

Twentieth-First Annual

TRUTH IN LOVE
LECTURESHIP

Theme:

Facts & Truths
"We Can Know"

May 18-22, 2011

PAUL SAIN, DIRECTOR

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INTRODUCTION

Can we absolutely, without fear of contradiction, **KNOW** some things? If one responds with a definite "NO!" then the question begs to be asked, "*Can they absolutely KNOW that to be true?*"

Television, radio and the printed page continually bombards us with their claim of what is objectively true. From experience we have learned that a significant portion of their "*reports*" is merely their spin or outlandish propaganda. At times it is humorous to hear a report that eating or drinking "XYZ" will cause this ailment or disease. Then a few days or weeks later, a report is offered proclaiming the physical benefits of consuming "XYZ" product. Doctors have urged all to drink eight glasses of water a day and then a while later other doctors have said the benefits are minor at best. Politicians present "*evidence*" (scientific or otherwise) that supposedly substantiates their claims of urgent action which is needed regarding global warming (or something similar), which just happens to match their agenda. Others offer evidence that "*prove*" the opposite as true. Is it possible to obtain truth?

Even America's history, regarding our founding fathers and their belief in Almighty God, is being manipulated and may soon reflect blatant false information (if some have their way).

God's Word informs us of ones 2,000 years ago who were "*false Christs*" and "*deceivers*" (Mark 13:22). Paul and John pled for an examination of the facts to "*prove all things*" (1 Thess 5:21) and "*try the spirits*" (1 John 4:1) to determine if they were of God.

Philosophical skepticism (arguing that we do not have solid evidence for belief in objective truth) can be traced to ancient Greece where Protagoras of Abdera advocated

that since our means of perception (sight, hearing, smell, etc.) are all limited and fallible, then our ability to acquire information about the world is inadequate and we cannot be confident that our information is accurate.

Tragically in our world **RELIGIOUSLY**, the twenty-first century, of compromise, confusion and passive mentality, we are “*told*” we can not know, for certain, many basic truths and facts. It is suggested that to claim such definite knowledge is arrogant and offensive.

So why does this matter? Is this really an important issue that deserves attention and time? The answer is frightening. If “*truth*” is a subjective, relative concept, then what is true for one person may or may not be true for another. If “*truth*” is subjective and relative—then it does not matter what one believes—for it is “*truth*” to that person! To another “*truth*” might be something totally different.

Thus, the question begs to be asked: Is it even possible to determine truth? Have the facts been so mangled that it is no longer possible to learn and absolutely know the truth?

Can we know everything? Obviously not! But though I do not know everything does not automatically conclude that I do not know some things.

In this series of lessons, presented both orally and in this lectureship volume, we will examine and boldly present evidence that proves we can ascertain basic truths and conclude that we indeed can **KNOW** and we can **KNOW** that we **KNOW**! There is solid evidence that constitutes the solid foundation for knowing truth.

Paul Sain
Director of the Lectureship

DEDICATION

The East Hill congregation of the Lord's people celebrate their 60th Anniversary this year on July 3rd (2011). With thanksgiving we pause and reflect on accomplishments and works of the past. With sincere appreciation we consider many faithful servants who are no longer with us on earth, but on whose shoulders we stand. Countless ones have served as elders, deacons, Bible teachers, preachers and so many additional ways that have brought us to the present.

God's people are to be *"a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work"* (2 Tim. 2:21). In Romans 13:7 we learn it is godly to offer *"honour to whom honour"* is due. 1 Timothy 5:17 states, *"Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine."* The inspired writer exhorts Christians to consider leaders who have led faithfully (Heb. 13:7), and then exhorts, *"whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation."*

The inspired Scriptures specify how our Heavenly Father desires the church to be governed. Men (plural) who meet God's qualifications (1 Tim. 3; Titus 1), overseeing, feeding, shepherding, ruling, guiding, guarding the flock of God at each local congregation. East Hill has been richly blessed to have been led by many faithful servants of God.

DEDICATION

With the greatest respect and appreciation this Truth
In Love Lectureship volume is dedicated to the

Past & Present Elders
Who Have Served This Congregation
Through The Years

Joe Christopher (2010)
Hugh Cooper (1963)
Joe Cooper (2002)
Kenneth Frazier (2000)
Louie Fuqua (1976)
Charles Gibbons (1963)
Bill Gooch (2002)
Charles W. (Bill) Hart, Jr. (1972)
Joe Harwell (1963)
Johnny Jackson (2005)
Herman Mobley (1972)
Bryan Pigg (1953)
D. G. Rost (1953)
Larry Thomason (2009)
W. L. Thompson (1953)
W. E. (Bill) Walters (1953)
M. C. Weatherman (1959)
Kelly Webb (2002)
Eldridge Woodard (1987)

May we resolve to “*keep on keeping on*” as we walk
in the steps of our Saviour (1 Peter 2:21-24).

SPECIAL DEDICATION

The East Hill Church of Christ and her Elders wish to express our appreciation to **Paul & LaDon Sain** for their continued support and work with our annual Truth In Love Lectureship. Some twenty-two years ago the Elders at that time asked Paul about our hosting a lectureship at East Hill. Paul has worked diligently



to make this event a successful effort. The Church at East Hill as well as our brethren across the brotherhood has been strengthened as a result of the qualified speakers and the timely topics which have continually been a part of the lectureship. The event is an encouragement to all in attendance and especially to those students preparing to preach. Many

people have had a hand in making the Lectureship possible, but the Sains have always been the driving force behind the effort making sure the event flows smoothly. From the time of its conception, Paul has served as its Director and Editor of the lectureship book. The countless hours required in preparation of each lectureship and the many hours in preparing the book for print are a testimonial of his love for the Lord and His Word.

For many years Paul has been preaching the Gospel, this lectureship is just one of the many good works that he continues to do. It seems only fitting that we at East Hill pay special tribute by saying Thank You,

SPECIAL DEDICATION

and we hope that this special dedication expresses the love and appreciation that we have for them and their work in the Kingdom. Our prayer is that God continue to bless them with many additional years of service to the Lord's Kingdom.

As we send this book on its mission, we pray that it will be a valuable and important tool to brethren for generations to come as they seek to study God's Word and serve Him.

The East Hill Elders,
Joe Christopher
Joe Cooper
Johnny Jackson

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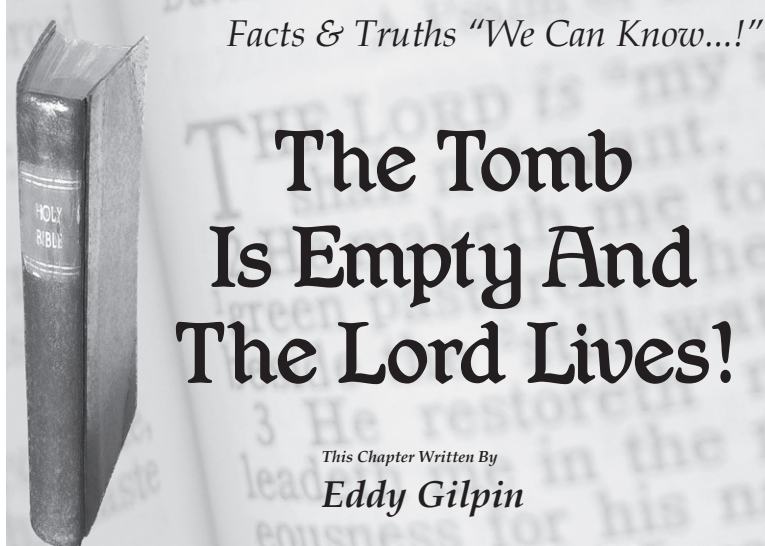
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Facts & Truths
“We Can Know”

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Christianity is a religion of history and facts. It is rooted in historical realities and not in subjectivism and hearsay. E.F. Harrison wrote: *"Some religions, both ancient and modern, require no historical basis, for they depend upon ideas rather than events. Christianity is not one of these"* (as quoted by Wayne Jackson). The Bible bases all of its spiritual truths on actual historical events, as is demonstrated by eyewitness accounts, archaeological evidence, historical and scientific accuracies, and fulfilled prophecies. The Record states,

And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name (John 20:30-31).

A study of the inspiration and preservation of the inspired Text provides sufficient information for one to know that it is truth, plainly and simply. Other

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writings of antiquity have been preserved, but none have undergone the scrutiny of the Scriptures; nor have they anywhere near the evidence to prove their credibility. Sadly, however, many will accept without reservation other ancient writings without so much as a question, while brushing aside the Bible as mythical and spurious.

At the foundation of all other Biblical truths lies the resurrection of Jesus the Christ. Christianity either stands or falls upon this one key component of the bodily resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead (Rom. 1:3-4).

And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain (1 Cor. 15:14).

And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins (1 Cor. 15:17).

That Jesus lived upon the earth no intelligent and logical person will deny. He remains as much a historical figure as every other person who ever lived but who has not been actually seen by any current generation. As surely as such individuals as Alexander the Great, George Washington, and Abraham Lincoln lived, the man Jesus lived among men. He was crucified by the Roman government, another fact attested to by historical record. And, that He was raised from the dead and has an empty tomb are likewise historical and demonstrable facts, proven in the same fashion as the existence of God Himself—by the evidence. Indeed, we can know

beyond any doubt that the tomb is empty and that our Lord lives!

“According To The Scriptures”

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how 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 Cor. 15:1-4).

Numerous are the passages prophesying the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. These were given hundreds of years before the actual event took place. Before noting just two of these passages, let us first examine some matters about prophecy. In an online article entitled, *“Mathematical Probability That Jesus is the Christ,”* the author quotes from the well-known work of Peter Stoner (*Science Speaks: An Evaluation of Certain Christian Evidences*). In three separate paragraphs he states:

The reason why prophecy is an indication of the divine authorship of the Scriptures, and hence a testimony to the trustworthiness of the Message of the Scriptures, is because of the minute probability of fulfillment.

Anyone can make predictions. Having those prophecies fulfilled is vastly different. In fact, the more statements made about the future, and the more the detail, then the less likely the precise fulfillment will be.

For example, what’s the likelihood of a person predicting today the exact city in which the birth of a future leader would take place,

well into the 21st century? This is indeed what the prophet Micah did 700 years before the Messiah. Further, what is the likelihood of predicting the precise manner of death that a new, unknown religious leader would experience, a thousand years from now—a manner of death presently unknown, and to remain unknown for hundreds of years? Yet, this is what David did in 1000 B.C.

Again, what is the likelihood of predicting the specific date of the appearance of some great future leader, hundreds of years in advance? This is what Daniel did, 530 years before Christ.

If one were to conceive 50 specific prophecies about a person in the future, whom one would never meet, just what's the likelihood that this person will fulfill all 50 of the predictions? How much less would this likelihood be if 25 of these predictions were about what other people would do to him, and were completely beyond his control?

For example, how does someone "arrange" to be born in a specific family?

How does one "arrange" to be born in a specified city, in which their parents don't actually live? How does one "arrange" their own death—and specifically by crucifixion, with two others, and then "arrange" to have their executioners gamble for His clothing (John 16:19; Psalms 22:18)? How does one "arrange" to be betrayed in advance? How does one "arrange" to have the executioners carry out the regular practice of breaking the legs of the two victims on either side, but not their own? Finally, how does one "arrange" to be God? How does one escape from a grave and appear to people after having been killed?

Indeed, it may be possible for someone to fake one or two of the Messianic prophecies, but it would be impossible for any one person

to arrange and fulfill all of these prophecies (Mathematical).

“The science of probability attempts to determine the chance that a given event will occur. The value and accuracy of the science of probability has been well established beyond doubt—for example, insurance rates are fixed according to statistical probabilities.

Professor Emeritus of Science at Westmont College, Peter Stoner, has calculated the probability of one man fulfilling the major prophecies made concerning the Messiah. The estimates were worked out by twelve different classes representing some 600 university students.

The students carefully weighed all the factors, discussed each prophecy at length, and examined the various circumstances which might indicate that men had conspired together to fulfill a particular prophecy. They made their estimates conservative enough so that there was finally unanimous agreement even among the most skeptical students.

However, Professor Stoner then took their estimates and made them even more conservative. He also encouraged other skeptics or scientists to make their own estimates to see if his conclusions were more than fair. Finally, he submitted his figures for review to a committee of the American Scientific Affiliation. Upon examination, they verified that his calculations were dependable and accurate in regard to the scientific material presented (Peter Stoner, *Science Speaks*, Chicago: Moody Press, 1969, 4).

For example, concerning Micah 5:2, where it states the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem; Ephrathah, Stoner and his students determined the average population of BETHLEHEM [sic] from the time of Micah to the present; then they divided it by the average population of the earth during the same period.

They concluded that the chance of one man being born in Bethlehem was one in 300,000, (or one in 2.8×10^5 —rounded).

After examining only eight different prophecies (Idem, 106), they conservatively estimated that the chance of one man fulfilling all eight prophecies was one in 10^{17} .

To illustrate how large the number 10^{17} IS [sic] (a figure with 17 zeros), Stoner gave this illustration:

If you mark one of ten tickets, and place all the tickets in a hat, and thoroughly stir them, and then ask a blindfolded man to draw one, his chance of getting the right ticket is one in ten. Suppose that we take 10^{17} silver dollars and lay them on the face of Texas. They'll cover all of the state two feet deep. Now mark one of these silver dollars and stir the whole mass thoroughly, all over the state. Blindfold a man and tell him that he can travel as far as he wishes, but he must pick up one silver dollar and say that this is the right one. What chance would he have of getting the right one? Just the same chance that the prophets would've had of writing these eight prophecies and having them all come true in any one man, from their day to the present time, providing they wrote them in their own wisdom (Idem, 106-107).

In financial terms, is there anyone who would not invest in a financial venture if the chance of failure were only one in 10^{17} ? This is the kind of sure investment we're offered by God for faith in His Messiah.

From these figures, Professor Stoner, concludes the fulfillment of these eight prophecies alone proves that God inspired the writing of the prophecies (Idem, 107)—the likelihood of mere chance is only one in 10^{17} !

Another way of saying this is that any person who minimizes or ignores the significance of

the biblical identifying signs concerning the Messiah would be foolish.

But, of course, there are many more than eight prophecies. In another calculation, Stoner used 48 prophecies (Idem, 109) (even though he could have used Edersheim's 456), and arrived at the extremely conservative estimate that the probability of 48 prophecies being fulfilled in one person is the incredible number 10^{157} ."

"How large is the number one in 10^{157} ? 10^{157} contains 157 zeros! Stoner gives an illustration of this number using electrons. Electrons are very small objects. They're smaller than atoms. It would take 2.5 TIMES [sic] 10¹⁵ of them, laid side by side, to make one inch. Even if we counted 250 of these electrons each minute, and counted day and night, it would still take 19 million years just to count a line of electrons one-inch long (Stoner, op. cit, 109) (Mathematical).

Isaiah 53:7-9 states:

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

The Ethiopian nobleman was reading from this very passage, a passage Philip applied to Jesus (Acts 8:34-35). Other passages as well demonstrate the fulfillment of these words (Mat. 27:12-14, 57-60; Mark 15:3-5; 15:27-28).

David also spoke of Christ's death thus:

I have set the LORD always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore (Psa. 16:8-11).

And, Peter revealed the significance of David's words as he applied them to the Lord's crucifixion:

Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by 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. For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption (Acts 2:22-27).

And also,

Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to

the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses (Acts 2:29-32).

The Empty Tomb

The empty tomb was unexpected by His followers (Mark 16:9-11; John 20:8-9). The discouraged disciples thought that the Lord's death meant the end of His movement, and they were hiding in fear of the Jews (John 20:18-19). Thus, they had neither motive nor opportunity to "*steal*" the body from the tomb, which was securely guarded by His enemies to insure that the body remained inside (Mat. 27:62-66). The plot devised by the enemies of the Lord after His resurrection further proves His resurrection.

Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done. And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, Saying, 'Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you.' So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day (Mat. 28:11-15).

Their plot proves a missing body and an empty tomb! And, that the Jews continued their charade regarding the disciples' taking of the body is demonstrated in Justin Martyr's Dialogue With Trypho (from around A.D. 165). He stated,

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A godless and lawless heresy had sprung from one Jesus, a Galilean deceiver, whom we crucified, but his disciples stole him by night from the tomb where he was laid when unfastened from the cross, and now deceive men by asserting that he has risen from the dead and ascended to heaven (as quoted by Butt).

The penalty for sleeping on the watch for a Roman soldier was death, regardless of the promises of the chief priests or any others. In addition, what kind of witnesses would sleeping soldiers make? If they were indeed asleep, how could they possibly have known who took the body? Further, since such a scheme was devised, it is obvious that neither the Romans nor the Jews took the body of Jesus from the tomb. However, both knew it was missing!

Consider also that the disciples would not have been guilty of taking the body from the tomb, even if they had been able to breach the Roman guard; for had they done so, they would not have been willing to suffer persecution and death as a result, which most of them did. Wayne Jackson stated it succinctly: *"While men may die out of religious deception, they do not willingly go to their deaths knowing they are perpetrating a hoax"* (1982). The Scriptures reveal that James died because of his faith: *"Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword"* (Acts 12:1-2). Regarding the ignominious deaths of the apostles because of their association with the truth, Paul declared:

For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death:

for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised. Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace; And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day (1 Cor. 4:9-13).

The fact that the tomb is empty is thus proven, not only by the friends of the Lord, but also by His enemies.

The Eyewitnesses

The Scriptures make note of numerous individuals and groups who saw the Lord after His resurrection. Paul told the Corinthians,

And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time (1 Cor. 15:5-8).

One who is a witness in the Biblical sense is a witness of the first class, an eyewitness. At the time Paul penned these words there were many still alive who could verify what he said; and none proved him to be untrustworthy in that which he claimed. As space will not permit a close examination of each of these instances, the chart below contains

a number of the appearances of the Lord before first-class witnesses:

Appearances Of Christ After The Resurrection

Appeared to:	Biblical Reference:
1) Apostles	Acts 1
2) Mary Magdalene	John 20:16-18
3) "The Women"	Luke 24:22-24
4) Two disciples on Emmaus Road	John 20:24-25
5) Disciples, without Thomas	John 20:26-28
6) Disciples, with Thomas	John 21:1-23
7) Seven disciples at Sea of Galilee	Matthew 28:16
8) Eleven disciples	Luke 24:33-36
9) More than 500 at once	1 Corinthians 15:6
10) Simon Peter	Matthew 28:16
11) James	1 Corinthians 15:7
12) Paul	Acts 9:3-6; 1 Corinthians 15:8
13) John on Patmos	Revelation 1:1-20

Once the Bible has been proven to be historically accurate (and it has been), the testimony of eyewitnesses is crucial, and very telling. No other work has undergone the scrutiny of the Bible; yet, no other work has withstood the test of time as it has. Both the sheer number of eyewitnesses of the Lord after His resurrection and the fact that they were still alive to verify such when the words regarding His being alive were penned and circulated prove that it happened. In essence, Paul in particular (1 Cor. 15) was calling upon any skeptic or critic to cross-

examine the eyewitnesses. If there were any takers, they were unsuccessful.

The Cases of Conversion

There is overwhelming evidence for the existence of Jesus Christ, both in secular and biblical history. Perhaps the greatest evidence that Jesus did exist is the fact that literally thousands of Christians in the first century A.D., including the twelve apostles, were willing to give their lives as martyrs for Jesus Christ. People will die for what they believe to be true, but no one will die for what they know to be a lie (Question).

The conversion of two individuals in particular is especially persuasive regarding the truth of the resurrection of Jesus. And, when taken with the other evidence serves to prove beyond any reasonable doubt that Jesus Christ was indeed raised from the dead and His tomb has since been empty. As these cases are considered, keep in mind, as noted, that when faced with persecution and death all that would have been required of any disciple was a presentation of or an indication of the whereabouts of the body. Yet, no one confessed to such knowledge, or to such a scheme as stealing the body and hiding it. But, at the same time, thousands faced and accepted persecution and death because of their belief in the resurrection of Jesus.

Consider first the conversion of James, the Lord's brother. The Scriptures reveal that he was among the unbelievers: "*For neither did his brethren believe in him*" (John 7:5). But, after His resurrection, James became not only a believer, but also a pillar in the Jerusalem church (Acts 1:14; 15:13-21), and

wrote the book that bears his name. Secular history records that James was stoned to death by an angry Jewish mob while in service to his half-brother (Jesus). The only explanation for such a change and subsequent loyal following by James is his knowledge of the resurrection of his half-brother from the dead. *"After that, he was seen of James"* (1 Cor. 15:7a).

A second and perhaps even more convincing conversion is that of Saul of Tarsus. In looking to his conversion we must take note of what he was, what he did, what he gave up, what he became, and what he suffered. Of him the Text states:

And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem (Acts 9:1-2).

After his conversion, in his statement to Agrippa, he asked, *"Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?"* (Acts 26:8). With this subject firmly in Agrippa's mind, Paul continued his thoughts:

I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem; and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities (Acts 26:9-11).

And, in his own words he declared that he had done such with all good conscience (Acts 23:1). Thus, there was no compunction from within that would have caused such a change in this man. It had to have been something from without.

Saul gave up much as far as the world is concerned. Speaking to the Philippian brethren regarding the Judaizers of his day, Paul stated of himself:

Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless (Phil. 3:4-6).

He was also schooled under Gamaliel, one of the most prominent Jewish instructors of his day (Acts 22:3). However, Paul was perfectly willing to give all of this prestige, power and prominence up in order to follow Christ and obtain the resurrection of the just himself. He voiced such in his words to the Philippians:

But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his

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sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead (Phil. 3:7-11).

Not only did he give up much, he also suffered much for the cause of Christ. To the Corinthian brethren he wrote:

Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not? If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not (2 Cor. 11:24-31).

Why would one go from being a man of such prominence in the eyes of his peers to being persecuted by the same and, at the same time take upon himself such a load of responsibility for which there was little earthly gratitude? What would cause Saul the persecutor to become Paul the persecuted almost overnight? What would make him relinquish his leadership among the Jews and relegate himself to being harangued and hounded by them for the remainder of his life? What could possibly change him from being one who killed

those who professed Christ to being one who was willing to be killed for Christ (2 Tim. 4:6-8)? There is nothing short of the proof of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead that would bring about such changes in such a man. Without a doubt, the greatest thing to occur in the book of Acts was the establishment of the church of our Lord (Acts 2). However, the event that follows very closely to that would have to be the conversion of Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9, 22, 26). What better thing could have happened for the church in the first century than to make its greatest enemy its greatest ally?

Conclusion

The evidence is overwhelming and beyond contradiction. Jesus, the Son of Mary, the Son of God lived upon this earth, was crucified at the behest of the Jews and by the cruel hands of Rome, and was resurrected from the dead by the power of God. Unlike the tombs of other religious leaders, the tomb of Jesus is empty. Christianity stands as the only religion with a resurrected and living Leader. The fulfilled prophecies regarding Him, the eyewitnesses of Him following His resurrection, the absent body and empty tomb, and the cases of those who were converted to His cause and willing to die for this fact prove that He was raised from the dead and continues to live. Indeed we can know that the tomb is still empty and our Lord lives!

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THE TOMB IS EMPTY AND THE LORD LIVES!

Holy Bible. King James Version

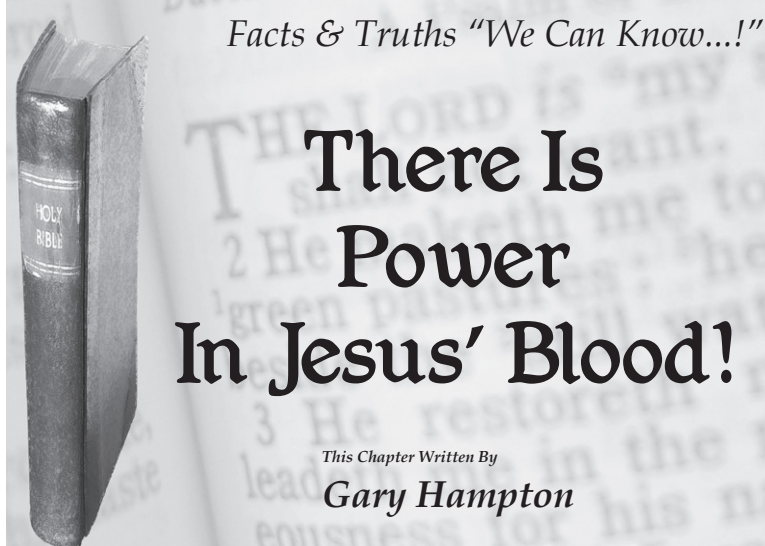
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Sin Stands Between Man and God

A careful reading of Genesis 3 leaves one with the distinct impression that man and woman, prior to violating God's will, were able to walk with God. Apparently God came during the cool of the evening to walk with man in the Garden of Eden. Unfortunately sin spoiled that relationship. Adam and Eve were cast out of the Garden and that close fellowship with God was lost.

However, God longed for man to once again be in a close relationship with him. In fact, even before forming the world, God formulated a plan for restoring lost mankind from the snare of sin. Paul explained it when he wrote,

To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God

who created all things through Jesus Christ; to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him (Eph. 3:8-12). [All scripture quotations are taken from the NKJV unless otherwise noted.]

To achieve his purpose, the Almighty had to find a way to rid man of sin, since it separates between man and God.

Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear (Isa. 59:1-2).

Every man or woman, who has reached an age where they can discern right from wrong, must admit they are guilty of sin. As Paul told the brethren at Rome, *"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"* (Rom. 3:23). Just a few verses before, he had quoted from Psalm 14:3, *"There is none righteous, no, not one"* (Rom. 3:10). Sin's paycheck is eternal separation from God, as the apostle went on to tell the Christians at Rome. *"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord"* (Rom. 6:23).

Christ's Blood Has The Power To Give Life

After years of believing otherwise, medical science has concluded that the life of our physical bodies is in the blood. This fact was revealed by

God to Noah when God gave him permission to eat of *“every moving thing that lives.”* He went on to state, *“But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood”* (Gen. 9:3-4). Willis suggests, *“Even though God allows man to kill animals for his sustenance, they are God’s property, and man is to recognize this by abstaining from that which signifies the life which God gives his creatures”* (179). Leupold expressed it very well when he wrote, *“This provision, then, of Noah’s time prepares for the sacrificial use of blood, and that which is to be sacred in sacrifice, in fact, is the heart and essence of the sacrifice, should hardly be employed that a man may glut his appetite with it.”* He even thought it would not be an overstatement *“to remark that ultimately this restriction is made in view of the sanctity of the blood of our Great High Priest, who is both priest and sacrifice”* (331). It seems likely that this is the reason the letter to the Gentile converts included a warning to abstain *“...from blood, from things strangled...”* (Acts 15:29).

God reiterated this point when Moses wrote,

For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul (Lev. 17:11).

A few verses later, the children of Israel were instructed to pour out the blood of any animal or bird they caught that might be eaten, *“for it is the life of all flesh. Its blood sustains its life. Therefore I said to the children of Israel, ‘You shall not eat the blood of any flesh, for the life of all flesh is its blood. Whoever eats it shall be cut off’”* (Lev. 17:14). Physical blood, then, is needed to sustain physical lives. That is

why we have blood banks and urge individuals to give blood during blood drives. Someone may need surgery or have an accident which will require them to have a blood transfusion to prevent the loss of life.

The life of the spiritual body of Christ, the church, is also found in blood. Paul told the Ephesian elders,

Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood (Acts 20:28).

"They were reminded that this church was purchased by God with his own blood shed in the person of his Son" (McGarvey 191). The word "purchased" "properly means to acquire or gain anything; to make it ours" (Barnes 297). Christ paid, "With the sacrifice of his own life; for blood is often put for life, and to shed the blood is equivalent to taking the life" (Ibid).

The Savior shed His precious blood in His death on the cross of Calvary (John 19:33-34). It was because He was already dead that the soldier pierced His side with a spear and blood came out mixed with water. Since the blood of God's innocent Lamb is absolutely essential to having our sins remitted, we must ask how we can reach His death where He left His blood? Scripture only describes one means of reaching that death.

Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory

of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:3-4).

To the brethren in Colossae, Paul said,

In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses (2:11-13).

So, reaching the life giving power of Jesus' blood is conditional. Each must first reach his death in baptism in order to reach the blood that he shed.

Christ's Blood Has the Power to Sanctify

The writer to the Hebrew Christians told them,

Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the camp, bearing His reproach (13:12).

The word "*sanctify*" is "*to purify by expiation, free from the guilt of sin*" (Thayer 6). "*Jesus did what the Levitical sacrifice could not do (cf. 2:11; 9:13; 10:10, 14, 29). Only the sacrifice of Christ could make men pure*" (Thompson 180). "*Jesus died in order to 'sanctify the people' – bring them to God as worshippers purified in conscience – by means of His blood, the willing sacrifice of His life*" (Bruce 402).

Paul used a comparison to the husband-wife relationship to help the Christians in Ephesus understand this powerful lesson.

THERE IS POWER IN JESUS' BLOOD

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish (5:25-27).

Summers says, *"This means that he loved the church to the extent that he gave up his own best interest out of consideration for the best interest of the church"* (123).

Sanctification is conditioned upon one's yielding his life to the truth. Jesus prayed to his Father, *"Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth"* (John 17:17). That is consistent with the idea that the brethren at Thessalonica were called to sanctification by the gospel. The apostle declared,

But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thess. 2:13-14).

One answers that call when he obeys the pattern of the gospel from the heart, ceases being the slave of sin and becomes the slave of righteousness (Rom. 6:16-18). The Corinthian Christians' father in the faith reminded them,

Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you

believed in vain. For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: 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 Cor. 15:1-4).

As we have already seen, those who are baptized into Christ are following the pattern of that gospel (Rom. 6:3-4).

Sanctification is not something one receives and never loses, as can be seen in the epistle to the Hebrews:

For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? (10:26-29).

Clearly, remaining sanctified is conditioned upon one's staying away from willful sin.

Christ's Blood Has The Power To Restore Friendship With God

In Romans 5:9-11, Paul ties two words to the powerful blood of Jesus. The apostle said the Christians at Rome were "*justified by His blood.*" The word "*justified*" is particularly used by Paul "*respecting God who judges and declares such men as*

put faith in Christ to be righteous and acceptable to him, and accordingly fit to receive the pardon of their sins and eternal life" (Thayer 150). The explanation of this is seen in the fact that Jesus gave his blood in his death to cause men to be reconciled to God. "Reconciled," means, "to be restored to the favor of God, to recover God's favor" (Thayer 333). Hence, some have said reconciliation suggests being made friends again. Paul went on to declare that they had received this reconciliation through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Reconciliation is inextricably tied to the blood of Jesus in Paul's words to the church in Colossae. He wrote,

And by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross. And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight (1:20-22).

God gave Paul the means of having his sins forgotten and reestablishing his friendship with him. In turn, the Almighty wanted him to tell others the terms of becoming God's friends. In other words, he was made an ambassador to carry the King's message of amnesty to others who had been trapped in the rebellion of sin. As Christ's messenger, he pleaded with men to become God's friend through the washing away of sin (2 Cor. 5:18-21). Such can only be achieved in Christ, where one is made a new creature (17). The apostle to the Gentiles explained that the way into Christ is through being baptized

into him (Gal. 3:27). Enjoying a constant cleansing from sin in the blood of Jesus can only be achieved by walking in the light (1 John 1:7).

Christ's Blood Has The Power To Give Remission

Christ's blood is able to release us from the bondage of sin, or give us remission. Immediately after Jesus had broken the bread and given thanks for it, Matthew reports:

Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins' (26:27-28).

In the Savior's parting charge to his disciples, he said,

Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem (Luke 24:46-47).

Significantly, in Acts 1:4, Luke reports that Jesus commanded them to wait in Jerusalem until the promise of the Holy Spirit was received.

They were in Jerusalem, on the day of Pentecost, when they were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in languages they had never studied. That led to a crowd gathering. They asked questions about how such a thing could occur, which, in turn, gave Peter and the others the opening to tell them about the resurrected Lord. Once the assembled multitude realized what

they had done, they asked the question, "*Men and brethren, what shall we do?*" Peter answered,

Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38).

So, the blood of Jesus which was shed for the remission of sins is available to anyone who meets the condition of repenting and being baptized by Christ's authority.

Christ's Blood Has The Power To Redeem

Mark reports Jesus' description of his purpose on earth. The Lord said, "*For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many*" (10:45). The last four words are significant. "*The word 'ransom' is lutron 'the price for redeeming, the ransom paid for slaves.' The word 'for' is anti, the predominant meaning in the koine being 'instead of.' It is the preposition of substitution. Our Lord paid the ransom money for slaves of sin who could not pay it themselves, namely, His own precious blood*" (Wuest 212). Titus was told, by Paul, that the Savior "*gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed*" (Tit. 2:14a). The apostle similarly informed the brethren from Ephesus that redemption is through Christ's blood (Eph. 1:7). "*Redemption*" is "*a releasing effected by payment of ransom; redemption, deliverance, liberation procured by the payment of a ransom...everywhere in the metaph., viz. deliverance effected through the death of Christ from the retributive wrath of a holy God and*

the merited penalty of sin" (Thayer 65). The apostle said he prayed for the saints in Colossae:

Giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins (1:12-14).

Peter described Christians as having been redeemed. *"The word 'redeemed' does not mean 'ransomed' as from kidnapping, but has reference to being freed from slavery"* (Roberts 19). *"It was a slavery to a pagan life of sin and shame. This life is described, first, as vain or 'futile.' It had no profit; it made no contact with the reality of life. Secondly, it was a conventional, a hand-me-down life, lived out by the sons as the fathers had lived it"* (Ibid 20). Christ gave his blood to pay the price for people living empty lives of sin. Their freedom was not obtained through the hoarding up of perishable items, but with the highly valued blood of God's own Son (1 Pet. 1:18-19). *"Only the infinite price of the blood of Christ can procure the infinite blessings of spiritual redemption"* (Tolle 11). That redemption is conditioned upon one's calling out to God for a clean conscience through baptism (1 Pet. 3:21).

Christ's Blood Has The Power To Bring A Not Guilty Verdict

John, the aging apostle, wrote to his children in the faith using the loving words of a mother holding her child near and caressing its forehead. He did not want them to indulge in sin as if it were a normal thing, though he had told them

they would sin. Instead, he urged them to make a sinless life their constant goal. He went on to reassure them that when a Christian does sin, he has on a continuing basis, as the present tense would indicate, an advocate with the Father. An advocate is *"one who pleads another's cause before a judge, a pleader, counsel for defence...so of Christ, in his exaltation at God's right hand, pleading with God the Father for the pardon of our sins"* (Thayer 483). The Christian's accuser is Satan (Rev. 12:10) and Jesus is the defense attorney.

