:23, it says, "For the husband is the head of the wife, as also Christ is the head of the church; and He is the Saviour of the body." Now what is the body? In the same epistle, we read, "And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body—" Notice what it says, "the church—which is His body—He is the Saviour of the body." Since the church is His body and He is the Saviour of the body, then Christ is the Saviour of the church. The church does not save, Christ does; but He saves the church. So where must one be to be saved? In the church. In which church? In the one that He built and He purchased with His own blood. (Acts 20:28). There is no salvation outside the church of Christ. Just as the eight souls were saved in the ark, so on the day of judgment only those who will be in the church Christ built can hope to be saved.

PREPARE TO MEET GOD

J.C. Choate



IN THE LONG AGO a prophet of God said: "Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel." (Amos 4:12). Although this statement was made hundreds of years ago the truth in it is still applicable to the present world. God warned his people through his servant of the necessity of preparing for the beyond. Likewise, the Lord continues to warn us through the medium of his word of the importance of preparing for the future. This truth is exemplified in view of the fact that death, judgement, and eternity will soon be upon all of us.

It is sad to know that multitudes of people believe that they are preparing to meet God, but in reality are doing nothing more than playing into the hands of the Devil himself. Such is true of those who feel that their good moral deeds will take them home to heaven; of those who are associated with the various religious organizations of man and have placed their hope in such; of those who feel that since they are members of the church all is well with their souls, and so on. These people, and others in similar situations, need to realize that if they are going to prepare to meet God they will have to lay down every thing that is of man and turn to the Lord completely.

It is needful that man prepare in as much as he is a sinner. Paul assures us that all have sinned. (Rom.3:23). All who reach the age of accountability become sinners and consequently stand in need of a saviour. (Rom. 5:8). Still another reason why man must prepare is that those who die in their sins will not be able to enter heaven. Hence, man must purify himself in obedience to God and live holy before Him, so that when he dies he may be able to enter that holy city. (Rev. 22:14)

It has been said that this world is a testing ground. Someone else has said that this life is really for the purpose of getting ready for the life that is to come. Hence, God is testing, trying, or proving us in this world; He wants to see what kind of people we are. If we pass the test, if we are found worthy of Him, we shall be saved in the world to come. However, if we fail to prepare ourselves we will be cast out to destruction.

The alien sinner is to prepare through hearing God's word, believing the Lord, repenting of his sins, confessing his faith in Christ, and being baptized. (Mk. 16:15, 16; Matt. 10:32; Acts 2:38). This is the only way that he can be saved. Now if one has obeyed the gospel and has drifted away he must return through repenting of his sins, confessing his faults, and asking for forgiveness. (James 5:16). If one is in this condition he must of necessity take these steps, if he expects to live one day with the Lord. Coming on down to the Christian, he must remain faithful to the Lord if he expects to receive a crown of life. (Rev. 2:10). So you can see, the God of heaven has something for each class of people to do. One cannot prepare to meet God by just sitting around on the stool of do nothing, but such matters demand one's serious attention, and moreover, his immediate action.

As stated in the beginning, all should prepare for the future since certain things are going to take place. To begin with, man's death is certain. (Heb. 9:27). After death the judgement will take place and all will be judged according to their works, whether they be good or bad. (2 Cor. 5:10). Finally, eternity will be ushered in, and the Lord tells us that all will live eternally somewhere—in heaven or in hell. (Matt. 25:46). In view of these solemn truths we should want to use every minute to make ready for things which are certain to take place.

Christ invites all to come. (Matt. 11:28-30). Paul exhorts: "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." (2 Cor. 6:2). The Lord has further invited: "And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." (Rev. 22:17). Sinner friend, hear the

Lord's invitation and prepare to meet God; erring Christian, don't let your pride and sin send you to hell, but return to your first love that you might prepare for the great beyond; dear Christian, remain true to the Lord all the days of your life and heaven one day will be your eternal home. God pleads with man to get ready; let's prepare now because heaven is worth preparing for.

Why Does God Let Bad Things Happen?

Bruce McLarty

WHY DOES GOD ALLOW the disease to strike, the terrorist to kill, the tornado to destroy, the child to die, the crime to be committed? Perhaps the most difficult question for a Christian to answer is, "Why does God let bad things happen?" It is this question that unbelievers point to as proof that the Christian concept of God is inconsistent and this question that Christians agonize over in their deepest struggles with doubt.

The problem arises from two truths about God that appear to be in conflict with each other. Christians believe that God is all-powerful; there is nothing that God cannot do. We also believe that God is good and that he desires the very best for his creation. How then can a good God allow suffering in the world? This dilemma is commonly referred to as the problem of evil. Doesn't evil prove that either God is not all-powerful or that he is not completely good? Would an all-powerful God who is good and loving allow bad things to happen to his people? These are questions that cry out for answers if faith is to survive.

