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Tabernacle
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The Story of
Victor Cross

Bible Q&A

THE *Quarterly*

Vol. 1 No. 2

WHY ARE THERE SO FEW
TRUE BELIEVERS?

The Quarterly

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Take Two

Publishing is quite interesting. Publishing this magazine is even more so. Several great brethren have submitted articles for the second issue of the *Quarterly* (hence the “Take Two” above), some of them given topics, others writing series, and others writing articles on topics that they chose for themselves. Imagine my surprise when two writers submitted articles dealing with *Temptation*. Imagine even more surprise when two writers submitted articles on the “walk” of a Christian from Ephesians 4:1-6. So, instead of postponing some of these articles, they are all being presented in this issue. I encourage you to “Take Two” and enjoy reading about these and other topics from slightly different perspectives and authors.

In the last three months since the first issue of the *Quarterly* came out, the word has spread and we now have subscribers from Florida to Oregon, from Texas to Canada, congregations, schools, and individuals have decided that the *Quarterly* was worthwhile. Even the owner of the *Gospel Advocate* had good things to say about the first issue. Thanks to all of you who have helped spread the word. A special thanks to those individuals who have ordered extra copies to send to friends and family.

We’re also pleased to announce that several new writers have joined us starting with this issue—Aaron Patterson writes on “Be Strong and Courageous” (I got to hear him preach it last month); John Krivak takes a look at the advantages to be gained through unity in the church; Keith Cozort writes a brief history of RoundHouse (and hopefully he’ll forgive me for the title I gave it); Jesse Nelson shares a sermon outline on Zacchaeus; Larry Conger shares a powerful poem on the loss of a Christian mate; and Hunter Hill (age 16) lends his rhyming talents to ask Christians where their focus is.

We’ve also got some other great features from our regular writers that we know you’ll enjoy! James Sims gives hints for setting up Bible studies, Mark McWhorter looks at more “Tabernacle Shadows,” Jake Schotter takes an in-depth look at Ephesians 4:1-6, and Gerald Cowan answers the question, “Why are there so few *true* believers?” Throw in some more poetry, a biblical biography of Epaphroditus, some interesting quotes, and the Conversion of Amos Allerton, and a lot more articles than I could have imagined for this issue, and you’ve got plenty of encouraging and interesting reading material to keep you busy for a few days!

We would also like to kindly ask you to look into the businesses and various works and events which are advertised in this issue of the *Quarterly*. There are good works being done by brethren, and we need to try to encourage and support them if at all possible.

Bradley S. Cobb
Editor and Publisher

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The Quarterly

Vol. 1, No. 2

April, 2017

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Editorial: Gossip

Recently (yesterday, to be precise), it came to my attention that a certain brother in Christ was spreading gossip about a certain preacher. When this brother was confronted about his gossiping and spreading of rumors, his response was, “I wasn’t spreading rumors, I was just repeating what _____ told me.” The things being spread were not only false, but served no good purpose at all. No one was being edified, built up, or encouraged. A good brother’s name was being smeared in front of people hundreds of miles away. What possible reason could someone have for spreading gossip like this? Here are some possibilities:

Ego—in spreading stories about someone else, perhaps the tale-bearer boosts his importance in his own eyes. After all, he holds this “secret” information and he is the one who people have to listen to if they want to hear it.

Jealousy—perhaps the tale-bearer craves attention, and thinks that by tearing down the reputation of a brother, he can get more attention for himself. This, of course, also ties in with the ego problem.

Misguidedness—some people have the idea that they are doing the brotherhood a favor by spreading each and every rumor that they have heard about someone—without bothering to check and see if they are true. This same attitude was prevalent (and still is) in political discussions where it doesn’t matter if it is true or not, people will share and proclaim anything that makes the other side look bad without doing any fact-checking. As sincere as people might be in trying to proclaim the truth about others, they do the church a massive disfavor by not checking their facts first.

Unspiritualness—Sometimes, people get a kick out of tearing others down just for the sake of tearing others down. This shows a lack of spirituality in their lives. They look for any and every reason to “mark” a faithful brother, and take joy in bringing about their downfall. People like this seem to think that they have no responsibility to try to help a supposed “erring” brother, but instead are to beat him into submission.

DO NOT MISS THIS PART: After the preacher spoke directly with the one spreading the gossip, the brother asked for forgiveness for spreading rumors. They parted as brothers at peace. This story ends on a good note, but it never should have even gotten to that point. Before you repeat something you’ve heard, make sure to find out if it is true or not. And then, ask yourself what good can be accomplished by repeating it. Your own soul could be at stake.

Give it some consideration.