One might well wonder upon what basis Christ would be able to plead the case of Christians. John says, *"And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world"* (1 John 1:8-2:2). The word *"propitiation"* is not,

...something which men must do to placate God, but something which God has provided in His grace to bring men into His presence with the assurance that they are accepted by Him, since He has removed the barrier that kept them at a distance - guilt, with its attendant retribution, the 'punishment' which is banished by 'perfect love' (4. 18)...Nor will John let his readers think of their blessings in restrictive terms. The propitiation that has availed to wipe out their sins is sufficient to do the same for all (Bruce 50).

Simply put, God's wrath is directed at sin, which all have committed. Christ came, at God's behest (1 John 4:10) to provide the means of the removal of that wrath. John says for *"our sin,"* which includes him in the group needing that great sacrifice. Jesus' gift is available to the whole world if they will but accept it in believing faith (John 3:16-17; Rom. 3:24-26).

Christ's Blood Has The Power To Cleanse

One of the elders around the throne asked John who all the people were in the great multitude around the throne. John responded,

'Sir, you know.' So he said to me, 'These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb' (Rev. 7:14).

John was writing to the seven churches of Asia. He wanted them to have grace and peace from the Father *"and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood"* (Rev. 1:5).

Receiving the cleansing power of Jesus' blood is conditional. Saul, on the road to Damascus, had asked,

'Lord, what do You want me to do?' Then the Lord said to him, 'Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do' (Acts 9:6).

Ananias was sent to him and he learned that he must not wait but arise and be baptized to wash away his sins (Acts 22:16). Peter quoted from Joel 2:28-32 in his Pentecost sermon. That quote concludes with, *"And it shall come to pass That whoever calls on the name of the Lord Shall be saved"* (Acts 2:21). Yet, when those within the crowd who were cut to the heart asked, *"Men and brethren, what shall we do?"* Peter told them,

Repent, and let every one of you and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the

remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38).

The explanation for the seeming contradiction in the quote and the apostle's answer is found in the fact that calling on the name of the Lord is accomplished in baptism.

Notice 1 Peter 3:21 again. Peter said,

Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ (ESV).

Put in other words, baptism is the means of calling on God to cleanse one's conscience. That being baptized is not a work that one does to merit salvation is clearly seen in the fact that *"baptism gets its efficacy or power by virtue of 'the resurrection of Jesus Christ'"* (Roberts 44).

There Is Power In The Blood To Give Boldness In Approaching God's Throne

When we recall that sin is the barrier between us and God, we come to recognize the necessity of being cleansed from sin before we try to approach God's throne. Robert Milligan summarized Hebrews 9:1 – 10:18, by saying,

(1) that the way into the Holiest of all, though dark and mysterious to the ancients, has now been made manifest to us through the shed blood of Christ; (2) that Christ has himself entered it by means of his own blood with which he has made an atonement for the sins of the world; (3) that he ever lives there as a priest on his throne to intercede for us

and to bless us; and (4) that by virtue of his atoning blood, we, too, are allowed to follow him and to be with him as joint heirs of the eternal inheritance (279).

The writer of Hebrews then says,

Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh (10:19-20).

The word “boldness” is “a joyful confidence...as regards our entrance into the Holiest of all through the blood of Jesus” (Ibid). That confidence is reflected as the writer goes on to say,

And having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water (10:21-22).

“The exhortation is, as in 4:16, to draw near in worship and service to God’s gracious throne where abundant help can be secured” (Lightfoot 189). Again, this is possible because men’s hearts have been sprinkled with the blood of Jesus.

Through Christ, then, Christians have the assurance that they are on the way to heaven (John 14:1-6). Like all the other blessings the blood offers, this one is conditional. One must do the will of the Father in heaven to have the hope of entering into the eternal city (Mat. 7:21). That will includes the command for those who would be saved to believe and be baptized (Mark 16:16).

Conclusion

Man’s sin put a barrier between him and God. God planned to restore fellowship with man

through the blood of his only Son. The blood of Jesus has power to give life. It can also purify a man, setting him apart from the sinful world. Friendship with God can likewise be restored through the blood of the Savior. There is power in the blood of Jesus to give remission of sins. Man need no longer be enslaved to sin since the blood of God's Son was offered to buy him out of that slavery. Christians are assured God will pronounce them "*not guilty*" because of the power in the Lord's blood. The cleansing agent for sin is the blood of Jesus Christ. The blood of Jesus has the power to give Christians boldness in approaching God's throne. Thank God for the blood of Jesus and all the blessings it supplies!

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New Testament Christians could be styled “*the Overcomers.*” This fact is made abundantly clear in the capstone of God’s Word—the book of Revelation. Therein the apostle John used forms of the word “*overcome*” some seventeen times, stressing not only the victory of Jesus Christ, but also the victory of those who follow Him.

These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful (Rev. 17:14).

The adversary to be overcome, of course, is Satan himself (1 Pet. 5:8). He is the archenemy of all mankind, desiring nothing more than the eternal damnation of human souls. His sphere of operation is termed the world, in which he assaults mankind through the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (1 John 2:15-17). The apostle John conveys good news, however.

WE ARE ABLE TO RISE ABOVE TEMPTATION!

Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world (1 John 4:4).

And again,

For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith (1 John 5:4).

Through faith in God and His word, the Christian is able to resist and overcome the sundry assaults of the devil. Generally speaking, those assaults are known as temptations.

Definition

As used in this present study, temptation typically refers to “*an enticement or seduction to commit sin.*” God has revealed to man His law, and Satan entices man to transgress that law. Man makes the ultimate decision. Satan and/or his agents seek to divert man’s attention away from allegiance and fidelity to God. Instead, they would much rather man focus on the immediate pleasure or gratification that is commonly associated with sin. For example, the immoral woman states, “*Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant*” (Prov. 9:17). She doesn’t want her mark to ponder his relationship with God. As an evil alternative, she would rather he contemplate the pleasure of an illicit rendezvous with her. This is the basic nature of temptation: persuading man to swap something eternal and somewhat distant, for that which is fleeting and right-at-hand. It would seem that in the face of eternity, temptation would have no allure whatsoever, were it not for the immediacy of the forbidden pleasure. When Satan convinces

man to be shortsighted, the present temptation is successful and Satan wins!

There is also another sense in which the word "*temptation*" is used. It can be used in the sense of trying, or putting one to the test. One can often discern this usage of the word by substituting the word trial in its place. For example:

Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations [or trials, CG] (1 Pet. 1:6).

In this way, the word "*temptation*" is applied to the difficulties, adversities, and hardships of life – including the tribulations stemming directly from persecution. An important note merits consideration here: even though "*temptations*" of this variety might not appear to involve a direct enticement to sin, they can involve an indirect enticement. Sometimes those suffering reversals and even tragedies in life are tempted to blame Whom? Those who are persecuted for their faith are pressured to renounce Whom? In this way the temptations of trial can prove to be true temptations indeed.

In summary, the devil assaults God's people in both ways. Whether through a direct enticement to sin, or through the bullying and coercion of persecution, his objective is always the same. He seeks to divert man from the paths of faithful service to God. Such is the design of temptation, and such must man resist.

The Assurance

By himself, a human being is virtually defenseless against the onslaught of the devil. A

Christian, however, can press the battle onward with the full assurance that he is able to overcome. The apostle Paul wrote, “*I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me*” (Phil. 4:13). This inspired statement is not a “*blank check*” entitling one to every fanciful exploit of his own will. It is, nonetheless, scriptural assurance that one endeavoring to do God’s will, will find the strength to do so.

First, assurance is found in the fact that God’s overruling Providence is at work in the lives of all His children. Providence refers to God’s working in human history through the framework of His natural laws. Providence is not miraculous, but where did one get the idea that an omnipotent Being’s hands were “*tied*” to the miraculous anyway? In other words, God does not have to work a miracle every time He seeks to accomplish something—say the answering of a prayer, for example. The apostle Paul described the power of God in this superlative fashion:

Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us (Eph. 3:20).

Truly, omnipotence is omnipotence—that is, possessing all power! Further, it should be expected that the “*ways and means*” of God’s exercising such power would surpass the limits of man’s comprehension. It is not for man to understand all the intricacies of God’s Providence. It is for man to know that His Providence is ever in the background of human affairs, never violating man’s free moral agency, yet always working to the accomplishment of His Divine purposes. God’s children must know

this and must know that “*all things*” will one day work together for the Christian’s ultimate good (Rom. 8:28).

It is in light of God’s marvelous Providence that 1 Corinthians 10:13 conveys so much assurance to the Christian:

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

Assurance is not found in questioning how God is going to effect such a promise in one’s life. Assurance is found in trusting that God will keep such a promise! It can be accurately stated that, if one is encountering a certain temptation, it is certain that the individual has the ability and/or opportunity to escape the said snare. The ability and/or opportunity is provided by God; the responsibility belongs to man.

A number of observations need to be made regarding 1 Corinthians 10:13. One, there is the commonality of temptation. All human beings, accountable before God, face and endure temptation. Even further, no one person is going to face an enticement or snare that no one else has ever faced—at least in generic principle. Every assault of Satan comes down at least one of the same three avenues: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (1 John 2:16). The temptation might appear to be in new “*wrapping*,” but the core principle inside is always the same.

Two, God knows the individual strengths and weaknesses of every person. The One Who made

the above promise is well informed and well able to make sure the fight between His child and the devil is a fair one. Through His Providence and the power of His word, God upholds the promise of 1 Corinthians 10:13. As Paul rhetorically asked, *“What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?”* (Rom. 8:31).

Three, for every temptation a Christian faces, God will make—or has already made—a way of escape. A sobering thought comes to mind at this juncture. How many *“escape hatches”* have been graciously provided by God, only to be overlooked, ignored, or outright refused by careless children of the Most High? Perhaps there are times and scenarios in which God provides the needed means of escape before the temptation actually comes. But through carelessness or negligence—perhaps the failure to maintain a steady diet of God’s word—a thoughtless child of God fails to arm himself appropriately beforehand and so falters before the seduction. Such a hypothetical case would surely not be God’s fault! He would have done what He promised. Man would have failed in availing himself of God’s fortification. The case of our Lord and His apostles comes to mind here. In Gethsemane Jesus repeatedly cautioned the eleven, *“Pray that ye enter not into temptation”* (Luke 22:40; cf. v. 46).

Four, the most important statement in 1 Corinthians 10:13 is probably the shortest. *“God is faithful.”* Often human beings let each other down. One thinks that he can trust in another, only to find out that when times are bad, the trusted helper is nowhere to be found. God is never like that! His faithfulness toward His children denotes

His trustworthiness and reliability. What God promises in regard to temptation—or anything for that matter—He will faithfully keep and fulfill. As the inspired author of Hebrews penned,

Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me (13:5-6).

This brings the present study to a second area of consideration. God's overruling Providence, and His ability therein to deliver His children from temptation, presupposes the doctrinal fact of God's supreme Sovereignty. Truly, He that is in Christ is infinitely greater than he that is in the world (cf. 1 John 4:4). To human beings, Satan appears as a formidable adversary for sure, but in the battle between him and God, the devil is simply no match! James implies this comforting fact in writing,

But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you (Jas. 4:6-7).

How can God make such a promise and offer such instructions? He is God! Before Him, the devil is a rebellious, miserable wretch whose doom is already certain. This is why it is imperative that human beings submit to their Creator. Resistance to the devil is futile and half-hearted without full and complete submission to the Heavenly Father. It is God's power and Sovereignty that Satan cannot resist. Consider the thunderous authority found in the words of Christ,

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Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offense unto me: for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men (Mat. 16:23).

The words spoken by Peter in that context were not of heavenly origin. As he rebuked the Lord, he stood as an adversary before Him—opposing His Divine plans and purpose. Satan would have used Peter and his words for his own devilish purposes, but the Lord’s wisdom and authority were too great. Christ’s words on that occasion were reminiscent of His direct dialogue with the devil himself, during the temptation in the wilderness.

Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve (Mat. 4:10).

Note the subsequent result, *“Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him”* (Mat. 4:11).

In Christ may one wield similar authority over the devil. Obviously, the authority lies not in the individual himself, but one in Christ is the Lord’s purchased possession (cf. Titus 2:14; 1 Pet. 2:9). It is Christ that lives in the Christian; it is His power that strengthens the Christian (Gal. 2:20; Phil. 4:13). God’s grace meets the Christian’s every need. Note that James included his instruction to *“resist the devil”* on the heels of emphasizing the efficacy God’s grace (cf. Jas. 4:6-7). As Sovereign Ruler over the universe—including the devil—the Lord affords His grace to whom He chooses, namely those that humble themselves before Him. The beneficial dimensions of such grace appear to be at least two-fold.

One, God's grace helps His children to overcome past mistakes. Why resist a present temptation, if one still bears the guilt of past collapses? The devil is well familiar with this concept. He seeks to remind Christians all the time of their failures. Nonetheless, a faithful child of God must remember that his past transgressions have been forgotten (Heb. 8:12). How wonderful and strengthening is the forgiveness of grace! The inspired psalmist penned,

As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust (Psa. 103:12-14).

Two, God's grace aids one in the time of present temptation. The foregoing citation concluded with the words, *"For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust."* God knows His children *"inside and out,"* with all of their foibles and flaws, and yet He loves them anyway! His grace forgives the sins of their past (upon the condition of repentance) and equips them for the temptations of the present. Christians are exhorted, *"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need"* (Heb. 4:16). A time of temptation is certainly a time of need, and the Lord knows eminently the grace that is needed by each of His children. In spite of their weaknesses, He acts on behalf of the faithful—His church. Zechariah vividly described this protection, *"For I, saith the LORD, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her"* (2:5). With such power and grace acting on his

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behalf, the Christian can most certainly overcome the snares of the devil!

In summary, God has everything in place for His children to overcome temptation. More than adequate assurance of this fact is given in His inspired word. What the Christian must do, in turn, is to embrace this blessed assurance in faith. All the promises and assurances that fill God's word will be of little help if one does not respond to them appropriately in faith.

For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it (Heb. 4:2).

How sad it is for children of God to forfeit the spiritual riches afforded them in Christ—simply because of unbelief! God will most certainly do what He has promised to do; He cannot lie (Titus 1:2). Christians, then, are to trust unwaveringly in His promises and live accordingly. Remember that Paul, in describing the spiritual armor of God, stated,

Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked (Eph. 6:16).

The Danger

Blessed assurance should never deteriorate into overconfidence and carelessness. It is very interesting when one realizes what the apostle Paul wrote just prior to that great verse of assurance, 1 Corinthians 10:13. *"Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall"* (1 Cor. 10:12). Although faithful Christians are assured of their

victory over sin and Satan, there is, nonetheless, still a battle to be fought (cf. 1 Tim. 6:12). In fighting the daily battle of faith, a child of God must fulfill his own responsibility. God will provide all that the Christian is unable to provide himself. The Christian, however, must provide willful submission. It is a matter of simply trusting in God's word and obeying it.

The fact of temptation during this life—and the danger associated with it—is undeniable in scripture. Jesus said,

Woe unto the world because of offenses! for it must needs be that offenses come; but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh (Mat. 18:7)!

The term "*offenses*" is translated by other versions as "*occasions of stumbling*" or even "*temptations*." In other words, man is presented with a choice in this present life. He must choose between good and evil, between obedience and rebellion. It is through Satan and his agents that one is tempted, lured away, toward evil and rebellion. Jesus was speaking to the fact that temptation exists and that it will be encountered. But woe to that man who allows himself to be so used by Satan! He is not only lost himself, but is also being used as an instrument to facilitate the downfall of others.

Man's adversary is ruthless indeed. The apostle Peter cautioned,

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour (1 Pet. 5:8).

He devours by means of sin, and temptation is the doorway that leads to that sin. His "*job*," and

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the “*job*” of the evil people whom he uses, is to make sin appear as attractive as possible. Whether through bullying or seduction, temptation is a real threat in this life. The inspired Paul knew this well when he wrote,

For this cause, when I could no longer forbear,
I sent to know your faith, lest by some means
the tempter have tempted you, and our labor
be in vain (1 Thess. 3:5).

“*The tempter*” is obviously an allusion to Satan, who works tirelessly at his craft. Following are some specific areas in which the devil seeks to apply temptation. These are also areas that scripture links explicitly with the words tempted or temptation.

One, improper attitudes toward money and material possessions comprise a great area of temptation for many. Paul counseled his protégé, Timothy:

But godliness with contentment is great gain.
For we brought nothing into this world, and
it is certain we can carry nothing out. And
having food and raiment let us be therewith
content. But they that will be rich fall into
temptation and a snare, and into many
foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men
in destruction and perdition. For the love of
money is the root of all evil: which while some
coveted after, they have erred from the faith,
and pierced themselves through with many
sorrows (1 Tim. 6:6-10; emp. mine, CG).

As a tool, used for good and kept in its proper perspective, money can be a wonderful thing. When made a god, however, money proves to be fleeting and vain.

The devil deceives many into thinking that money – especially more money – will solve all their

problems. This simply is not true. Often an increase in wealth brings with it an increase in problems. Solomon penned by inspiration,

When goods increase, they are increased that eat them: and what good is there to the owners thereof, saving the beholding of them with their eyes? The sleep of a laboring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much: but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep (Ecc. 5:11-12).

Most often one does not know what he is asking for, when he seeks to be rich materially. There is the perennial danger of one's "*setting his heart*" on those increased riches (cf. Psa. 62:10). Truly, temptations abound for those who "*will (desire to) be rich*" (cf. 1 Tim. 6:9).

Two, carnal desires lure many away from the paths of righteousness. The Corinthian Christians of the first century lived in what might be called "*the original sin city*." Sexual immorality was rampant in the city that was home to Aphrodite's temple, and the apostle Paul warned them concerning such sins.

Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body (1 Cor. 6:18).

In the next chapter, Paul presented marriage as God's alternative to and remedy for sexual immorality.

Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband (1 Cor. 7:2).

Within the bounds of scriptural marriage, sexual expression is both beautiful and holy; but sex

outside of marriage is both wrong and deadly (cf. Heb. 13:4).

In these two chapters, Paul offers inspired counsel as to how one can overcome sexual temptations. First, he commands Christians to flee (1 Cor. 6:18). This would involve the fleeing of potentially tempting company and/or circumstances. Sexual desire is not easily overcome or governed by mere reason—especially in the heat of a passionate moment! A child of God is sure to fall if he remains for a prolonged period under such conditions. One is not to “*reason*” himself away from fornication, but flee! Joseph knew that time had come to flee, when his reasoned words fell on the deaf ears of Potiphar’s wife (Gen. 39:7-12). Second, caution is to be exercised even by married couples. They are to be regular and sustained in the sexual aspect of their relationship. Paul wrote,

Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan **tempt** you not for your incontinency (1 Cor. 7:5; emp. mine, CG).

Protracted time apart can present special temptations to husbands and wives who otherwise might not have been tempted. The prolonged cessation of conjugal rights can erode one’s self-control over time, resulting ultimately in a lack of self-control, or incontinency. God’s children must ever be on guard against the wiles of the devil—his ploys and plots to undermine a Christian’s faithfulness (cf. Eph. 6:11).

Three, temptation can even come to those who are seeking to restore a fallen brother. A child of

God undertaking such an act of restoration would normally be among the most faithful and involved in a congregation. However, if care is not exercised, there are special problems and temptations that will be encountered. Consider yet another inspired, Pauline statement:

Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be **tempted** (Gal. 6:1; emp. mine, CG).

This exhortation can be beneficially viewed from at least two perspectives. First, the soul-winner ever needs to realize that the brother he restores today, might well be the brother who restores him tomorrow! Such is the nature of life in this world. All of God's children are "*flesh and blood*," and therefore prone to weakness and frailty (cf. Mat. 26:41). One would do well to remember this fact and apply it to himself as he approaches a fallen brother in hopes of restoring that precious soul. Second, a soul-winner needs to be on guard against pride, self-righteousness, and a host of similar sins. It is easy to use the shortcomings of others as grounds for "*inflating*" one's own righteousness. A fallen soul should be approached in compassion and sympathy—not condescension and superiority.

Vigilance

Perhaps any study regarding temptation and rising above it would be woefully incomplete without a treatment of James 1:13-15.

Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted

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with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

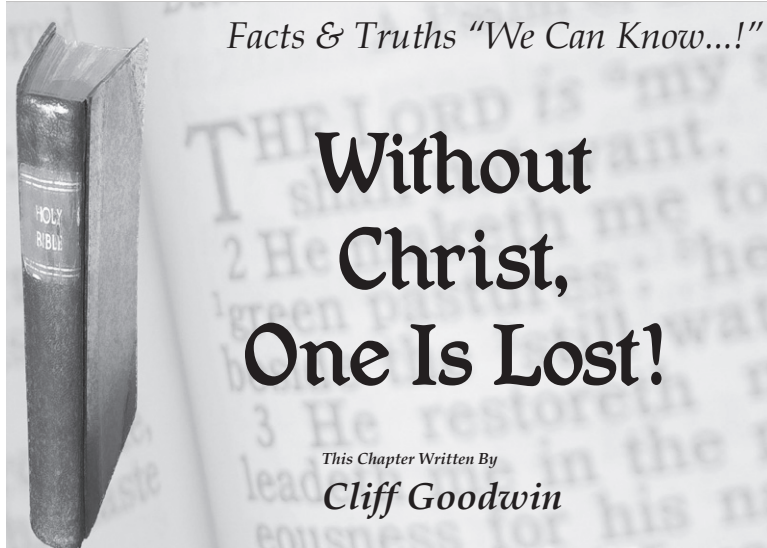
Man rests assured, upon imbibing the rich content of these verses, that the source of his spiritual battles is not God. God is completely above and apart from all evil. His very nature is righteousness, and all His deeds constitute the same. Therefore, as it has already been pointed out, Satan is the one who seeks to draw men away after their own desires (lusts).

Temptation occurs when something on the **outside** of man (i.e. *something in his environment*) appeals to something on the **inside** of man (i.e. *a desire*) in such a way that the breaking of God's law is considered. Such an appeal is typically made either through the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life (cf. 1 John 2:16). Further, tempting appeals are not always the result of attraction (pleasantness), but may also stem from agitation (provocation). At any rate, temptation is that which prompts a man to act contrary to the manner which God expects and has commanded. James describes it as a man's being drawn away of his own lusts, instead of governing and restraining those lusts himself. All human beings possess desires and drives within them. The key is found in not allowing oneself to be drawn away in an illicit pursuit of those desires. God created the desires, and God gave the rules governing those desires. Satan wants man to break those rules!

This is where vigilance is seen to be of paramount importance. A child of God must remain

keenly aware of at least three things. One, he must remain aware of the desires and drives within himself. Many of these will be from God and will be good and wholesome in and of themselves. These need to be governed and regulated. However, occasionally there will be desires cultivated in a person's life that are unfounded, unauthorized and unholy. These need to be fought and extinguished. Two, a Christian must remain knowledgeable and aware of what God's law says pertaining to his own desires. God's law dictates how good desires are to be governed and fulfilled, as well as dictating which desires need to be abandoned altogether. Three, one must remain intensely aware of any efforts made by the adversary and his agents to entice one into pursuing a course that is contrary to God's law. Simply put, this is being aware of temptation—not for the sake of seeking it out, but for the sake of skirting it when it appears. A heartfelt vigilance in these three areas, trusting and following God's word, will greatly aid one in rising above temptation.

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In the politically correct climate of the present era, the above title might appear, well, shocking and offensive. But is it true? In matters of the soul, truth is all that matters. Man needs a true and accurate understanding of the way things really are. He does not need “feel-good” fables or even educated theories. He needs truth—he desperately needs truth. Jesus Christ taught, “*And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free*” (John 8:32). Freedom from the shackles of sin (John 8:34) and from the fear of death (Heb. 2:15): this is what man really needs. He does not need soothing; rather, he needs saving.

It is beyond the purview of this present piece to delve deeply into the proof of the Bible’s Divine origin and inspiration. It should be noted, however, that such proof is both abundant and irrefutable. Evidence ranges from the pre-scientific statements found in scripture (e.g. Ecc. 1:7; Isa. 40:22) to the historical foreknowledge of the Bible (e.g. Isa. 44:28;

Dan. 2:31-45). The overarching unity of the Bible, along with the hundreds of prophecies fulfilled in and by Jesus Christ—hundreds of years after being given—are also proof-positive that the Bible is from God. The Bible speaks truthfully when it says of itself,

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness (2 Tim. 3:16).

Therefore, the Bible is the truth man so desperately needs. The Bible is the light up to which the title of this present study must be held. Is one really lost without Jesus?

The Condemning Nature Of Sin

Sin is a spiritual reality. Sin exists, and human beings are guilty of committing sin everyday. However, the modern mind would rather dismiss the notion of sin. It is deemed too uncomfortable for one to consider the violation of a Supreme Being's character. Sin is just that. For a society that shirks responsibility at every turn, it is unthinkable that a human being possesses eternal accountability regarding sin. Nonetheless, man possesses just that. Sin has been glamorized, trivialized, rationalized, and even neutralized; but seldom is it truly recognized!

So what is sin? Simply put, sin is the breaking of God's Divine law. *"Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law"* (1 John 3:4). There are sinful deeds (Jude 15), sinful words (Job 31:30; Psa. 39:1), even sinful thoughts, or attitudes (Prov. 24:9). Even further,

there are sins of omission—obligations left undone, which ought to have been done (cf. Jas. 4:17). But in all of these cases, sin is essentially the same thing: rebellion before God as the Creator. When noted in this light, the seriousness of sin comes into sharp focus.

What are the consequences of such rebellion? What does sin do to the human soul? Man needs to understand the answers to these questions. First of all, sin has a separating effect. Isaiah said in the long ago:

But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear (Isa. 59:2).

The only thing in the universe that can drive a wedge in the fellowship between God and man is sin. How monumental a matter indeed! God is holy and pure. His righteousness cannot tolerate evil and sin—He would not be God if He could (cf. Hab. 1:13)! The psalmist penned:

For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee (Psa. 5:4).

When man chooses sin, he willingly forfeits a right relationship with God. God's love reaches out to man, but man's sin slaps at His benevolent hand.

Secondly, sin has a killing effect. Paul reminded the Ephesians, "*And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins*" (Eph. 2:1). How could that be? Prior to their conversions, the Ephesians were walking and talking. They would eat, sleep and work. How could they possibly have been dead? They were dead spiritually. In separating

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their souls from the Life Source (cf. John 1:4), sin had rendered them spiritually dead! That is the status of every soul that is cut off from his Creator. Such a one is in a pitiable condition and in need of urgent, soul-saving help.

Finally, sin has a damning effect. It has been said that, if a soul dies physically, while it is dead spiritually, it will be dead eternally. This accords with John's inspired words:

But the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death (Rev. 21:8).

This is the ultimate end of all those who rebel against the Almighty – and never repent. Life in this present world can be thought of as somewhat of a probationary period. In other words, what a person does with his life in this world will determine his destiny in eternity. Death marks the end of all opportunity; thus, one's fate is sealed at the point of death. Jesus clearly stated:

...I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come (John 8:21).

If a person leaves the walks of this life a sinner, his soul will be separated from God eternally. Sin keeps a person out of heaven.

What solution is there to man's sin problem? Actually, the answer lies in a Who, not a what. In the very context of the previous scripture, Jesus identifies Himself as the solution – better yet, the Savior.

I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins...Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin...If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed (John 8:24, 34, 36).

Is one lost without Jesus? In light of the condemning nature of sin, the answer is a sobering "Yes."

The Universal Extent Of Sin

Without Christ, one is lost. How can one make such a general, all-encompassing statement? The answer lies in the universal extent of sin in this present world. Sin's condemning nature has already been shown; that tragedy is only exacerbated when one considers the fact that sin affects every accountable human being!

A word needs to be mentioned here regarding accountability. Innocent children and those who are unable to develop mentally (i.e. children in adult bodies) are not accountable before God. Jesus taught:

Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven (Mat. 18:3).

And again:

Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven (Mat. 19:14).

A person must be able to mature to the point that he can discern between good and evil, as well as grasping the nature of responsibility and consequences before God. God is most certainly

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a just God (cf. Neh. 9:33; Rev. 15:3), and He will always do what is right (cf. Gen. 18:25).

Nonetheless, the vast majority of human beings are able to live and develop to the point of accountability before God. Of these, it is clearly written, *“For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not”* (Ecc. 7:20). Centuries later, in describing the similar conditions of both Jew and Gentile, the apostle Paul stated that *“all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God”* (Rom. 3:23). Even in writing to Christians, the apostle John urged honesty in this regard:

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us...If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us (1 John 1:8, 10).

The testimony of scripture is clear and unequivocal: all accountable people are guilty of sin. Therefore, the spiritual malady that jeopardizes men’s souls is a veritable pandemic. All men everywhere need Jesus Christ!

The apostle Paul used similar words in addressing the Athenians on Mars’ Hill:

And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent (Acts 17:30).

There is, of course, a very simple reason why all men everywhere are commanded by God to repent—it is the universal extent of sin. No accountable person could ever refuse Jesus Christ as Savior and still entertain any realistic hope of heaven. Sin is a sickness that affects every accountable soul; therefore, every soul needs Jesus Christ. Without Christ, one is lost!

The Universal Extent Of The Great Commission

Man's absolute spiritual need for Jesus Christ is reflected in the Great Commission itself. What could be so important that the Lord would mandate its proclamation throughout the world, to every creature?

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15; cf. Mat. 28:19).

As the lifesaving serum of the soul, the gospel of Jesus Christ must be proclaimed far and wide, to every height and across every sea! Only in hearing and obeying that good news can human souls be saved (Rom. 10:16-17).

For this reason one will find the word of the gospel linked with spiritual life (as opposed to the death imposed by sin). The apostle Peter recognized the life-giving power of Christ's words, even during the Lord's earthly ministry. On one occasion Peter replied, *"Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life"* (John 6:68). If Christ possesses the words of life, then the implication is quite clear. No one is privileged to that saving information separate and apart from the Lord. Later on, following Christ's death and resurrection, the apostles were commanded, *"Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life"* (Acts 5:20; emp. mine, CG). Even later still, an angel described the apostle Peter to Cornelius as one *"who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved"* (Acts 11:14; emp. mine, CG). These, obviously, were the words of the gospel (cf. Rom. 1:16).

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The good news surrounding the death, the burial, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 15:1-4) must be preached to every human being. After all, Jesus died for every human being!

But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for **every** man (Heb. 2:9; emp. mine, CG).

If Jesus died for every single person, then every single person needs to hear about it! For this reason God gave the Great Commission. Even further, the Great Commission is positive-proof that every accountable person is lost apart from Christ. The inspired Paul wisely wrote, *“For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead”* (2 Cor. 5:14).

Modern day Christians would do well to note how seriously the apostles and the first-century church took the Great Commission. In the early A.D. 60’s Paul was able to write:

Which [the gospel] is come unto you, **as it is in all the world**; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth (Col. 1:6; cf. v. 23; emp. mine, CG).

Christian soldiers had been arduously working over the past three decades in order for the apostle Paul to make such a statement. No doubt, Paul himself had been at the forefront of such labors (cf. 1 Cor. 15:10). His soul-winning attitude is evident in passages like:

I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the

unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also (Rom. 1:14-15).

And again:

Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation (Rom. 15:20).

May the church of Christ today cultivate and maintain these evangelistic attitudes! The Great Commission is not only evidence that souls without Christ are lost—it is also the plan for addressing that very problem.

The Clear Statements Of Inspired Men

Knowing and believing that the Bible is the inspired word of God, one can quickly discern from only a handful of scriptures that Jesus Christ is the only way to heaven. This fact was taught without reservation by the apostles and by Christ Himself, and it should still be taught in that fashion today. The present portion of this study will look to specific statements made by inspired men. One example will come from Jesus Himself, and one each from Peter and Paul. One should remember that the apostles spoke and wrote with infallible authority, as they were guided by the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. 2:13; 14:37; 2 The. 2:15; cf. 2 Pet. 1:20-21).

First, Jesus made an unmistakable claim regarding His being the one and only Savior of the world.

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me (John 14:6).

WITHOUT CHRIST, ONE IS LOST!

Only with *"help"* could one ever misunderstand the words of Christ on this occasion. He is not *"a way"* among many to be traveled. Neither is He *"a truth"* among many to be known. Jesus Christ is the singular, unique, exclusive Savior of mankind! *"And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world"* (1 John 4:14). He spoke these words not only as God Incarnate (John 1:14), but also as One anointed with the Holy Ghost (Mat. 3:16; Acts 10:38). His claim is accurate and true, and as sure as the foundations of heaven itself!

Second, the apostle Peter was unwavering in his conviction regarding Jesus Christ as the exclusive Savior. He strongly said:

Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved (Acts 4:12).

It is helpful at this juncture for one to remember the circumstances under which Peter made such a bold claim. He and John had gone up to the temple (Acts 3:1)—a trip that resulted in their healing a lame man (Acts 3:6-8) and preaching the gospel to the masses (Acts 3:12-26). However, Jewish authorities eventually came upon them and arrested them, taking them into custody overnight (Acts 4:1-3). It was the next day, while standing before the high priest and sundry others, that Peter made such a clear and definite declaration (Acts 4:5-12). Obviously, that would not have been the most popular thing to say on that occasion, and before that audience. Peter did not say it because it was popular; he said it because it was right! He

and John were then censored, commanded not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus (Acts 4:18). But as the rest of the book of Acts reveals, along with the balance of the New Testament, that injunction went unheeded.

Peter's inspired wording is so clear-cut and precise. Any person seeking salvation "*must*" be saved by the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no alternative, no substitute, for Peter said, "*Neither is there salvation in any other.*" When his "*life was on the line,*" he did not mince words. His apostolic testimony was clear and explicit, and it was the testimony of the Holy Ghost Himself (Acts 4:8; cf. John 16:13).

Third, the apostle Paul, who wrote approximately half of the New Testament, identified Jesus as mankind's only Redeemer.

For there is one God, and one mediator
between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;
Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be
testified in due time (1 Tim. 2:5-6).

Whereas there is only one God, likewise there is only one Savior. Jesus is the one Man uniquely qualified to bridge the gap between a sinless God and a sinful humanity. He is the Mediator between God and mankind—not a mediator. It is so comforting and reassuring for one to realize that, when it came to mankind's salvation, God did not send an angel (cf. Heb. 1:5). God the Word (John 1:1) came down from heaven, taking on the form of a man (Heb. 2:16). As a man, He suffered temptation, yet without ever capitulating to sin (Heb. 4:15). He even suffered the pangs of death. In this way, Jesus Christ is truly the "*perfect*" Savior of the human race—and the only Savior!

WITHOUT CHRIST, ONE IS LOST!

Though he were a Son, yet learned he
obedience by the things which he suffered;
And being made perfect, he became the author
of eternal salvation unto all them that obey
him (Heb. 5:8-9).

Like Peter's earlier, Paul's inspired wording is striking. The repeated use of the word one makes an irrefutable point. It is an undeniably fundamental doctrine that there is only one God (cf. Eph. 4:6). Paul demonstrates, however, that it is equally fundamental that there is only one Mediator (hence, Redeemer and Savior). The numeral one is singular and leaves no room whatsoever for any "alternative" saviors.