NO EASY ANSWERS

There is a sense in which the entire Bible reflects the struggle with the problem of evil. One of the first examples of this is found in the story of Joseph. After Joseph had endured the hatred of his brothers, slavery in the land of Egypt and imprisonment as a criminal, he experienced a complete turn of events in his life. He was freed from prison and elevated to the position of being the second most powerful man in all of Egypt. His brothers, who had once contemplated murdering Joseph but had sold him into slavery instead, were forced by famine to come to Egypt to buy food. Predictably, when Joseph the Egyptian revealed his true identity to

his nervous siblings, they feared for their lives. When they pleaded for him not to kill them and offered to be his slaves, Joseph said,

*“Don’t be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but **God intended it for good** to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives” (Genesis 50: 19-20).*

Joseph was wrestling with nothing less than the problem of evil. Why had God allowed such bad things to happen to him through the years? Would not an all-good and all-powerful God have prevented his suffering? Apparently not. For whatever reason, God had let bad things happen to Joseph for years. Yet, Joseph was able to look beyond the pain and find purpose in what had taken place. God, he believed, had been working toward a greater good, something that had been hidden from Joseph’s eyes for years.

When Bible-reading people think of suffering and the problem of evil, their minds often turn to Job. In this classic story of suffering, we find a godly man who was wealthy and enjoyed a large, blessed family. Then, one day, everything fell apart. His livestock was stolen, his wealth was lost, his children were killed and his health was destroyed. Everything was taken from Job.

Three friends came to sit with Job and help him in his time of near-total destruction. For seven days they sat silently next to him on the ground. After that, they began trying to explain to their friend why he had suffered so much. The book of Job reports that their firm conviction was that all suffering could be traced back to sin; for Job to be suffering so much, he must have committed some terrible sin.

However, in the end, God spoke up and rebuked Job’s friends for their foolish and false words of comfort. Job responded,

“I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted...Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know” (Job 42:3).

Job received no easy or complete answer about his suffering. However, his faith endured, and he confessed that God was both all-powerful and completely good. His suffering was not explained, but neither did it destroy his faith.

Joseph and Job remind us that there are no easy answers to our questions about why God lets bad things happen. Sometimes, as was true in the experience of Joseph, time eventually helps make sense of our hurts; we can see the purpose in our pain. But this does not always happen. Sometimes, losses and pains never make sense. The suffering seems purposeless, and we are tempted to

doubt either the power or the goodness of God. When it comes to human suffering, there are no easy answers. Instead, there are many ideas about life and God that must be considered as we grapple with the question of why God lets bad things happen. The following are two such ideas:

THE PROBLEM WITH FREE WILL

When God created human beings, he created us with free moral will. God did not manufacture robots who would mindlessly do whatever they were programmed to do; he made people who could say "Yes" or "No" to the one who created them. God said to the first man and woman,

"Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground" (Genesis 3:3).

Genesis also records that God instructed the first couple, *"You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die" (Genesis 3:3).*

From the very beginning of our existence, we have had a choice. This free moral will is, at the same time, a wonderful gift and a terrible burden. No one would give it away, and yet we struggle with the responsibility that comes with it.

Our free moral will helps to explain much of the suffering in this world that is caused by human behavior. Murder, robbery, child abuse, terrorism and genocide are the sorts of things that make our spirits groan and cause us to scream out, "Why?" Surely God could stop such suffering, so why doesn't he? At least part of the answer may lie in this matter of free will.

You and I do not want God to take away **our** freedom to make our own choices. But we sometimes insist that he take away the freedom of anyone who would cause suffering.

Take, for example, the horrible events of September 11, 2001, when terrorists slammed hijacked airplanes into the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and a field in Pennsylvania, killing more than 3,000 innocent people. Almost everyone with any faith cried out that day, "Where is God? How could he allow such a thing to happen?" But what did we really want him to do? Did we want him to take away the free will of the hijackers? Sure we did! But did we also want him to take away our freedom to choose our response to God? The inconsistency of our answer is obvious; we want God to limit the free will of everyone but us!

THE BIGGER PICTURE

There is a small book near the end of the Old Testament that helps us confront the issue of the bigger picture. Habakkuk was a prophet who complained to God,

How Long, O Lord, must I call for help, but you do not listen? Or cry out to you, "Violence!" but you do not save (Habakkuk 1:2)?

Habakkuk was bothered by the way the wicked Israelites were mistreating their poor neighbors. So, God told Habakkuk not to worry, because he was sending the Babylonians to overtake their kingdom. The prophet was stunned by what he heard! How could God use a nation that was even more unrighteous than Israel to resolve the first problem? Habakkuk had wanted a little justice, just enough to clean up the mess he could see, not enough to destroy his homeland.