-Bradley S. Cobb

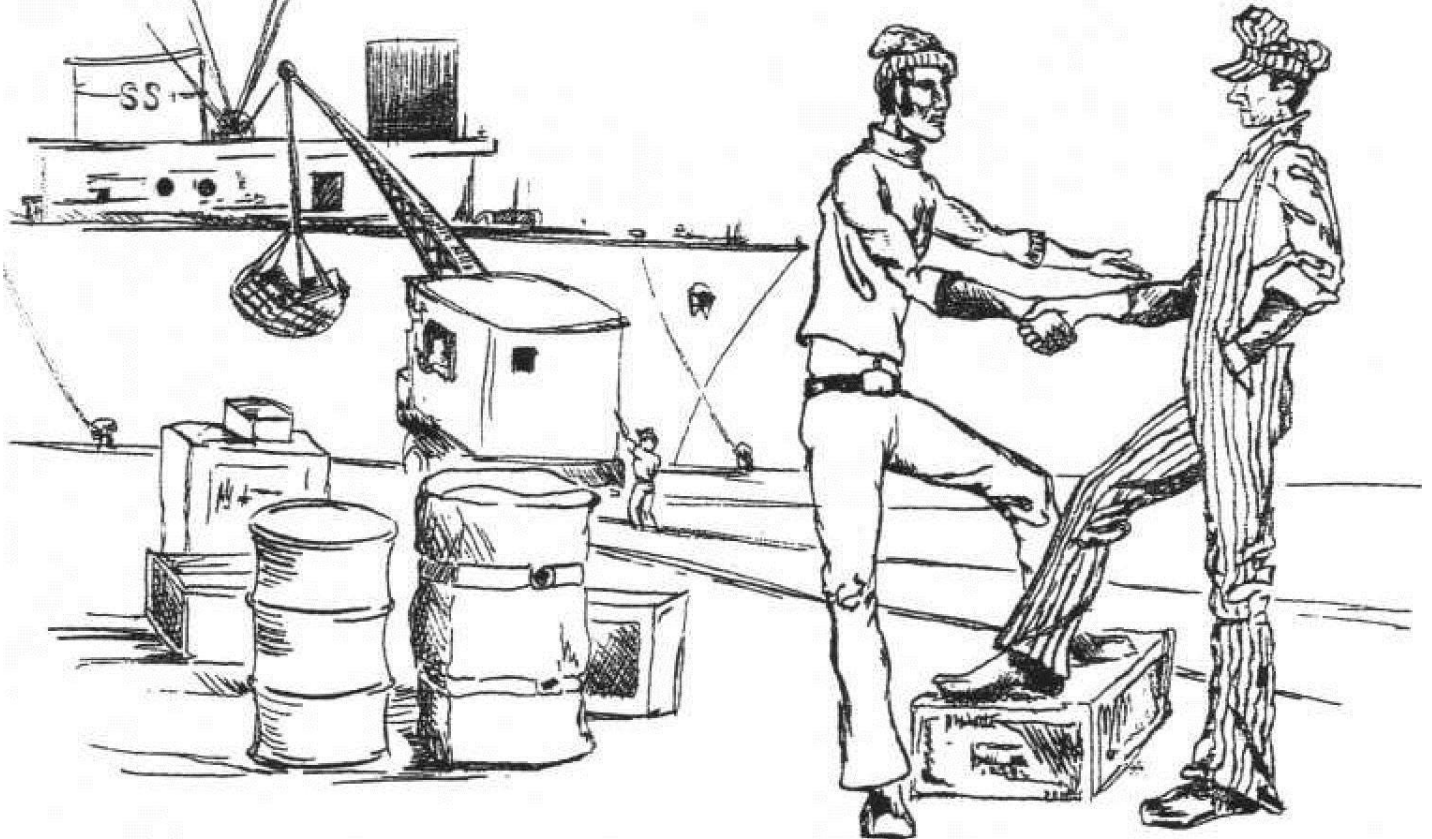
Are *YOU* interested in writing for the Quarterly?

- We are looking for dedicated Christians who want to help encourage, edify, and help other Christians in their walk with the Lord.
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VICTOR CROSS:



INTERNATIONAL MISSIONARY

By Bradley S. Cobb

Quick! Who is Victor Cross?

Here, I'll give you a hint: He's a *powerful* evangelist whose influence has been felt around the entire globe.

Still don't know who he is? Good. That's just how he'd prefer it. You see, Victor Cross doesn't want to be a big name. He wants Christ to be the focus.

But the way that Victor has gone about it—the way he has influenced people all over the world—is something incredible, because it is so simple.

And you can do it too.

Victor came from a family of Christians. Both of his grandfathers were gospel preachers, and he wanted to follow in their footsteps. When he was 18, he

was baptized into Christ and in less than a week, he announced that he wanted to preach for Jesus.