The Awful Cost Of Calvary

If Christ were sent to be the Savior of the world—and He was—then what exactly did such redemptive work involve? Was it merely "*a stroll in the park?*" Or, did the Godhead make a costly investment in the welfare of humanity? The scriptures point decisively to the latter. Careful consideration of all that God the Word (Jesus Christ) went through will bring one to the logical conclusion that, surely, this must be the only possible way for mankind to be saved!

First, there was the leaving of the glories of heaven. Human beings can only begin to imagine what this meant, and what this felt like, for Jesus Christ. He prayed:

And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine
own self with the glory which I had with thee
before the world was (John 17:5).

From all eternity, Jesus had been with God the Father and God the Spirit; He Himself being God

the Word (John 1:1; cf. Mat. 28:19). The prophet Micah said that His “*goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting,*” (5:2). Yet He left the realm of eternity, and for what? To come into this “*lowland of sin and sorrow.*” The apostle Paul penned”

For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich (2 Cor. 8:9).

The Prince of glory made an humble entrance into this world. In all likelihood born in a stall for traveling beasts, baby Jesus was laid in a feed trough (Luke 2:7). Later, in His public ministry, Jesus said:

The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head (Mat. 8:20).

Jesus left the glories of heaven in order to live an humble life among men—seeking to save men (Luke 19:10).

Second, there is the matter of Christ’s incarnation. This word means “*to be made flesh.*” Jesus did not leave the glories of heaven to walk among men in some kind of exalted, celestial state. No, instead He became flesh and blood as are all men.

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth (John 1:14).

And again:

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise

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took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil (Heb. 2:14).

This is a most significant point. As a flesh and blood human being, Jesus would have experienced hunger, pain, weariness, etc. He endured the spectrum of human toils. Imagine the God of eternity being subjected to such mundane things!

Third, with flesh comes also the potential for temptation. Jesus was surely tempted, as gospel biographers record (Mat. 4:1-11; Mark 1:9-13; Luke 4:1-13). Satan approached the Lord at seemingly His weakest time, tempting Him to transform stones into bread. Jesus did not budge. The devil took all of his “shots” at the Lord of glory but to no avail. Biblical writers make it abundantly clear that Jesus Christ was sinlessly perfect (2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15; 1 John 3:5). Peter profoundly wrote, “*Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth*” (1 Pet. 2:22).

Fourth, Jesus was subjected to a most horrific death. All of the foregoing considerations—His leaving heaven, His incarnation, His temptation—pointed in one direction. They all pointed in the direction of the cross. For that ultimate purpose, Jesus came into the world. His execution, at the hands of evil men, was not the humane means of lethal injection, or even electrocution. Jesus was crucified—nailed by spikes to a wooden cross and left hanging there to die. Crucifixion was reserved by the Romans for the lowest in their society—slaves and vile offenders. In fact, there is only place in New Testament scripture that Jesus is referred to as a bondservant, or slave. It was in the context of the cross.

But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant [i.e. slave, CG], and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross (Phil. 2:7-8).

Jesus was no criminal, but He died as a criminal, among criminals (Mark 15:27-28). He was willing to suffer such treatment, for He looked ahead to the redemption of man.

Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God (Heb. 12:2).

How could one possibly conclude that man has "*options*" regarding his eternal salvation? If there were multiple possibilities for man's redemption, then why would God the Word conceivably go through all that He did??? It is not only the height of ingratitude, but it also borders on blasphemy for a person to erroneously claim that man can be saved apart from Christ. As the inspired apostle Peter wrote:

For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God... (1 Pet. 3:18).

Without Christ, one is lost!

WITHOUT CHRIST, ONE IS LOST!



The theme of this lecture is, WE CAN KNOW GOD'S PLAN FOR THE FAMILY IS BEST. That would make sense, since His wisdom far surpasses that of man. After all, He is the potter and we are the clay (Isa. 64:8). What would the universe have been like had man invented its design and created it by his own handiwork? We don't know the answer to that, but we do know that it would have paled in comparison to what God did. The creation can never surpass the Creator in His superiority. Man may make progress in this world, but never progress such that he can call God his equal. His plans for anything will never be as good as God's. Many today look upon God's plan for the family as foolish, when in reality His plan for all things is infinitely wise. The apostle Paul encountered Jews who thought God's plan for salvation was foolish (1 Cor. 1:25), but ultimately God's plan for salvation was wise, because it was the only one that worked. God's

plan for the family today is the same. It is wise because it is God's, and it is the only plan that will work.

It is in the context of God's greatness that we consider His plan for the family. The family was God's first Divine arrangement. It existed before government, and before the church was established. And the family's design and parameters are God-derived and God-directed. He built the home with His own set of blueprints and nothing man can design in its place will be its equal. Man has subsequently submitted his own set of blueprints for the family, but man's substitution for God's creation will never rival that which God has set forth. Man cannot and has not improved upon that which God instituted in His invention of the home. This invention is patented, it is one of a kind, but for the product to work properly one must follow the instruction booklet completely. The following will analyze the purpose of the family, the plan for the family, the perversion of the family, and the prescription for the family.

The Purpose Of The Family

The first family began in the peaceful setting of the Garden. God created Adam and placed him in a paradise that we can only imagine, having never witnessed it. One can imagine the lush vegetation, the perfect climate, the sights and sounds of this paradise on earth, but in all its glory the Garden did not satisfy man. Adam was lonely (Gen. 2:18). He had the riches of the Garden all to himself, and yet what good was it to him without anyone with whom to share it. So God fashioned for him a companion. Her name was Eve, and she was

placed before Adam in the garden. Adam and Eve were the first married couple.

Now of course God invented marriage as the vehicle through which procreation could take place (Gen. 1:26-28). But procreation was not the purpose of marriage; just simply the product of it. The purpose of marriage was companionship. It is interesting that God brought a woman to man for companionship, not another man. God did not bring to Adam a hunting buddy, or a fishing partner but rather someone much better than that. There is no substitute for the companionship a woman can bring to a man. There is not one who can make a man feel more complete and whole on this earth other than his wife. Of course God is the One that makes man truly complete, but of God's creation only a woman is perfectly suitable for man. That is how God designed it.

According to God's design, the natural products of this union were children. Adam and Eve would bring the first children into this world. They would set in order the natural process that still exists today of the perpetuation of mankind. Scientists tell us that we evolved after an accidental explosion. But the Bible says that every creature produces after its own kind. One cannot witness monkeys transforming into humans today as the scientists declare, but one can witness the marvelous order that God ordained for both man and animal of replenishing the earth after their kind.

The Bible never specifically says it, but no doubt Adam's children also helped ease his problem with loneliness and fulfilled his life, as only fathers can understand. The first family now stood as

God's creation. Genesis 1 records the details of the creation, and after everything was created God said it was good. But after creating man, God reflected and said it was very good. Oh how satisfied God must have been to see the first man and wife with children. Oh how with pride He must have considered this product to be very good!

The Plan For The Family

God's Plan for Marriage

As God's creation, marriage came with rules to govern its existence. God did not create the family without parameters. He did not create the family without rules to function. God's plan was that a man and a woman join together in marriage, not a man and another man, not a woman and another woman. His plan was for man and woman to leave father and mother and cleave to one another (Mat. 19:4-5). He wanted them as two individuals to come together to form one unit. In Matthew 19 in speaking to a group of Pharisees, Jesus made this clear. He told them that this was God's plan for marriage and that it had been His intent from the beginning.

God also has a plan for the sexual union in marriage. God created sex, not as a bad thing, but as a good thing within the proper parameters, meaning between a man and his wife (Heb. 13:4). This message needs to be given to our young people today. Many of them are being told that sex is bad, and that simply is not true. Sex is wonderful when it is within a Godly marriage. It is something our young people should be looking forward to with great anticipation.

God's plan also details the leadership for

the home. In Ephesians 5:22-23 Paul wrote by inspiration to the saints at Ephesus,

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and He is the savior of the body.

God wanted men to be the leaders of the home, and He desired wives to submit to the man's leadership. The example being that, just as Christians are subject to Christ in His church, so wives are to be to their husbands. Many have balked at this arrangement saying that such an arrangement makes a woman inferior. But submission has never stood for inferiority from a spiritual standpoint in the scriptures. Two examples: Noah in the Old Testament and Christ in the New Testament. Noah submitted to God (Gen. 6) in building the ark, and so did his family. When the flood came, one can be certain that Noah did not feel inferior because of his submission to God. When Christ submitted to the will of the Father in the garden prior to His crucifixion, He said to the Father, let Thy will, not My will be done (Mat. 26:39-42). His submission did not make Him inferior. Inferiority is found in the unwillingness to submit, not in the willingness to do so. Such is the case in marriage.

God's Plan for the Home includes Guidelines for Interaction, Communication, and Affection in Marriage.

The husband is given specific obligations from God towards his wife. He has an obligation to love his wife (Eph. 5:25). This is not the kind of love that is popular today, which is more like infatuation. This is the love that Christ had for

His church. Christ died for the church (Acts 20:28). When a man loves his wife like that, then it is a deep and abiding love—a selfless love.

The husband has an obligation to know his wife (1 Peter 3:7). He is to make an attempt to understand his wife. She is not like him, and because of that he has to work to understand her makeup. What are her needs, her wants and desires? He must seek to know them and failure to do so will hinder his prayers to the throne room of God. That is how important God thought it to be!

The husband further must have the proper attitude toward his wife (Col. 3:19). Some men sincerely believe they love their wives. They would buy her the whole world if they could. They would die for her in an instant. They would never leave her. But they won't treat her decently. The word bitter in Colossians 3:19 means resentful, angry, indignant. No woman wants a man who claims to love her, but has a sorry attitude towards her, and thus will not treat her kindly. Husbands are to be kind to their wives; warm and pleasant, nourishing and cherishing her as even they would their own bodies (Eph. 5:29). The proper attitude includes a husband honoring his wife (1 Peter 3:7). As we would put it today, to treat her like a queen, because she is one! She is the queen of the home and is deserving of honor.

The wife also has particular responsibilities for interaction, communication, and affection in marriage. As a help-meet the woman is to be the perfect compliment to her husband. But she cannot do this without having the right attitude. She must possess a submissive attitude (Eph. 5:22). Husbands are Divinely qualified to be the leaders of the home,

but they will be ineffective if they have a stubborn and insubordinate wife.

Wives also must love their husbands (Titus 2:3-4). The word for love in this passage is *philandros*, different than the word used to direct husbands to love (*agapao*) in Ephesians 5:25. Love in Titus 2:3-4 means to show fondness, to show affection. Some wives shower affection on their children, but when it comes to their husbands they leave them high and dry. This is unloving and more importantly unbiblical. In addition to showing affection the wife also has a responsibility to provide for the sexual needs of her husband (1 Cor. 7:2-5). This of course is also required of the husband towards his wife, but is mentioned under the wife's responsibilities simply because sex is used as a bargaining tool by far too many women. Sex is not something that can be used as a bargaining chip because in marriage our bodies no longer belong to us, but to our mate. The only exception allowed for withholding that privilege is for the purpose of fasting and prayer, but even that is to be done with consent from both parties, which is why the phrase with consent is used in 1 Corinthians 7:5. The phrase for a time is also interesting because it indicates the time period to be temporary and is in context with fasting and prayer. How long are people going to go without food? Not very long! You get the point.

Wives must also reverence their husbands. The word reverence in Ephesians 5:33 comes from the Greek word *phobeo*, from which is derived our English word *phobia*, or fear; to be in awe of. It is important to note that this command is found in the context of the relationship Christ has with His church. Many wives need to think soberly upon

this command before approaching their husbands in a disrespectful and condescending fashion.

God's plan for marriage is for it to be permanent. This idea is simple, and yet profound. God's plan is for one woman and one man, for life. Because this is the case, the importance of the selection of a mate is key. We are to leave and cleave (Gen. 2:24). To cleave means to be glued together. God wants that glue to be permanent glue when we say, "I do." The importance of this permanence is further demonstrated by the only Biblical allowance for divorce, that being fornication (Mat. 19:9). It is clear that God wants marriages to be permanent, not fly-by-night affairs.

God's Plan for Child Rearing

God's plan for the family includes not just marriage, but also the rearing of children. In this aspect of the home both parents and children are given directives. Parents have responsibilities towards their children, and children have obligations towards their parents in God's plan for the family.

First we will deal with the parents. God built man with a natural affection for his offspring. This is the way God designed man and the way it is intended to be. Parents who love their children and love God will want to follow God's plan for the home in child rearing.

Parents are to teach their children about God (Deut. 6:4-9). Moses' command to the second generation of the children of Israel was that they teach their children about God. This same principle certainly applies today. Christianity is a taught, not caught, religion. And parents today should

strive to be like Noah of old, who was a preacher of righteousness (2 Peter 2:5). While he could not save the world, he taught and instructed, and was successful in the salvation of his obedient family. Children will receive spiritual instruction from all types of places. Some will learn about God from Bible school teachers, some from the preacher, some from their friends, and others from the secular world. But God's plan for the spiritual instruction is for parents to train their children, both by teaching and by example.

God's plan for parents includes men who will be providers for their family's needs. The two categories of greatest emphasis are physical and spiritual. God desires men to provide for the physical needs of the family (1 Tim. 5:8). This seems so basic, and yet how many men shirk this God given responsibility. A man that does this is labeled as worse than an unbeliever. However, the spiritual needs of families are of infinitely greater importance. God wants a father to provide for the spiritual needs of his family. One who will lead and guide the home in the way that is right. The world needs fathers like Abraham who can be counted on to guide their children in the keeping of the way of the Lord (Gen. 18:19). God needs men who are faithful to their wives and loving towards their children; fathers who will rear their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4). God needs men who are faithful to Him and His church and who can show the world what it means to be a father.

God's plan for parents includes women who will love their husbands and love their children (Titus 2:4). The world needs women who will be

keepers at home (Titus 2:4-5). The world needs women who will guide the home, and be proud of the title: Director of Domestic Affairs (1 Tim. 5:14). The world needs women to realize the profound impact they can have on their husbands and children spiritually. The world needs more godly women!

In order for God's plan for the family to function as it should, there must be cooperative and obedient children. Parents can do their part, but God's plan is that children do their part as well. Children must be obedient to their parents (Eph. 6:1). Children must show the proper honor toward their parents (Eph. 6:2). We need children who love their parents and love God and His word. This is God's plan for the family!

The Perversion Of The Family

God's plan for the family is perfect. When executed correctly it works like a well-oiled machine. But when man perverts that which God has directed, the result is catastrophic. Man has perverted essentially every aspect of God's design for marriage and the home, such that many have the idea that marriage itself is obsolete. An October 2010 study conducted by the Pew Research Center found that 39% of their respondents believed marriage to be obsolete.

Perversion of the Purpose of Marriage

Man has taken the purpose of companionship of man with a woman and has changed it to man with man and woman with woman. This one perversion has set on course the destruction of the home across our world today. It is only one change

and yet it has had, and will continue to have, an evil influence in our world.

Man's plan does not and will never work. Aside from being specifically condemned by God (Rom. 1:26ff), homosexuality does not meet either qualification for the purpose of marriage. It does not meet the test of companionship. Yes men can be friends with other men, and likewise the woman with other women. But companionship does not reach the heights or provide the closeness that it does with a man and a woman. From a sexual standpoint homosexuality is unnatural/against nature. This point is further demonstrated in the fact that procreation cannot take place under man's perverted plan. If Adam and Eve would have been created homosexual, then we would not exist today, and the human race would have ended with them. So man's perversion does not accomplish procreation, only God's plan does that. And yet man today is trying to promote the idea that some are created as homosexuals, how absurd! The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed as a result of this evil practice. When will our nation realize the destruction that is taking place through this wicked practice today?

Perversion of the Plan for Marriage

Volumes of books could be written about the perversions of man with regard to God's plan. Man has pre-empted God's plan because he has not been satisfied with it. Man has set his own plan forth and attempted to substitute it for God's, trying to make improvements in it, but no improvements can be made.

Man has perverted the permanence of marriage. Man's plan for the duration of this sacred union is dependent upon his own wants, needs and desires. Men and women marry each year, and many spend more time planning the wedding than they do staying in the marriage. For many, ending this sacred union matters nothing more to them than the cost involved, or the legal hassles it might cause. They don't consider the scriptures for guidance in their marriages. They don't consult the guidelines for ending such a union (Mat. 19:9). They have traded sacrifice for selfishness, and obedience to the God of heaven for self-willfulness. Divorce is so common today that it is not even looked down upon. Many marry planning one day to divorce, and then wonder why it becomes a reality in their lives. This is the result of man's perversion to God's plan for the permanence of marriage.

Man has perverted the sexual union of marriage. Fornication is commonplace in our culture. Our young people are fornicating at earlier ages and with multiple partners with no regard for the place where sex belongs. This is the crop that grows from the seeds of Satan and the perversion by man of God's plan. Because of this, bastards are being born into the world at higher rates than ever. The share of births to unmarried women has risen dramatically over the past half century, from 5% in 1960 to 41% in 2008. Young people are cohabitating in place of marriage, having children in these unholy circumstances and worse yet are convinced that somehow this way is better. Cohabitation is very much on the rise according to research done just last year.

As marriage has declined, cohabitation (or living together as unmarried partners) has become more widespread, nearly doubling since 1990, according to the Census Bureau. In the Pew Research survey, 44% of all adults say they have cohabited at some point in their lives (Pew Research Center, Oct. 2010). Because of the abuse of marriage in our culture, young people no longer have a fond admiration and respect for it, but rather a disdain and displeasure.

Man has perverted the roles in marriage. The very idea that a man is the leader of the home, and that a woman should submit to him, is scoffed at in our society. Women valuing their careers over family learn to be CEO's, and take those skills home in an attempt to be the leaders there. While men in too many cases are abdicating the throne of leadership and giving up their God-given command to lead.

Man has perverted the attitudes and actions of marriage. Far too many husbands spend more time on the golf course, in the boat, in the deer stand, and at work to ever have a chance to know their wives as the Bible directs. Husbands rationalize this by saying they deserve it, instead of thinking about the husband their wife deserves. Meanwhile, their now disenfranchised wife, who herself is overworked because she has worked as many hours outside the home as the man, nags her husband and does not treat him much better, if any better, than he treats her.

She is bitter about being expected to work a full time job away from home and at home. She is angry because her husband spends his free time with his buddies rather than with her, and in her anger she

strikes back. She withholds sex from him that is not her right, and uses it as a bargaining tool to get the attention that she should have been getting all along. The husband resents her for this tactical maneuver and often strikes back through infidelity. This is the fruit that has been born through the perversion of God's plan for marriage.

Perversion of the Plan for Child Rearing

Man has perverted the place of the parent. Men are dedicating themselves to being providers, and in so doing neglecting their role as spiritual leaders of the home. If homes are not as spiritual as they should be, the finger must come pointing back to the leader of that home. Mothers have been replaced with daycare centers and babysitters and any replacement available. But the truth is there is no replacement for a mother or a father. But when man perverts, he perverts without conscience or care for the results that follow.

Man's perversion is tearing families apart. Yes marriages end in divorce, and that is tragic. But even more tragic is the carnage left for the victims in the home. An analysis of Census Bureau data shows that the percentage of children under age 18 living with divorced or never-married parents has risen sharply over the past half century. In 1960 about 9 in 10 children residing with a parent lived with married parents. By 2008 that number had dropped to 7 in 10.

The innocent children who have done nothing wrong, are all their lives shuffled from pillar to post because of divorce. In many cases they have more than one "mommy" or "daddy" and in so doing become so confused that they do not know

which way is up. This is man's blueprint that he has drawn without regard for God's plan.

The Prescription For The Family

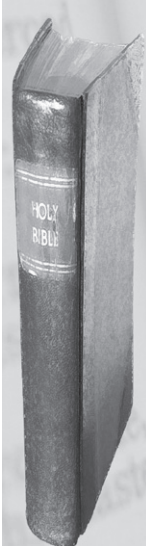
What then is the prescription for the problem of man's perversion of God's plan? Surely it is something that is mysterious. Surely it is something unattainable, like the cure for cancer. Surely it is not understandable because of its complexity.

Actually the prescription is simple. The restoring of the family to its original intent is akin to the restoration of another Divinely appointed institution, the church. Years ago the men of the Restoration Movement were discontented with the state of the religious landscape. They looked about and could not find the church they read about in the Bible. The Reformation Movement had tried to reinvent and reform the church. But the Restoration Movement simply sought to restore it, in accordance with its original blue print.

In order for the home to ever be as God would have it be in our world, man must go back to the original blueprint, God's instruction manual for His creation, the home. This blueprint is the Bible, God's holy and divine word. Only in following God's plan will man ever cure the problems that have resulted from his own perversion. May God help us all as we strive to follow His blueprint for the home!

GOD'S PLAN FOR THE FAMILY IS BEST!

Facts & Truths "We Can Know...!"



Evangelism Is A Duty And Privilege!

This Chapter Written By

Don Blackwell

In the days of Elijah, the prophet, Syria was the world empire, and their king, Benhadad, had moved his troops to Samaria to attack the city. The method he used was siege warfare. His troops surrounded the city, and they stationed themselves there and waited. No one was allowed into or out of the city, and thus supplies were cut off. 2 Kings 6 tells us that *"they besieged it, until an ass's head was sold for fourscore pieces of silver, and the fourth part of a cab of dove's dung for five pieces of silver."* Two mothers even made an agreement, *"Today we will eat your son, and tomorrow we will eat mine."* The situation looked bleak to say the least. Intense suffering, hunger and pain had overtaken the city inhabitants from the least to the greatest.

Outside the walls of the city, there were four lepers who were also suffering and starving (2 Kings 7:3). The law commanded that all lepers be outside the city, isolated from others (Lev. 13:46). These leprous men, feeling the desperation

of their situation devised a plan. They decided that they would go to the camp of Syrians and throw themselves on the mercy of the enemy. The unsuspecting lepers arrived to find the camp abandoned.

For the Lord had made the host of the Syrians to hear a noise of chariots, and a noise of horses, even the noise of a great host: and they said one to another, Lo, the king of Israel hath hired against us the kings of the Hittites, and the kings of the Egyptians, to come upon us. Wherefore they arose and fled in the twilight, and left their tents, and their horses, and their asses, even the camp as it was, and fled for their life (2 Kings 7:6-7).

God had caused them to hear a great noise that sounded so real and convincing that they fled in terror, leaving their tents, supplies and food behind. One can imagine the apprehension of the lepers as they reach the outer edge of the camp to find it empty. No doubt, they expected that any second the Syrian soldiers would appear and take their lives. Driven by their hunger, they press on and begin to eat, probably gorging themselves with food. The entire camp was empty of Syrians, but full of food and supplies. Then they said to one another, *"We do not well: this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace"* (2 Kings 7:9). They recognized that just a short distance from them people were suffering, starving and dying; and they had the remedy right in front of them. In fact, they were enjoying the benefits of it, and they were not telling anyone about it. And they recognized that they were doing wrong. Brothers and sisters in Christ, you and I are partaking of the world's

greatest spiritual feast, and we are surrounded by spiritually starving and dying people. Assuredly if they were wrong for not sharing the good news, how much more so are we? The topic of our study is *“Evangelism is a Duty and a Privilege.”* We will approach this study by examining four points: the command, the consequences, the compromises and the capability.

The Command

Evangelism is a duty. A duty is something that is expected. It is binding and obligatory. Such is the case with our charge to carry the gospel. Though one hates to say it this way, *“We have no choice in the matter!”* Evangelism is our duty because of God’s command. To substantiate the command we want to observe five words. The first is **mission**. Luke 19:10 says *“For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”* That was our Lord’s mission. It is the reason He left Heaven. As members of His body, it is our mission as well. The mission of the body cannot be different from the mission of the head. The second word is **mandate**. The mandate states:

Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved... (Mark 16:16).

The mandate is clear, direct and universal in nature. Thirdly, we observe the word **method**. How is mankind to be saved? Titus 1:3 says that God *“in due times manifested his word through preaching...”* Preaching and teaching is the method by which we execute the mission of God.

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For *“whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.”* How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: *“How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!”*

Evangelism is the method that God has chosen to save man. Without a preacher, the gospel is not heard, belief does not take place and obedience does not occur. Word four is **model**. The model of the New Testament church shows the early Christians engaging in evangelism. In Acts 8, there was a great persecution that arose against the church in Jerusalem. Stephen was killed. The enemies made havoc of the church and hauled men and women to prison. *“And they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria...”* (Acts 8:1). The incredible verse however is verse 4, *“Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word.”* What could possibly make them do this, in light of the persecution? In Acts 5, the apostles were thrown into prison and beaten for preaching the cross. But verse 41 says that they rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer for the name of Christ. In Acts 16, Paul and Silas are in prison for preaching Christ. Revelation 1:9 informs us that John, the apostle, was in exile on the island of Patmos *“for the testimony of Jesus Christ.”* Brethren, the pattern (model) of the New Testament is that Christians engage in evangelism! Our fifth word is **measure**. Paul said:

For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel! (1 Cor. 9:16).

It will not be good for me in the sight of God if I do not preach the gospel. Evangelism is (at least in part) a measure of my faithfulness.

Evangelism is a command, but we want to carry this deeper than that, because I do not evangelize just because I *"have to,"* I do it because I want to! I do it because it is a privilege! Evangelism is more than a duty. It is a desire. Evangelism is more than a *"have to."* It is a hunger. I remember as a student at the Memphis School of Preaching the instructors used to tell us, *"If you can do anything other than preach, then do it."* Their point, of course, was that we needed to have a burning desire to engage in this work. Perhaps the words of Jeremiah say it best. He wrote:

For since I spake, I cried out, I cried violence and spoil; because the word of the LORD was made a reproach unto me, and a derision, daily. Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay (Jer. 20:8-9).

Jeremiah said, *"I had had it. I was not going to speak God's message to people anymore!"* But then he said, *"I could not help myself. I had to do it. It was like a fire inside of me."* Brethren, that's exactly the way it ought to be in us. There is a brother at the North Charleston congregation where I preach. He talks to everyone he meets about the gospel. He was at the laundromat recently washing the comforter

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from his bed, and before he left he had talked to a non-Christian about the gospel who now regularly attends the North Charleston congregation. It is a fire inside of him! Paul said,

For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!
(1 Cor. 9:16).

I must preach the gospel. Evangelism is a duty. I get to preach the gospel. Evangelism is a privilege.

Consequences

Evangelism is a duty and a privilege, but what if I refuse? The consequences can be summed up in four words: Hell, heartache, high-handedness and hopelessness. The first consequence of my refusing to evangelize is **Hell**. If I refuse to preach the cross of Christ, people will die lost. The current population of the world is 6.9 billion.¹ There are, on average, 107 deaths per minute.² In the time it takes you to snap your fingers three times one soul passes into eternity. It is estimated that the worldwide membership of the church of Christ is about 5 million.³ In the United States, it is estimated that the percentage of adults associated with the church of Christ is somewhere around 1%.⁴ In the world as a whole, it is approximately 0.07%. Less than a tenth of a percent of the world's population are members of the Lord's church and thus saved. If we assume that all 5 million of those members are faithful, that still means that 99% of the people dying are lifting up their eyes in torment. If we are to be realistic, the percentage is higher than that. If I refuse to evangelize, then every minute

people die and find themselves in torment. They will open their eyes in shock, and it will forever be too late. Jude 23 emphasizes the urgency of the situation by describing our work as *"pulling them out of the fire."*

Consequence number two is **heartache**. If I refuse to carry the gospel I will have to face my lost family, friends and neighbors at the Judgment. Matthew 25:32 says:

All the nations will be gathered before Him,
and He will separate them one from another,
as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats.
And He will set the sheep on His right hand,
but the goats on the left.

There is going to be a great separation. Imagine for a moment the day that time stops. Picture yourself standing in the presence of the Lord, and you see on the Savior's left hand side the man that you rode to work with every day for the last two years. Imagine seeing your barber or your next door neighbor. Now imagine that you never even attempted to tell them about the cross. The song that we know so well by James Rowe says,

*When in the better land, before the bar we stand
How deeply grieved our souls will be
If any lost one there, should cry in deep despair
You never mentioned him to me.*

Dear brethren, it's difficult to imagine a greater heartache than one will experience at that moment. If you will bear with me a moment, I would like to share a personal experience. In 1987-1988 I was a baggage handler at the Charleston International Airport in Charleston, South Carolina. I worked

the baggage room and shuttled suitcases to the airplanes. My co-worker at the time was a young man in his early twenties. His name was Tim. We spent many long hours together in the belly of various aircraft and sitting alone in the baggage room awaiting the next suitcase to tumble down the conveyor belt. I'm ashamed to say that in all of that time I never mentioned the gospel to Tim. Years later, after moving away from Charleston, I returned home on a visit and stopped by the airport to visit old friends. I asked a former supervisor, "Whatever happened to Tim?" The response, "You didn't hear? He committed suicide." A heavy heart does not adequately describe what I felt at that moment, and I have had to live with it ever since. I have repented, and I know that forgiveness has been granted, but I have thought many times about the Judgment. What if Tim looks my way and says, "You never mentioned him to me"? The consequences of failing to do evangelism are heartaches.

Consider a third consequence, **high-handedness**. One may ask, "What do you mean by that?" The Psalmist wrote, "Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults" (Psa. 19:12). The secret faults in this passage are those that are secret to the one committing them. They are sins of ignorance in other words. Verse 13 then says,

Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous
sins; let them not have dominion over me:
then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent
from the great transgression.

There is a contrast being made in these two verses between two different types of sin. Sometimes Christians will suggest that all sins are the same in

the eyes of God. Such is not true. Proverbs 6 teaches us that there are some sins that are particularly an abomination to the Lord. Our current passage in Psalm 19:12-13 also makes a distinction in sin. There are sins committed in ignorance, and there are sins committed with full knowledge. The latter is described as “*great*” transgression. Such sins are committed with one’s eyes wide open. They are high-handed in nature. It is as if one shakes his fist in the face of God and says, “*I know what you said, but I’m not going to do it.*” These sins are sins of a rebellious spirit. If I know what God expects of me, and I simply refuse to do it, I am guilty of high-handed sin.

A fourth consequence of neglecting to do evangelism is **hopelessness**. I will hear Jesus Christ deny me. The Lord said,

Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in Heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in Heaven (Mat. 10:32-33).

Mark says, “*Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words...*” (Mark 8:38). If I refuse to teach/preach the cross and thus deny the Lord, I will hear Him deny me. There is no situation so hopeless as this. I will have no right to argue. I will have no strength to do anything about it. I will know that within seconds I will enter into Hell forever.

When the church sings the song “*You Never Mentioned Him to Me,*” where do you picture yourself? Do you envision yourself on the right hand looking over at someone on the left hand

side who is lost? Seemingly many Christians are not really convinced that failing to teach will cost them their souls. Certainly, one of the most sobering passages in all of the Bible is Ezekiel 3:18:

When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.

What if I refuse? Then I will be on the left side. I will hear those words, "*Depart from me.*" I will be hopeless.

Compromises

With the command so clear, and the consequences so severe, why would a person compromise when it comes to evangelism? Why would a man hesitate to preach the cross of Christ? What could be so powerful as to cause a believer to shrink from his responsibility?

First, you cut off the majority of the world's population. When one faithfully teaches Colossians 2:14, he cuts off the Jews.

Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross...

When one preaches salvation only through the cross of Christ, you cut off the Hindus, the Muslims, the Buddhists, and the Jews. The truth be told, a lot of people have a hard time bringing themselves to do that. It is not politically correct. And people may respond very negatively with comments such

as, *"You mean to tell me that you think 99% of the world's population is going to be lost? Well, you're quite the narrow-minded bigot, aren't you?"* Many Christians have allowed such potential comments to stifle their evangelistic efforts.

Several years ago, Larry King was interviewing a Catholic priest, and they were discussing whether or not people from other faiths could be saved. Can someone who does not believe in Jesus as the Messiah go to Heaven anyway? The priest's answer was essentially *"yes."* I wondered, *"How could he say that?"* That position is not consistent with the beliefs of the Catholic Church. The point is seemingly very difficult for people to bring themselves to say that the majority of the world is lost. When one preaches the New Testament gospel, he must however do so.

Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it (Mat. 7:13-14).

A second reason people compromise in their evangelistic efforts is because preaching the cross means preaching baptism. Romans 6:3-4:

Do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Christ shed His blood in His death on the cross, and today one reaps the benefits of that blood in

baptism. One cannot preach the cross of Christ without preaching baptism (immersion in water for the forgiveness of sins). The problem is that when I do this, I am going to upset my denominational friends. Such is drawing a line in the sand. It lays down an ultimatum, and this makes people very unhappy.

Thirdly, because preaching the cross means preaching the one church. Acts 20:28:

Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood.

What was done on the cross is the act that redeemed us. It is the act that purchased the one church (the one body) (Eph. 1:22-22), and a man cannot properly do New Testament evangelism without teaching the one church. Occasionally after one is baptized, he will have the idea that he can go back and attend his old denomination. When this happens, it is evident that something very crucial was omitted from their teaching process. A preacher argued with me on one occasion stating, *"the one church is not one of the things that must be taught up front."* He said, *"Nowhere in the Bible do we read about anyone being taught the one church before he was baptized."* Most assuredly this brother was mistaken. First, there was only one church in existence in the first century, but secondly the one church was still taught prior to baptism. When Phillip went down to the city of Samaria in Acts 8:5 it says that he preached *"Christ"* to them. What did that include? Verse 12 says:

But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

Prior to baptism Phillip preached the kingdom, which is the church (Mat. 16:18-19).

Why would a person hesitate to teach the one church? We all know the answer. It makes people very angry. And sometimes it is not the denominational people who get angry. Often it is a weak Christian who becomes enraged. This author remembers one experience in which he contrasted a specific denomination with the church of the New Testament. After the sermon, a member greatly complimented the lesson, thanking him particularly because there was a family member present who attended that denomination. That evening it was a different story. The same member had had lunch with this family member who was furious about the sermon. This Christian then attacked the sermon and complained to the elders. The world's reaction to the one church has caused many weak Christians to forsake their responsibility to evangelize.

Fourth, some compromise on evangelism because of the ridicule it sometimes brings. 1 Corinthians 1:18 says:

For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

The gospel is foolishness to the world. If one holds to Christian principles, he will be deemed by many as simple minded, backwards, ignorant and even brain-washed. TV personality, Bill Maher, said,

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We are a nation that is unenlightened because of religion...I think that religion stops people from thinking...I think religion is a neurological disorder. If you look at it logically, it's something that was drilled into your head when you were a small child.