In the end, after his overwhelming encounter with God, Habakkuk began to understand a little bit of how much he **did not** understand. He sighed,

Yet I will wait patiently for the day of calamity to come on the nation invading us. Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior (Habakkuk 3:16-18).

Habakkuk's encounter with God suggests that our understanding of suffering is perhaps like that of a child who is receiving his immunizations. The stunned infant screams as a sharp needle is plunged into his tender flesh. He cries out in confused pain, not able to make sense of what is happening to him. All he knows is that he hurts and that the adults in the room are doing nothing to stop this terrible injustice. However, the child's mother, perhaps with tears in her own eyes, can see the bigger picture and knows that the momentary pain is nothing compared to the pain from which the child is being protected.

Is this how God views our suffering? Does he hold us and weep with us, knowing that if we were only able to see and understand the big picture, we would appreciate the reason for his actions? Along this line, the Apostle Paul wrote,

I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us....And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose (Romans 8:18,28).

So, why does God let bad things happen? I don't know. No one

fully does. The free will of man and the bigger picture of life and history are partial answers. But I do know that Joseph, Job, Habakkuk and millions of believers through the centuries have held on to their faith as they walked through the valley of deep darkness and have trusted that there is no limit to the goodness and the power of their God!

THE 20:20 VISION OF THE CHURCH

John Gipson

SOMEONE HAS CALLED ACTS 20:20 the 20-20 vision of the church.

Remember the setting. The apostle Paul was at Miletus, and from there he sent a message to the elders of the church in Ephesus asking them to come to him. It was important that these leaders of the church be alert to the danger of fierce wolves coming into the flock of God. Paul begins his warning by reminding these men of how earnestly he had worked while he was in Asia. Then he makes a statement about how he went about his work, as recorded in Acts 20:20. *"I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house."*

The public proclamation of the Gospel is a pattern set in the first century which is still followed today. You can hear the Good News proclaimed from the pulpit, web sites, the printed page, and through the means of radio and television. It is public and powerful.

But Paul realized that not everyone would be reached by public proclamation. More needed to be done, and therefore he taught *"from house to house."* It was through a combination of public and private teaching that all Asia heard the Word of God. And it was done in such a short period of time that it still leaves my head reeling. Do you remember the time frame? *"This continued for two years, so that all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks"* (Acts 19:10).

Just think — in two years! Twenty-four months! And that in a time when Paul didn't have all of our modern means of communication! „

Could it be that we have not been as successful as the early Christians were because we have followed only one-half of Paul's pattern?

ARE YOU IN CHRIST?

CHRISTIANITY IS A RELATIONSHIP with God called being “in Christ.” Before becoming a Christian a person is “in sin” and “in the world.” This word “in” means “within” or “inside of.” It expresses a person’s relationship or his position in relation to Christ or the world. We cannot understand Christianity unless we understand these relationships.

“IN SIN” BY DISOBEDIENCE

Man is not born in sin. Instead, he enters sin when he is old enough to disobey God. Jesus said that children are pure (Matthew 19:14). Sin is transgression of God’s law (1 John 3:4), not something passed down from parents.

Because the world is full of sin, the Bible says that “the whole world lieth in wickedness” (1 John 5:19). Non-Christians are “dead in trespasses and sins” (Ephesians 2:1). Man must not continue “in sin” (Romans 6:1). He must change his relationship to sin.

Sin keeps one from fellowship with God. Since God cannot stand sin, He cannot have fellowship with anyone “in sin” (Isaiah 59:2). His perfect holiness cannot have companionship with sin, because sin is “ungodliness,” that which is un-God-like, contrary to God’s very nature (Romans 1:18). Sin breaks fellowship with God.

FORGIVENESS OF SIN “IN CHRIST”

Because God loved man, He provided for man’s sins to be forgiven so that fellowship could be restored. God gave His Son to be a sin-offering, enabling God to punish Jesus for man’s sins, so that man need not receive sin’s punishment. But to have forgiveness of sins, man must be “in Christ” where God’s forgiveness is found. Only in the death of Jesus can man’s sins be forgiven (Ephesians 1:7).

ALL SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS ARE “IN CHRIST”

Ephesians 1:3 says that all spiritual blessings are “in Christ.” Because God cannot fellowship anyone outside of forgiveness provided “in Christ” all of His spiritual benefits for man are “in Christ.” God’s love is “in Christ” (Romans 8:39, 1 Timothy 1:14). His grace or undeserved favor are “in Christ” (1 Corinthians 1:4, 2 Timothy 2:1). Reconciliation with God is “in Christ” (2 Corinthians 5:19, Ephesians 2:16). Redemption from sin is “in Christ” (2 Timothy 2:10, Romans 3:24). Man has no spiritual blessings outside of Christ.