But then discouragement hit—and it hit hard. The local preacher laughed at him for wanting to preach. Laughed in his face! This same preacher (who was also the one who baptized Victor) later accused him of stealing the church typewriter (a typewriter which Victor had loaned to the church). Then Victor had to watch the drama unfold when it came to light that Victor's missing typewriter had actually been sold by the preacher, who then used the money to buy himself a better one.

As a result of these constant discouragements, and seeing this poor example of a preacher, Victor changed his mind about preaching. In fact, these

events caused him to leave the church, and therefore Jesus too.

As Providence would have it, Victor got married. He started going to church with her, and when she decided to be baptized, he went forward to publicly repent of being unfaithful to the Lord. But the preacher demanded that Victor itemize all the sins he'd committed while he was away from the Lord. This didn't sit well. Victor left the church again, and this time it was for good—so he thought. He was bitter. He was angry. He was resentful towards all things related to the church.

But let's fast-forward a couple decades.

Victor Cross has been without the grace of God for twenty years, despite his wife's best efforts to encourage him to come back. One day, as Providence would have it, Victor met a couple men. These men were kind, sincere, and godly. They also happened to be elders in the church. After learning Victor's story, they said they understood why he would make that decision, from a human standpoint. But they also encouraged Victor, and told him, "Don't give up on Jesus just because someone else treated you that way. Jesus didn't do that to you."

Praise God, Victor came back to the Lord.

Local Missionary

His desire to work for Jesus came back fiercer than ever before. And in his very first prayer after coming back to Christ, Victor uttered these words: "Lord, make me a fisher of men."

Because Victor knew that he had to help be the answer to his own prayer, he began to study the Bible, and collected a modest library. He wanted to preach, but knew that he would also need to work a "regular" job to pay the bills. He bought a film projector and a set of Jule Miller filmstrips, and showed them to anyone who would watch.

But again discouragement struck. He tried many times to get people to take a Bible correspondence course, but every time he did, the same question was asked, "what denomination?" He learned quickly that regardless of how he said it, as soon as the words "church of Christ" left his lips, the door was shut, and people's minds became closed.

It was late afternoon as Victor started to leave the doctor's office. He stopped before leaving, and asked the secretary if she'd be interested in studying the Bible. And, as always, the question came, "with what denomination, Mr. Cross?"

After pausing for a moment in silent prayer, asking God, "How do I answer?" Victor turned and said, "Look at me."

Confused, the secretary replied, "What do you mean?"

Victor turned again and said, "Look at me! Do I look like a denomination?"

"You surely don't."

Victor quickly responded with a smile, "Then will you study the Bible, *with me*?"

She did, and later was baptized.

Victor has done the same thing with multiple thousands of people, and the success rate is amazing. Others have followed his approach and found that it works for them too. Why? Because even people who aren't willing to go inside a church building to save their lives are open to talking to an individual about the Bible.

It's interesting that when you look in the Bible, you won't see a single person converted by a sermon preached during the worship. They're all converted outside of the "church building."

And though Victor Cross brought several people to Christ this way, his biggest impact for Christ—one that was felt world-wide—hadn't even begun.

International Missionary

Victor Cross wants to do more for Jesus. *There are so many lost souls out there that need the gospel, but how can I do it?* Once again, Providence intervenes.

Victor took a job operating a crane, unloading cargo from ships that came into the bay near Houston, TX. This job put him in contact with seamen from all over the world. His first day on the job, he met some Germans who were bringing in a shipment, and he asked them about studying the Bible. They were very enthusiastic about it, but not being fluent in English, a study would be difficult.

That very night, Victor wrote to Otis Gatewood, a preacher in Germany, asking for Bible material in German. Within a few weeks, Victor started receiving tracts and Bible study materials in German, Finnish, Spanish, Swedish, and many other languages. Victor went to work.

He invited some of the sailors to his house for fried chicken (these foreign seamen had never had fried chicken before), showed them the filmstrips, and then gave them some tracts in their own language. He soon had Bibles, tracts and materials in 17

different languages.

Victor met with thousands of foreign seamen each year, giving them tracts, Bibles, and encouraging them to read them.

But sometimes the people aren't so friendly. One day, he went aboard a Greek ship, and every single person refused to talk with him. So, he simply left three tracts on the ship and left.

It was over a year later that the same ship came into port, and Victor again went on to see if he could talk with anyone. He entered the mess room where he saw a man reading something. It was a tract! It was one of the tracts that Victor had left over a year earlier! As Victor said "hi" and sat down, the man spoke to him.

"The Americans are the most wasteful people on earth. Over a year ago, when we were here, some American threw this little book away. And it's the greatest message I have ever read! Three weeks after we departed from Houston last year, we docked in Japan where I got a Bible, and I checked all the references given. And everything in it is true!" The man continued, "I will be discharged soon. And when I get home, I'm going to tell the patriarch in our church that he has been teaching us a falsehood all these years!"