He continued,

When you were a kid and they were telling you whatever you believe in religion, do you think if they had switched the fairy tales that they read to you in bed with the Bible, you would know the difference?...Do you think if it was the fairy tale about a man who lived inside of a whale and it was religion that Jack built a beanstalk today, you would know the difference? Why do you believe in one fairy tale and not the other?⁵

Especially in academia Christianity is thought of as backwards. Last year this author taught a semester in the local community college. It was relayed to me by another teacher that the department head had mocked me behind my back because my education was from what she perceived as a "Christian" school. Many Christians have compromised on various tenets of the gospel for fear of such treatment. Peter reminds us, *"Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you..."* (1 Peter 4:4).

Capability

An intimidated Christian might be tempted to say, *"With a population of almost 7 billion, and people dying at a rate of 107 per minute it just seems impossible. There is no way we can evangelize the world."*

First, consider with me the power of one. Some Christians have the mistaken idea, "*I'm only one person, I can't make that much of a difference.*" I want to share with you a personal example which shows quite the contrary. Thirty five years ago, a Christian man by the name of Frank Shepard invited his co-worker in the tire business to have a Bible study with him. As a result of that study this author's father and mother obeyed the gospel. They then raised four sons in the Lord's church. They now have adult children who are preaching the gospel and raising their grandchildren in the Lord's church. Many souls have been reached and converted as a result of their efforts. How many more generations of Christians will there be from their offspring? And each one of the individuals they have taught start the cycle again. Brethren, no doubt, thousands will be in Heaven as the result of one man asking his co-worker for a Bible study.

Secondly, consider the power of many. Many examples of individual Christians and congregations coming together to reach souls could be given. We will give only one, one with which this author is personally involved—the Gospel Broadcasting Network. At the time of this writing GBN (through the cooperative efforts of many Christians) is paying to air the *Good News Today* program in thirty-eight million homes each Lord's day. As of April 2011 we have just added a channel on *Roku*. *Roku* is a box that was originally marketed by *Netflix* to stream online video. This box now allows other providers to create personalized channels that can be streamed directly into the home of anyone who has high-speed internet and who owns a sixty dollar *Roku* box. There are approximately one and a half million

homes that currently have these boxes, and the number is growing rapidly. GBN is also weeks away from releasing a live 24/7 channel as an iPhone and an Android app which smart phone users can watch any time they choose. There are fifty-one million iPhone users. There are eight and a half million Android users. The point is that brethren uniting resources enables us to reach millions of souls in ways that we would not otherwise be able to reach. That's the power of many.

Most importantly, we must not forget the power of God. When one says, "*It's impossible,*" he is forgetting one very important thing. He is forgetting "*with God all things are possible*" (Mat. 19:26). He is also exhibiting a lack of faith. Such a Christian should repent, and then press on to what God has told him to do.

What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? (Rom. 8:31).

Conclusion

There is a story told of a homeless man who was sitting in a doorway in an alley. He was cold and hungry, not having eaten for days. Someone came by and shouted to him, "*They're giving away free bread at the grocery store!*" The man got excited, got up, dusted himself off and headed toward the grocery store. When he arrived, he started shoving bread into his mouth and loaves into the pockets of his tattered old coat. He had enough bread for the next two weeks. He left the store chewing on another loaf of bread and beginning to feel warm and filled. As he walked down the road he passed

another doorway where there sat another cold and hungry man needing bread. He stopped and looked and walked on by, never mentioning that they were giving away free bread at the grocery store. How do you feel about this man?

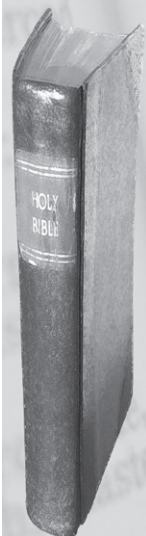
Brothers and sisters in Christ, we have the *"bread of life,"* and we walk by hundreds of people every week and never say anything to them about Jesus Christ. Evangelism is a privilege. Evangelism is a duty. If I fail to take part in this duty and privilege, the results will be eternal.

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EVANGELISM IS A DUTY AND PRIVILEGE!

Facts & Truths "We Can Know...!"



God's Plan Of Salvation!

This Chapter Written By

Jeff Johnson

But Peter, standing up with the eleven lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by 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. For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance. Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his

sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:14-38).

Introduction

How did the international travelers in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost learn about God's plan of salvation? How did all those who were converted in the book of Acts know God's plan of salvation?

Peter stated in Acts 2:22, "*Men of Israel, hear these words.*" Peter called everyone present to hear the first gospel sermon which laid the foundation of God's plan. Peter explained that his hearers had, with wicked hands, crucified the Son of God. Now

when they heard this, their hearts were pierced through, and they cried out, *"What shall we do?"* Peter then affirmed that they must obey the plan. Each traveler had *"Heard"* the gospel call in his own language so each one perfectly understood the gospel call. Then each person *"Believed"* what he had heard and had to *"Repent,"* make that great *"Confession,"* and *"Be Baptized"* for the remission of sins. This was God's plan of salvation. On the day of Pentecost about three thousand people learned what God required in order to be saved. Today, the same plan exists, and nothing has changed.

God's Plan

As the Almighty God had made known the ways of life to His children throughout the ages, once again He made known His intent for His new family.

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds (Heb. 1:1-2).

An inspired John explained in 1 John 1:1-4, that His hearers had seen Jesus, and had heard His voice and His teachings, and had touched Jesus, also known as the Word of life. John continued to tell his hearers that the same Word, Jesus, whom the apostles had seen and heard, was being proclaimed unto those hearers both then and now (1 John 1:2-3). The basis for faith in God is the evidence presented by the witnesses, the apostles, to the hearers. God's plan was delivered to mankind through His Word.

To discuss salvation is to discuss the gospel of Christ:

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned (Mark 16:15-16).

In these verses we read the Lord's command, "Go ye." That direct command to all believers, "Go ye," means, "Go me," and, "Go you." What are we to go and do? We are ordered by God to preach the gospel. Why? Paul said, "*I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation*" (Rom. 1:16). The gospel demonstrates God's power to save man.

The message was simple: teach the unlearned, baptize them, and continue to teach them. All people who believe and are baptized are thus saved. All those that do not believe, of course, will not be baptized and will be condemned. This preaching was part of the first gospel sermon and to preach Christ is to preach baptism.

For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13).

Ephesians 4:5 tells us that there is only one baptism that is essential and in effect today, because John's baptism and the baptism of suffering were fulfilled in our Lord's death (1 Peter 2:21; Rev. 1:9). It is not the baptism of fire since this is yet to come (Rev. 20:15; 19:20). What does baptism do for us? Immersion in water saves us, because the water washes away sins, "*not the filth of the flesh,*" but our sins (1 Peter 3:21).

We must do it to be saved! It is not the "he" that believeth, it is not the "he" that is baptized, it is the "he" that believeth and is baptized (Mark 16:15-16). Baptism is:

- For the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).
- For being born again (John 3:3-5).
- For the washing away of sins (Acts 22:16).
- For contacting the blood of Christ (John 19:34; Rom. 6:3).
- For being added to the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13; Acts 2:47).
- For having our names added in the Lamb's book of life (Phil. 4:3).

Some today will argue that baptism is not essential. Critics verbally express that, "*The thief on the cross was not baptized.*" Our response should be a series of questions: "*How do you know the thief was not baptized? Was the thief married? Did he have children? What did he steal?*" No one knows the answers to these questions because the Bible does not give that information. By the same token, we do not know he was not baptized! John had been baptizing in that geographical area unto repentance. Remember the thief lived and died under a different law, but his last hours were spent with Jesus who knew all the answers.

Some critics prefer a Burger King salvation in which a person can, "*Have It Your Way.*" These people refer to passages like John 3:16, while others quote "*faith only*" passages. Luke 13:3 only mentions repentance. Do we only repent? Matthew 10:32 only mentions confession. Do we only confess? Are these the only things necessary? The Bible says faith alone does not justify (Jas. 2:24-26).

In the New Testament, God's inspired word provides everything a person needs to obtain salvation. A speaker who covers all the steps will allow a hearer to start on the correct road to salvation.

A Closer Look

God's plan of salvation is profoundly simple. Any honest soul who hears, believes, repents, confesses, is baptized and remains faithful will inherit eternal life. Notice what kind of teaching does not save. Psychology and philosophy will not save. Motivational speaking, jokes and man-made doctrines will not save. Only the plan provided by God in the New Testament can save. In addition, many people put their trust in what is called the sinner's prayer. They believe that this prayer will save them, but the sinner's prayer is not found in scripture and is not authorized by God to save. If the prayer does not have a book, chapter, and verse, how can it save?

Hearing: What kind of hearing is required to be saved? It is hearing the word of God. *"So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God"* (Rom. 10:17).

Before a person can believe or obey something, he must first hear about it. Jesus' parable about the sower discusses the type of hearers. Some hearers are similar to the way side, a person who is opinionated and not easily persuaded, may cast off the seed. The rocky ground represents a person who will not be deeply rooted in truth and will soon be withered away by heat. The thorny ground represents a person who receives the word, but is soon, choked out by the cares of the world. Then,

there is the good ground, a person who gladly receives the word. A person must have an honest, sincere need to hear the word. When he hears the gospel message and obeys, then a Christian is born.

Believing: What kind of faith does not save? Putting faith in a preacher cannot save a person. Putting faith in a parent's religion cannot save. How many times has a person heard this statement, "*If it is good enough for mom and dad, its good enough for me.*" Faith in a man-made doctrine cannot save, but many people are willing to believe a lie.

What kind of faith is required to be saved? An obedient faith in Christ! Paul said in Galatians 5:6,

For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

The Christian life is like running a race, since there are obstacles along the way that one must avoid. What are some things that can hinder?

- Bad company or the friends one chooses (Prov. 13:20; 24:1-2)
- Family (Mat. 10:35-37)
- Work (Luke 14:19)
- Possessions (Luke 14:18-20; Acts 5:1-11)
- False Teachers (Gal. 1:6-9)

The doctrine a person obeys determines his destination. Therefore, he must get on the right road and follow the directions in order to reach an eternal home with God.

Repentance: I once heard a great gospel preacher define repentance as: "*Change the way*

GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION!

you think, and change the way you live." The word "repent" does not mean: "I'm sorry, even though this sorrowful emotion may be present in the beginning of repentance. Nor does it mean confessing sins one has committed."

What is Biblical repentance? It is a changed mind leading to a changed life. Luke 3:8 tells us:

Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

Luke records for us in Acts 26:20:

But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.

Confession: The confession made before baptism is not making a report of sins committed in one's past. Nor is it an admission that Christ washed away sins. What should be confessed in order to be saved? In Acts 8:32 we read:

The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth.

This passage of scripture presents an Ethiopian eunuch reading from the book of Isaiah which is prophecy about Jesus, the Son of God. When Phillip studied with the Ethiopian, he preached unto him Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. The Ethiopian stated, "*I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God*" (Acts 8:37). This, and only this, statement is the

great confession. The Ethiopian commanded the chariot in which he and Philip were riding be stopped. Both Philip and the Ethiopian went down into the water and Phillip baptized him...buried him in the water and raised the eunuch to walk in newness of life.

It was Christ that he had to confess and that Jesus is the Son of God. It is Christ's name, and no other, by which man will be saved. Matthew 10:32 tells us: *"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven."*

Baptism: The word baptism means to be totally submerged, or immersed, in water and not sprinkled or poured. If a person pours water over someone's head, then he has only gotten wet and has not been buried in the watery grave of baptism. Although some religions believe baptism is an outward sign of an inward faith, true baptism is for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).

Many people inaccurately claim that Paul was saved on the road to Damascus. If this were the case, neither Paul nor the Lord knew about it, because Paul was told to go into the city and wait there for instructions. If Paul were already saved, then why go and wait? Acts 22:16 tells us that Ananias instructed Paul *"to open his eyes...and arise, and be baptized and wash away thy sins."* Paul's conversion was not completed on the road to Damascus because he had not yet been baptized. Baptism is the washing away of sins.

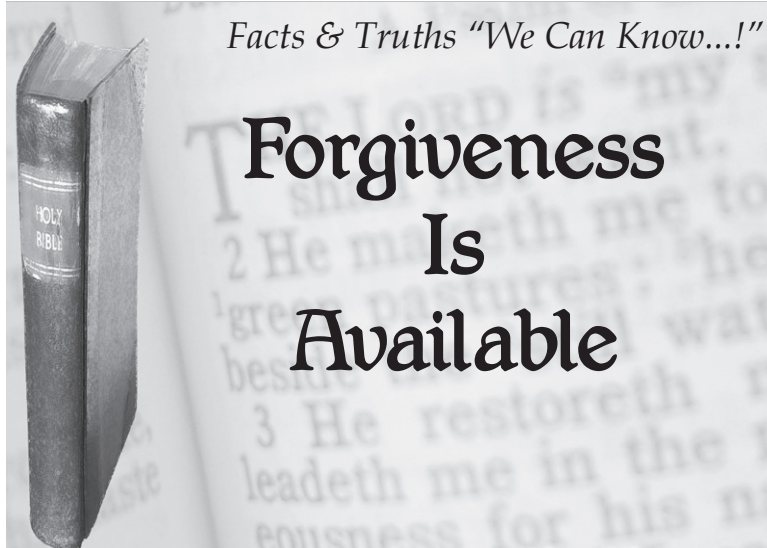
Every conversion in the book of Acts followed the same steps, or the same plan. People heard and believed the gospel, repented of their sins, and made their confession. At that point, they were baptized

into Christ. A person is not a Christian until he has followed God's plan correctly. A person cannot "accept" Jesus into his heart, by merely believing and thus be saved. A person can take a lot of steps to get "into" the Erwin Church of Christ, but he must take one final step that gets him across the threshold and "into" the building. It is baptism, that final step, that gets a person "into" Christ. In addition, baptism allows God to add a person to His church, His family. No other step taken by anyone on earth is as significant as this one.

Faithfulness: Once a person has been baptized, he then must remain faithful (Rev. 2:10). This means a life of obedience to God's Word and God's cause until he dies. Faithfulness is living by the word of God and repenting when we sin.

Conclusion

The religious world has changed God's plan and it does not see the importance of obeying God's plan as He intended. What God has commanded for our salvation let no man change, revise or omit. Jesus Christ's death on the cross, burial in a tomb and resurrection provided the example for man to follow. He must crucify the old man of sin, be buried in baptism and rise to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6). God wants His people to live in faith and obedience to His deceptively simple plan for salvation. God does not want His people to be uncertain or to be defeated by sin. God gave His Son that we might live the good life now and in eternity.



Editor's Note: The following outline is offered as a brief study of this valuable subject. The Bible clearly and concisely declares that *"We Can Know Forgiveness Is Available!"*

Introduction

1. Jesus taught an important lesson
Matthew 18:23-35
2. Consider this matter seriously
Romans 1:31-32

I. FORGIVENESS IS A GOD-LIKE QUALITY.

1. Jesus taught that forgiving another is
God-like Luke 6:36
2. Our forgiveness from God depends on
forgiving others
 - a. God forgives as we forgive
Matthew 18:35
 - b. Merciful shall obtain mercy
Matthew 5:12

- c. Forgive our debts as we forgive others
Matthew 6:12-15
- 3. Jesus rebuked Pharisees for failing in this
Matthew 23:23
- 4. Forgive as often as one repents
Luke 17:3-4

II. THREE PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

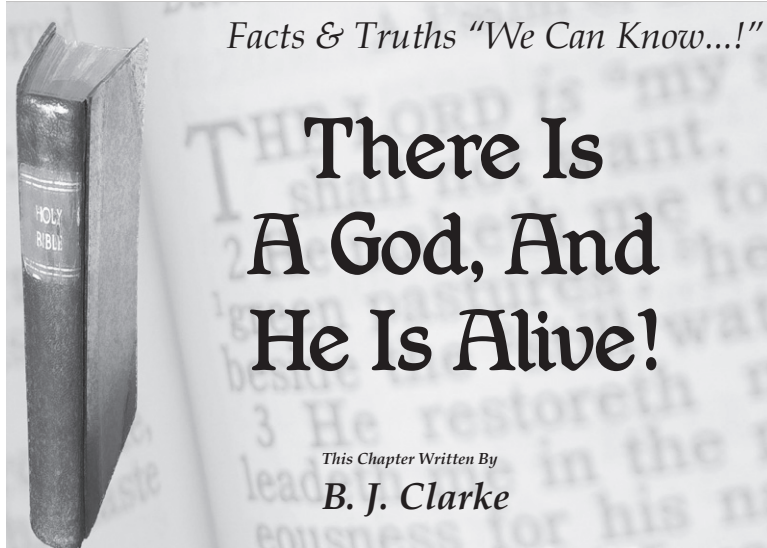
- 1. Consider how much and how often God forgives you
Ephesians 4:32
 - a. If God can forgive us, we can forgive others.
 - b. Consider ALL we have done against God vs. how little to others.
 - c. Some say: "I'll forgive, but I won't have anything to do with him now."
 - (1) Are you not glad God does not treat us that way?
 - (2) Would you like others to treat you that way?
 - (3) God FORGIVES, FORGETS, and then TREATS us as if we have never sinned in our life.
- 2. Do not expect and demand the impossible (of yourself or others).
 - a. Some question if they have forgiven, since they cannot forget.
 - b. Forgive — though you may never forget.

- c. Likely you will recall the offense, but do not let it affect the way you treat the person.
3. Make the decision to forgive – purpose in your heart to forgive.
 - a. Forgiveness is an act of the will.
 - b. You will never forgive until you decide to do so.

CONCLUSION:

1. Jesus is the greatest example of forgiveness and mercy – Luke 23:34.
2. Jesus taught His disciples to follow Him, have His mind and spirit.

FORGIVENESS IS AVAILABLE!



Introduction

The question of origins is a matter of interest to all mankind. Even the atheist has grappled with the question, *“Where did I come from?”* Charles Smith, the President of the American Association for the Advancement of Atheism, authored a pamphlet in 1929, in which he gave the following *“explanation”* for the origin of man:

In the beginning was matter, which begat the ameba, which begat the worm, which begat the fish, which begat the amphibian, which begat the reptile, which begat the lower mammal, which begat the lemur, which begat the monkey, which begat man, who imagined God (Charles Smith, President of the American Association For The Advancement Of Atheism, in the pamphlet *“Godless Evolution,”* authored in 1929).

3500 years earlier, another man, by the name of Moses, offered a very different explanation. He wrote:

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth...And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them (Gen. 1:1, 26-27).

In examining the two statements above, one could not find two more contradictory assertions about the origin of man, and the universe!

So, which explanation is correct? Did man imagine God, or did God create man? Is it even possible to know – absolutely know – whether there is a God in heaven? Scripture affirms that God *“made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion”* (Jer. 10:12). Yet, the atheist will retort that you cannot use the Bible to prove that God exists. In reality, you can, if you prove first that the Bible is beyond human production. There are numerous evidences within the Scriptures to show that it is no ordinary book, but these matters are addressed in another chapter in this lectureship book. Besides, there are numerous strands of evidence outside of the Scriptures that prove the existence of God.

God has not left Himself without witness (Acts 14:17). In addition to the powerful affirmations of Holy Scripture that God exists, the theist has numerous arguments from the realm of philosophy and common sense, which may be employed in the arena of debate. Despite the intimidating glances of scientific *“scholars,”* and the pronouncements of liberal theologians, the existence of God can be known to be the absolute truth. Entire volumes have been penned for the express purpose of

demonstrating these proofs. Obviously, we cannot adequately cover in one chapter all of the evidence, but we will attempt to present some of the strongest evidence. Perhaps not all of the following arguments are equally weighted, but the combination of these arguments provides sufficient evidence for us to know that *"There Is A God, and He Is Alive."* This is true...

Because Of What The Atheist Cannot See

The atheist often brags that no man has ever seen God. In Seattle, May 6, 1962, Russian cosmonaut Gherman Titov proclaimed his disbelief in God and said he saw no God or angels during his 17 orbits of the earth. Some years ago, Russian elementary schools displayed a poster in their schools in which a Russian Cosmonaut is looking down from the sky on the churches in the Soviet Union and saying, *"Nyet Boga,"* the Russian way of saying, *"No God."*

The intended meaning is quite clear—this cosmonaut has been in the realm of outer space, as far away from this world as one can get, and yet he did not see any evidence of God. Of course, these cosmonauts need to read Psalm 14:1, *"The fool hath said in his heart, there is 'Nyet Boga' (no God)."*

How should one respond to the assertion that not seeing God disproves His existence? In the first place, it is not a logical argument. Does the inability of a blind person to see someone disprove the existence of that someone? Does the inability of a blind person to see light prove that light does

THERE IS A GOD, AND HE IS ALIVE!

not exist? Of course not! One can't see love or justice in a tangible form, and yet love and justice exist. One cannot see 2 lbs. of sorrow, or 5 oz. of happiness, and yet sorrow and happiness are real and do exist.

Furthermore, what the atheist has not seen is actually an argument against his claim that God does not exist. Even evolutionary scientists admit that we have not scratched the surface in our exploration of outer space. The nearest star is light years away. The orbits of the Russian cosmonauts were only small circles around the earth, a marble in comparison to the rest of the universe. Thus, how do the cosmonauts know that God does not reside in some part of space they have never orbited? That is precisely the point! They don't know!

You would have to see everything before you could affirm dogmatically that there is no God, because if you did not see every place and everything, the very thing that may have escaped your notice is the existence of God. The words of Ron Carlson and Ed Decker are excellent:

It is philosophically impossible to be an atheist, since to be an atheist you must have infinite knowledge in order to know absolutely that there is no God. But to have infinite knowledge, you would have to be God yourself. It's hard to be God yourself and an atheist at the same time!

In a speech made to the faculty and students of Oskaloosa College, D. R. Dungan illustrated it like this:

If I should announce to you this morning that there is not in the walls of this building, deposited a silver dollar, you would rightfully

understand me as affirming my perfect acquaintance with every piece of material used in their construction, large enough to contain such a coin. If I were not present when every brick was made and put into the wall, and when all the mortar was made, and if I watched not with unerring accuracy every act of all the workmen until the whole was complete, then you would laugh at my affirmation. You see at once that the genuine atheist must be a man of unlimited knowledge, and that none of you can claim to be such, at least till you will have graduated. Even then it is questionable if such a garment would sit gracefully.

The atheist cannot tell you for certain that there is no God in the universe, because he has not seen the entire universe. In the next place, we know that there is a God, and He is alive...

Because Of What Men Have Never Seen

The atheist taunts that men have never seen God, but he should consider some things that men have never seen, which necessitate the existence of God.

1. Men have never seen something come out of nothing. It is a scientific fact that from nothing comes nothing. Consider the following syllogism:

1. Something cannot come from nothing.
2. But something exists.
3. Therefore, something or Someone has always existed.

Wayne Jackson enhances the above syllogism:

If there was [sic] ever a time when absolutely nothing existed, then there would be nothing

now, for nothing produces nothing but nothingness! Since something does exist, it must logically follow that something has always existed. Exactly what was that?

Well, everything that exists can either be classified as matter or mind. Can you think of something that cannot be so categorized? We think not. Accordingly, look at this argument:

1. Everything existent is either matter or mind.
2. But something existent is eternal.
3. Thus either matter or mind is eternal.
4. But as shown above, matter is not eternal.
5. Therefore, it is mind that is eternal. That Mind is identified and described in the Bible as God.

The truth described above eliminates the intimidation of answering the question, "*Where did God come from?*" because we discover that the atheist himself has to answer his own question about the origin of matter. Where did matter come from?

2. *Men have never seen unintelligent matter turn into an intelligent mind.* Theists believe in an eternal Mind, whereas atheists believe in the eternality of matter. Therefore, we can affirm the following syllogism:

1. A rational being cannot come from an irrational thing. (If it could, this would be equivalent to something coming from nothing).
2. But a rational (thinking) being exists.
3. Therefore, a rational (thinking) being has always existed.

In his debate with Woolsey Teller, in October of 1947, James D. Bales used the force of the above

syllogism to ask his opponent some unanswerable questions:

How did matter become intelligent enough
to deny that the universe is governed by
intelligence?

How do you account for the order and
intelligence, which are manifested in such a
being as man, if the universe is a product of
non-intelligent forces?

Is there any rational account as to why matter
in motion should have worked out theism in my
brain and atheism in yours?

Thomas B. Warren put Antony Flew in a
similar prison when he pointed out that Mr. Flew
would have to explain a number of things to be
able to prove his proposition that there is no God.
He used a chart in which he depicted Flew having
to escape through a number of different doors. He
asked Mr. Flew to explain how:

Human beings came from
that which was not human?

Intelligence came from
that which had no intelligence?

Conscience came from
that which had no conscience?

Consciousness came from
that which had no consciousness?

Truly, dead inanimate matter cannot be an adequate
cause for that which is living and thinking. We
unashamedly affirm, *"for every house is builded by*

some man, but he that built all things is God" (Heb. 3:4).

3. Men have never seen blind chance as an adequate cause for complex effects. Consider what is known as the cosmological argument for the existence of God:

1. Every effect must have an adequate cause.
2. The world is an effect.
3. Therefore, the world must have had a cause outside of itself and adequate enough to account for its existence.

A key word in the cosmological argument is the word "*adequate.*" For instance, if we are walking in the forest and we come upon a footprint in the soft earth, we immediately know that someone or something is responsible for causing the effect (the footprint). What caused the footprint? Was it a single raindrop? Was it the impact of a leaf hitting the ground as it descended from a tall tree? Of course not! Even though we were not present when the impression in the earth was made, we immediately know that neither a raindrop nor a leaf would be an adequate cause or sufficient explanation for the footprint.

Show an atheist a cake, and he will always reason back to a baker. Show an atheist a poem, and he will always reason back to a poet. Show an atheist a house, and he will always reason back to an architect and builder of the house. Show the atheist something far more complex than a cake, a poem, and a house, such as the universe, and he suddenly parks his reason and ascribes its origin to blind chance. To hear the atheist tell it, all you need is a big bang, and a few materials fortuitously colliding together in

just the right way, and “*Presto, change-o,*” you’ve got a universe!

To show the utter folly of believing that blind chance is an adequate cause for the universe, Wayne Jackson writes:

Professor Harold Morowitz has estimated that the probability for the chance formation of the smallest, simplest form of living organism known is 1 to 10340,000,000 [that is 1 followed by 340 million zeros] (Energy Flow In Biology. Academic Press. New York. 1968. p. 99.). Do you know what a staggering figure this is? The entire universe is said to contain only 10¹⁸ electrons! Dr. Carl Sagan has estimated that the chance of life evolving on earth is 1 to 102,000,000,000 [1 followed by 2 billion zeros]. It would take 6,000 books of 300 pages each just to write that number! Yet they expect us to believe it just freakishly happened! Professor Edwin Conklin of Princeton University put it this way: “*The probability of life originating from accident is comparable to the probability of the unabridged dictionary resulting from an explosion in a printing shop*” (Reader’s Digest. January, 1963. p. 92).¹²

Men have never seen such things happen as described above! This ought to be proof positive that God is the uncaused, adequate, Cause of the universe. Finally, we can know there is a God, and that He is alive...

Because Of What Men Can See

Although no man has seen the full essence of God at any time (John 1:18), there are plenty of things man has seen, and can see, which attest to God’s existence. Paul wrote, “*For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen,*

being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" (Rom. 1:20). Because of what men can see, there is no excuse for not believing in God! What can men see that proves the existence of God?

1. Men can see the glory of God in the heavens.

The psalmist exclaimed, *"the heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork"* (Psa. 19:1). No atheist would look at the light shining from an electric light bulb and conclude that the light bulb evolved from darkness into light. Yet, the same atheist looks at the light shining from the stars in the skies and thinks it is the product of mere happenstance. Amazing!

Abraham Lincoln once said, *"I can see how it might be possible for a man to look down upon the earth and be an atheist, but I cannot conceive how he could look up into the heavens and say there is no God."* Contrast the reaction of our American astronauts while in space with that of the Russian cosmonauts. Remember when the American astronaut looked upon the sphere of the earth and read those marvelous words found in the very first chapter of Genesis? The reason the Russian cosmonauts did not see God when they were in outer space is the same reason a thief cannot find a policeman right after committing a burglary.

2. Men can see the handiwork of God from the heavens. The late Carl Sagan, noted Professor of Astronomy at Cornell University, authored an article, which appeared in Parade magazine, Sunday, June 6, 1993. The article is entitled, *"Is There Intelligent Life On Earth?"* The subheading of the article reads: *"What an alien spaceship might reveal about our planet – and ourselves."*

In the article, Mr. Sagan, who was at best an agnostic, takes the reader on an imaginary trip through space while looking down on the earth from a spaceship. The entire article is, amazingly, devoted to proving that the design and structure of the earth is evidence of life upon the earth. Sagan imagines looking upon the oceans with infrared technology and discovering that there is *"sufficient water vapor in the air to account for the clouds and just the amount that must exist because of evaporation if the oceans are in fact made of liquid water."*

You then discover that the air on this world is almost 1/5th oxygen. According to Sagan, *"No other planet in the Solar System has anything close to so much oxygen."* Sagan grants, *"the oxygen would not be proof of life but rather the merest hint of life."* As you continue your travel you discover that methane and oxygen are together in the same atmosphere. To quote Sagan, *"In an oxygen atmosphere, methane is a sign of life."*

Perhaps the most telling section of Sagan's article is what he writes about the evidence of technology, discovered on earth from the spacecraft. From the craft you are able to detect radio transmissions from the earth. Sagan writes, *"So, as an alien explorer, you would know that at least one of the species on earth has achieved radio technology."* To search for the species behind this technology, Sagan hypothesizes looking at the earth with a telescope at about 100-meter resolution. His next statement is absolutely correct, and yet absolutely contradictory based on Sagan's agnostic philosophy. Sagan writes, *"The planet is revealed to be covered with straight lines, squares, rectangles, circles, of regularity and complexity that would be hard to explain except*

by life and intelligence." He then adds that if you take pictures at a few meters resolution:

You find that the criss-crossing straight lines of the cities and the long straight lines that connect the cities seem to be filled with streamlined, multicolored beings a few meters in length, politely running, one behind the other. At night they turn on two bright lights in front so that they can see where they're going. The streets of the cities and the roadways of the countryside are clearly built for their benefit. Some of them, when their workday is done, go to little houses to retire for the night. At last you have detected the source of all the technology, the dominant life form on the planet.

So what is the point of all this? Carl Sagan looked at the complexity of the makeup of the earth, and its physical infrastructure, and deduced that this did not happen by accident. In the magazine article, Sagan inserted a satellite photo of the heart of Washington D.C. The caption reads: *"The regular geometry of Washington, D.C. – including the Capitol, the Pentagon, and bridges over the Potomac – provide presumptive evidence of intelligent life on earth."*

It is fair to ask, if the intricacy of one small section of Washington D.C. is evidence of intelligent life, then would it not also follow that the more complex intricacies of the human body also point to an intelligent Designer and Architect? Mr. Sagan's article placed him in the unsavory position of believing that the roadways of Washington D.C. required intelligent beings to construct them, but his agnostic position would not allow him to affirm decisively that the ones who built these roadways definitely came from an intelligent Creator.

Mr. Sagan's article admitted that technology has a source from which it was created or invented but, according to Sagan, the source of this technology, mankind, has no definite source from which he was specially created. You could never have convinced Mr. Sagan that the sophisticated high-powered telescopes taking these photographs from outer space just exploded into existence, and yet Mr. Sagan believed that the planets in outer space did come from a big explosion. You could never have convinced Mr. Sagan that a spaceship could create itself, given enough time, and yet Mr. Sagan believed that the ones who built the spacecraft just evolved by accidental happenstance. We wish that Mr. Sagan had been consistent enough to see the force of his argument as it related to the existence of God.

3. Men can see the evidence of intelligent design all around them. Simply stated, the design argument is as follows:

1. Evidence of design supposes an intelligent designer.
2. The world everywhere exhibits marks of design and intelligence.
3. Therefore, the world owes its existence to an intelligent designer and author.

As I think about the design argument, I cannot help but remember a visit to the St. Louis Science Center some years ago. The visit was both a joy and a sorrow. There were dozens of fascinating things to wonder at and observe. Overall, I enjoyed the experience. However, everywhere I turned there were films and placards promoting evolution as a scientific fact that had been established as conclusively as the law of gravity.

All over the St. Louis Science Center there were wall placards documenting the construction of the Science Center and the major contributors to its construction. There was even a bank of TV monitors, which depicted, in fast frame fashion, the building of the Center, from its foundation to ribbon cutting ceremony. Also, while we were in the Science Center we examined the intricacy and complexity of a jet engine.

Now, there is not a scientist alive who would believe or teach that the St. Louis Science Center came about as the result of an explosion of brick, mortar and other building materials. No scientist would believe that even one exhibit or jet engine put itself together accidentally. Yet these "scientists" expect us to believe the men who built these exhibits, and the center to house them, came about as the mere chance result of an initial explosion, and subsequent evolutionary processes. They can see that the design of the exhibits and the center itself imply a designer and architect. They are unwilling to see that the design of the universe and man himself imply a supreme Designer and Architect. These men and women, who seem to be wise in this age, need to become fools that they may become wise (Jer. 9:23-24; 1 Cor. 3:18-19).

As Thomas Warren pointed out so well in his debate with Antony Flew, no atheist would argue that a mechanical hand could exist without a designer, yet the same atheist looks at the complexity of the human hand and "*reasons*"(?) that it just happened. Yet, the Psalmist declared, "*I am fearfully and wonderfully made*" (Psa. 139:14).

4. Men can see the morality within mankind.
Much could be written concerning this argument,

but due to space limitations, we will simply reproduce the powerful argument presented by brother Warren in his debate with atheist (now former atheist), Antony Flew:

1. True or False: In murdering six million Jewish men, women, and children the Nazis were guilty of real (objective) moral wrong.
2. In torturing and/or murdering six million Jews, the Nazis were guilty of violating which of the following (place check mark by each choice that is appropriate):
 - a. Law Of Germany
 - b. Law Of England
 - c. Law of USA
 - d. Law of God
 - e. Some other law (explain)
 - f. No law at all

This powerful argument devastated Mr. Flew. He found himself on the horns of a hopeless dilemma. He could not endorse the actions of a madman like Hitler. But on what grounds could he condemn him? Had Hitler violated the law of Germany? Hardly. He was the law of Germany at the time. Had he violated the law of another nation? No, for He was not amenable to the laws of other nations. Then what law did he violate by his barbarism? He violated the law of God, to which all men are amenable.