FAITH AND TRUST "IN CHRIST"

Because the death of Jesus paid the penalty for man's sins, man must trust in Jesus' death as the basis of forgiveness before God. Faith "in" Christ Jesus was the message that the apostles preached (Acts 24:24, Galatians 2:20). Men believed that Jesus had died for sinners and trusted this atoning blood as God's only means of their forgiveness. "In Him was life and the life was the light of men" (John 1:4).

BAPTIZED "INTO" CHRIST

Galatians 3:26, 27 says: "For ye are all children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." Notice that faith in Christ makes one a child of God when he is baptized "into" Christ. The word "into" means "from without to within." A believer's faith brings him "into" Christ when he is baptized to enter Christ or "put on Christ." Baptism is the point at which a believer enters into Christ where forgiveness is (Romans 6:3-5). If one has not been buried with Christ, he has not "put on Christ." Man can have no fellowship with God until he is baptized into Christ's death where God's forgiveness is found.

IN CHRIST AND IN THE CHURCH

A Christian's relationship with God by being forgiven in Christ puts him into the church. 3,000 Christians were added "to the church" by the Lord the first time people were saved in Christ's death (Acts 2:47). In the Bible the church was simply people in Christ Jesus. Paul wrote to Christians sanctified "in Christ" at Corinth and called them "the church of God" (1 Corinthians 1:2). When anyone today is baptized into Christ, he is at the same moment in the church, since the church is nothing but saved people called out of sin into Christ. Thus the church is purchased with Christ's blood. Jesus gave Himself for the church because He gave Himself for Christians, and Christians are the church (Acts 20:28, Eph. 5:25).

ONE IN CHRIST

The church is often called Christ's "body" (Ephesians 1:22,23, Colossians 1:18,24). By being baptized into Christ, Christians are at the same time "baptized into one body" (1 Corinthians 12:13). Christians are called the many members (parts) of Christ's one spiritual body, the church (Romans 12:5). Jesus prayed that all believers be one in God and Christ (John 17:21). Paul said that all are "one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). Christians must be "of

the same mind in the Lord" (Philippians 4:2). Everyone in fellowship with God in Christ must be one with everyone else in fellowship with God in Christ. There is "one body" (church), just as there is "one Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Ephesians 4:4,5). Division into different churches, is sinful.

GROWTH AND LABOR IN CHRIST

The relationship "in Christ" includes work, growth, and fruit-bearing in the Lord. Labor is not in vain "in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:58). In Christ Jesus only a faith which works in love avails anything (Galatians 5:6). Paul's converts to Christ were called his "work in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 9:1). Babies "in Christ" must grow together in Christ by being fitly-framed as parts of the building of Christ, the church (1 Corinthians 3:1, Ephesians 2:21). The Christian's relationship "in Christ" is a continual growth process by which he relates himself to other parts of Christ's body, the church.

DYING IN THE LORD

"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord" (Revelation 14:13). The lifelong relationship "in Christ" results in dying "in the Lord." Only by living, growing, and laboring in the Lord can Christians die in the Lord. 1 Thessalonians 4:16 describes the "dead in Christ." These are those who were baptized into Christ, who lived in Christ, and who finally died in Christ. Their wonderful relationship with God had grown closer through the years until it brought them fully into the presence of God.

"I Glorified Thee On The Earth"

Clem Thurman

JESUS, PRAYING TO THE Father just before His betrayal and arrest, said, *"I glorified thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which thou hast given me to do"* (John 17:4). By contrast, when the apostle Paul listed the sins of the Gentiles, he first showed, *"Knowing God, they glorified him not as God, neither gave thanks"* (Rom. 1:21). Jesus knew what was expected of Him, and He did it. The Gentiles also had knowledge of God, but refused to glorify Him: *"Their senseless heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things... Who,*

knowing the ordinance of God, that they that practice such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but also consent with them practice them" (Rom. 1:22-23,32).

The sins that make one "worthy of death" bring one under the just wrath of God. The apostle John tells us, "*This is the second death, even the lake of fire*" (Rev. 20:14). Surely, then, we do not want to suffer that death which results from sin: "*The wages of sin is death*" (Rom. 6:23). Those Gentiles were doomed to spiritual death, eternal separation from God in the lake of fire, for not glorifying God. Jesus, on the other hand, did glorify God. He is our pattern.