Victor never told the man that it was he who left the tract.

The captain of another Greek ship was asked by Victor, "Do you read the Bible every day?"

The Captain said he had no Bible, so Victor gave him one, along with a tract. Later that week, the captain invited Victor to dine with him on the ship. He told Mr. Cross, "This book is the greatest thing I have ever read! Why didn't you come along 25 years ago?"

Curious, Victor asked why. The answer was astonishing.

"My father was a Greek Orthodox priest, and said that it shouldn't be a Catholic Church or a Greek Church, but *Christ's* church. My father said the Lord's Supper should be observed every Sunday, and that it should be accompanied with prayers, and songs, and study of the Bible. But he could never find anyone who would agree with him. Now he's gone." Then the Captain concluded with these words: "I'm going home to establish the church that belongs to Christ, and maybe someday we'll send missionaries back to evangelize the United States."

Postal Missionary

There are millions of people around the world who would love to receive letters from the United States. Victor Cross learned this as a result of his tract-spreading activities. He was contacted by someone in Nigeria who had received a tract he left on board a ship, and that led to over 100 correspondence courses *completed* within a year, with many of them obeying the gospel.

Once, a ship was actually beginning to pull away from the harbor when Victor quickly rushed up the gangplank to ask if anyone read their Bible every day.

A British man on board said "Sir, I read my Bible every day." So, Victor handed him a tract—*The Old Paths* by Batsell Barrett Baxter. The man said, "If this is of any value, I'd like to hear from you further." So Victor quickly wrote his name and address on the back before running back to the dock, just barely making it. Another fifteen seconds, and he would have had to swim back to shore.

It was nine days later that Victor received a letter in the mail, stating: "your 'book' impresses me very much. I can't bear to part with it, but I'd like my wife to have one." He gave her address to Victor, and that same day, copies of the tract, and four Bible courses were mailed to the British West Indies. Within a few short years, 16% of the **entire island** had completed the correspondence courses!

Victor Cross has since gone on to his reward. But his life should be an encouragement to each of us to do what we can to spread the gospel. We don't have to be pulpit preachers. We don't have to be eloquent. What we have to do is make the opportunities, and use what God has given us.

So, next time you go to church, pick up some tracts and hand them out. Ask people "Do you read your Bible every day?" Help get people interested in taking a Bible study course through the mail. You can even help to spread the word about Bible study courses through email, Facebook, text message, and many other forms of communication.

You, too, can be an international missionary without leaving your hometown!



(Note: Victor Cross and his evangelistic efforts were discussed in *Firm Foundation*, March 12, 1968. Some of the information in this series came from that article).

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10:30 AM SPLIT SESSION: Men: "How to Love a Wife"
Women: "The Little People in Marriage"
11:30 AM: Q&A Session and Lunch (Provided)
12:45 PM SPLIT SESSION: Men: "The Essentials of Male Leadership in Marriage"
Women: "R-E-S-P-E-C-T"
1:45 PM SESSION: "The Intimacy of Marriage"

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How to Gain Unity's Advantage

By John Krivak

"Only conduct yourselves [as citizens] worthily of the gospel of Christ so that, whether I come and see you or whether I am absent, I may hear the things concerning you: that you stand firm in one Spirit, with one mind contending together for the faith of the gospel and not being frightened at anything by the ones who are opposing—which is a sign of destruction to them, but of salvation for you, and this from God.

For it has been given to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer on behalf of Him, having the same struggle which you saw with me and now hear to be with me."

—Philippians 1:27-30

Without using the word, Paul presents "unity" as the means to a great advantage. The only thing he longs to next discover about the church in Philippi is that they face their opposition with a united front. This will serve as a sign or indicator from God in two ways. For the opponents, it portends their inevitable destruction. But for the Christians who have joined arms and share the Spirit, this surely indicates their salvation. In the context of conflict and opposition, a sign from God is an amazing advantage!

Social Advantage

To begin to comprehend the sociological advantage, imagine if one of us were arrested—say for refusing to bake a cake—and were therefore incarcerated. Jail is a means of making one feel isolated, demeaned, and excluded—terrible experiences for a social creature. You would understand this treatment against you to be representative of the whole society. But imagine how you would feel if you received visits to your cell from every member of your church! Every Christian in the county! This is probably the sense of Heb. 13:3; we visit jailed Christians. Now, the guards and wardens might reconsider their evaluation of you, the prisoner. The press might take notice. Society's perception might well change, since you are obviously esteemed and valued by such a large number of people. Their regard and relational investment in you would raise your value before the

watching world. Contrariwise, imagine your sensations if no one came. Unity brings advantage.