Since the atheist believes that man is merely matter in motion, he finds it impossible to explain the source of man's morality. Did dead matter, consisting of rocks, dirt, water, gases, etc., provide man with a moral code? Or is it much more reasonable to conclude that man's morality is the result of an all-powerful, all-knowing, all-loving,

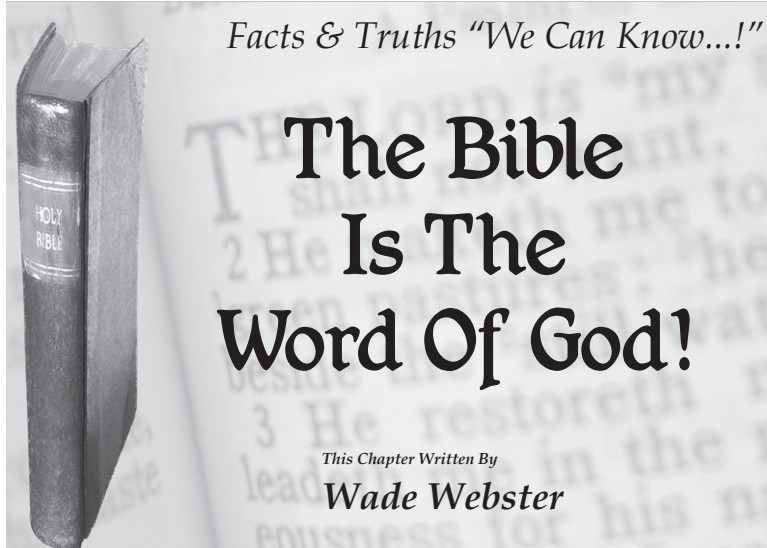
THERE IS A GOD, AND HE IS ALIVE!

all-moral Creator? To ask the question is to answer it.

Conclusion

We have by no means exhausted the arguments for the existence of God. We have, however, given ample proof that humanity and the universe owe their existence to an adequate Cause and intelligent Designer. The Bible identifies this intelligent Designer as God Almighty, the Creator.

There is a God in Heaven (Dan. 2:28)! He is alive! In Him we live and we survive!



Make no mistake about it, the Bible claims to be the word of God. Over 2,700 times the writers of the Bible refer in one way or another to what the Lord said. With most Bibles being from 1,200 to 1,500 pages in length, this means that twice per page the reader is reminded that he is reading God's word. We must not miss the fact that the Scriptures are inspired or breathed of God (2 Tim. 3:16-17; Mat. 4:4).

By definition, faith is *"the substance of things hoped for"* and the *"evidence of things not seen"* (Heb. 11:1). Our faith has substance to it and evidence behind it. Furthermore, it has a rock-solid foundation beneath it. Although many are building without a foundation, we are not. We have dug deep to find the solid rock of absolute truth. We are building on a foundation that can withstand the heavy rains, strong winds, and battering floods of unbelief (Luke 6:47-49).

As Christians, there are certain things that we must “*believe*” and be “*sure*” about (John 6:66). For example, we must believe and be sure that Christ is the Son of God (John 8:24). Furthermore, we must believe and be sure that the Bible is the word of God. Our lesson, as the title suggests, is concerned with the second of these convictions.

The evidences used to establish that the Bible is from God fall into two main categories: external and internal. External evidences include things like archaeological discoveries. Internal evidences include things like scientific foreknowledge. Generally, external evidences are accepted with little question. However, individuals often dismiss internal evidences by arguing that the Bible can't be used to prove itself. However, nothing could be further from the truth. If you found a bottle of liquid and wanted to know what it was, how would you go about finding out? No doubt, you would first examine the outside of the bottle. By reading the label and examining the shape of the bottle, you could likely glean some things. However, if you really want to know what the liquid was, you would have to eventually open the bottle and test its contents. In like manner, if you want to know whether or not the Bible is the word of God, you are going to have to eventually open it and examine what is on the inside.

As you know, there was a time, in the not so distant past, when virtually everyone believed that the Bible was the word of God. However, that is not the case today. Modernism, atheism, and relativism have all taken their toll. Generations have been produced who do not believe in absolute, knowable

truth. With this in mind, we must prepare ourselves to give them a reason for the hope that is within us (1 Pet. 3:15).

Because Of Its Amazing Unity

The Bible was written by about forty men over the course of about 1,600 years. It was written in three languages—Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic. The writers came from a host of backgrounds. Some were highly educated like Luke (Col. 4:14) and Paul (Acts 22:3), while others were unlearned and ignorant like Peter and John (Acts 4:13). Kings, cupbearers, soldiers, farmers, herdsmen, publicans, and fishermen all penned parts of it. It contains a variety of literary forms—poetry, prophecy, proverbs, parables, etc. It is made up of two testaments and covers three dispensations of time—Patriarchal, Mosaical, and Christian. Yet, in spite of all of these variations, there is amazing unity. No writer contradicts another writer. Although there are 66 distinct parts to it, it is one book. There is one central theme or scarlet thread that runs throughout it—the salvation of man.

Imagine a medical book written in 3 languages, over 1,600 years, by 40 men, from various backgrounds. How much unity would there be to that book? How many glaring contradictions would there be in it? No doubt, there would be many. Yet, such is not the case with the Bible. How do you explain that? I am convinced that it cannot be explained separate and apart from the all-powerful hand of an all-knowing God. Peter explained:

Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. 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 (2 Pet. 1:20-21).

There is amazing unity in the Scriptures because the forty men who penned it were all inspired by the same Spirit. Moses and Mark, David and Daniel, Micah and Matthew, all had the same God revealing truth to them.

Because Of Its Remarkable Predictions

The Old Testament established a simple test for how to tell if a prophet was from God or not. If the prophecies came to pass, the prophet was from God. If the prophecies didn't come to pass, then the prophet was not from God (Deut. 18:22). It seems to me that we can apply the same test to the Bible. If the predictions of the Bible came to pass, then it should be accepted as being from God. However, if its predictions did not come to pass, then it should be rejected.

Isaiah challenged the idolaters of his day to show things to come (Isa. 41:22). For sure, such would have been proof that they were from God. Of course, they couldn't do so. However, the writers of the Bible were able to do so. In fact, the Bible is filled with predictive prophecies. Perhaps, the most remarkable thing about the predictive prophecies of the Bible is that they were very specific in nature. Unlike generic predictions that may be said to have many fulfillments, the specific prophecies of the Scriptures have only one fulfillment. Thus, when these prophecies come to pass, they reveal a Source greater than themselves. As you know,

man is sorely lacking in his ability to predict the future. Even with high-tech radar and computer simulations, man struggles to predict the weather and stock market. Yet, Bible prophets and writers made very specific predictions that were fulfilled to the smallest detail.

Someone has estimated that there are approximately 800 prophecies in the Old Testament. Amazingly, over 300 of these prophecies are of Christ. The prophecies detail His lineage (Luke 3:38; Heb. 7:14), His birthplace (Micah 5:2), His betrayal (Psa. 41:9; Zech. 11:12), His death (Psa. 22:16), His resurrection (Psa. 16:10), and a host of other matters. Amazingly, these very specific prophecies were given hundreds of years before the time of Christ. The prophets were dead and gone by the time they were fulfilled. They were powerless to bring them about. However, they went off without a hitch. How can this be explained apart from the all-powerful hand of an all-knowing God? It simple cannot. Peter Stoner, a mathematician, estimated the probability of just 8 of these prophecies being fulfilled by accident at 1 in 10 to the 17th power. That is a 1 followed by 17 zeros (1,000,000,000,000,000,000,000). He illustrated this number by suggesting that it is equal to covering the state of Texas in silver dollars to a depth of two feet, marking one of the coins, and then asking a blind-folded man to find the marked coin the first try.

Of course, the Messianic predictions are not the only remarkable prophecies in the Old Testament. The prophecies concerning various nations are also remarkable. For example, Ezekiel gave a remarkable prophecy concerning Tyre (Ezek. 26:3-14). Ezekiel

predicted that Tyre's walls would be destroyed, her towers would be broken down, and that the dust would be scraped from her, leaving her as bare as the top of a rock. Tyre would become a place for the spreading of nets. The prophecy was partially fulfilled by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C. He destroyed the city and left it in ruins. However, the stones, the timber, and the dust from the destruction remained. The complete fulfillment did not come until the time of Alexander the Great (332 B.C.). Concerned with leaving his rear flanks open to attack, he cast the rubble, including the dust, into the sea to build a bridge to the island of Tyre, so that he could conquer it and protect himself.

Because Of Its Unbiased Treatment Of Heroes

The Bible records its heroes warts and all. It does not gloss over their faults; but rather, it records them for our learning (Rom. 15:4). It shows them to be men and women of like passions as we are (Jas. 5:17). Few prominent characters escape the pages of Scripture without at least one negative detail from their lives being recorded. Of course, even in these rare cases, there was sin (Rom. 3:23). Only one man ever lived without sin—Jesus Christ (Heb. 4:15). The fact that the Bible records even the faults of its heroes is proof that it is of divine and not human origin. Consider a few examples with me:

Noah, one of the charter members of Faith's Hall of Fame (Heb. 11:7), found both grace and disgrace in the pages of Scripture. He found grace in the eyes of the Lord (Gen. 6:8), but disgrace in

the eyes of his own sons (Gen. 9:20-23). As you recall, this just man, who walked with God, and was perfect in his generations (Gen. 6:9), also planted a vineyard, drank of the wine, and was found uncovered in his tent. The Bible not only recorded Noah's faith, it also recorded his folly (Prov. 20:1).

Abraham, another hero of the faith, was also recorded warts and all (Heb. 11:8-19). This Friend of God and Father of the Faithful answered the call of faith and left home not knowing where he was going (Gen. 12:1-2; Heb. 11:8-10; Jas. 2:21-23; Rom. 4:11-12, 16). However, during a time of famine, he took a trip down into Egypt and forgot to pack his faith. He convinced his wife to tell a half-truth, or better yet, a whole lie, to preserve his life (Gen. 12:10-20). He was walking by fear, rather than by faith.

Of course, other heroes like Moses, David, and Peter, also received unbiased treatment in the Scriptures. Like the men we examined earlier, we see them warts and all.

Because Of Its Refusal To Cater To Human Curiosity

The Scriptures provide men with all that they need to know (2 Pet. 1:3-4; 2 Tim. 3:16-17), but not necessarily all that they want to know. It does not cater to human curiosity. The fact that the Bible does not cater to the curiosity of man shows that it is of divine origin. Consider a couple of examples:

There is only one occasion in Scripture when Jesus is recorded as writing anything; and, the Scriptures do not tell us what it was (John 8:6,

8). Wouldn't you like to know? I know that I would. However, we are not told. As you recall, the occasion involved a woman taken in the act of adultery. When Jesus stooped down, what did He write on the ground? Did he write the words grace, mercy, or forgiveness? Did he write a Scripture? Did he write the name of the man who was involved with her? Did he write the names of this poor woman's accusers? Did he write the sins hidden in the lives of those who wanted to stone her? We are not told. However, we are told the effect that Jesus' words, both spoken and written, had upon those gathered before him. John records that the men, convicted by their consciences, went out one by one, from the eldest of them to the youngest (John 8:9). I find it interesting that on the only occasion that Jesus wrote, He wrote on the ground. He wrote on a tablet that prevented that would quickly be stamped out. Can you imagine what would have happened if Jesus had been written on a scrap of paper? No doubt, the world would be filled with scraps of paper today all claiming to bear the handwriting of Jesus.

Although the Bible records that Paul was given a thorn in the flesh to buffet him and to keep him from being exalted above measure (2 Cor. 12:7), we are not told what the thorn was. I would like to know, wouldn't you? I could write a best-selling book if I knew. Was it poor eyesight as many suggest? We don't know. We aren't told. The Bible does not cater to our curiosity. All that we know is that it must have bothered Paul immensely. After all, he besought the Lord three times to remove it (2 Cor. 12:8-9).

As you know, the Bible records many occasions when individuals were brought back from the dead (1 Kings 17:17-24; Luke 7:11-18; John 11). However, these individuals tell no tales. Wouldn't you like to know what it was like where they were? I know I would. However, the Bible doesn't tell us. It does not cater to our curiosity.

Of course, many other mysteries remain. However, these matters of curiosity point to the fact that the Bible is of divine and not human origin.

Because Of Its Scientific Foreknowledge

The Bible is not a science book. However, it does contain scientific information. When it touches upon scientific matters, it is always correct. It does not record the superstitions or misconceptions that prevailed in the time when various books were written. Amazingly, the Bible even contains many scientific facts that had not been discovered at the time that Bible books were written. Please consider a few examples of this type of information:

Oceanography

The psalmist spoke of "*the paths of the sea*" (Psa. 8:8) long before these paths were discovered. The paths were discovered by a man named Matthew Fontaine Maury (1806-1873). Maury was once confined to his bed during a prolonged sickness. During this time, his son read to him from the eighth psalm. Upon hearing the psalmist speak of the paths of the sea, Maury determined to find them when his health improved. He followed through with his desire and was rewarded for his effort. He took God at His word and was not

disappointed. His book of physical oceanography is still considered a fundamental text on the subject. How did the psalmist know about these paths long before Matthew Fontaine Maury did? For sure, the psalmist had never seen them. He had no means by which to investigate them. Yet, he was right about them. Who told him? Obviously, it was the One who made the seas.

Job spoke of the springs of the sea (Job 38:16) and of the recesses of the deep (Job 38:16; cf. 2 Sam. 22:16). Both of these scientific statements have since been confirmed. Freshwater springs are found off the coasts of Greece, Italy, Israel, Syria, and Australia. How did Job know that they were there? Furthermore, how did he know that deep recesses were there? Yet, he did. These recesses were not discovered for thousands of years after he lived. The Challenger Expedition (1873-1876) discovered a recess 5 ½ miles deep. Job certainly could not have explored these depths. Someone had to tell him about them. Who was that someone? It couldn't have been another man. They were as limited as he was. It had to be someone greater than him. It had to be God.

Solomon wrote:

All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is not full; unto the place wither the rivers go, thither they go again (Eccl. 1:7).

This passage records the hydrologic cycle. Did you know that the Mississippi River dumps approximately 6 million gallons of water per second into the Gulf of Mexico? Yet, the Gulf never overflows. Why not? It doesn't overflow because of the hydrologic cycle. The water returns to the

clouds where it can fall again. Other Bible passages also speak of this water cycle (Amos 9:6; Eccl. 11:3). More than 2,000 years prior to the discovery of the water cycle, inspired writers were talking about it. How can you explain this separate and apart from an all-powerful and all-knowing God?

God instructed Noah to build an ark that was 300 cubits long, 50 cubits wide, and 30 cubits high (Gen. 6:15). The ratio for the ark was 30 to 5 to 3 (length to breadth to height). It seems that this is the perfect ratio to use in building a ship capable of withstanding stormy seas and carrying large amounts of cargo. In 1844, Isambard K. Brunel employed this ratio in building a ship that he named the Great Britain. The ratio was again used by shipbuilders during World War II to build a boat nicknamed the "*ugly duckling*." How did Noah know the perfect ratio to use in building the ark? He knew it because God told him.

Medicine

God guided Moses to tell the Israelites that "*the life of the flesh is in the blood*" (Lev. 17:11-14). Of course, this wasn't known in Moses' day. In fact, it wasn't even known in George Washington's day. History records that he died from blood-letting. Today, we know that Moses was right. Red blood cells carry oxygen to the body. How did Moses know that "*the life of the flesh*" was "*in the blood*?" He knew it because God told him.

The Old Testament commanded the circumcision of boy babies on the eighth day (Gen. 17:12). We now know why. Today, we know that Vitamin K is responsible for prompting the production

of prothrombin by the liver. It is between the 5th and the 7th days of the baby boy's life that prothrombin begins to be produced. We now know that prothrombin is the highest that it will ever be in the life of the infant on the 8th day. There is no better day for circumcision. How did Moses know that this was the very best day to circumcise a baby boy? Did he just make a lucky guess? I am convinced that the Great Physician revealed it to him. Perhaps, Moses never knew the significance of this day. However, God did.

Ancient writers thought that only the male possessed the seed of life. The female was seen only as an incubator. Democritus, an ancient Greek writer, even suggested that warm mud could essentially perform the role of the female. Moses knew better. He knew that the female also possessed the seed of life (Gen. 3:15). Today, of course, we know that it takes the 23 chromosomes contained in the female ovum or seed, plus the 23 chromosomes contained in the male sperm or seed to produce a normal human. How did Moses know the contribution that the female made? Did he just guess right?

Countless other evidences could be taken from the fields of physics, astronomy, and biology. However, these are sufficient to establish that the only way to account for these statements is that an all-seeing, all-knowing, all-powerful God was revealing these details to the writers of Scripture.

Because Of Its Historical Accuracy

Some individuals argue that it is not important for the Bible to get all historical details right.

However, it is. If the Bible cannot be trusted in matters of history, what confidence do we have that it can be trusted in matters of theology (John 3:12)? If the writers made mistakes in recording earthly matters, how can we be sure that they didn't make the same in recording heavenly matters?

Although many have doubted the historical accuracy of the Scriptures, no clear archaeological discovery has ever proven a Biblical reference to be untrue. It should be noted that this is not true of other religious books like the book of Mormon.

Amazingly, the Biblical writers did not shy away from mentioning people, places, or other details. For example, in the book of Acts, Luke mentions 32 countries, 54 cities, and 9 Mediterranean islands. He also mentions 95 people, with 62 of them not being named elsewhere in the New Testament. The mention of all of these people and places caught Sir William Ramsey's attention. Ramsey, a skeptical scholar, set out in the late 1800's to disprove the historical accuracy of the book of Acts. After many years of uncovering evidence which proved, rather than disproved, the Bible, Ramsey reluctantly concluded that the book of Acts was historically correct. In commenting on these kinds of details, J. W. McGarvey noted:

A fictitious narrative, located in a country with which the author is not personally familiar, must either avoid local allusions or be found frequently in conflict with the peculiarities of place and of manners and customs. By this conflict the fictitious character of the narrative is exposed.

McGarvey went on to detail numerous times when the Bible proved to be accurate in such details. He

noted that *"in not a single instance of this kind have any of the Bible writers been found at fault."* How does one account for such accuracy? It must be accounted for on the basis that they were inspired of God.

Although the Old Testament mentions the Hittites over 40 times, their existence was doubted for many years by critics. Some went so far as to assert that the writers of the Bible made them up. However, archaeologist Hugh Winckler uncovered 10,000 clay tablets in ancient Boghazkoy, in modern day Turkey. The tablets confirmed the existence of the Hittites. The Bible was right after all.

Virtually everyone agrees that the Romans used crucifixion to put men to death. However, there is some discussion as to how men were fastened to the cross. Some assert that men were merely tied to the cross, rather than being nailed. However, the Bible records that Jesus was nailed to the cross. Thomas wanted to see *"the print of the nails"* (John 20:25; cf. 20:27; Luke 24:39-40). Archaeology has again proven the Bible to be true. In 1968 a burial site was discovered that contained the bodies of approximately 35 Jewish men. It is believed that these men were crucified during an uprising in A.D. 70. Among the remains were those of a young man named Jehohanan. He was approximately 24-28 years of age. A spike seven inches in length was still protruding from the remains of two heel bones. Like our Lord, he had been nailed to a cross by the Romans.

Because Of Its Preservation

No book in human history has been attacked as much as the Bible. It has been banned and

burned. It has been chained and cut. Yet, it is still here. True to its claims, it has not been destroyed (Isa. 40:8; 1 Pet. 1:23, 25; Mat. 24:35). How do we account for its survival separate and apart from God's providential preservation? Its survival is clear evidence that it is from God.

Jesus promised that not one jot or tittle would pass from the law until all was fulfilled (Mat. 5:18). The term jot refers to the Hebrew yod. The yod was the eighth letter of the Hebrew alphabet. It is a very small letter. The tittle refers to a small grammatical marking similar to an apostrophe. Jesus was declaring that the smallest parts of the law would not pass away. Paul shared the Lord's confidence in word. He had such confidence in the Scriptures that he based a whole argument on whether a word was singular or plural (Gal. 3:16).

Critics often argue that the Bible has been lost through years of copying. Since we don't have the original autographs, it is argued that all that we have are few copies of copies. First, it should be noted that a copy is as good as an original if it has been accurately preserved. Interestingly, the autographs of other ancient writings, like those of Plato and Aristotle, are also not in existence. Secondly, it should be noted that we do not just have a few copies. There are over 5,700 Greek manuscripts of the New Testament. This number does not include 25,000 translations; nor, for that matter, numerous quotations from the church fathers. Virtually the entire New Testament could be reproduced from the writings of the church fathers alone. Finally, it should be noted that some

of the manuscripts that we have are very close to the time of the original writings. For example, the John Ryland's papyri manuscript is probably only separated from the original by 35 years or so (A.D. 117-138). Other copies of ancient works like those of Caesar, Demosthenes, Plato, Herodotus, Cattelos, and Homer are separated by a thousand years or more from the originals.

Wayne Jackson notes that inspiration was not lost in copying as long as the copies were accurately made from the original documents. From his earliest years, Timothy had known the "*holy scriptures*" (2 Tim. 3:15). The "*holy scriptures*" that Timothy had were only copies. They were not the originals. However, they were still able to make him wise unto salvation. Of course, they can do the same for us today.

Because Of Its Acceptance By Jesus Christ

Jesus and His disciples used the expression "*It is written*" more than 90 times. The expression means, "*It stands written.*" Jesus and the disciples accepted the Bible as the word of God. As you know, Jesus used it to drive away the devil (Mat. 4:4, 7, 10) and to answer His enemies (Mat. 21:13; Mark 7:6). He put his stamp of approval upon the creation (Mat. 19:4-6), the flood (Mat. 24:38-39), Jonah (Mat. 12:39-41), and many other events.

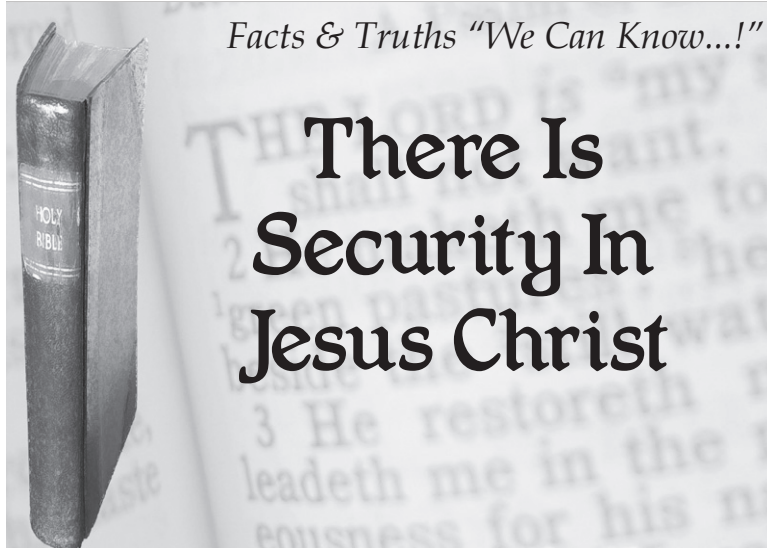
If we accept Jesus as the Son of God, then we must accept the Bible as the Word of God. After all, He did. If He was wrong about that, then how can we trust Him in anything else? To reject His

word is to reject Him (John 12:48). His word can no more be separated from Him than His church.

Conclusion

I am so thankful to have been assigned this topic. The study has benefited me tremendously. I hope that it will do the same for those that read it. My only regret is that I cannot include all of the evidence that is available. I have but scratched the surface. However, I believe that I have given sufficient evidence to convince the honest investigator.

THE BIBLE IS THE WORD OF GOD!



Editor's Note: The following outline is offered as a brief study of this valuable subject. The Bible clearly and concisely declares that "We Can Know We Have Security In Jesus Christ!"

Introduction

1. 1 John deals with how one may know.
2. John presents 6 points to spiritual security.

1. SALVATION IS IN JESUS CHRIST - 1 John 5:11

- A. It has always been imperative to be in the God-appointed place at the God-specified time.
 1. Noah's time - safety was in the ark
1 Peter 3:20
 2. When the Lord "passed over" Egypt, safety was in the house with blood on the doorposts and lintel
 3. Now, safety is "IN CHRIST" - 1 John 5:11
- B. "IN CHRIST" means we...
 1. Are new creatures - 2 Cor. 5:17
 2. Access to "all spiritual blessings" - Eph. 1:3

3. Have redemption from sin – Col. 1:12-14
 4. Enjoy forgiveness of sins – Col. 1:14
 5. Are children of God – Gal. 3:26
 - C. To be IN CHRIST is to be His Body, the Church – Col. 1:12-14, 18
 - D. Men are baptized INTO CHRIST – Gal. 3:26-27; Rom. 6:3-4
- 2. OBEDIENCE TO CHRIST IS ESSENTIAL TO SALVATION** – 1 John 2:3-5
- A. Cannot get into Christ, nor dwell in Christ, unless he keeps the commandments
1 John 3:24
 - B. Christ has given commands which men must obey to become Christians – Heb. 5:8-9
 - C. The Christian life is one of obedience
1 Peter 1:14, Note, ‘as obedient children’
- 3. ONE MUST FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST** – 1 John 2:6
- A. Peter said that Christ ‘left us an example’
1 Peter 2:21
 - B. Jesus challenged men to follow Him
John 8:12
- 4. GOD’S WORD MUST DWELL IN THE SAINT**
1 John 2:14
- A. Spiritually strong – 1 John 2:14; Psa. 119:11
 - B. “Word of Christ” must indwell “RICHLY”
Col. 3:16
 - C. Therefore:

One must desire the Word – 1 Peter 2:1-2

One must study the Word – 2 Tim. 2:15

One must obey the Word – James 1:22

5. THE LOVE OF GOD MUST RULE THE HEART

1 John 2:15-17

A. Jesus said the greatest commandment is to LOVE GOD – Mat. 22:37

B. God's commands are not grievous (hard to obey) if one really loves God – 1 John 5:3

C. Love for God dispels love of the world
1 John 2:15-17

D. To love God one must be taught, and meditate on, the love God has shown to man – 1 John 4:19; 1 John 4:10

E. One cannot love God without loving the children of God – 1 John 5:1-2

6. THE PRACTICE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS MUST BE A WAY OF LIFE – 1 John 2:29; 3:8-10

A. The acid test of discipleship is RIGHTEOUSNESS IN LIFE

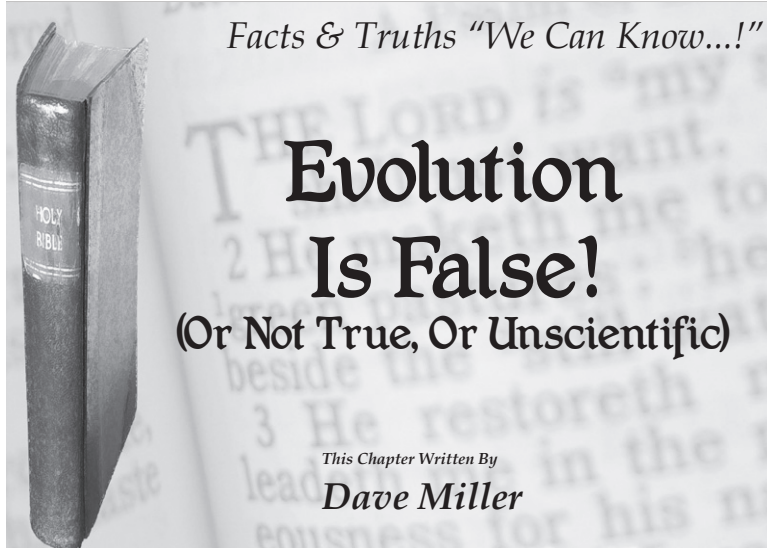
1. One must work righteousness to please God – Acts 10:34-35

B. Christianity is not merely worshipping one day per week – IT IS A WAY OF LIFE!

C. To practice righteousness (right doing) is to keep God's commandments – Psa. 119:172

CONCLUSION:

1. One CAN do the things God requires for salvation.
2. One CAN and must obey the Lord - Heb. 5:8-9
3. If you have never obeyed His gospel, do so now - 2 Cor. 6:2
4. If you have erred from the truth, you have not sinned "unto death" if you will repent and confess your sins - 1 John 5:10-14; 1:7-8.



It is incredible to contemplate the fact that 100 years ago, the virtually universal teaching of the public schools was Creation as depicted in the Bible. In stark contrast, we have lived to see the unbelievable transformation in which the universal teaching of the public schools is evolution. The impact on the thinking of children who are now adults has been catastrophic. The teaching of evolution has undoubtedly been one of the primary factors that has led to the deterioration of Bible values in our country. How might one know whether evolution is true or false? Consider the following three ways to determine the legitimacy of evolution:

How To Know Evolution Is False

First, if the Bible can be shown to be of divine origin, then its utterances regarding Creation are accurate. Abundant proofs exist to demonstrate the inspiration of the Bible. Accordingly, evolution

EVOLUTION IS FALSE!

can be known to be false since inspired biblical utterances discount it. Such passages as Genesis 1-2, Exodus 20:11, Psalm 30:6,9, Hebrews 11:3, and many others cannot be harmonized with evolution.

Second, if the claims of evolution can be shown to be scientifically flawed and untenable, then evolution is proven to be false. Abundant evidence exists to demonstrate this point as well. Evolution, in fact, violates virtually every known law of science, including the Law of Biogenesis, the First and Second Laws of Thermodynamics, the Laws of Genetics, and the Law of Causality (Cause and Effect). Yet, all of these laws harmonize perfectly with the biblical portrait of Creation.

Third, one can know that evolution is false if the created order possesses characteristics that inherently demand the existence of a transcendent, supernatural Creator. As a matter of fact, the evidence that exists in the material order—the Universe/cosmos, the planet Earth, the animals, the plants, and the human body—communicate the clear message that they owe their origin to the divine Creator. As the psalmist insisted:

The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard (Psa. 19:1-3).

Paul made the same point in his letter to the Roman Christians:

For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse (Rom. 1:20).

In the time allotted for this lecture, let us focus on this third way of knowing that evolution is false. God deliberately intended to manifest His will to human beings via this very avenue.

God reveals Himself and spiritual reality to the human race by means of two forms of revelation: natural (or generic) and special (or supernatural). Special revelation consists of the Bible—the supernatural book that God imparted to humanity by miraculously directing human writers to record His will (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21). Natural revelation consists of nature—the material realm, the created order. Since God created the heavens and the Earth, His “*fingerprints*” are all over it. Humans can easily recognize these fingerprints—if they are unbiased, honest, and willing to follow the evidence to its logical conclusion. Sadly, legion is those who reject the obvious. Why? They are generally unwilling to accept the implications of the existence of God: the need to bring one’s fleshly appetites and actions into harmony with the will of the Creator. But that fact does not lessen the magnitude of the evidence and its availability.

Evidence That Shows Evolution Is False

Since “*the things that are made*” (Rom. 1:20) point to God, and not mindless evolution, let us examine some of those “*made things*” for amazing proof of God and Creation. The human body possesses such complexity that it simply could not have evolved. Its amazing intricacies absolutely demand a mind—a higher intelligence—behind them.

The Human Mouth

Take, for example, the interior of the human mouth. Setting aside the incredible design necessary for the mouth to function, including teeth, gums, tongue, lips, muscles, nerves, cells, etc., all of which must work together from the beginning if the individual is even going to receive nourishment to survive, evolution simply cannot provide credible explanation for the condition of the human mouth on a microscopic level.

Did you know that microbiologists estimate that over 700 distinct bacterial species are present in your mouth? At least one-third of them are on your tongue! How in the world could 700 separate creatures come together in one place to create a complex ecosystem of mixed organisms that co-exist with each other to perform marvelous feats of chemical engineering—from breaking down food particles and mopping up shed body cells, to competing with intruder organisms to protect us from infection? The complexity is inexplicable in terms of evolution. This sophisticated arrangement had to have been created by God. Evolution is false.

Another feature of the created order that proves evolution to be false involves symbiosis. Symbiosis refers to a close, usually obligatory, association of two or more plants or animals of different species that depend on each other to survive. Each gains benefits from the other. Plants and animals that need each other to survive would have had to come into existence close in time to each other. They most certainly could not have been separated from each other by millions or billions of years of alleged evolutionary adjustments.

The Dodo And The Tambalacoque

One example of symbiosis pertains to the island of Mauritius, which is renowned for having been the only known home of the Dodo bird. First sighted by Europeans around 1600, the Dodo became extinct within 80 years. Another unique specie endemic to Mauritius is the Tambalacoque tree, a tree highly valued for its timber. In 1973, the Tambalacoque tree was believed to be dying out. Only 13 of the trees remained, and they were sickly. Experienced Mauritian foresters reported that the trees were all ancient—more than 300 years. The elderly trees still produced seeds, but none would germinate, even when carefully tended in nursery conditions. That's when an American wildlife ecologist (an evolutionist) proposed a theory that provided an amazing explanation.

Stanley A. Temple, who holds a Ph.D. from Cornell University in Vertebrate Zoology, was a professor at the University of Wisconsin in conservation, ecology, and environmental studies, proposed an interesting theory. In an article that was published in Science magazine in August of 1977, Dr. Temple theorized that, going by the age of the surviving trees, something had changed in the trees' environment about 300 years earlier. One obvious change was the fact that the Dodo bird was extinct by 1681. Early explorers of Mauritius left few records of Dodo behavior, but they did report that Dodos fed on fruits and seeds. A Tambalacoque seed is enclosed within a hard, thick endocarp (pit), which is covered by a pulpy, succulent mesocarp, and then a thin exocarp—similar to a round avocado about two inches in diameter. Temple knew that some seeds need the processing of an animal's

innards before they sprout. The grinding of a big bird's gizzard can erode just the proper amount of the hard pit so that the seed within, passing out of the digestive system uncrushed, can sprout and take root in the soil.

But what could be done, since there were no more Dodos? There is one bird known for being "*as dumb as a Dodo*"—the turkey. So Dr. Temple enlisted a flock of turkeys, feeding them seeds from the Tambalacoque tree. Some pits made it through the turkeys' digestive tract and were ground down by the turkeys' gizzards. A few sprouted into healthy infant Tambalacoque trees—perhaps the first seen on Mauritius in three centuries! This symbiotic relationship enabled the Dodo bird to receive sustenance by eating the seeds and leaves of the tree. The tree was perpetuated by the bird's gizzard scratching its seeds as they passed through its digestive system. That means that birds and plants had to come into existence in close temporal proximity to each other—which is precisely what the Bible teaches, since plants were created on day 3 of Creation and birds were created on day 5. These two species could not have "*co-evolved*"! They had to have been created intact from the beginning and their instinctual behavior set into motion together. Evolution is false.

Nile Crocodile And The Egyptian Plover

Another amazing proof that divine Creation is true and evolution is false is seen in the relationship sustained by the Egyptian Plover bird and the Nile crocodile. Africa's largest crocodilian, these primordial brutes can reach 20 feet and weigh up to 1,650 pounds. Their diet entails mainly fish,

but they will attack almost anything: zebras, small hippos, birds, porcupines, and other crocs. They are ambush hunters – they wait for fish or land animals to come close, and then rush out to attack. They are vicious man-eaters: up to 200 people die each year in the jaws of a Nile croc.