JESUS GLORIFIED GOD BY HIS LIFE

Jesus constantly showed His purpose in coming to the earth: "*I am come down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me*" (John 6:38). When His disciples talked about food with Him, Jesus replied, "*My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to accomplish his work*" (John 4:34). When He came to the close of His life, Jesus prayed, "*Father, not my will, but thine, be done*" (Luke 22:42). He could pray that because He lived it. He came from heaven, where He was "*on equality with God,*" and took the form of man in order die for our sins (Phil. 2:5-8; Heb. 2:14-15). Everything He did, His entire life, was then pointed toward to Calvary — to fulfill the purpose for which the Father had sent Him to this world. He lived in perfect obedience, "*Tempted in all points like as we are yet without sin*" (Heb. 4:15), setting an example for us (1 Pet. 2:21). But His primary purpose was to offer Himself on the cross as the perfect sacrifice for our sins. He kept that purpose in mind, and glorified God by fulfilling it.

God has a purpose for our lives, "*Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man*" (Eccle. 12:13). If Jesus glorified God by accomplishing the work God gave Him, then most assuredly we glorify God when we fulfill the purpose God designed for us. "*He died for all, that they that live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto him who for their sakes died and rose again*" (2 Cor. 5:15). If we fail to live for Him, then we become like those whom Paul condemned in Rom. 1:21. If an automobile malfunctions, it hardly is a credit to its manufacturer. On the other hand, if it does what it is designed to do, an automobile reflects glory and credit to the ones who made it. That is precisely the way it is with us. When we fulfill the purpose for which God created us, we bring glory and honor to Him.

WE GLORIFY GOD BY OUR OBEDIENCE

Just as Jesus glorified God by doing His will, so do we. The Lord said, *"Ye are the light of the world... Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven"* (Matt. 5:14-16). Not only will our obedient lives glorify God, but such lives will cause others to glorify God, also. We are to be *"children of obedience"* (1 Pet. 1:14), as we follow in the steps of Jesus. The Scriptures say of Him, *"Though he was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation"* (Heb. 5:8-9). Just as we are *"made free from sin"* by obedience (Rom. 6:18), so the Bible says, *"Ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth"* (1 Pet. 1:22). There is just no substitute for doing what God tells us. We cannot glorify God while ignoring what he wants us to do!

The so-called golden text of the Bible states, *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life"* (John 3:16). Paul writes later, *"God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us"* (Rom. 5:8). That love demands a response from us: *"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God"* (Mark 12:30). Our lives should reflect God's love, as we seek to glorify Him. In fact, the life that glorifies God is based on, *"Faith working through love"* (Gal. 5:6). The Lord chose apostles to preach His gospel to the world, and they wrote many letters to help us know God and our duty to Him. But Paul wrote, *"Ye are our epistle, known and read of all men, being manifest that ye are an epistle of Christ"* (2 Cor. 3:2). Others are watching us, "reading" the way we speak and act. Many times Christians are the only "Bible" an unbelieving world will read. When we live as God directs, we convince the world and bring glory to God.

WE GLORIFY GOD IN THE NAME WE WEAR

"If any man suffer as Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this name" (1 Pet. 4:16). The apostles, beaten and threatened with worse if they continued to preach Christ, rejoiced that they were *"counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the Name"* (Acts 5:41). Some 700 years before Christ, the prophet wrote, *"I will give to those within my house and within my walls, a name better than of sons and daughters... The nations shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory, and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name... Ye shall*

leave your name for a curse unto my chosen: for the Lord God shall slay thee, and shall call his servants by another name" (Isa. 56:5; 62:2; 65:15). In Acts 10 we read of the conversion of the first Gentiles, then in Acts 11, *"The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch"* (v. 26). As the prophet had foretold, the *"mouth of the Lord"* gave this name.

God made a promise to Abraham, renewed to Isaac and then to Jacob. When Jacob wrestled with the angel of God, his name was changed to *"Israel"* (Gen. 32:24-28). *"Isra"* in Hebrew means "Prince." *"El"* in Hebrew means "God." Hence, Israel means "Prince of God." Jacob's descendants became a great people, a great nation, and were chosen by God to be His special people. But they were never known as "Jacobites." They were *"Israelites."* As God said, *"And all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the Jehovah; and they shall be afraid of thee"* (Deut. 28:10). They wore a name that identified them as God's people, and in that name they glorified God. Under the New Testament, also, God has given a name for His people to wear: *"Christian...let him glorify God in this name"* (1 Pet. 4:16).

WE GLORIFY GOD IN THE CHURCH

We live in a time when it is popular to belittle the value of the church. But read the Scripture: *"Unto him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations for ever and ever"* (Eph. 3:21). I will readily agree that I cannot glorify God in a denomination, but we can and must glorify God in the church we read about in the Bible. If Christians are to glorify God *"in the church and in Christ Jesus,"* would you not take it to be the church of Jesus Christ? He promised, *"I will build my church"* (Matt. 16:18). Notice that Jesus called it, *"My church."* It is not my church, it is not Martin Luther's church, it is not John the Baptist's church. It is the church of Christ. He is builder and head of His church.