This example is meaningful in the context of Philippians. Paul was incarcerated on his initial evangelistic visit (Acts 16), and is back in jail as he writes (Phil. 1:30). He gained advantage from Silas in the first stint, and from Epaphroditus (4:18) in the latter sentence.

Or again, consider the advantage felt especially early in the American Restoration. Those who early braved estrangement from their denominational social groups suffered scorn and ostracism. All they had was the Lord and one another, they being but small in number. The denominations had their established structure and swelling membership from which to offer acceptance and status. And those leaving these groups found what? A place among Barton Stone's vilified ex-Presbyterians? Dubious status in James O'Kelly's "secession" from the Methodists? Recognition as a Campbellite? Such moves were from *status* to *stigma*, but what an advantage came when such outcasts banded together in Christian unity! These stragglers became a movement and observers eventually joined in great numbers. Advantage unity!

Or again, look at the phenomenal growth of the NT church across the social boundaries of many diverse cultures in the Greco-Roman world. Success appeared highly unlikely for anyone calculating odds. But Jew bonded to Gentile in Christ Jesus, and the resulting unity redrew the social map as Christianity became a conquering force.

Spiritual Advantage

Paul appreciates the social advantage of unity, but much more the theological gains. He so appreciated the comfort brought by loving brothers and sisters while he wore the chains, but admits he didn't even need these comforts (Phil. 4:10-14). The spiritual advantage of unity was enough to fill his heart. The nature of this advantage becomes apparent when we grasp the message of Philippians.

To begin, unity is the fruit of "*walking worthily*" (1:27). I have added to the translation above the

sense of “*walking worthily [as citizens]*” because the word chosen by Paul (the root of which forms our word “politics”) would have special connotations in a Roman colony like Philippi and among people privileged with Roman citizenship, such as the Philippians. But he urges these Christians to walk worthily “*of the gospel*.” I suspect many of us make the mistake (as I once did) of understanding this to mean conduct befitting careful morals, solid ethics, fervent religiosity (church attendance), and lovingly responsible relationships. A far superior meaning becomes apparent if we let context be our guide and follow the function of Paul’s words. Of course, the sort of “worthy walking” that I am thus setting aside is plainly required of Christians. None of these responsibilities are optional. However, they are not what Paul is communicating here, and we miss the boat if we settle for an alternative meaning.

Think about it. What does it mean to walk worthily of the “*gospel*”? The gospel is the Cross-death of Jesus that led to glorious resurrection and exaltation—how, pray tell, does one walk worthily of *that*? Well, again, everything suggested in the previous paragraph would not seem enough, would it? The Scriptures as my witness, nothing suffices as a walk worthy of Jesus’ death that is short of a death of our own. We answer His dying with a death of our own, or we fall far short of acting worthily!

Response to “Gospel”

Let’s establish this. Since they were not Protestants and heirs of the Reformation pioneered by Luther and Calvin, Bible authors like Paul and Peter were not at all embarrassed to speak of “*obeying the gospel*”, as in 2 Thess. 1:8 and 1 Peter 4:17. What, works of merit! No. Actually both Scriptures discuss those who fail to obey the gospel as beyond the scope of salvation. The implication is that those who do “*obey*” the gospel are insiders to Christian salvation. But again, what does it mean to “obey” the gospel? What does it mean to “disobey”?

Let it be suggested that one obeys the gospel in exactly the same fashion as one walks worthily of it: through his own responsive death! When Jesus called disciples, He warned off any who would not “*take up their own crosses and follow [presumably to the place of death]*” (cf. Mark 8:34 and parallels in other Gospels). As He was to embrace crucifixion for them; so must each of us for Him! Dietrich Bonhoeffer was right: “*When Christ calls a man, he bids him*

come and die.” This spiritual death involving total sacrifice of self is not presented as a goal that a Christian attains after long, steady, and incremental progress. Jesus presents this in radical demand as prerequisite: the walk of discipleship begins only after one accepts it. As J. Paul Sampley (*Walking Between the Times*, p. 19) writes: “*Participation in Christ’s death is the beginning of the believer’s faith journey.*” The New Covenant, in bare essence, is the agreement between Christ and the believer to share this death. The resulting relationship brings salvation.