Despite these facts regarding the deadly nature of the Nile crocodile, it is absolutely astounding to learn that the Egyptian Plover bird has a symbiotic relationship with this creature that entails entering the croc's mouth for the purpose of cleaning its teeth and gums. The croc will open its mouth and allow the bird to enter, sometimes keeping it open and sometimes closing it gently with the bird still inside. The bird then uses its beak to remove parasites, leeches, and bits of food that infest the crocodile's mouth. The Plover enjoys a ready source of food, and the crocodile gets a valuable teeth cleaning to promote health. Such an arrangement could not have evolved! No crocodile could have gradually decided it was in its best interest to let a bird clean its mouth. Such sophisticated relationships among diverse creatures prove pre-planning – intelligent design by the Master Designer and Creator. Evolution is false.

Emerald Wasp And The Cockroach

Another astounding example of symbiosis that demonstrates evolution to be unscientific pertains to the Emerald Cockroach Wasp and the American cockroach. The latter insect is six times larger than the Emerald Wasp. Yet, the wasp enacts a brilliantly strategic sting into the central nervous system of the cockroach to cause temporary paralysis of the front legs. This allows the wasp to deliver a second sting

into a carefully chosen spot in the brain ganglia to control the escape reflex. The brain sting causes a dramatic behavioral change: the cockroach becomes passive and zombie-like. Its breathing slows, and it makes no attempt to escape. As a result of this sting, the roach will groom itself, become sluggish, and fail to show normal escape responses.

The wasp then leads the cockroach by its antennae, like a leash, to the wasp's burrow. Inside the burrow, the wasp lays a white egg, about two mm long, on the roach's abdomen. It then exits and uses debris to barricade the defenseless roach inside the burrow (to keep other predators out). With its escape reflex disabled, the stung roach remains calm and complacent as the wasp's egg hatches after about three days. The hatched larva drills a hole into the leg of the cockroach to retrieve nutrition from the blood system of the roach for four to five days. Then the larva burrows into the abdomen of the cockroach, crawls inside, and over a period of eight days, consumes the roach's internal organs in an order which guarantees that the roach will stay alive, at least until the larva enters the pupal stage and forms a cocoon inside the roach's body. Six weeks from the first sting, a new adult wasp emerges from the hollowed out dead body of the roach.

The venom of the Emerald Wasp is carefully calibrated to shut down signals carried by a key neurotransmitter brain chemical called dopamine. The wasp delivers the sting with the precision of microscopic brain surgery. This remarkable skill did not evolve! Nor was it learned. It was hardwired by the Creator into each wasp – making it a natural born neurosurgeon. The offspring of the wasp literally depend on the perfect execution of the mother's

sting. Too much venom, and the cockroach would immediately die, eliminating the wasp offspring's fresh food source. Too little (or poorly aimed) venom, and the roach would escape. Millions of years of trial and error cannot be the source of this relationship. Failure of any one step in this complex process would prevent reproduction – and terminate the species. Can such design, complexity, order, purpose, and intelligence come out of mindless, evolutionary chaos? Absolutely not. The Emerald Wasp and the American cockroach were created by the Creator to function precisely as they do.

O LORD, how manifold are your works! In wisdom have you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures (Psa. 104:24).

The Creation declares the reality of the Creator. Evolution is false.

The Flagellum

Consider yet another among the millions of amazing proofs of the falsity of evolution and the reality of the Creator. Bacteria, like salmonella, have as part of their anatomy several flagella filaments extending from their cell body. These flagella are marvels of engineering – bio-nanomachines – that have the remarkable ability of self-assembly. The bacterium's flagellum assembly process begins with the formation of an MS ring in the cytoplasmic membrane. Then a switch complex called a "C" ring is assembled on its cytoplasmic side, followed by integration of the protein export apparatus inside the ring. The export apparatus sends out flagellar proteins from the cell body to the distal end of the flagellum to grow the structure.

Next, the “hook,” working as a universal joint, extends to the outside of the cell. Then the two junction proteins, Hap1 and Hap3, are attached, followed by the binding of the cap protein, Hap2, to form a capping structure under which the assembly of flagellum molecules begins to grow the flagellar filament. Flagellum molecules are then inserted successively just below the cap, and the flagellar filament continues to grow. All of the flagellar axial proteins produced in the cell body are sent into the central channel of the flagellum and transported to and polymerized at its growing end. Twenty to thirty thousand flagellum molecules polymerize to build a ten to fifteen micrometer long filament.

The flagellar motor is similar to manmade motors—since both were built on fundamental principles set in place by the Creator. The flagellum consists of rotor and stator units in the cell membrane, switching unit, bushing, universal joint, helical screw propeller, etc. To generate thrust, the rotary motor is driven by protons flowing into the cell body. The motor then drives the rotation of the flagellum at around 300 Hz, at a power level of 10-16 W, with energy conversion efficiency close to 100%. The resulting speed is up to 20,000 rpms—faster than the speed of Formula 1 race car engines. This highly efficient, flagellar motor is far beyond the capabilities of manmade, artificial motors. It is so sophisticated, that to suggest that it evolved is the height of irrationality and blind prejudice. The evidence is decisive: evolution is false.

Of course, the evolutionist’s “*explanation*” for symbiosis and the wondrous organisms that grace our planet goes something like this:

Organisms that depend on each other for survival co-evolved, gradually becoming dependent on each other by means of minute changes over millions of years.

Christians have a responsibility before God to train themselves to recognize gobbledygook when they hear it. The fact is that any alleged “*transitions*” or “*minute changes*” – when pinpointed and examined as moments in time – are seen to be unworkable, imaginary, impossible, and nonexistent.

Recall the debate conducted in 1976 on the campus of North Texas State University in Denton, Texas, when Dr. Thomas B. Warren debated Antony G.N. Flew – at the time, arguably the foremost atheistic philosopher in the world. Flew’s attempt to substantiate the credibility of evolution is seen in this statement: “[I]t is, it seems to me, a consequence of evolutionary theory that species shade off into one another” (p. 25). “Shade off into one another?” Evolutionists attempt to cloud the mind by implying that all organisms came into existence as a result of very slow, almost imperceptible changes over time. But where on the planet are these alleged increments or “*shades*” from one species to another? We know chimps exist. We know humans exist. We know nothing of any alleged “*shades*.” Nor does science!

Brother Warren challenged Flew to face the fact that even if evolution theorizes numerous pre-human ancestors, there had to be a first human being to arrive on the scene. Where did he/she come from? The very first human being on the planet had to come into existence somehow. But how? Was this first human being a male or female? A baby or an adult? In reality, there are only two

possibilities: (1) either a nonhuman had to transform into a human during its lifetime, or (2) a nonhuman had to give birth to a human. Philosophically and scientifically, these are the only two possibilities. Evolution is not only scientifically unfeasible; it is logical and philosophical nonsense! Indeed, evolution is false.

Conclusion

If you were to toss a stick of dynamite into a print shop, and do so everyday for a million years, would a dictionary be the result? Can such design, complexity, order, purpose, and intelligence ever come out of mindless, evolutionary chaos? The answer is an unequivocal "NO!" The only plausible explanation for the Universe and the entire created order is "*the great God who formed everything*" (Prov. 26:10).

O Lord, how manifold are Your works! In wisdom You have made them all. The earth is full of Your possessions (Psa. 104:24).

We can know evolution is false. The Creation declares the reality of the Creator. May we humbly bow before Him by living the Christian life everyday.

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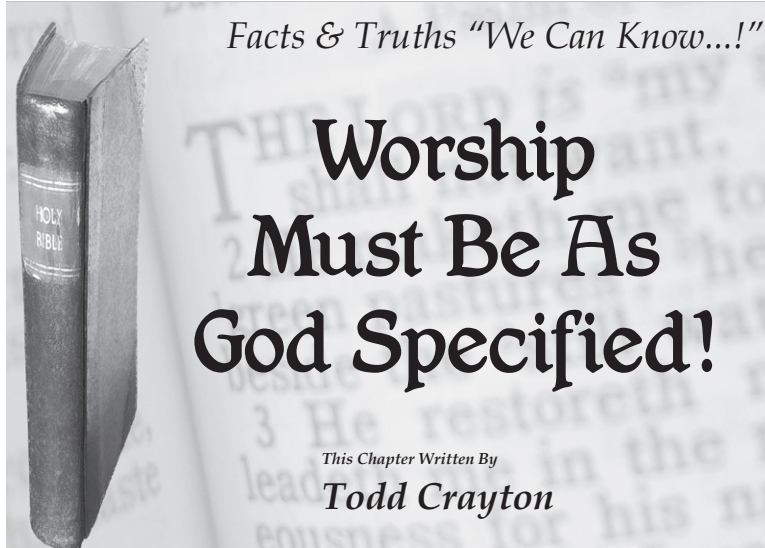
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EVOLUTION IS FALSE!



I am very blessed and honored to speak on this great lectureship. I extend my deepest appreciation and gratitude to brother Paul Sain and the elders of the East Hill congregation. I pray God's richest blessings on this good work and all who contribute to its effectiveness.

Introduction

"A man can no more diminish God's glory by refusing to worship Him than a lunatic can put out the sun by scribbling the word, 'darkness' on the walls of his cell" (C. S. Lewis). To the Christian, worshipping God is a privilege! Giving homage and reverence to the God of all there ever was and all there ever will be is no small act. The hearts and minds of those who engage themselves in worship will find meaning and a genuine appreciation and love of God. That love and appreciation demands that one adheres to the specified worship found in His book and only His book. God has always

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required man to worship Him according to His plan and according to His specific instructions. Man can not alter, modify, amend, revise or adjust those specifications (Rev. 22:19). What man must do is seek to discover what God desires, follow the direction God outlines, exhibit the proper demeanor, keep from distractions in worship and do all in his might to reach the destination where God resides.

Worship – The Discovery

Man was created with a need to worship his Creator and the Lord, God alone (Exo. 34:14; Psa. 22:9).

And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul (Gen. 2:7).

Man was created with a soul and spirit and both belong to God (1 Cor. 6:20). God forever elevated man by His special creation that the animal kingdom never warranted, and thus, created man with a spirit that longs to know his creator.

But *“how”* does one get to know God: the object of one’s worship? John 4:24 tells us that *“God is a Spirit.”* How does man get to know a Spirit? Brother Tom Holland in his book, **Man’s Worship to God**, suggests that one gets to know another human through *“association and communication.”* That same principal carries over to man getting to know his God. Man must associate with God through diligent study and meditation of His word (2 Tim. 2:15; Psa. 1:2; 119:11; Acts 17:11). Man must communicate with God through prayer.

Many never gain the knowledge to fully know God because they neglect to talk to The Father in prayer. The story is told of a father and son who went on a long journey together. The son did not speak to his father once during this long journey. This made the father very sad, for he loved his son. He talked to the boy. He requested the son to talk, but the boy did not say one word. Some Christians are like this boy. As Christians, God is our Father (1 Cor. 8:6; Eph. 4:6; 6:23; Phil. 1:2). Christians are His children and the Father loves those who are His. God is talking to his children as they journey through life. The Father talks to his children when Christians read the Bible and hear it preached. Man talks to Him when he PRAYS. For one to truly come to know God, he must spend time with God: in study, prayer and meditation on His word. Man must embark upon a discovery to know God. *"It is in the process of being worshipped that God communicates His presence to men"* (C.S. Lewis).

Worship – The Desire

"Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness" (Psa. 29:2). God desires man's worship. The word *"worship"* is found 119 times in the Bible. Webster defines *"worship"* as *"courtesy or reverence to worth; hence honor and respect. An act of paying divine honors to deity; religious reverence or homage."* As one studies the use of *"worship"* in the Bible, it is translated from several different Koine Greek words: three are used more than once. *"Proskuneo,"* literally means to kiss the hand to (towards) one, in token of reverence, to prostrate oneself (Thayer).

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It occurs 60 times in the New Testament and is always rendered 'worship' as used in John 4:24. The second, "*sebomai*" means "*To stand in awe; to venerate, to reverence, to worship, to adore*" (found 10 times in the New Testament). The third use is "*latreuo*;" it occurs 21 times in the New Testament and is translated 17 times as "*service*" and 4 times as "*worship*." It means: "*To render religious service of homage; to worship God in the observance of rites instituted for worship.*"

A good description of worship is that of Isaiah 6:1-8, an analysis of which shows that worship is: (1) an awareness of the presence of God, (2) a consciousness of sin and unworthiness on the part of the worshipper, (3) a sense of cleansing and forgiveness, and (4) a response of the soul with reference to doing God's will: "*Here am I, send me!*" (Burton Coffman).

It is clearly seen from the very meaning of the word, that worship involves active participation. God wants participants, not mere spectators. True worship, as God specifies, requires that He is the audience! God has shown His love toward man by sending his son to die for mankind (John 3:16). Man should show his love by worshipping Him "*in spirit and in truth*." The Christian should desire to worship his Creator and cry out like the psalmist:

As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so
panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul
thirsteth for God, for the living God: when
shall I come and appear before God? My
tears have been my meat day and night, while
they continually say unto me, Where is thy
God? When I remember these things, I pour
out my soul in me: for I had gone with the
multitude, I went with them to the house of

God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holyday (Psa. 42:1-4).

Worship – The Destination

When Christ came to earth, His destination was the cross to reconcile man back to the Father (Eph. 2:16; Col. 1:20). Christ who existed:

In the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross (Phil. 2:6-8, ASV).

He diligently obeyed the Father's will (Heb. 5:8) and daily prepared Himself to that purpose. Christ knew his destination. Just as Christ set his face to go to Jerusalem (Luke 9:51), so the Christian must prepare the mind before arriving at worship. A determination must be made that worshipping God is important, and that it will be done in keeping with God's desire. The decision to worship God should be the culmination of much study, prayer and meditation during one's week. It is not simply an hour spent on Saturday evening studying the Bible class lesson or crash-learning the previously assigned memory verse. The heart and mind must be prepared to give honor and glory to the Most High King. One should take it seriously that he is preparing to bow before the throne of God. One must come reverently as the Psalmist proclaimed in Psalms 95:6: *"O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker."* And one must come with the attitude of David who said, *"I was*

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glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD" (Psa. 122:1). The preparation occurs long before one arrives at this destination.

However, mere attendance must never be equated with worship. God is the audience of one's worship, not the people or self. Many times one attends worship services out of habit or because they've been forced to "go to church" all their lives and "it's just what they do." Sadly, this individual has missed the entire purpose for coming to worship and does not even acknowledge their worship. Since God has given His all and His best, it is pitiable for one to just "show up" at the building. Jesus said to the Jews: "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me" (Mat. 15:8). Worship is drawing nigh unto God, not the church building! Jesus calls this vain worship (Mat. 15:19; Mark 7:7).

A person can worship in a way that displeases God:

Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word. He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol. Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations. I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none

did answer; when I spake, they did not hear:
but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose
that in which I delighted not (Isa. 66:1-4).

Simply attending and not putting one's heart into the act of worshipping God is vain and is of no profit. Albert Barnes summarizes it this way:

A pure, a holy, a spiritual worship, therefore, is such as he seeks the offering of the soul rather than the formal offering of the body—the homage of the heart rather than that of the lips.

Worship—The Demeanor

This writer's has heard many mothers admonish their children, *"behave yourself when you're in public; remember who your parents are; act like you've got some sense!"* How one carries himself reflects on his mother and father. Likewise, how the Christian carries himself reflects on his heavenly Father. The demeanor one displays in worship definitely reflects the contents of one's heart.

A cursory glance around the worship assembly on any Sunday morning, would lead one to think worship is the *"most boring thing in the world."* It would appear many people evidently do not enjoy worship because they arrive late, leave early and speak to no one. They do not sing, give little or nothing and sleep often. Is this the demeanor that God expects? Resoundingly, no! It has already been stated that God desires worship to Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). This text clearly states that God wants worship that is meaningful and freely given to Him and only Him! (Exo. 20:1-5; Mat. 4:9-10).

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When one says, *"I just don't get anything out of worship,"* it means they are not putting enough into it. Biblical worship requires knowledge of God's word, and it must be done with the right demeanor. God is to be the sole object of one's worship, and it requires a love for God (1 John 4:9-19)! It requires emotion from the worshipper! That love for God will translate into an outward demeanor that says, *"I'm here, I want to be here, I want to please God. I want to honor and glorify Him! I want to worship him acceptably!"* This can only come from a heart that is humble and grateful...a heart that is obedient (John 14:15).

Jesus said,

He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him (John 14:21).

If Jesus' love manifests itself to those who love Him, then that manifestation must be seen in the worshipper's demeanor!

Worship – The Direction

The worship of God must be done properly: the two requirements being that it must be engaged in with utmost sincerity and as directed by the word of God. God has revealed the manner in which He should be worshipped, and those who hope to have their worship accepted should heed the restrictions.

One *"must"* worship in spirit and in truth. The word, *"must"* or the Greek word *"Dei"* – [de] is defined *"necessary, there is need of, it behooves, is right"*

and proper" (Thayer). The Encarta English Dictionary defines "*must*" as a modal verb indicating that "*somebody is compelled to do something because of a rule or law, or that it is necessary or advisable to do something.*"

The word "*must*" is a modifier—a word or phrase that affects the meaning of another, usually describing it or restricting its meaning (Encarta Dictionary). When God says one "*must*" worship Him in spirit and in truth, one must do so because he is "*compelled*" to do so and it is God's law. Furthermore, it is "*necessary*", "*proper*" and "*right.*" Tom Moore gives the following outline on the word, "*must*" and how it modifies three elements which make up Christian worship:

1. "*Must*" modifies the object of worship—Him.
2. "*Must*" modifies the attitude of worship—spirit.
3. "*Must*" modifies the standard of worship—truth.

Thus, the object, the demeanor, and the direction of Christian worship are vitally crucial; they are a must!

Because the word "*must*" compels one to worship according to God's law, it restricts everything else outside the law. This is otherwise known as the Law of Exclusion. God has given specific directions.

The Pattern

If the Bible teaches anything, it teaches that all human beings are under obligation to submit to the authority of God and Christ (Dave Miller). Paul articulates this extremely important principle

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in his letter to the Colossians: *“And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord”* (Col. 3:17). The Law of Exclusion removes any and all things God does not authorize.

Christians are to follow God’s directions for God-specified worship. Coffman has said: *“Of the ancient tabernacle, a type of the worship men offer today, God said to Moses, ‘See that thou make all things according to the pattern’ (Heb. 8:5) and there is no way to avoid the application of this to Christian worship.”* So, what is the New Testament pattern of Christian worship? *“The things which are written”* (1 Cor. 4:6) reveal that God has authorized five items of worship for the New Testament church:

- a. Giving as one has been prospered (1 Cor. 16:1-2);
- b. Lord’s Supper (1 Cor. 11:20-30);
- c. Praying to God (Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 14:15);
- d. Preaching of the Word (Acts 20:7);
- e. Singing (Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19).

Charles H. Spurgeon said: *“God is to be praised with the voice, and the heart should go therewith in holy exultation.”*

New Testament Worship – Giving

Often seen as optional to many, giving *“as one has been prospered”* (1 Cor. 16:1-2) is as vital to pleasing worship as any other requirements. Paul writes:

Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia even so do ye (1 Cor. 16:1).

He then proceeds to tell the Corinthians how to make their contribution on the first day of the week. This collection was made to support the work of the one universal church. Paul was encouraging the church at Corinth to “*remember the poor saints which are at Jerusalem*” (Gal. 2:10; Rom. 15:26-27); an example that is still binding for Christians today.

Additionally, giving to the Lord is to be sacrificial. Christians can never give as much as God has, but they can and must give sacrificially. Luke 21:1-4 records one of the greatest examples on giving:

And he looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury. And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites. And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all: For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had.

Today, one must carefully consider and deliberately give to the Lord. Giving that is God-specified requires:

Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver (2 Cor. 9:7).

New Testament Worship—*Lord's Supper*

The Lord's supper was instituted by our Lord, himself, “*the same night in which he was betrayed*” (1 Cor. 11:23). This event is recorded not only by Paul, but also in three of the gospel accounts (Mat. 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25 and Luke 22:19-20).

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It is called "*the Lord's Supper*" (1 Cor. 11:20), which is probably the best term to use because of its comprehensive description. It is the "*Lord's*" ([@kuriakos]) because Christ is its originator, master and host. Being called a "*supper*" indicates that it is an actual partaking of food. Another term used is "*the table of the Lord*" (1 Cor. 10:21), here again expressing ownership. It is also called a "*communion*" (1 Cor. 10:15), though this is not a name for it, but rather a statement about it. The word [@koinonia] means "*participation*" or "*fellowship*" and helps to describe its purpose. Then, it is referred to as "*the breaking of bread*" (Acts 2:42; cf. Acts 20:7), an expression which originated from the ancient manner of eating bread. Other particular terms are "*the cup of blessing*" (1 Cor. 10:16) and "*the cup of the Lord*" (1 Cor. 10:21) (Denton Commentaries). The commemoration of the death of the Redeemer, and the purpose was to keep before the church and the world a constant remembrance of the Lord Jesus until he should again return (1 Cor. 11:26)

New Testament Worship – Praying

Prayer is the privilege of every Christian. It is pleasing to God because one communicates from the heart directly to Him. Whenever first-century Christians met together, prayer was a part of their worship:

And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers (Acts 2:42).

The Bible authorizes Christians to follow that example in worship today every first day of the week. Acts 6:4 infers Christians are to "*give*"

ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word."

Additionally, Christians are to remember one another in prayer (1 Thes. 5:25; 5:17),

Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints (Eph. 6:18).

New Testament Worship – *Preaching/Teaching The Word Of God*

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).

Coffman has said:

Of course, all the books of the Bible are doctrinal since doctrine means 'teaching,' and the Bible was given to teach us, to instruct us, to indoctrinate us on how to be saved from our sins and how to live after we have been saved from our sins so that we might live eternally in heaven. When people decry doctrinal preaching and ask for 'something practical' they, like the mother of James and John, 'know not what they ask' (Mat. 20:22)! Doctrine or the right kind – the kind set forth in God's Word – is practical! Believed and obeyed, the doctrine of Christ will save us (John 8:32). Doctrine of the wrong kind – that which is not set forth in God's Word – will condemn (2 Thes. 2:10-12).

What is specified in worship is declared by inspiration. God desires His people to be taught the truth. Evangelists are to "*preach the word*"

WORSHIP MUST BE AS GOD SPECIFIED!

(2 Tim. 4:2); *“preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things”* (Rom. 10:15); *“preach the gospel”* (Rom. 1:16) and *“preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord”* (2 Cor. 4:5). God specifically forbids His servants from teaching error:

But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. 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. 1:8-9).

Without fail, God has specified the preaching of His word:

Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God; Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus (Col. 1:25-28).

New Testament Worship – *Singing*

The worship that God specified includes singing from the heart.

Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord (Eph. 5:19).

The meaning of this term is to produce music vocally; and regardless of ancient meanings attributed to the word [*psallo*], rendered

“making melody” used here in conjunction with it, no translator has ever rendered this verb any other way. God’s command for Christians is that they should sing, and if playing instruments of music is an acceptable part of divine worship, it is difficult to understand why it would not have been so stated in this place (Coffman).

The law of Exclusion is once again invoked here. Colossians 3:16 states:

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God.

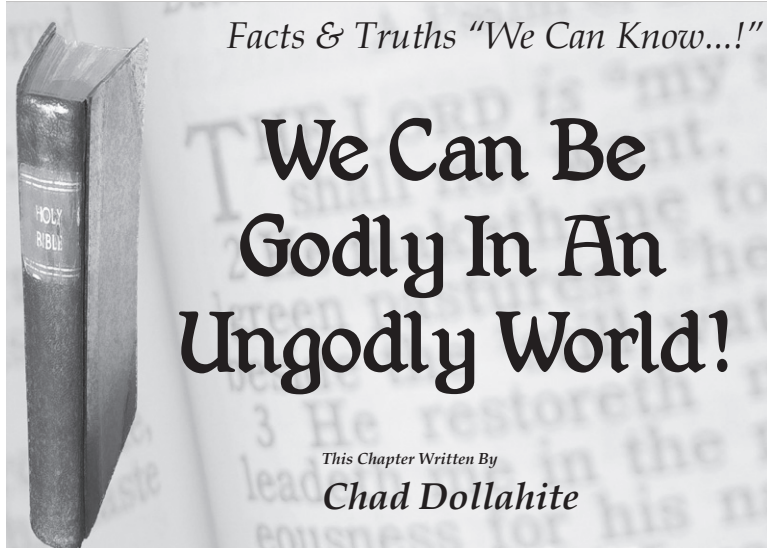
The meaning of this term is to produce music vocally; and regardless of ancient meanings attributed to the word [*psallo*], rendered ‘making melody’ used here in conjunction with it, no translator has ever rendered this verb any other way. God’s command for Christians is that they should sing, and if playing instruments of music is an acceptable part of divine worship, it is difficult to understand why it would not have been so stated in this place. God has said ‘to sing,’ thus commanding a special kind of music, all other kinds are eliminated. Historically, no mechanical instruments of music were used in Christian worship until the seventh century, despite the fact of such instruments having been known and used throughout the whole world at the time of the beginning of Christianity and for centuries prior to that time. There is no refutation of the fact that the founder of Christianity, namely, the Christ and the blessed apostles simply left them out. (Coffman)

Conclusion

It is possible to know that one's worship can be as God specified. Worship must be engaged in as God has commanded. It is important to remember, in Christian worship God is the audience. It must be offered with the right discovery of God and His desire to be worshipped. It must be offered with the right destination in mind; the right demeanor and the right direction. Nothing should prevent the true Christian from worshipping God acceptably.

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In an age where many seem to be uncertain about many—and everything (yea, some seem certain of but one thing—that one cannot be certain of anything!), it is refreshing to look to the Truth (God’s word, John 17:17) and find that, when it comes to matters of salvation, of life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3), we can know! There are things one can know for certain, and God’s word provides the pattern for knowing God and being known of Him. As Paul wrote, *“But if any man love God, the same is known of him”* (1 Cor. 8:3; cf. 1 John 5:3—*“For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments,”* and John 14:15—*“If ye love me, keep my commandments”*).

We live in an ungodly world; this has always been so. Jesus said:

Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow

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is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it (Mat. 7:13-14).

The apostle John wrote, *“And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness”* (1 John 5:19). Living in twenty-first century America, the question, *“Can we be godly in such an ungodly world?”* is a very worthy consideration, and it is of utmost importance, for each individual’s salvation depends upon the answer. For this study, we look to the writing of that great servant of Jesus Christ, Paul, in his letter to the evangelist Titus. Particularly, we will focus our study on Titus 2:11-14, noting that living godly in an ungodly world is as simple as denying and deciding.

Titus himself was a man living godly in an ungodly world. While today’s society certainly has its evils and temptations, as Solomon wrote, *“There is no new thing under the sun”* (Ecc. 1:9b); that is to say, all forms of temptation (the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, 1 John 2:16) have been present since the beginning of time. Such a statement is certainly not to minimize the difficulty of any individual temptation, but simply to illustrate that, since the fall of man, God’s people have been faced with the challenge of living godly in an ungodly world. Titus faced this challenge in an exemplary way. He was Paul’s *“partner and fellowhelper”* with the problems Paul faced in dealing with the Corinthian brethren (2 Cor. 8:23). Wayne Jackson wrote, *“The apostle obviously had great confidence in Titus; he was a hard worker, a trustworthy soul, an a skillful diplomat”* (307). Titus truly was a godly man in the midst of an ungodly world.

Getting to the text of this study, Titus 2:11-14, how does this text affirm that one can know how to be godly in an ungodly world?

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

Being Godly In An Ungodly World Demands We Deny

Paul connects this section of the epistle to the previous with the Greek word *gar* (translated “for”). In doing so, the apostle “*provides the explanation for the intense exhortations to godly living*” (Jackson 345). That reason is the grace of God, personified in Jesus Christ’s incarnation. Jesus came into this world “*to seek and to save that which was lost*” (Luke 19:10); He came to offer man what man could not provide for himself (salvation). Grace is often defined correctly as unmerited favor. The dictionary.com website defines grace as “*the freely given, unmerited favor and love of God*” (**Random House Dictionary**). Many Bible passages support such a definition; one such example is as follows:

For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works

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of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost (Titus 3:3-5).

Without the manifestation of grace to all in the form of Jesus, none could live godly, for all accountable mankind has sinned (Rom. 3:23). The foregoing fact is affirmed clearly in many passages, but note one in particular:

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, (by grace ye are saved;) [Eph. 2:4-5].

God's grace has appeared to all in the form of Jesus and, yet, all will not be saved, a fact clearly evidenced by scores of passages in the Bible (Isa. 1:9; Rom. 9:27-29; Mat. 7:13-14; Luke 13:24; Mat. 7:21-23; et al). What then, is Paul's meaning that *"the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men?"* Jackson writes, *"The offer of salvation through grace is potentially available to every lost person, and 'whosoever will' may obtain such (Mt. 11:28-30)"* (346). God's grace is potentially available to all, but that grace, appearing in the form of the second Person of the Godhead (Jesus), teaches men that some things are to be denied. In short, God's grace teaches men to deny sin and to deny self.

Deny Sin

Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world (Titus 2:12).

From the negative vantage point, Paul teaches that Christians are to deny sinful things. Listed in verse 12 are ungodliness and worldly lusts, broad terms denoting a general denial of sinful ways. Jackson notes:

‘Deny’ (arneomai, to repudiate, renounce) carries the idea of a defiant attitude. Conversion to Christ is not merely separation from ungodliness with a shrug; rather, it must be an emphatic, ‘No!’ (346).

“Ungodliness” is, obviously, the exact opposite of “godliness.” Godliness is diametrically opposed to ungodliness. Note Paul’s words to Timothy:

Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine; According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust (1 Tim. 1:9-11—note that “sound doctrine” is determined by the gospel, not some subjective standard of men/culture).

While the purpose of this chapter is not to catalog every sin, the Bible clearly lays out for mankind what sin is. Sin is “*the transgression of the law*” (1 John 3:4) and sin is also failing to do what is right (Jas. 4:17). Paul also mentions “*wordly lusts,*” of which Jackson writes:

‘Lusts’ (epithumia, a strong desire) is a term that occasionally may be used of a good desire

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(as in Luke 22:15; Phil. 1:23); however, in the letters to Timothy and Titus it consistently takes on the aura of 'evil passions' (cf. 1 Tim. 6:9; Mounce, 424) (347).

The grace of God teaches men to deny sinful ways. The Holy Spirit, through Paul, makes it clear: "*abhor that which is evil*" (Rom. 12:9). Going back to the fact stated earlier, that God's grace has appeared to all, yet not all will be saved, we can now see the reason—God's grace teaches, and some simply will not follow that teaching. First and foremost, God's grace teaches men to deny sinful living. Sadly, many do not do so, but such is not the fault of God, for His grace has appeared to all in the form of Jesus, and that grace has not left us without instruction. Jesus prayed to the Father, "*Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth*" (John 17:17).

Deny Self

If denial of sinful ways seems difficult, the remedy is supplied by the very context of this study. One needs only to look to that personification of grace, Jesus Christ:

Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God (Heb. 12:2).

Jesus is our perfect example in all things right and holy. In the context of Titus 2:11-14, Paul uses the example of Jesus to teach (by inspiration) that the denial of sinful ways is encapsulated in denial of self.

Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself

a peculiar people, zealous of good works
(Titus 2:14).

Jesus epitomizes self-denial for all mankind. In another epistle, Paul iterates this fact eloquently:

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross (Phil. 2:5-8).

Jesus did not come to this earth to give of His money (though, being God, He owns everything—Mat. 28:18; Col. 1:16); He did not come to this earth merely to give His thoughts (though He is the very personification of the wisdom of God—1 Cor. 1:30); He did not come to this earth merely to give of His time (though He, being eternal, could give literally all the time in the world—1 John 1:2). No, Jesus came to this earth to give Himself wholly for the salvation of mankind (Statham 38). Jackson notes:

‘Gave’ (didomi, in the aorist tense), refers to the one-time, historical act of Jesus’ self-sacrifice on the cross (349).

This self-denial of Jesus is portrayed in Ephesians 5:25: *“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.”* The word *“gave”* in this verse is paradidomi, defined by Strong as *“to surrender.”* Christ surrendered Himself for the good of the church; His prayer was, *“Not my will, but thine, be done”* (Luke 22:42), and He told His listeners, *“I came down from heaven, not*

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to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me" (John 6:38). Jesus gave up heaven itself to come to this earth and secure the ability for all men to be reconciled to God! Do we appreciate this self-denial? Jesus' sacrifice came in the denial of self; He gave Himself willingly:

Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father (John 10:17-18).

To live godly in an ungodly world, one must deny sinful ways, and such is accomplished by the denial of self. When one puts self aside, he will see sin for what it is; avoid it at all costs; and, when he does yield to its temptations, he will confess such and forsake it (1 John 1:9). We must follow the example of Paul:

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me (Gal. 2:20).

All would do well to take the following illustration to heart and apply it to their lives:

There was an officer in the navy who had always dreamed of commanding a battleship. He finally achieved that great dream and was given commission of the newest and proudest ship in the fleet. One stormy night, as the ship plowed through the seas, the captain was on duty on the bridge when off to the port he spotted a strange light rapidly

closing with his own vessel. Immediately he ordered the signalman to flash the message to the unidentified craft, 'Alter your course ten degrees to the south.' Only a moment had passed before the reply came: 'Alter your course ten degrees to the north.' Determined that his ship would take a backseat to no other, the captain snapped out the order to be sent: 'Alter course ten degrees—I am the CAPTAIN!' The response beamed back, 'Alter your course ten degrees—I am Seaman Third Class Jones.' Now infuriated, the captain grabbed the signal light with his own hands and fired off: 'Alter course, I am a battleship.' The reply came back. 'Alter your course, I am a lighthouse.'

No matter how big or important any of us think we are, God's Word stands forth as an unchanging beacon. All other courses must be altered to His (Hewitt 208).

Jesus came to this earth to show His love for mankind: *"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us"* (Rom. 5:8). He came to purify those who submit their lives to Him: *"And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him"* (Heb. 5:9). He came to make men a *"peculiar people,"* of which Jackson writes:

The redemptive or purification process produces 'a people for his [Christ's] own possession' (laon periousion, a special possession). The language is borrowed from the Old Testament where it is used of the nation of Israel (Ex. 19:5; Deut. 26:18), whose obligation was to avoid idols and obey Jehovah's law. Here the word hints of a 'costly possession' or a 'special treasure' (Kittel, 828). The term 'peculiar,' as found in the KJV, is no longer

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popularly used as it was in the early 17th century. Hence, the NKJV renders it 'special people.' It is a misappropriation of this text to cite it as a text to 'prove' that Christians are a 'peculiar' people, i.e., 'odd' or different from others (351).