Not only did Christ build the church, He bought it. To the elders of the church in Ephesus, Paul said, *"Feed the church of the Lord, which he purchased with his own blood"* (Acts 20:28). The Lord Jesus is the only Savior (John 14:6; Acts 4:12). But what happens when He saves people? *"They that received his word were baptized, and there were added to them in that day about three thousand souls... The Lord added to the church daily such as were being saved"* (Acts 2:41,47). The same Lord who saved those people added them to His church. He never added them to a denomination, but to the church which He built and bought and in which we are to

glorify God. When people became Christians, they also became members of the church which Jesus built. It is as Christians, in that church, that we glorify God. What a shame that so many try to glorify God, while they reject the church in which God wants them.

As Jesus prayed, *"I have glorified thee"* (John 17:4), He continued, *"Now glorify thou me with thine own self, which glory I had with thee before the world was"* (John 17:5). Again He said, *"Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him"* (John 13:31). Jesus was crowned with glory and honor when he was received into heaven and sat down on the right hand of the Father (Phil. 2:9; Heb. 2:9). Just as Jesus was glorified, so shall we be, if we love and serve God in this life. *"As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God... And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified with him"* (Rom. 8:14,17).

Let us learn to live in such a way that when this life comes to a close, we may be able to say with Jesus, *"I glorified thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which thou hast given me to do. And now, Father, glorify thou me with thine own self"* (John 17:4-5).

WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF "JEHOVAH" AS GOD'S NAME?

Bob Prichard

NAMES ARE IMPORTANT. It is difficult for us to conceive of things apart from their names. The many different names for God in the Bible describe and demonstrate His character. "Jehovah" (usually rendered "LORD" in the King James Version) appears often in the Scriptures. *Jehovah* means "the Eternal One, the Unchangeable One, the One Who was, and is, and is to come." When Moses met God in the burning bush, he asked His name. "And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you" (Exodus 3:14). God spoke as Jehovah, the self-existent God.

The Hebrew people came to consider one particular name of God His personal name. Scholars call this name, derived from four Hebrew letters, the "tetragrammaton" (from "tetra," four, and "gram," letter). The Jews were so concerned about using this name in vain that they would not even pronounce it when reading the Bible aloud. (They substituted "Adonai," meaning Lord.) As a result, the proper

pronunciation of the original Hebrew is unknown. Most scholars say “Yahweh” or “Yahveh” is likely the proper pronunciation, although Jehovah has been used since the sixteenth century.

The Bible stresses the importance of respect for God by emphasizing the importance of the name of God. Solomon said, “The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe” (Proverbs 18:10). The psalmist said, “He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant forever: holy and reverend is his name” (Psalm 111 :9). (By the way, “reverend” refers only to God in the Bible, and never to man.) Isaiah spoke of “the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones” (Isaiah 57:15). Jesus told His disciples, “After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name” (Matthew 6:9).

The third commandment warns, “Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain” (Exodus 20:7). Although this commandment is part of the old covenant, the need for respect for the Lord’s names continues. Paul wrote, “Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed” (1 Timothy 6:1).

The Worship Of God Is...

Ron Bryant

PRESCRIBED

It should be sufficient to say that the worship of God is **prescribed**.

“Make a joyful shout to the LORD, all you lands!

“Serve the LORD with gladness; Come before His presence with singing.

“Know that the LORD, He is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.

“Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, And into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name” (Psalm 100:1-4).

God has decreed the content, the action, and the attitude of

worship. Consequently, there is no room for self-will. If the course followed is to be "holy," the elements of personal pleasure, of personal preference, of mere self-will must be excluded. What abides as valid is that which God has ordained.

PURE

Additionally, it should be evident that the worship of God is to be **pure**. *Pure devotion* without admixture of motive, *pure moral lives* without the contamination of willful transgression, *pure adoration* without thought of self—these describe the condition of the will in the context of true worship.

"Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? Or who may stand in His holy place ?

"He who has clean hands and a pure heart, Who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, Nor sworn deceitfully.

"He shall receive blessing from the LORD, And righteousness from the God of his salvation" (Psalm 24:3-5).

That worship cannot be acceptable in which the suppliant's voice is one way and his heart is another (Matthew 15:8f). It is but an empty routine or ceremony unless the heart is involved. Purity of heart and life, of motive and action, are part and parcel of true worship. Worship serves to make the worshipper purer.

PURPOSED

Worship cannot be entered into apart from noble **purpose**. It is a deliberate purposed action. In worship one chooses to "bow the knee," to "pay obeisance," to "do homage."

"Oh come, let us worship and bow down; Let us kneel before the LORD our Maker.

For He is our God, And we are the people of His pasture, And the sheep of His hand" (Psalm 95:6,7).