Now while the death of Jesus was physical and mortal, our responsive deaths are not necessarily so. They may be so in all actuality, as when we obey the command to faithfulness in such a way that it brings martyrdom (Rev. 2:10). That is one way to take up your cross and follow; one way to obey the gospel; one way to walk worthily of Christ Jesus! But we find indicators that the “death” may actually leave us, in some sense, alive—strange as that may sound. On one occasion, Jesus in Luke’s Gospel was heard to bid prospective disciples to take up their crosses “*daily*” (9:23). That is impossible to do daily for mortals who have but one mortal life to give! But daily dying is possible if we embrace the type set forth in 2 Cor. 5:14-15, NASB— “*For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.*” We allow our “self”—in autonomy, independence, and self-determination—to die the death. Then, when Christ enters us and takes over that area of control, we can declare as Paul did that it is no longer us who live. We have been crucified! It is now Christ living in us (Gal. 2:20-21). Although we still breathe and feel our hearts beating, we can say with Paul: “*I die daily*” (1 Cor. 15:31).

Sounds like Baptism!

It will be lost on none of my fellow heirs of Restorationist heritage that the ground we have thus staked out is overlapped by baptism in its full dimension. Baptism is the immersion in water where death with Christ is deliberately taken. Baptism is death; baptism is crucifixion. It need be done just once, but dying comes daily thereafter. We are conceptually on the same ground staked out by Paul in Romans 6! We have been baptized into the death of Jesus, offer-

ing to God in that moment our own death to self and to sin. We become “*living sacrifices*” (Rom. 12:1)—what a concept! We are raised—with the water dripping off us—to newness of life. And newness of life is meant in such a way as to answer the question that sets off the discussion of that incredible chapter: “*Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase?*” Our lives change so as to answer that question with the sharpest negative! Having died with Christ in such a way that we are directed no longer by our “self” but by our new Lord, our lives take on sanctification and righteousness. We are transformed daily.

Four Models for Unity in Philippians

Paul expressed everything written in the previous five paragraphs simply as “*walking worthily of the Gospel*.” The meaning he intends has everything to do with the Cross and our response. This may easily be shown to fit the flow of the Philippian letter as demonstrated by four models worthy of imitation.

Consider the people set forth as examples to the Christians who are called, in unity, to stand faithfully together against their opponents. **First example:** Paul presents himself as he struggled through his own personal dilemma—to die (and be with Jesus) or to remain alive (and stay with the brothers and sisters)? He settled that deliberately by giving advantage to Philippi’s Christians! Had he sought his own advantage, he would have died mortally and entered himself without delay into the presence of Christ Jesus (1:21ff.). However, his actions are those of a man who has experienced a death of self in response to Jesus, enabling him to bring advantage to others in unity. **Second example:** Paul hopes to send Timothy, because while others think of their own interests and advantages, Timothy is genuinely concerned about others (2:19-22). Again, a man walking worthily of Jesus’ dying brings advantage to others. **Third example:** there is their own congregational minister, Epaphroditus (2:25ff.; 4:18ff.). He came close to mortality for the work of Christ, doubtless because having already died it was of no further concern!

Paul, Timothy, Epaphroditus—all of them advantaged the unity in the church because they each died responsively to Jesus. To the point, they actually were each imitating the supreme example of Jesus himself! Jesus was a worthy model—to them and to us—because of His own dying. When Jesus died, it meant setting aside His essential equality with God

(a personal advantage), and without such forfeit, He could not have advantaged others. *Reader, you ought break from this page and read Philippians 2:1-18 before resuming.*

A “Sign” with Two Opposite Meanings

This brings us to the sign, both of Christian salvation and of their opponents’ destruction—in each case a sign from God (1:28). The Christians’ salvation is thus marked as with a sign or definite indicator because their walks correspond worthily to the Cross-death of Jesus. This is the supreme fulfillment of the work of God. But the opponents are just the opposite; they stand in contradistinction to those who carry their own crosses to follow Jesus. In 3:18-19, after exhorting: “*Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us*”, Paul describes the opponents as “*enemies of the Cross*.” Their orientation to Jesus and His Cross is adversarial rather than responsive—and this marks them with a clear indicator, a sign from God. Their god is their “*appetite*”—devotion to selfish concerns that brings no advantage to others. Their glory—rooted in self rather than in Christ Jesus—is really shame. Their end is destruction—a death apart from Christ—in lieu of one that they could have shared with Him had they been responsive. As I read it, these opponents were other members of the church at Philippi whom Paul described as “*preaching Christ out of selfish ambition*” (1:17) and “*from envy and strife*” (1:15). So, the sign reveals the acceptance of death with Jesus (thus an indicator of salvation) or reveals the non-acceptance (an indicator of destruction).

Unity brings advantage! But this is an advantage that may only be produced by Christians who die responsively with and for Jesus. These dying-yet-alive Christians are walking worthily of the gospel.

Some Practical Applications

So, how can we gain the advantage of unity? Let’s consider three ways to live this out.