The redemption of mankind by Jesus, as noted in Philippians 2:5-8, consisted of His emptying Himself (see v. 7, ASV) and taking upon Himself the form of a servant (v. 7), which He did willingly (see v. 6b, ASV) for our good, that we, being sinners, might have hope of eternal life. And, we, the beneficiaries of His self-denial, are called to imitate that perfect example:

But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many (Mat. 20:25-28).

The key to living a godly life in an ungodly world begins simply by denying sinful living, and this denial can only be accomplished by denial of self. Jesus says, "*Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*" (Mat. 5:3). Truly, as the old saying goes, "*The way up is down!*"

Being Godly In An Ungodly World Demands We Decide

The pattern for living a godly life in an ungodly world begins with denial, but it is not enough

simply to deny, for nature abhors a vacuum. Upon denying sinful living and denying self, one must decide to live for Christ and to look for Christ.

Live for Him

Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world... Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works (Titus 2:12, 14).

Getting back to the text in Titus 2, Paul writes that, while God's grace teaches us negatively ("*denying ungodliness and worldly lusts*"), it also teaches positively. We are to live for Jesus by living soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world ("*age*," NKJV). "*Soberly*" carries the idea that reason will take the place of passions (Statham 37). It is "*the exercise of self-restraint that results from one who is seriously minded*" (Jackson 347). "*Righteously*" refers to "*an earnest attempt to conform to God's law*" (Jackson 347). Righteousness is doing right:

Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous (1 John 3:7).

And, since the Holy Spirit, through the psalmist, declares, "*all thy commandments are righteousness*" (Psa. 119:172), being righteous means keeping God's commandments (cf. John 14:15). And, "*godly*" is the concept of one governed by the will of God Almighty, not laws of custom, expediency, or self (Statham 38). The last clause of Titus 2:14 informs that Jesus gave Himself for us to purify us and to make us His special people, but also that we

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are to be "*zealous of good works.*" This is a theme emphasized by Paul in Titus (1:16; 2:7, 14; 3:8, 14). If we want to be godly in an ungodly world, we must live for Him!

Look for Him

Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13).

Paul tells those who would live godly in an ungodly world to look for "*that blessed hope.*" In other words, "*Look for Jesus; He is coming again.*" The word "*hope*" in this verse is put for the thing hoped for (Jesus, His return). W.M. Statham notes:

No mere secularism has motive power enough to sustain a noble life. It breaks down always through the consciousness that nothing matters much, for death ends all (38).

Too often, those who obey the gospel of Jesus Christ go back into worldly living (which end is worse than the first, 2 Pet. 2:20-22). While such can be attributed to many things (not the least of which is a failure to deny self, as noted earlier), this return to sinful living often results from a loss of focus, from a failure to "*look for Him.*" Paul writes:

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth (Col. 3:1-2).

Jesus Himself stated, "*No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God*" (Luke 9:62). Christians must remember, as the old song states, "*This world is not*

my home, I'm just a passing through." Note again the fitting words of W.M. Statham:

The exile has the hope of seeing his native land. The child at school looks for and longs for home. And this with us is a blessed hope, because it makes us happy and restful here and now, and makes us joyful even in tribulation; for we look for 'a city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God' (38).

Paul states our looking for Him another way in his epistle to the Philippians:

For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself (3:20-21, NKJV).

While the key to living a godly life in an ungodly world begins with denial of sinful living and denial of self, the godly life is perpetuated by deciding to live for Jesus Christ and to look eagerly for His return, realizing that at such a time, all will give account for their lives here on this earth.

And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead (Acts 17:30-31).

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 (John 12:48).

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For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad (2 Cor. 5:10).

The alternative to godly living is, of course, ungodly (sinful) living. When one begins to consider what sin is, what it cost God, and what it will cost individual souls, then living godly in an ungodly world becomes not only possible, but a way of life. J.W. McGarvey preached a sermon in 1893 on "*Sin and Its Punishment*" and, in that sermon, he made the following statement:

I wonder if any of us has ever realized what it is to commit sin. I believe that I would esteem above every other gift that could be bestowed upon me as a preacher, the power to adequately conceive what sin is, and to adequately set it before the people. A number of times in my ministrations, I have prepared sermons designed to set forth the enormity of sin; but I have every time felt that I made a failure. I found, I thought, two causes of the failure: first, a want of realization in my own soul of the enormity of it; and second, inability to gather up such words and such figures of speech, as would, with anything like adequacy, set it forth before my hearers. The pleasures of sin have blinded our eyes to its enormity. So I have come to the conclusion, after a great deal of reflection, and a great deal of mental effort, that about the only correct gauge we have with which to measure the enormity or heinousness of sin, is the punishment that God has decreed against it. God is infinite in all his attributes; infinite in mercy, in love, in compassion; and when we find the punishment that such a God as that was constrained, by the justice that also characterizes him, to enact

against sin, I think we shall be better able to form an idea of its enormity than we can from any other view of the matter (16-17).

Living Godly in an ungodly world is a matter of denying sin, hating it with every fiber of one's being; denying one's self and yielding wholly to the will of Almighty God; living every day for Jesus, Who gave Himself for each individual soul that ever has or will live; and looking for His glorious return, at which time all the Christian's hope will be realized in an eternal home in heaven. We must love God with all our hearts, souls, and minds (Mat. 22:37); we must see sin for what it is and hate it as God does (Hab. 1:13a; Psa. 119:104); and we must love the Bible, the word of God (Psa. 119:97, 113, 119, 127, 140, 159, 163, 167). Living godly in an ungodly world is not sinless perfection, for all make mistakes and stumble. But, as it pertains to lifestyle choice, whether looking at Titus 2 or scores of other Bible examples of godly men and women, when one loves God and loves His Word, living a godly life will come as naturally as breathing!

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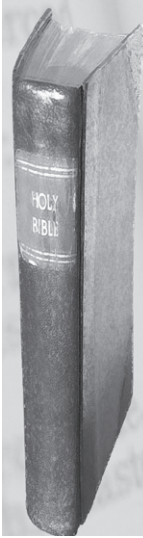
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Facts & Truths "We Can Know...!"



We Are Servants To Our Lord And God!

This Chapter Written By

Bobby Liddell

I know of no other congregation of the Lord's people that more fittingly fulfills the Scriptural depiction of service than the East Hill Church of Christ. It has been a joy to me to have the blessing of getting to know, and being privileged to work with, this good church. Her elders have my highest respect, as men of faith and courage; her preachers are as talented, zealous, and faithful as any I know; and, her members epitomize what Christians are to be. The gracious, loving hospitality extended to students of the Memphis School of Preaching, by the East Hill congregation's inviting them to attend the annual lectureship, has very positively impressed hundreds of good men. The opportunity for them to be present at the Truth In Love Lectures has not only increased their Bible knowledge, but has also helped them to be better men, and better preachers. It is a blessing to us all to have fellowship with the brethren at East Hill.

Introduction

Being a servant is not what most people envision for themselves. Serving another is not the goal, and does not fit well into "*The American Dream*." Most, in our society, view service as, at best, a possibly necessary beginning point, from which one can rise to prominence, but that one should seek to avoid. We all recognize this attitude, for we see it every day from those who are in positions of service, but who do not want to be.

Yet, do we recognize this attitude when it is within us? How often do we think seriously about being servants? Do we, as Christians, delight in the opportunity to be bondservants? Are we happy to be slaves? Are we joyful about submitting to our Master, and humbly serving our Lord and God?

Let us explore the following: Service and Gladness, Service and Gratitude, and Service and Greatness, as we seek to know that we are servants to our Lord and God.

Service And Gladness

Psalm 100 is "*A Psalm of Praise*." The Hebrew word translated "*praise*" means to extend the hand in offering a sacrifice; thus, some commentators think the Jews sang this psalm when making their offerings of thanksgiving. The inspired record states:

Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands. Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing. Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath 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 unto him, and bless his name. For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations (Psa. 100).

We should "*Serve the Lord with gladness*" because He is the Lord (Psa. 100:2). The Lord (KJV) is Jehovah (ASV); that is, he is the Eternal One, the Self-existent One. If He is our Lord, He is our Master, and if He is our Master, we are His servants. On one occasion, Jesus asked, "*And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?*" (Luke 6:46). Thus, He expressed the truth that if He were their Lord, they would be His servants, and they would do what He said. Refusing to do His will, although calling Him Lord, proved He was not really their Lord, and they were not really His servants. If we are His servants, we will rejoice in serving Him. We will serve Him with gladness (exceeding joy).

The word, that is translated "*serve*" means to work as a bondservant (Psa. 100:2); however, the idea is not of one's having been forced into service, against his will, and to his chagrin. Rather, the point is that those who choose the Lord as Master serve Him with joy filled delight in doing His will (1 John 5:3). Submission is part of service, and the sad truth is that, for whatever reasons, some will not submit to the Lord. Service requires humility, and some will not humble themselves to be servants. Likewise, service requires devotion to one master, and some try in vain to hold onto two. Jesus plainly stated:

No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the

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other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon
(Mat. 6:24).

We should serve the Lord with gladness because He is the Lord. If we deny He is our Lord, we will not serve Him.

We should "*Serve the Lord with gladness*" because He is God (Psa. 100:3). He is Elohim, the Supreme God of Heaven and earth, and it is before His throne of grace and mercy that we come with singing, praise, and thanksgiving. He is the God that we must know (Psa. 100:3). Do we know Him? John wrote that we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.

And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him (1 John 2:2-3).

We must also know why we serve Him, and how to serve Him, if we would serve Him acceptably. "*Sincerity and honesty*" do not override the requirement of knowledge of what our Master desires and demands, nor of what His servants must do. He is God! We should serve Him with gladness because He is God. If we deny He is God, we will not serve Him.

We should "*Serve the Lord with gladness*" because He is the Creator (Psa. 100:3). Were we brought forth that we might reject our Creator and refuse His commands? Did the Lord create us that we might deny Him, His eternal existence, His creative power, and His sovereign authority? The fact that we are His creation should suffice for all

men, in *"all lands,"* to praise Him and serve Him (Psa. 100:1). Since our very existence sprang from our Creator's might and mercy, we should rejoice in the opportunity, the privilege, and the pleasure to serve Him. We should serve Him with gladness because He is our Creator. If we deny He is our Creator, we will not serve Him.

We should *"Serve the Lord with gladness"* because He is good (Psa. 100:5). Brother Gus Nichols used to say: *"God is great in His goodness, and good in His greatness."* The Lord is good, pure, and holy. His eternal nature is ultimately, infinitely good. Therefore, there is nothing that our Master requires of us that is not good, and there is nothing that He prohibits from us that is good. Many in the world falsely accuse Him, charging that serving Him restricts their participation in the *"good"* things of the world. Such a charge is blasphemous! We should rejoice in His goodness, and serve Him with gladness.

His mercy (loving kindness) is everlasting; that is, it extends beyond the *"vanishing point,"* the point beyond which we cannot see. His truth (fidelity to His word) is for all generations, generations of generations, from a word used twice for emphasis (Psa. 100:5). How then, could any right-thinking person refuse to make a joyful noise (singing) in worship to Him, or refuse to look upon service to Him as a joy-filled delight? After all, because of His love, mercy, and grace, we can be *"His people, and the sheep of His pasture"* (Psa. 100:3). Therefore, we should serve Him with gladness because He is our good. If we deny that God is good, we will not serve Him.

Service And Gratitude

We should serve the Lord with gratitude. Our service should be with gladness, from hearts filled to overflowing with gratitude. Having received His wonderful, bountiful blessings, we surely owe to Him our deepest appreciation (Jas. 1:17). Paul wrote *"And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful"* (Col. 3:15). Every day should begin, continue, and end with gratitude in our hearts, expressed by our words, and shown through our deeds.

We may choose to serve the Lord, or not, and we may choose to serve Him with gratitude, or not. The challenge given by Joshua still calls to men to make a decision of whom we will serve.

And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD (Josh. 24:15).

Grateful service comes from an attitude we choose to have, and depends upon a decision we must make. The misconceived attitude of *"entitlement"* chokes out proper gratitude. The delusion of proud self-sufficiency bars gratitude from the heart. As we noted above, Psalm 100:4 states: *"Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name."* Note these other passages that emphasize how we should be grateful to God.

Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto thy name: the upright shall dwell in thy presence (Psa. 140:13).

Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God (2 Cor. 9:11)..

For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God (1 Thess. 3:9).

Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light (Col. 1:12).

Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus (Phil. 4:6).

Giving thanks always (every time, BL) for all things (every thing, BL) unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 5:20).

And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him (Col. 3:17).

In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you (1 Thess. 5:18).

In view of all that for which we should be so very thankful, why do we have problems being grateful for an opportunity to serve Him who has so blessed us? Could it be,

Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened (Rom. 1:21).

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Or, maybe we are like the nine lepers who did not return to thank Jesus when He had miraculously healed them (Luke 17:11-19)!

When we count our blessings, we should be so overwhelmed that we would want everyone, beginning with God, to know just how thankful we are. Satan seeks to convince us that God does not love us, that He has not blessed us, and that we are poor, deprived, neglected, and have nothing. If we listen, we will begin to feel sorry for ourselves, and the next step is that we will become angry toward God. God wants us to be, *“Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving”* (Col. 2:7). We should serve the Lord with gratitude. If we are not grateful for all God has done for us, we will not serve Him.

Service And Greatness

We should follow the Lord’s example of service. Matthew 18:1 records this disturbing question, that indicated the disciples of Christ had the wrong idea about His kingdom: *“At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”* Later, the inspired account reveals:

Then came to him the mother of Zebedee’s children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him. And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom. But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I

am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able. And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father. And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren. But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many (Mat. 20:20-28).

Jesus' disciples argued over who would be "greatest." Rather than openly condemn them, the Lord taught them the way to true greatness. The way He declared is the right way to greatness today. If we want to be great, we must be ministers (those who attend to others, taking upon themselves the humble work of service). If we want to be chief, we must be servants (slaves serving of our own free will).

Some ask, "*How can we be the servants of God, as we should?*" We must follow the example of the Lord Jesus Christ, who came not to be served, but to serve. Paul wrote of Jesus, "*But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men*" (Phil. 2:7). Jesus taught humble service precedes exaltation,

But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself

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shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted (Mat. 23:11-12).

He showed that, if one would be promoted, he must be a "*faithful and wise servant*" (Mat. 24:45). Such a servant will be blessed, and will hear, "*Well done*" (Mat. 25:21). We can know we are servants to our Lord and God when we follow Jesus' example of service. If we do not follow the Lord's example, we will not serve Him.

We should follow the Lord.

If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour (John 12:26).

Consider some of the great men of faith who followed the Lord, and how they rejoiced to be known as His servants.

Instead of reminding the readers of His greatness, or of the fact that He was the brother (half-brother) of Jesus, James wrote:

James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting (Jas. 1:1).

There was no greater title that he could wear, than simply being a servant of our Lord and God.

Likewise, Jude, also believed to be the half-brother of Jesus (Mat. 13:55), did not claim any honor, but referred to himself as:

Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called (Jude 1).

Peter, so prominent in so many ways, did not project himself as some great one, but wrote:

Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ (2 Peter 1:1).

Perhaps, the man whom the faithful admire most, other than the Christ, is Paul. Yet, Paul repeatedly reminded those to whom he wrote that he was just a servant. *"For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more"* (1 Cor. 9:19). His desire was, above all, to serve Christ: *"For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ"* (Gal. 1:10). Thus, he was: *"Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God"* (Rom. 1:1). So, to Titus, he wrote: *"Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness"* (Titus 1:1). His attitude of service preceded the greatness he achieved. So, he could write, assuring others: *"Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ"* (Col. 3:24).

If we follow the Lord, we will become servants, humbly submitting ourselves to the will of God, seeking simply to glorify Him as His servants (Luke 9:23-25). If we do not follow the Lord, we will not be servants to our Lord and God.

Conclusion

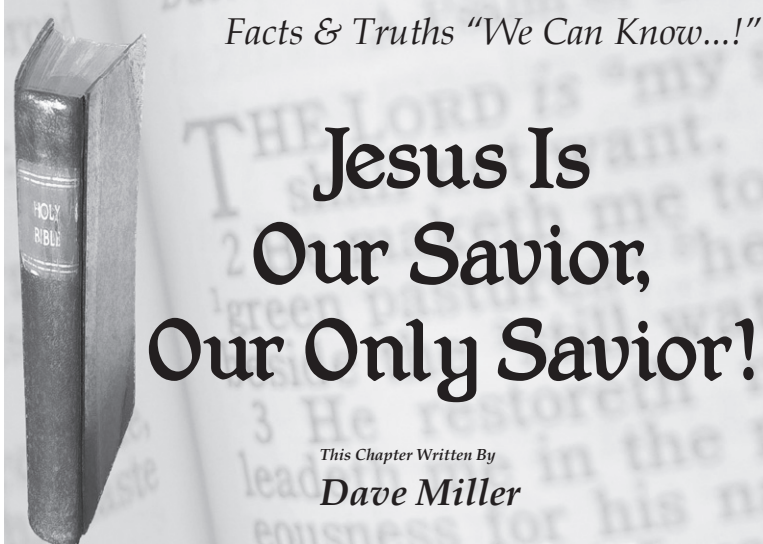
We can know we are servants to our Lord and God when we serve Him with gladness and gratitude. Only then will we know the true way to greatness. As His humble, loyal servants, we can happily anticipate hearing, *"Well done, good and"*

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faithful servant...enter thou into the joy of thy lord"
(Mat. 25:23).

Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness (Rom. 6:16-18).

Facts & Truths "We Can Know...!"



Jesus Is Our Savior, Our Only Savior!

*This Chapter Written By
Dave Miller*

The central feature of Christianity—that which makes it distinct from all other religions in the world—is the person of Christ. Whatever parallels and comparisons may be made between the various religions of the world, the one quintessential difference that makes Christianity incomparable is the person/deity of Jesus Christ. If the Bible is correct, all accountable human beings are required to come to a knowledge of the person of Christ, and then believe in, love, and obey Him. There are no exceptions. As Jesus Himself said, “If you do not believe that I AM, you will die in your sins” (John 8:24). He also insisted: “*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me*” (John 14:6). Peter declared to the entire Jewish hierarchy, including the high priest of the Jewish nation, “*Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved*” (Acts 4:12).

How can we know that Jesus is our one and

only Savior? The same way that we know that Jesus loves us: because *“the Bible tells me so.”* In other words, abundant evidence exists to demonstrate without any doubt whatsoever that the Bible is the only book on the planet that is of divine origin. It is the only authentic and flawless source of guidance from God. Since no other book on Earth bears the attributes of inspiration, then we can know that Jesus is our one and only Savior because the Bible plainly teaches He is.

It is not the purpose of this lecture to review the evidence for the inspiration of the Bible. Nor do we have the time to examine the bona fide historical evidence that Jesus actually lived on Earth. Instead, we will focus on the Bible’s affirmations regarding the unique, exhilarating role that Jesus most certainly fills as our Savior. Old Testament prophecy and New Testament fulfillment combine to create a thrilling portrait that drives the honest heart to the certainty that Jesus is our one and only Savior.

Old Testament Anticipation

The cross of Christ is unsurpassed in human history. No greater subject can occupy our minds on Earth. The cross was orchestrated with supernatural precision. More than 300 specific Messianic prophecies anticipate the great redemptive events surrounding Christ’s road to the cross. They prove Jesus to be our Savior, and promote profound respect for Him! Let us begin by considering a few of the stunning prophecies that prove Jesus is our Savior, and that help us to see what He endured to fulfill that role.

Psalm 69:8—*“I have become a stranger to my brothers, and an alien to my mother’s children.”* Fulfilled in John 1:11—*“He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him,”* and the fact that even His fleshly brothers rejected Him (John 7:3).

Isaiah 8:14—*“He will be as a sanctuary, but a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense to both the houses of Israel.”* Declared fulfilled in Romans 9:32—*“For they stumbled at that stumbling stone,”* and 1 Peter 2:8—*“‘A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense.’ They stumble, being disobedient to the word.”*

Psalm 2:1-2—*“Why do the nations rage, and the people plot a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against His Anointed.”* Fulfilled in Luke 23:12—*“That very day Pilate and Herod became friends with each other, for previously they had been at enmity with each other,”* and Acts 4:27—*“For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together.”*

Psalm 41:9 (cf. 55:12-14)—*“Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me.”* Fulfilled in Matthew 26:47ff. and John 13:18ff. in the betrayal by Judas.

Zechariah 11:12—*“Then I said to them, ‘If it is agreeable to you, give me my wages; and if not, refrain.’ So they weighed out for my wages thirty pieces of silver.”* Fulfilled in Matthew 26:15-16—*“Then...Judas...said, ‘What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?’ And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver.”*

Zechariah 11:13—*“And the Lord said to me, ‘Throw it to the potter’.... So I took the thirty pieces of*

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silver and threw them into the house of the Lord for the potter.” Fulfilled in Matthew 27:5—“Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself.”

Zechariah 11:13—“So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the Lord for the potter.” Fulfilled in Matthew 27:7—“And they consulted together and bought with them the potter’s field, to bury strangers in.”

Psalm 109:2—“For the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful have opened against me; they have spoken against me with a lying tongue.” Fulfilled in Matthew 26:59ff.—“Now the chief priests, the elders, and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus.... Even though many false witnesses came forward, they found none.”

Isaiah 50:6—“I did not hide My face from shame and spitting.” Fulfilled in Mark 14:65—“Then some began to spit on Him, and to blindfold Him, and to beat Him.”

Isaiah 50:6—“I gave My back to those who struck Me, and My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard.” Fulfilled in John 19:1—“So then Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him.”

Isaiah 52:14—“Just as many were astonished at you, so His visage was marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men.” Fulfilled in Matthew 26:67; 27:30—“Then they...beat Him; and others struck Him with the palms of their hands.... and took the reed and struck Him on the head.”

Zechariah 13:7; Isaiah 63:3—“Strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.” Fulfilled in Jesus’ prediction to His apostles in Matthew 26:31,56; Mark 14:27—“All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night.”

Psalm 38:11; 88:8 – “My loved ones and my friends stand aloof from my plague, and my relatives stand afar off.” Fulfilled at the cross in Matthew 27:55; Mark 15:40 – “And many women who followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to Him, were there looking on from afar,” and Luke 23:49 – “But all His acquaintances, and the women who followed Him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.”

Isaiah 53:7 – “He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth.” Fulfilled in Matthew 27:12 – “And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He answered nothing.”

Micah 5:1 – “They will strike the judge of Israel with a rod on the cheek.” Fulfilled in Matthew 27:30 – “Then they...took the reed and struck Him on the head.”

Psalm 22:14-15 – “I am poured out like water, and all My bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; It has melted within Me. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and My tongue clings to My jaws; You have brought Me to the dust of death.” Fulfilled in the agonies Jesus suffered via Roman crucifixion.

Isaiah 53:4-6,12 – “Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; ...But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed....; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.... He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.” Fulfilled in Matthew 26:23 – “For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins,” and 1 Peter 2:24 – “who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to

sins, might live for righteousness – by whose stripes you were healed.”

Psalm 69:21 – *“They also gave me gall for my food, and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.”*
Fulfilled in Matthew 27:34 – *“they gave Him sour wine mingled with gall to drink. But when He had tasted it, He would not drink.”*

Psalm 22:16 – *“For dogs have surrounded Me; the congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet.”* Fulfilled in John 20:25 – *“Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails.”*

Psalm 22:1 – *“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? Why are You so far from helping Me, and from the words of My groaning? O My God, I cry in the daytime, but You do not hear.”* Fulfilled in Matthew 27:46 – *“And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?’ that is, ‘My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?’”*

Psalm 22:7; 109:25 – *“All those who see Me ridicule Me; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head.”* *“I also have become a reproach to them; when they look at me, they shake their heads.”* Fulfilled in Matthew 27:39 – *“And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads.”*

Psalm 22:8 – *“They shoot out the lip...saying, ‘He trusted in the LORD, let Him rescue Him; let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him!’”* Fulfilled in Matthew 27:42-44 – *“Likewise the chief priests also, mocking with the scribes and elders, said, ‘He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him. He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him; for He said, “I am the Son of God.”’”* Even the robbers who were crucified with

Him reviled Him with the same thing."

Psalm 22:18—"They divide My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots." Fulfilled in John 19:23-24—"Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments and made four parts, to each soldier a part, and also the tunic. Now the tunic was without seam, woven from the top in one piece. They said therefore among themselves, 'Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be.'"

Psalm 22:15—"My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and My tongue clings to My jaws." Fulfilled in John 19:28—"Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, 'I thirst!'"

Psalm 34:20—"He guards all His bones; not one of them is broken." Fulfilled in John 19:33—"But when they came to Jesus, and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs."

Zechariah 12:10—"then they will look on Me whom they pierced." Fulfilled in John 19:34—"But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out."

Psalm 31:5—"Into Your hand I commit my spirit; You have redeemed me, O Lord God of truth." Fulfilled in Luke 23:46—"And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, 'Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit.' Having said this, He breathed His last."

Isaiah 53:12—"He poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors." Fulfilled in Mark 15:27—"With Him they also crucified two robbers, one on His right and the other on His left."

Isaiah 53:12—"He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." Fulfilled in Luke

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23:34 – “Then Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.’”

Isaiah 53:9 – “And they made His grave with the wicked – but with the rich at His death.” Matthew 27:57ff. – “Now when evening had come, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who...when Joseph had taken the body...laid it in his new tomb.”

Psalms 16:10 – “For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, nor will you allow Your Holy One to see corruption.” Fulfilled in Acts 2:31 – “he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption.”

Psalms 16:25 – “I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken.” Fulfilled in Acts 2:31-33 – “he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ.... This Jesus God has raised up.... Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God....”

Psalms 68:19 – “You have ascended on high, You have led captivity captive.” Fulfilled in Luke 24:51 – “Now it came to pass..., that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven.”

Daniel 7:13 – “I was watching in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him.” Fulfilled in Acts 1:9 – “Now when he had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.”

Psalms 110:1 – “The Lord said to My Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool.’” Fulfilled in Acts 2:33 – “Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God,” and 1 Peter 3:22 – “Who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God.”

Astounding! The doctrine that Jesus is our Savior, with all of its minute details, could not have been accidentally predicted centuries ahead of time—let alone brought to fruition! No other document on the planet throughout all of human history compares to the Bible. These amazing predictions not only prove that the Bible is the inspired Word of God, these incredible details anticipating Christ's life on Earth, His crucifixion, and His resurrection, compel us to conclude: "*Jesus is our Savior, our only Savior.*"

New Testament Affirmations

The New Testament is filled with declarations concerning the tremendous role that Jesus fills as our Savior. Like the Old Testament words of anticipation, these, too, nourish our spirits and reassure us that Jesus is our Savior. Recall the words of the angel that appeared to the shepherds as they were tending their flocks by night:

Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord (Luke 2:10-11).

And consider the words of the Samaritans to the woman who had encountered Jesus at the water well:

Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world (John 4:42).

Jesus is the "*Savior of the world*" in the sense that "*He Himself is the propitiation for our sins,*

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and not for ours only but also for the whole world"
(1 John 2:2).

And what of the words of Peter and the apostles as they made their bold defense before the Jewish Sanhedrin:

The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior (Acts 5:30-31).

Paul labeled Him "*the Savior of the body*" (Eph. 5:23), and informed the Philippian Christians,

For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself (3:20-21).

Writing to Timothy, Paul said that God:

Has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began, but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel (2 Tim. 1:9-10).

To Titus, Paul explained that as we live our lives subduing the flesh, we are:

Looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people (2:13-14).

That declaration reassures us that Jesus is our Savior. And Paul pressed the point more fully in the next chapter:

For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life (3:3-7).

Jesus is our one and only Savior!

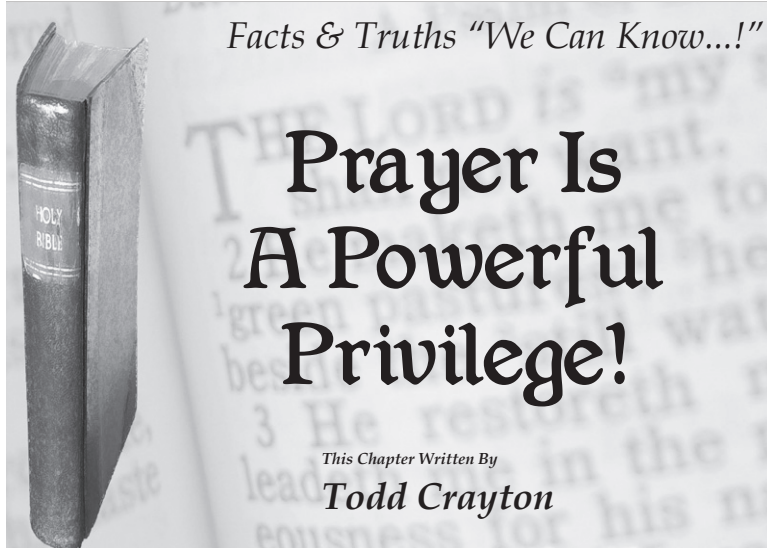
Peter insisted that if we will make our calling and election sure, *“an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ”* (2 Pet. 1:11). Indeed, Jesus is the means by which we *“have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ”* (2 Pet. 2:20). We are under obligation to *“grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ”* (2 Pet. 3:18).

Conclusion

Jesus Christ is our Savior, our only Savior. All men can know this matchless truth. All men must know this truth, and render obedience to the Gospel of our Savior. To fail to do so is to commit eternal, spiritual suicide. May all men come to the

JESUS IS OUR SAVIOR, OUR ONLY SAVIOR!

same realization that the apostle John expressed:
*“we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the
Son as Savior of the world”* (1 John 4:14).



Facts & Truths "We Can Know...!"

Prayer Is A Powerful Privilege!

*This Chapter Written By
Todd Crayton*

I am excited for this opportunity to speak on this life-changing subject: Prayer is a Powerful Privilege. I extend my deepest appreciation and gratitude to brother Paul Sain and the good elders of this congregation for their vision in hosting this great time of renewal, spiritual edification and fellowship

Introduction

The early Christians were men and women of prayer. Brethren today must engage in a continual desire and attitude of communicating with God. Jesus told his disciples "...ask and it shall be given..." (Mat. 7:7). There are few blessings as wonderful as leaning upon the everlasting arms of God's love. There at the spiritual alter, one may release all fear, worry and anxiety knowing that the Father will handle any challenge in the life of His child (Luke 21:34). This study will investigate: (1) the right privilege of prayer; (2) the reverent privilege

of prayer, and (3) the remembered privilege of prayer.

The Right Privilege Of Prayer

If you ask the average person, what is prayer; they may say something to the effect that prayer is talking with God. Yet, to the mature Christian, prayer is far more than simply *“talking”* with God. Prayer can be defined as *“A devout petition to God; a spiritual communion with God – as in supplication, thanksgiving, or confession”* (**Random House Dictionary**). Prayer involves the act of *“communicating”* with God. In other words, prayer is a *“Communion with God that involves intimate communication with an interchange or sharing of thoughts or emotions.”* Privilege is defined as *“an advantage, right, or benefit that is not available to everyone; the rights and advantages enjoyed by a relatively small group of people.”*

To understand how these two definitions apply to biblical prayer, let the reader consider the following uses of prayer as rights to Christians.

First, prayer is a *“right”* to those who are the sons of God (Rom. 8:14, 28; John 1:12). The regard the Lord has toward Christians cannot be equaled; for He has chosen them:

Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thes. 2:14).

Moses writes in Numbers 16:5:

And he spake unto Korah and unto all his company, saying, Even tomorrow the LORD will shew who are his, and who is holy; and will cause him to come near unto him: even

him whom he hath chosen will he cause to come near unto him.

Coming near to God is one of the privileges of His chosen people, but *"drawing near to God only comes through obedience to His message"* (Jas. 4:8). Coming near can also be described as communion with God in prayer.

God has commanded His people to pray with understanding (1 Cor. 14:15). The Apostles taught that the message of Christ unified the world in one body (Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 12:20; Col. 3:15). Christians follow the example of the apostles because they have God's authority and those in Christ's body have the right to approach God in prayer. The Bible asserts, *"Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth"* (John 9:31). Therefore, only those who are in the body of Christ have the right to approach God in prayer.

Secondly, God has given the privilege of prayer to those who do His will and are righteous. The Bible records that God is open to the requests of the righteous (Psa. 34:15; 34:17; 37:39); for, *"The Lord is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous"* (Prov. 15:29). There are some versions of the Bible (such as Today's English Version and Easy to Read Version), which mistranslate this verse as *"evil and good people."* It is important to properly apply the correct Hebrew word *"tsaddiyq,"* meaning *"just," "lawful,"* from the root *"to make moral, cleanse"* (**Strong's Hebrew Concordance**). This idea of righteous has lost its power with the use of the phrase *"good people"* today. As brother James Coffman states, *"It is not the so-called 'good people'*

whom God hears, but it is the 'righteous'." A Biblical definition of "righteous" can be found in Luke 1:6: "Walking in all the ordinances and commandments of the Lord; blameless." Coffman further states, "The common idea of who is 'good' applies the term to anyone who minds his own business and stays out of *Jm.il.*" The Bible clearly extols the only one who is good...God himself (Mat. 19:17). This harmonizes with Jesus' own words "why callest thou me, good?" (Mark 10:18). In order, for God to hear one's prayer, he must be righteous.

Thirdly, the right privilege to prayer involves obedience. Jesus' obedience to the Father through suffering (Heb. 5:8), compels Christians to follow His example in all things, especially prayer. It was Christ's custom to exercise the privilege of prayer. He "continued all night in prayer to God" (Luke 6:12). What an example the church of the New Testament could be if her members sought to pray with fervor and urgency! (Psa. 5:1; 55:17; 1 Thes. 5:17). In Hebrews 5:7, Christ offered up "Prayers and supplications with strong cries and tears." Obedient Christians are to pray likewise!

God, in His power and might, can make major changes in one's life through the right of prayer. Yet, in worship, this writer has witnessed very "telling" body language when a prayer "goes a little long." One's humble outpouring of his heart to God in prayer, in worship or otherwise, can never be too long; for Jesus gave the perfect example (1 Pet. 2:21; Psa. 62:8). There are brethren who are experts in choosing the best location for a new church building, but miss the best location for the Church...on her knees, at the feet of the Father (Php. 2:10). For it is there, prostrate to the earth,

the most awesome blessings of God are received.

An audience with God never requires prior approval. It is shown in Hebrew history, that the subjects of a Persian king could not come before him unannounced, lest he incur the penalty of death (Est. 4:11). God, the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords, makes no such requirement before approaching His throne. That requirement was satisfied by putting on Christ through obedience to the gospel (Gal. 3:27; Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10). Once satisfied, His subjects have the privilege of coming *“boldly unto the throne of grace”* (Heb. 4:16) whenever they choose. God’s throne is always open to his servants and he hears no matter the request.