"...at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth,

"and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:10).

It is with resolve of heart that one can come, humbling the heart, seeking after and adoring the Father. It is in devotion that is with singleness of purpose that the believer is able to pay tribute, to give himself, and to praise his Maker.

PATTERNED

Worship is the desire of the redeemed, and it is also the **pattern**

of their lives. Apart from a life yielded to the Savior, longing to honor Heaven's purpose, acts of worship are just that — acts. The moments of specific outpourings of worship, either public or private, are to flow out of lives yielded to the holy purposes of God. Those moments empower and enrich the life of the redeemed, yet times of worship are not a substitute for righteousness.

"He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there " (Matthew 14:23).

"...present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Romans 12:1,2).

The life that is a living sacrifice must delight in and desire to join in the deliberate praise and homage of the Almighty. The worshipper of God finds compatibility between the aspects of his *praise of the Father and his life for the Savior.*

PRAISE

No aspect of worship is more intriguing than the aspect of **praise**. The joyousness of worship is beautiful. It excites the soul. It lifts the believer to holy delight, as he senses the *"beauty of holiness"* (Psalm 96:9). To worship is to revel in the majesty and honor of the Almighty. It is to delight in His beauty and strength. It is to offer *"the sacrifice of praise...giving thanks to His holy name"* (Hebrews 13:15).

Is Baptism Important?

Colin McKee

I. BAPTISM IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE IT IS PART OF THE MESSAGE OF CHRIST

When Philip met the man from Ethiopia he taught Jesus to him and in doing so, he taught him baptism. *"Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this scripture, preached Jesus to him. Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, 'See here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?'"* The subject of baptism was necessarily included in the teaching of Christ or else the eunuch would not have known to ask about it.

II. BAPTISM IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE IT IS DIRECTLY RELATED TO SALVATION

Peter states in 1 Peter 3:21, "*There is also an anti-type which now saves us, namely baptism.*" Paul explained that the church is sanctified and cleansed (saved) by the washing of water by the word (Ephesians 5:26). Our Lord Himself directly related baptism to salvation in Mark 16:16: "*He who believes and is baptized will be saved.*" How could anyone be so bold as to say, "He who believes shall be saved, even if he is not baptized"?

III. BAPTISM IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE IN BAPTISM ONE IS CLEANSED FROM, FORGIVEN OF SINS

On Pentecost day Peter told the questioners, "*Repent and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins*" (Acts 2:38). Ananias told Saul, "*...arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins...*" (Acts 22: 16).

IV. BAPTISM IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE BY BAPTISM ONE ENTERS CHRIST

Is it important to be *in Christ*? It is extremely important, because:

1. Only those in Christ are "*new creation*" (2 Corinthians 5:17). Outside of Christ there is no new spiritual creation.
2. All spiritual blessings are in Christ (Ephesians 1:3). No true spiritual blessings are found outside of Christ.
3. We are brought near to God in Christ (Ephesians 2:13).
4. Salvation is in Christ (2 Timothy 2:10; Acts 4:12).

All these blessings are found only in Christ. Therefore it is highly important to be in Christ and the only entrance into Christ is through baptism.

According to the Bible the same action accomplished by the *blood of Christ* is attributed also to *baptism*.

1. "*...washed us from our sins in his blood...*" (Revelation 1:5); "*...be baptized and wash away your sins...*" (Acts 22:16).
2. "*...we have redemption through his blood the forgiveness of sins...*" (Ephesians 1:7). "*Which now saves us, even baptism...*" (1 Peter 3:21).
3. "*...blood... shed for many for the remission of sins...*" (Matthew 26:28). "*...be baptized ... for the remission of sins...*" (Acts 2:38).

Let us believe, teach, and practice the importance of baptism.

THE IMPORTANCE OF NAMES

Jerry Jenkins

DO YOU RECALL THE time spent in choosing the name of that firstborn? Maybe suggestions were sought from friends and loved ones. Perhaps books were browsed to find just that right name. With the oft-quoted statement from Shakespeare and the repeated affirmation, “one name is as good as another,” and “there’s nothing in a name,” from well-intentioned religious people, to the contrary: **names are important to all.**

It was alleged that Chrysostom advised parents, “Give your boy a great Spiritual name and tell him the story repeatedly, then maybe he will live up to his name.” Such philosophy must have worked among the Native Americans, for their children often enhanced their names.

Books have been written which catalogue the number of times a given name has been used. The use of names tends to be cyclical. Name a baby today an unusual name, and in a few years that name may be commonplace.

God has given names. He changed Abram’s name to “Abraham,” Jacob’s name to “Israel,” and He told Elizabeth and Zacharias to name their boy “John.”