First, a personal application. Phil. 2:1-5 is a supremely beautiful exhortation which gains its power in the glorious model set forth by Jesus in the “Christ hymn” (2:6-11). This is holy ground we are walking on. Jesus set aside all the personal advantage that came with being God and with not being associated with sinful humanity. Yet...He took His place among us, left all of that behind, took a slave’s status that

left Him dead—nailed to a Cross. Those who manage to take this in are exhorted: *“Make your own attitude that of Christ Jesus”* (v.5).

Let’s be plain about this: if we do not respond to His Cross-work with a death of our own, we are outside of Christ and will have no advantage to bring to the unity of His people. You determine whether your heart does or does not make this response. This should have been the central feature of your conversion/baptism, which leads to the second application.

Second, an evangelistic application. When I made my first attempts at evangelism, I did shoddy work. I understood the requirements that we often memorize on five fingers—hear, believe, repent, confess, and be baptized. I understood these to bring the ultimate prize—salvation! All that is true, but I found out that it is possible to go through all of this with a new believer with hardly a mention of Jesus. Without mention of what He did on the Cross, and why. Without making it explicit that His death necessitates a death of our own (the gospel that saves actually contains two crosses!).

Now when I present the gospel for obedience, I declare that the only acceptable response is dying with Jesus. I give the convert space and time to fully consider and decide by urging them to *“count the cost”* as Jesus did (see Luke 14:25-33). No one should be baptized short of this determination. I do not press for baptism until this happens.

By the way, this presents a huge demand upon a convert, but in my experience it brings a great advantage to the evangelist and aids success. A convert who is willing thus to die is not apt to quibble over things that easily become disagreements and break the deal:

- Is baptism really necessary?
- Do I really have to break off an immoral relationship?
- Are you telling me I can no longer drink alcohol or take drugs?

Find a convert willing to die, and this all becomes much easier. The reason is that the real engagement now is not between you and the convert, but between him/her and Jesus. You (the evangelist) need no longer do any “arm twisting” because Jesus is now doing the heavy lifting—and isn’t that how things should be?

Third, an application for preaching. A major element of preaching is moral exhortation, getting Christians to “shun the wrong and do the right.” You may have noticed that to get Christians to say “no” to sin and “yes” to holiness requires more motivation than “because the Bible says so.” People will not quit simply because you prove convincingly that it is sin. It’s not until Jesus is lifted up before them on the Cross that hearts will bend and defer, and those in the audience who have already yielded to the gospel will make easy work for the preacher. Now, all that’s required is a reminder that they have already died to such things! The preacher simply queries how anyone beholding the Crucifixion could fall into temptation, could engage in sin, or could refuse the sacrifice called for in the pursuit of holiness? As in evangelism, the minister is no longer the one responsible for undertaking the heavy work of motivation; Jesus has already done that! If the Cross won’t work, nothing will.

In closing, we gain unity’s advantage by responding, one and all, to the Cross.

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Written and maintained by Roderick L. Ross.

Baptism Saves Us

By Roderick Ross

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, by Whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, who formerly were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. There is also an antitype which now saves us, namely baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, Who has gone into Heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him. — 1 Peter 3:18-22

Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ, paid the price for our sins. His **sacrifice** is what saves us – the perfect Son of God suffering for the imperfect sons of men. And, it is **our response to His sacrifice** that saves us.

In the days of Noah, those who did not enter into the ark had been preached to, but refused. Those who heard, those who **obeyed**, were Noah and his family. They, believing, responded in faith by building the ark, gathering the animals, and entering the ark. The water which became the agent of destruction for the unbelieving, was the agent of their salvation. It was the water which drowned the unbelieving and which lifted the ark above the destruction, saving those who were within it.

In the same way baptism also saves us by destroying sin, and lifting us above the sin. It is nothing more than requesting a good, clear conscience, free from sin, of God. Baptism is not washing the flesh, but cleansing the conscience and the soul. It is expressing faith in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, Who has ascended into Heaven to sit at the right hand of God, being an ever present Advocate for His people.

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, and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. After that He was seen by over 500 brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, whom am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. Therefore, whether it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed. — 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

The gospel, as opposed to the Gospels, is represented by the central story of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

First, you must believe that Jesus died. Not only that He died, but that He died for our sins in fulfillment of the prophets. This is a pivotal fact of Christianity. If you do not believe Jesus died for our sins, it does not matter what else you may believe or do.

Next, you must believe that Jesus was buried.

Third, you must believe that Jesus arose from the grave on the first day of the week on the third day following His crucifixion. Over 500 people were witnesses of the fact of His resurrection.

All that we are or do, as Christians, depends upon our faith in this.

And He said to them, Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he who believes not shall be damned. — Mark

16:15-16

The gospel was to be preached to every man.

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. — Romans 1:16

Those who believe the gospel and obey it are saved. Those who do not believe the gospel are damned. Jesus put it quite simply and forcefully.