Neither does the right of prayer to God require eloquence or pageantry. The Pharisees misunderstood this concept by espousing their own piety. Yet, the one whom God heeds speaks from the heart (Luke 18:10-13). Self righteousness is the way of the proud and upright (Jas. 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:5). One’s spiritual ‘littleness’ in comparison to the greatness of God, must give one pause. Can man have any grounds to stand proud before God? Can man answer the mysteries of God? (Job 38:3-4). Surely not! God, alone, exalts those who stand humbly before Him. This writer had a cousin who was a faithful member of the Lord’s church. She was an unassuming woman, yet she was known for her humbleness and great devotion to prayer. Her power to touch the hearts of everyone she met was amazing. Nothing in her appearance was gauche but before God she was regal because in prayer she found her true purpose; leaving a spiritually posterity to her family (1 Pet. 5:6).

Does God hear the prayer of unrighteous persons? Resoundingly, no! It would be inconsistent for God to admonish Christians to live faithfully then grant the prayers of disobedient persons (Rev. 2:10). By implication, if godly sorrow yields a penitent heart (2 Cor. 7:10), then vain promises and empty commitments demand silence from the heart of God. One might say, *"but God cares for all in the world;"* to this God replies in Luke 6:46: *"And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"* God does hear those with an earnest desire to seek Him, but ignores those who use prayer only as a last resort. This principle of prayer may explain unfavorable answers to the prayers of some *"whose ears are turned away from the law"* (Prov. 28:9).

The right privilege of prayer must be based on biblical faith in God (Heb. 11:6). It is the one who exercises faith in the Bible and His existence that pleases Him. In an interview, CNN columnist, L. Z. Granderson said, *"True faith does not require us to have all of the answers."* He goes on to say:

One of the biggest problems with religion in general and evangelical Christianity in particular, is the claim of having definitive answers about an infinite being. But true faith does not require us to have all of the answers. Faith, as it relates to spirituality, isn't knowing something others don't know—we call that a secret—but rather belief in something that can't be empirically proven or disproven. In other words, to truly be a person of faith, one must accept the fact there is no tangible evidence there is a God.

This gentleman's error in understanding biblical faith is plainly wrong. While the creation of

God may not speak articulately, the evidence is overwhelming (Psa. 19:1). God has given the required evidence to conclude: He is the great I AM (Exo. 3:14). It may be denied by some, but it cannot be refuted (Heb. 11:1). God answers the prayers of those who believe with all their heart, mind, soul and strength along with uncompromising obedience to sound doctrine (Rom. 6:17; Mark 12:30; Luke 10:27). The one who doubts should not expect an answer to his prayers. James writes:

But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering.
For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea
driven with the wind and tossed (Jas. 1:6).

The right privilege of prayer is also given to those who are penitent and *"hunger and thirst after righteousness"* (Mat. 5:6). Cornelius was an example of one who was seeking; whom the Bible describes as devout in all his doings (Acts 10:2). He led his household in prayer at the times of the day according to Jewish custom and gave alms to the needy. He was noted by God and Cornelius' prayers *"went up as a memorial before Him"* (Acts 10:1-3).

Cornelius, a Gentile, was diligent in doing all he knew to follow God. He was not a part of the covenant God made with Israel, yet he believed in the one true God. He was given the opportunity to hear the words of Peter that he and his house might be saved (Acts 11:14). Because of Cornelius' penitent heart, the grace God, showed obviously, demonstrates that His ear is open to those who are searching for the Truth. Not that God saved him through prayer, but provided the door through Peter. Before obedience, he stood in the same state

as Saul on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:11). Peter gave Cornelius the keys to the kingdom...the gospel message...and Cornelius chose to enter into it (Acts 10:48), along with his household. God desires his children exercise their right to pray with an obedient heart and a blameless life.

The Reverent Privilege Of Prayer

There is knowledge of God that comes from a supremely respectful attitude of His Word. His will is revealed to Christians who come to Him in reverent fear. Reverence is defined as *“a feeling of profound awe and respect; often love, veneration. It is an act of showing respect, especially, a bow”* (**American Heritage Dictionary**). This thought is found in Proverbs 1:7:

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

This is regarded by most commentators as the adage or mark of the entire book of Proverbs (Coffman). The words, *“respect,” “fear,” “honor,”* and *“deference”* describe, by inspiration, a biblical view of fear.

It is further important to note the phrase *“The fear of the Lord,”* is recorded over a dozen times in the book of Proverbs. Today some of the words used to refer to the Heavenly Father do not express reverence. Public prayers will expose one’s knowledge or the lack of it. There are some who believe that reference to Jehovah as Father is too formal; using the term *“daddy”* as an alternative. God does not expect perfect wording in one’s address, but even Jesus, undeniably the closest to Him, did not use such a casual address in teaching

His disciples to pray. Jesus prayed, *"Our Father which art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name;"* this helps one to visualize who is over whom in prayer (Luke 11:2).

Jesus' life shows prayer was a constant part of His daily walk and He was sober and honorable in talking with the Father (Heb. 12:28). His petitions were reverent to God and those following Him must do likewise by showing a respectful attitude in prayer. That attitude must manifest itself by being offered in all seriousness and devotedness. The location from where one prays does not matter as much as *"how"* he prays. One may pray while sitting, standing or lying down, but one's heart must be directed toward God with the faith that God will hear. Abraham Lincoln expressed the sentiment of numberless care weary, toil worn souls when he said:

I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go; my wisdom and all that was around me seemed insufficient for the day.

Godly fear must be the source of one's reverence for God.

Jesus, as High Priest of the New Covenant, is able to go before the throne of God as the advocate for the Christian (1 John 2:1-2). The Old Testament records the reverence of the Levitical priesthood. The High Priest, under the Law of Moses, was given authority to enter into the tabernacle once a year and offer sacrifices for himself and all the people (Lev. 16:32-34). Only the High Priest had the authority to enter into the area of the tabernacle

called the Most Holy Place and offer the sacrifice that God commanded. Jesus has made it possible that all who obey the gospel to become priests and priestesses (1 Pet. 2:5; Eph. 2:14). The priest under the Law of Moses had the utmost fear of Jehovah God. Even the priestly robes worn by Aaron and his son's denoted their honor in serving God. Likewise, priests of the New Testament (Christians) are to be distinctive, not only in manner of life, but in their prayer life as well. He is faithful and strengthens all who ask of Him (Heb. 2:17-18). He has made it possible through His ultimate sacrifice that Christians, the new priesthood, may bow before the Mercy Seat of God without any reservations.

There is One who rules in the kingdom of Christ and in the kingdom of men, sitting upon the throne of grace (Heb. 4:16). There, priests can "*draw near*" and not stand afar off as commanded of the congregation of Israel (Exo. 24:1). This is not a craven fear but a respectful love for the Creator which can be discovered in prayers that are filled with deference to Him. By definition, deference is "*submission or courteous yielding to the wishes or opinion of another;*" in this case to Jehovah God.

One way deference is shown is by using the formal pronouns in addressing God as "*Thee*" and "*Thou,*" as opposed to "*you*" and "*your.*" It is appropriate to use the formal pronouns, but it is not commanded. This writer concludes speaking to the Creator of all things should be a special, sober occasion denoted by one's words.

Jesus is poised to communicate our special requests of the Father. He lives to intercede on behalf of those who ask (Heb. 7:25). He is on the throne of Heaven, co-equal with the Father. The

Father is always listening and ready to answer. God listens and heeds because Jesus is uniquely positioned to plead on man's behalf. He is the mediator between God and man alone (1 Tim. 2:5). He has no equal or usurper in this life or in eternity. *"Anyone or anything else evoked to the Father must be excluded: including saints and the Virgin Mary because Jesus is the only legitimate advocate"* (Coffman). There can be no substitute for reverence in prayer. The Heavenly Father is most deserving of it.

The Remembered Privilege Of Prayer

There is a tendency for even faithful Christians to forget their constant dependency in God. Jesus said, *"men ought always to pray, and not to faint"* (Luke 18:1). Exhaustion, pressure, stress and life in general can cause one to faint from overwhelming physical and emotional factors. The similar effect can happen to one spiritually when the privilege of prayer is forgotten. The Hebrews writer encouraged the Jewish Christians to not faint (Heb. 12:3). How true are the words of the song *"...Where could I go, O where could I go but to the Lord? Needing a friend to save me in the end..."* (J. B. Coats). One can avoid fainting physically by resting, eating properly and balancing tasks. One can avoid fainting spiritually by spending much time praying, teaching and studying the Holy Scriptures (2 Tim. 2:15). The entertainment of the "IPad" device, the newest vacation spot or the best golf course won't do what hours in prayer will accomplish. Each reader must nurture an attitude of sole dependency focused in Christ (Glenn Hitchcock). Arthur W. Pink has said, *"Prayer is not so much an act as it is an attitude – an attitude of dependency...dependency upon God."* One

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cannot expect to win moral and spiritual battles while forgetting to seek the Lord's help. It's not easy to live the Christian life, but no disciple ever yielded to Satan while on his knees in prayer.

Christians are commanded to pray and make supplication and to do so often. Paul said,

I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men (1 Tim. 2).

Begging before the throne of God on behalf of others, is a command of God that one must follow. Oh, how the body of Christ has been healed, nurtured and protected by the fervent prayer of the righteous through all their troubles (Jas. 5:16; Eph. 6:18; Php. 4:6).

Every faithful child of God possesses a constant urgency of heart that is perpetually calling out to Him. Solomon has declared, *"To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven"* (Eccl. 3:1). Prayer is for all seasons, i.e. young and old, spring, summer, winter and fall. One diligent in prayer should never hibernate (Eccl. 3:1-3). When tragedy and grief are all around, it is time for the soldier of Christ to pray (2 Tim. 2:4). The remembrance of those who have lived faithful to Him makes those left behind cling more closely to the cross through prayer (Psa. 97:12; Heb. 10:32; 2 Pet. 1:12; 3:1). Remembering the blessings that have come before, rallies the petitioner to discipline the mind to know that as long as he continues, a response will come (Hitchcock). Luke tells the reader to continually seek, ask and knock knowing the answer will come after much importunity (Luke 11:8-10). C. H. Spurgeon once said,

Prayer pulls the rope down below and the great bell rings above in the ears of God. Some scarcely stir the bell, for they pray so casually; others give only an occasional jerk at the rope. But he who communicates with heaven is the man who grasps the rope boldly and pulls continuously with all his might.

The times of most needed comfort are those when one will gratefully speak with God often; knowing there is no one else who can bring peace and comfort like the Lord (2 Cor. 1:3-4). When in the midst of the shock, pain and confusion from the loss of a loved one, job, or physical health due to disease, God is the will and way where there is none. Think of the most eloquent words of Tennyson at the death of the legendary King Arthur:

And slowly answer'd Arthur from the barge:
"The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfils himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.
Comfort thyself: what comfort is in me?
I have lived my life, and that which I have done
May He within himself make pure! but thou,
If thou shouldst never see my face again,
Pray for my soul.
More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of.
Wherefore, let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day
(407-418).

Alfred Lord Tennyson

Personal needs must not take precedent over remembering the needs of others. It is the case that often one prays for self because he may not

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know the needs of others. Unlike King Arthur, sometimes the cares and needs of brethren are kept quiet, like a top secret, from those who should be praying for them (Phil. 1:3-4). May Christians cease and desist in covering up hurt, anxiety, doubt and sin with the phrase, *"I'm fine,"* in response to a sincere inquiry of their well-being. Prayer is a privilege! Remembering one another in prayer is absolutely essential to spiritual maturity! Paul writes often of praying for the saints everywhere and especially for those close fellow workers with him (2 Cor. 6:1). Paul warns that one's work is in grave danger of nullifying the grace of God through omission of prayer, because prayer is a work of God. Additionally, he frequently beseeched brethren to *"pray for us"* (1 Thes. 5:25; 2 Thes. 3:1; Heb. 13:18; Php. 1:9); and to *"pray without ceasing"* (1 Thes. 5:17). It is essential that the Christian remembers to pray: *"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits"* (Psa. 103:2).

Conclusion

Prayer is a powerful privilege for the Christian and an awesome responsibility. The Christian is responsible to acknowledge the right privilege, the right reverence and the right remembrance in his prayers to the Heavenly Father.

May all the faithful children of God be ever mindful and comforted by the words of Jeremiah:

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you.

And ye shall seek me, and find me, when
ye shall search for me with all your heart
(29:10-12).

One can know assuredly that his prayers are
flowing to the ears of God. John states,

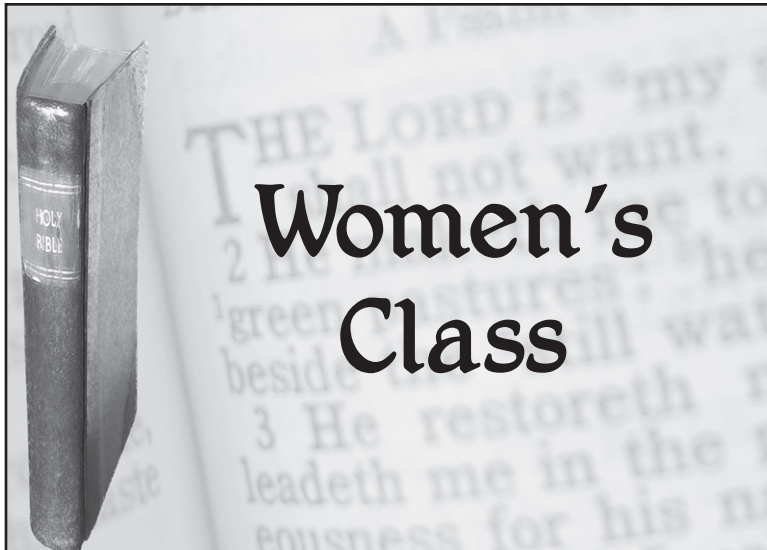
And this is the confidence that we have in
him; that, if we ask any thing according to
his will, he heareth us: And if we know that
he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that
we have the petitions that we desired of him
(1 John 5:14-15).

May Christians everywhere come to know the
powerful privilege of prayer!

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Introduction

Several years ago this writer had a disturbing conversation with an 80 year old Christian sister who had been a member of the Lord's church the majority of her life. The conversation went something like this:

Sister: *"I just don't know if I'll go to heaven or not."*

This Writer: *"Why do you believe that?"*

Sister: *"I just don't know if I've been good enough or done enough to get to heaven."*

This Writer: *"But we can know that we are saved. God tells us so in 1 John."*

Sister (shaking head): *"I just don't know."*

Needless to say, I was speechless as I thought of all I knew of this sister. At 80 years of age, she had more vigor and "get-up-and-go" than many half her age, and she was "going" often. She was caring and giving (almost to a fault) to many in the church.

Daily she cared for her ailing, older sister and gave money anonymously to those in financial need. She worked in the kitchen at every fellowship meal and brought food galore to every church-sponsored event. This sister supported gospel meetings, ladies' days, Vacation Bible School and attended funerals held at the building. She was regular in her attendance at worship services and gave of her means each Lord's Day; she displayed a love for God and his church. This sister was a servant! She was constantly serving others and receiving little praise; she was selfless; she was consistent in her service. At that particular moment, this writer could not fathom why this mature sister questioned whether she would go to heaven or not.

But therein lies the crux of the matter. It is not up to this writer, or anyone else, to look at a person's actions and determine that his heart and motives are right with God. It is the responsibility of every Christian to make his calling and election sure (2 Peter 1:10, KJV). John assures that the Christian may know he has eternal life:

And this is the record that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God (1 John 5:11-13).

Every Christian can "*know*" assuredly that he possesses "*life eternal*" but only if he has committed himself fully to obeying God's commands. Jesus told his disciples, "*If ye love me, keep my commandments*"

(John 14:15). This command requires that one renders his entire life in service to God: the way God has said; with the spirit with which He requires.

It was unknown to this writer what this older sister's motives were for serving. It is possible her heart wasn't fully committed to her serving and she did it out of fear, obligation or with reservation. Perhaps she took the correct humble view of Luke 10:17: "*So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do,*" but failed to remember that no Christian who ever lived did "*all that was commanded,*" except Christ. This verse clearly explains that one can never work enough to earn extra favor with God. Even the fulfillment of conditions upon which God gives salvation cannot merit the gift. One must do ALL he is commanded by God, to the best of his ability and allow God's grace to cover the rest. Nonetheless, women can know they are in service pleasing to the King when they are actively and diligently involved in the work of the local church and when that service is loving, loyal, limitless and for a lifetime.

The Servant Serves

One cannot talk about service without first defining a "*servant.*" **Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary** defines servant as "*One who serves, or does services, voluntarily or on compulsion; a person who labors or exerts himself for the benefit of another.*" More succinctly stated, a servant voluntarily submits himself for the benefit of another—or in other words, a slave (doulos). The Christian becomes a

"slave" or "servant" to Christ when he obeys the gospel and puts on the Lord in baptism. Service is what Christian servants "do for" or "give to" others for God's glory. In the New Testament, "service" or "diakonia" [dee-ak-on-ee'-ah], comes from the root meaning "to run on errands;" attendance, aid, ministry, relief, and hence, service. It is not possible to be a servant and not render voluntary service to others.

Saved To Serve

Without doubt, God's gift of his Son (John 3:16-17) has given mankind, but especially Christians, the opportunity to live new lives (Gal 6:1-4). With this blessing comes great responsibility. Christians accept new obligations and duties when they accept their new calling: a lifetime of obedience to God that includes serving Him. Deuteronomy 10:12 clearly states God requires His people:

To fear Jehovah thy God, and to love him,
and to serve Jehovah thy God with all thy
heart and with all thy soul.

Indeed, the Christian has been called and saved to serve God (Heb. 9:14; 12:28). God gave all to reconcile all things unto himself (Col. 1:20; Eph. 2:16). It is only "reasonable" that the recipient of God's sacrifice is expected to serve Him and those in the world (Rom. 12:1). Everyone has a ministry or service he is expected to fulfill. Paul wrote unto the Colossians to "take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfill it" (Col. 4:17). He further admonished Timothy to "make full proof of thy ministry" (1 Tim. 4:5). The concept of "servitude" or being a "servant" is a significant

part of what a Christian is. It is a noble calling; one the child of God should accept with humility and gratitude.

The Honor Of Being A Servant

Many great men in the Old Testament proudly called themselves "*servant*." Moses referred to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as "*Thy servants*" (Deut. 27) as well as to himself (1 Kings 8:53). Joshua called himself a "*servant of the Lord*" (Josh. 24:29). "*My servant*" was how God referred to Isaiah (Isa. 20:3), Job (Job 1:8), and Caleb (Num. 14:24), as well as the prophets (Jer. 7:25). New Testament writers also referred to themselves as "*servants*:" James (Jas. 1:1), Paul (Rom. 1:1; Phil. 1:1), John (Rev. 1.1), Peter (2 Peter 1:1) and Jude (Jude 1). Of course, our Lord and Savior, is the epitome of a servant. He was foretold to come as the "*Suffering Savior*" (Isa. 52:13-53:13) and even stated he "*did not come to be served but to serve*" (Mat. 20:28) and "*made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant*" (Phil. 2:7). Jesus Christ gave the world the greatest example of how to be a servant in John 13:4-17 when he humbly washed his disciples' feet. Jesus exemplified the service he wants Christians to embody and live today.

Likewise, many women of the Bible share the distinction of being servants; ministering to Jesus, Paul and the cause of Christ. While many would focus on the restrictions placed on women of the church, as it pertains to the public worship assemblies of the church (1 Cor. 14:34-37; 1 Tim. 2:11-12), those restrictions did not stop women from contributing greatly to the work of the early church. In fact, in the church at Rome, alone, one

can read of the service of many faithful women (taken from Executable Outline Sermons):

- a. Phebe, *“a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea”* (Rom. 16:1), who had *“been a succourer of many”* (Rom. 16:2).
- b. Priscilla who risked her own life to help Paul and to whom all the churches of the Gentiles, owed thanks (Rom. 16:3-4).
- c. One named Mary, who bestowed *“much labor”* (Rom. 16:6).
- d. Twin sisters, Tryphena and Tryphosa, who *“labored in the Lord”* (Rom. 16:12).
- e. The beloved Persis *“which laboured much in the Lord”* (Rom. 16:12).

Space does not allow a comprehensive listing of numerous other invaluable women who served and labored in the Lord’s church but whose contributions are well documented in Scripture. Throughout history, women have consistently answered the Macedonian call be in service to their King.

Women In Service To The Church

Throughout the Lord’s churches world-wide, one question can probably be heard echoing through the halls of many buildings or meeting places, *“What can I do?”* Often, this writer has heard Christians say, *“There’s just not anything for me to do in this congregation; all the jobs are being done by someone who has always done them.”* This, of course, is not usually the case, but it is an excuse given for not being actively engaged in the Lord’s work without someone specifically telling them what to do.

All one has to do is look around today and readily see that the growth of many churches is

the result of *"much labor"* by women. While not authorized to lead in public worship assemblies (1 Cor. 13:34), there is much work outside the assembly that must be done if the Lord's churches are to grow and thrive. Women are often in the position to provide much of this needed work!

While so-called, perceived *"organized works"* (preparing communion, maintaining the baptistery linens, attending the nursery, etc.) of the congregation may often be fully manned, Jesus never commanded that a Christian's work be limited to the confines of duties that facilitate worship services. Christians are commanded to be *"stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord"* (1 Cor. 15:58). There is never a time when a Christian woman should not be working for the Lord and serving others this side of heaven. No one in the kingdom should be limited in his service to God because he was not told what to do! Opportunities abound if hearts and hands are willing. A thorough study of God's word (2 Tim. 2:15; 1 Tim 4:13) would sweep away any lingering doubts of the work that needs to be done by brothers and sisters alike. Consider the following areas in which women can and should serve.

Women In The Service Of Benevolence

Defined as *"an act of kindness; good done; charity given; love of mankind, accompanied with a desire to promote their happiness,"* benevolence should be the hallmark of every Christian! Benevolence is critical to the work of the church. Paul admonished the church at Galatia:

As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them

WE ARE WOMEN IN SERVICE TO THE KING

who are of the household of faith (Gal. 6:10).

Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world (Jas. 1:27).

Women are to be busy serving God by ministering to brethren who are sick, the poor, the homeless and those imprisoned (Mat. 25:34-40). Why? Because Jesus said, *“Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me”* (Mat. 25:45). James warns the Christian there is no profit in paying lip-service to benevolent works:

What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit (Jas. 2:14-16)?

God’s people are expected to serve. The Apostle John in 1 John 3:17 addresses the fact that one’s service is governed by his love of God:

But whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?

Perhaps even more so than men, women seem to be well-suited for benevolence work. *“Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us...”* (Rom. 12:6), women bring a grace and a sensitivity not normally associated with men. The unique attributes of femininity lend themselves

well to this work, as mercy and compassion are almost second-nature to women. Additionally, many times women often possess skills through which benevolence can be rendered, such as making clothes, as Dorcas did for needy widows (Acts 9:36-39); or cooking, providing child-care, caring for the sick or extending hospitality (Rom. 12:13; 1 Pet. 4:9). Likewise, women are called to serve in benevolence, ever mindful that they might later be *"taken into the number"* and that they should be *"well reported of for good works...if she have diligently followed every good work"* (1 Tim. 5:9-10).

Women In The Service Of Edification

Edification involves building up the body of Christ, through the work of every member (Eph. 4:15-16). It entails following such instructions as: *"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ"* (Gal. 6:2); *"Comfort each other and edify one another"* (1 Thes. 5:11) and *"Comfort the fainthearted, support the weak"* (1 Thes. 5:14).

Women can do much to edify the church. God has charged that women teach, either through formal or informal means. Grandmothers and mothers can teach children, as Lois and Eunice did Timothy (2 Tim. 1:5; 3:14-15). Older women can and should teach younger women (Titus 2:3-5). There are many people who come into the church without benefit of godly mothers and grandmothers. Christian women can serve as surrogates for those in need.

Informal words of encouragement can never be underestimated! It has been said that *"women are natural nurturers."* With so many dysfunctional families and emotional problems today, the gift of encouragement and nurturing possessed by many

women is essential. Many teachers and preachers have been helped by godly women encouraging them in their work. This writer's husband has been edified many times over by the words of a caring godly woman. There is a great need for women to see themselves as teachers of young people and other women, and as encouragers of men in their work of preaching the gospel. Where women are involved in the work of edification, their contribution to the work of the local church does not go unnoticed.

Women In The Service Of Evangelism

Taking the gospel to a lost world is not optional; neither is it gender specific. The Great Commission was given by our Lord to his church; to ALL who would wear his name:

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world (Mat. 28:19-20).

Because the gospel is God's power to save, it must be shared with everyone (Rom. 1:16; Mark 16:15-16). This is a work that can be done by everyone, especially women (cf. Acts 8:1, 4).

Women can do much to evangelize the community, the city and the world in which they live. Firstly, like Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Susanna (Luke 8:1-3), women can help support those who preach the gospel by ministering to them "*of their substance*" (Luke 8:3). Like Lydia, they can provide much needed hospitality (Acts 16:15).

Secondly, they can tell others about Christ. The Samaritan woman was instrumental in converting many people to Christ (John 4:28-31, 39-42). Priscilla, who with her husband, Aquila, provided a place for Paul to stay during his ministry at Corinth (Acts 18:1-4). She converted Apollos at Ephesus (Acts 18:24-26) and hosted the church at Ephesus and at Rome in their home (1 Cor. 16:19; Rom. 16:3-5). Even without a word, godly women can lead others to Christ, including unbelieving husbands (1 Peter 3:1-2). In fact, because of their compassionate, benevolent nature, many souls have been saved, and churches started through the evangelistic efforts of godly women!

Service Pleasing To The King: Women Fit For Duty

It is not possible to offer acceptable service to God when one's heart is not involved. Matthew said:

This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me (Mat. 15:8).

Christians have willingly submitted to belong to Christ, and as a servant should:

Obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men (Col. 3:22-23).

Considering the sacrifice God made for mankind, shouldn't one's service to the King be voluntary and based on his love for the King?

By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous (1 John 5:2-3).

A Christian can do outstanding work in the areas of benevolent, edification and evangelism, yet not give service that is pleasing to the King! One may ask how this is so? At the heart of the matter is the *"heart"* of the servant. Service to God must be rendered willingly and with the right motive, otherwise it is done in vain (Mat. 15:8-9; Mark 7:6-7). Service must be done God's way to be approved by Him. Consider the following attitudes one is to possess in order for his service to be acceptable by God.

Loving Service

As a child of God, one must first seek to please Christ in all that he does; but that service must come from the heart.

Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently (1 Peter 1:22).

One's service to God must originate from a true love for God and His word, then, he will readily fulfill the command to love his neighbor.

And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself (Mark 12:30-31).

If one loves God from a sincere heart, he will love and serve his neighbor as God commands. He will have an *“earnest and anxious desire for and an active and beneficent interest in the well-being of the one loved”* (**International Standard Bible Encyclopedia**). God has shown man how to love by sacrificing his *“only begotten son”* (John 3:16-17). Notwithstanding, we should *“love God because he first loved us”* (1 John 4:19) and if God so loved us, shouldn't we also to love one another (1 John 4:11)? After all, *“God is love”* (1 John 4:8). It's a very simple, yet, a very profound definition of love.

But love others we must—just as Jesus has unconditionally loved: *“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us”* (Rom. 5:8). This means that He loves in spite of shortcomings, inadequacies, or failures; and that is how Christians are to love others. In fact, Jesus said the same thing when He stated:

A new command I give you: Love one another.
As I have loved you, so you must love one
another (John 13:34).

That phrase, *“As I have loved you”* takes love to a whole new level. It's one thing to love; it's another to love like Jesus loved. God's love is *“demonstrated.”* God's love is shown. Just as God's love is not based upon the *“value,” “performance,” “popularity,”* nor *“success”* of the person, the Christian must love likewise: unconditionally, doing the will of God from the heart (Eph. 6-6).

Love is so much more than how we feel. It is what we do. Love is not merely an emotion, it is an action. It is demonstrated through behavior. The Apostle John wrote in 1 John 3:18: *“Dear children,*

let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth." It is easy for one to say he loves someone, but actions speak louder than words. The proof of love is in the relationship, not in the rhetoric. A person can say "I love you" a million times, but how he treats someone is the true test of that love. Actions prove love.

How one conducts himself when carrying out his service to others matters. Going through the motions without an engaged heart will tell the one being served how much he is truly valued. Proverb 27:19: "As in water face answereth face, so the heart of man to man." Burton Coffman further explains:

This is a wonderful axiom indeed. Still water serves as a mirror for one looking into it, reflecting one's very likeness. The same thing is true in human relationships. A grouchy, evil-spirited person evokes the same attitude in everyone he confronts; and the same is true of a happy and cheerful person.

Loyal Service

Since Christians become servants FREELY, it should be expected that they are loyal to God first. Paul said in Galatians 1:10:

For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.

A loyal servant does not consider his own profit or preference important, but that of the One he freely serves! It is amazing how any can claim to be servants of the Lord Jesus Christ, while complaining about having to do the will of God (Phil. 2:14) or being negligent or slothful in carrying out His will (Rom. 12:11; Heb. 6:12). Yet some Christians act

as though they are being forced against their own will! Of course, they don't *"have to"* serve God, but the alternative is to serve Satan by default and be eternally in hell! God by His grace has offered salvation, and how galling it is for Christians to grumble or complain that He calls us to a life of service in grateful appreciation!

It may be surprisingly that the word *"loyal"* or *"loyalty"* does not occur in the Bible. Not surprisingly, its synonyms, *"faithful and faithfulness"* occurs some 150 times. Defined as *"devotion, duty, or attachment to somebody or something"* (**Encarta English Dictionary**), the concept of loyalty is seen throughout the Bible in God's fulfilled promises to his people. A natural progression and result of one's love for God is one's loyalty to serve God by serving others.

God keeps His promises! Without fail, God has been loyal and faithful to all mankind, but especially so to His Children; indeed, *"the Lord is not slack concerning his promises"* (2 Peter 3:9). Moses said:

Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations (Deut. 7:9).

Repeatedly in the Old Testament, God kept his promises to the nation of Israel:

Blessed be the LORD, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised: there hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant (1 Kings 8:56).

One can take great comfort in the following passages:

And the LORD gave unto Israel all the land which he swore to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein. And the LORD gave them rest round about, according to all that he swore unto their fathers: and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand. There failed not ought of any good thing which the LORD had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass (Josh. 21:43-45).

Yet, serving from a loyal heart is not always as intuitive as it may appear. Brethren are not faultless people and some even make it difficult to love them; making it difficult to maintain our loyalty to God's commands. Sometime one may want to follow the lyrics of country singer, Gretchen Wilson's song: **I Don't Feel Like Loving You Today:**

I don't feel like loving you today,
So don't you even try to change my mind,
The best thing you can do right now,
Is just go away,
Cause I don't feel like loving you today,

There are times in everyone's walk with God that serving others can try and test one's patience and loyalty. However, that is when one should remember God's unwavering loyalty towards him and resolve to follow the third stanza of Ms. Wilson's song:

But you know I will anyway,
Even though we make it hard sometimes.
I'll wind up forgiving you
and probably loving you,
For the rest of my life,

But I don't feel like loving you today
I just don't feel like loving you today

Remember, God, not man, is the object of one's loyalty. It would be wise to live up to the words of the spiritual song, written by Elisha A. Hoffman, "*To Christ Be True:*"

To Christ be loyal and be true;
In noble service prove,
Your faith and your fidelity,
The fervor of your love.
To Christ the Lord be true (ever true);
For He will go with you,
And help you all your conflicts thru;
To Christ the Lord be true. (736)

Women can know their service is as God requires when it is done out of loyalty to Him.

Limitless Service

Someone has said, "*Many want to serve God, but only in an advisory capacity.*" Many place limitation on their service. That is not acceptable service to God! Some limit "*how,*" "*where,*" and "*when*" they will serve. Moses tried to do this in Exodus 3:10-11. Still others will serve God only when it's convenient for them like Felix in Acts 24:25. Jonah tried to limit "*who*" he would serve by refusing to go to Nineveh as God directed (Jonah 1:1-3). And still many others will serve God, but not when it means serving people they don't like. One would do well to remember that Christians are to "*do good unto all men*" (Gal. 6:10). There is no escape clause for doing good to only those who are pleasant and nice in return (Mat. 7:12; 1 Thes. 5:15; Luke 6:29; Prov. 20:22);

Our Lord and King has been limitless in what He has sacrificed and suffered for all mankind (Heb. 5:8; 1 Peter 2:3; 3:18). Therefore, one's service must be given "*without*" some things. First, service cannot be based on fear. It must be without the fear of the consequences of not serving. The writer, Luke, assures that God has delivered his servants "*out of the hand of our enemies*" so he "*might serve him without fear*" (Luke 1:74). The Hebrew writer put it this way,

Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear (Heb. 12:28).

Second, service must be given without reservation as Ananias and Sapphira did (Acts 5:1-10). Third, service cannot be self-promoting or routine. Obedience service is not always easy, especially for those who care more for their own personal wants and the opinions of others than the things of God (John 12:43; John 9:22). In some instances, there is a goodness of conduct on the part of some which has no relation to their heart's desire and is simply a cloak worn for appearance's sake. With this sort of goodness Jesus had no sympathy and denounced it as hypocrisy (Mat. 6:1-34; 23:27-28). Christ's service must begin with an inward conformity to God's law. For servants, the good conduct is not to be in the outward appearance only or trying to be pleasing for personal reward. Service must come without limitations.

Lifetime Service

When this writer was in college, she joined a service sorority with a creed that said: "*Membership*

into (named organization) is a lifelong commitment." The responsibility to remain true to the sorority's main tenets—service to others—were repeatedly stressed. Yet, the consequences of not maintaining membership in that organization in no way compare to allowing one's membership in Christianity to lapse! Christianity is not for the faint hearted! Hebrews 12:1-3 sums it up best:

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

Living a faithful, Christian life is a lifelong journey. It is a marathon; not a foot race. God has given Christians a mission that requires patience and endurance. Hebrews 10:36 states: *"For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise."* God has given all the tools to be successful (1 Pet. 1:3; John 5:24). The reward/retirement plan is eternity with Him; *"...be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life"* (Rev. 2:10). Eternal salvation is promised, but only to the servant who is fully committed for a lifetime! Won't it be grand to hear the Lord say, *"Well done, good and faithful servant"* (Mat. 25:23)?

Conclusion

There is clearly much that a woman can contribute to the work of the Lord's Kingdom. She must give loyal, limitless service that comes from a loving heart—for a lifetime. The true measure of that service is not defined only by what occurs in the worship assemblies, it includes what the members do day by day, in the home, at work, in the world. It involves benevolence, edification, and evangelism taking place on a daily, personal basis. When godly women are active in the service of the Lord, using the unique talents and opportunities given to them...souls are saved, they are strengthened in the Lord, and the Lord's church is made stronger. When women are in service to the King, the kingdom of God is increased, and they can KNOW for sure they have eternal life (Rom. 6:22).

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