The most precious name God ever gave is one that each of His children can wear. God calls His followers “**Sons of God,**” or “**Children of God.**” Oh, what a glorious name! *“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God; therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not”* (1 John 3:1).

This marvelous name is made available by faith which leads to obedience. In the prologue of the Gospel of John, the writer declares: *“He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, (even) to them that believe on his name...”* (John 1:11,12).

The name is not bestowed on those who *inwardly believe* and *mentally* receive Jesus. To such He makes sonship *available*, but it is not *given* at that initial point.

One must turn to the writings of Paul for clarity: *“For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ”* (Galatians 3:26,27). It is not until one has been baptized — the act of spiritual birth into God’s family, according to John 3:3,5 — that any human

becomes a child of Almighty God. God gives us this marvelous, glorious name *after baptism*, and not before.

"For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named" (Ephesians 3:14,15).

Names are important, even more important when they are given by God!

THE PRESERVATION OF THE BIBLE

G.F. Raines

THE BOOK OF GOD, the Holy Bible, has been providentially preserved for us through many turbulent centuries in (1) its manuscripts (copies in the languages in which it was originally written); (2) the versions (translations of the Scriptures into other languages); and (3) the quotations from the Bible in the extant writings of the early church scholars.

It is said that if every copy of the Bible were to be destroyed, it could be nearly reproduced from the ancient quotations alone. Let us consider a few examples:

Theophilus: "Thus he teaches those that do good not to boast, that they be not pleasers of men. *'Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth.'*" (Matthew 6:4).

Tatian: "*All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made*" (John 1:3).

Clement of Alexandria: "*'Behold,' says Paul, 'the goodness and severity of God.'*" (Romans 11:22).

Tertullian: "Paul himself writes to the Philippians, *'If by any means I may attain to the resurrection of the dead.'*" (Philippians 3:11).

Irenaeus (pupil of the apostle John): "And on this account the apostle, in the first Epistle to the Thessalonians, speaking thus, *'May the God of peace sanctify you wholly; and may your whole spirit, soul and body be preserved unto the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.'*" (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

We should be very grateful to God for the preservation of the sacred writings, because, "*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 Timothy 3:16,17).

Jesus says, "*Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away*" (Matthew 24:35).

Peter says, "For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: but the word of the Lord abideth for ever" (1 Peter 1:24, 25).

Last eve I passed beside a blacksmith's door
And heard the anvil ring the vespers chime;
When looking in, I saw upon the floor,
Old hammers worn with beating years of time.

"How many anvils have you had," said I,
"To wear and batter all these hammers so?"
"Just one," said he; then said with twinkling eye,
"The anvil wears the hammers out, you know."

And so, I thought, the anvil of God's Word
For ages skeptic blows have beat upon;
Yet, though the noise of falling blows was heard,
The anvil is unharmed—the hammers gone.

—Anonymous

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Ken Tyler

JESUS ASKED, "FOR WHAT shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul" (Mark 8:36,37)? These marvelous verses tell us of the importance of being saved. Though the devil wants to claim our souls in hell, obviously, Jesus wants us to live eternally with Him. He died on the cross to pay for our sins. The most important question to all of us should be, "What must I do to be saved?" The New Testament plainly teaches there are five steps to salvation:

1. Hear. Hearing of the word is what produces saving faith. Romans 10:17 tells us that "...faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

2. Faith. Listen to Hebrews 11:6, "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

3. Repentance. Repentance is a change of mind that brings about a change in a person's life. In repentance a person determines he is going to serve the Lord regardless of anything else. Paul said in his sermon at Athens, Greece, that God "...commandeth all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30).

4. Confession of Christ as the Son of God. Paul said in Romans 10:9 *"...if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."*

5. Baptism for the Remission of Sins. On the day the church began, when believers asked what they needed to do to be saved, Peter replied, *"...repent, and be baptized...for the remission of sins..."* (Acts 2:38). According to verse 41 about 3,000 were saved that day.

What's keeping you from being saved? Surely you do not want your soul to be lost. Please follow these five steps so you can go to heaven. **Jesus is "...the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Hebrews 5:9).**

THE BIBLE contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, and the happiness of believers.

- Its doctrine is holy, its precepts are binding, its histories are true, and its decisions are immutable.
- Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe, and practice it to be holy.
- It contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you.
- It is the traveler's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword, and the Christian's charter.
- Here Heaven is opened, and the gates of Hell disclosed. Christ Jesus is its grand subject, our good its design, and the glory of God its end.
- It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet.
- Read it slowly, frequently, and prayerfully.
- It is a mine of wealth, health to the soul, and a river of pleasure.
- It is given to you here in this life, will be opened at the judgment, and is established forever.
- It involves the highest responsibility, promises reward for faithful labor, and condemns all who trifle with its sacred contents.

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