There is a contrast in what Jesus said between *believe and baptized* and *believe not*. If you believe the gospel, you will be baptized and be saved. If you do not believe the gospel you are lost.

Why is baptism tied in with belief in the gospel? Part of it is a matter of metonymy, a part representing the whole. Baptism represents obedience in all things (see *Matthew 28:19-20*). But, more importantly baptism represents faith in the gospel as presented in 1 Corinthians 15 — the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus.

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? 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. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. — Romans 6:1-11

In baptism, we show our faith in the death, burial

and resurrection of Jesus Christ in the likeness of His death, burial and resurrection. We die to sin as we are baptized into His death. We are raised with Him to a new life as we come out of the water. It is the complete similitude of the gospel in the death, burial and resurrection. No other act which we can engage in is so full of symbolism and faith in the gospel.

But some say we are attempting to save ourselves *by our work* in baptism. Nothing could be further from the truth. It is the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ which is our hope.

One of my wife's favorite stories is about this passage: A Methodist preacher (who believed in sprinkling for baptism) told his son to bury the dead chicken out behind the barn as he left one day. When he returned, he smelled something dead and rotten. When he followed his nose, he found the chicken laying on the ground out behind the barn, with a little bit of dirt sprinkled on top of it. Calling his son, he asked him why he did not do what he had told him to do. His response? "God said we are buried in baptism, and you sprinkle a little water over people. I figured if it was good enough for God, it was good enough for you."

For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power. 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 (operation) 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, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. — Colossians 2:9-14

Baptism is called the circumcision of Christ. The circumcision of the Old Testament, which began with Abram, was a surgical procedure which removed the unclean flesh. The circumcision of Christ is a surgical procedure which removes the uncleanness from the soul: it removes the body of sin. The circumcision of Christ is done without hands, it is the operation (work) of God. Baptism does not express

faith in our ability to save ourselves, but expresses our faith in the ability of God to remove our sin through the blood of Jesus Christ. It is not what we do in baptism that saves us, it is what *God does* in baptism that saves us. We do not perform the operation on ourselves in baptism, God operates on us.

For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. — Galatians 3:26-27

Can one be saved without putting on Christ? We are the sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. Without faith it is impossible to please God (see Hebrews 11:4). Our faith causes us to put on Christ. Our faith causes us to be in Christ. We are baptized into Christ. We put on Christ when we are baptized. A faith that says Christ saves us but does not put on Christ is an empty faith. It is like someone who says a coat will keep them warm, but will not put the coat on. Will the coat keep them warm if they do not put it on? Neither will Christ save us if we are not baptized and do not put Him on.

Baptism

The act of appealing to God for salvation by being buried in water. The moment at which a person of faith's sins are washed away, they're clothed with Christ, and added to the church (Acts 2:38-47; Acts 22:16; Rom. 6:1-7; Gal. 3:27-28; 1 Peter 3:21).

Then Peter said to them, 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. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our

God will call. — Acts 2:38-39

That is why Peter, after he had declared Jesus to be both Lord and Christ, the Savior of the world, to those on the day of Pentecost following Jesus' resurrection, told them to *repent and let every one of you be baptized*.

*It is not what **we** do in baptism that saves us; it is what **God** does in baptism that saves us.*

They believed that Jesus, Whom they had crucified, was the Christ. Now they wished to know what they should do about it. They wanted to know what they needed to do to relieve themselves of the guilt of delivering the Son of God to death. They wanted to know what they needed to do to obtain the forgiveness of their sin.

They needed to be baptized by the authority of Jesus *for the remission of sins*. This phrase is used by Jesus in ordaining the Lord's Supper as He spoke about His blood being shed *for the remission of sins* (Matthew 26:28). *For the remission of sins* indicates that what comes before it is necessary for the remission of sins to be received. Remission of sins is not possible without the blood of Jesus being shed. It is His blood that washes away our sins. Remission of sins is also not possible without baptism. It is *where* the blood of Jesus washes away our sins.

Barton W. Stone was a preacher of prominence in the Great Awakening, a charismatic movement that took place before, during, and after the American Revolution. It was their common practice to call people to the altar, and have them pray for their salvation, which was indicated by a manifestation of the Spirit in what they called *exercises*. On one occasion, a gentleman of unquestionable passion, zeal, and fervor came forward to pray. Stone prayed with him and for him for quite a while; but, no manifestation occurred. Stone said that no one could question the passion, zeal, and desire of the man who had come forward. Neither could anyone question that God wished that this man would be saved, for *he is not willing that any should perish, but that all should*

come to repentance. Therefore something must be wrong. Perhaps it was that they had asked the gentlemen to do something different than that which Peter had commanded on the day of Pentecost. For he told them to merely repent and be baptized.

For years I have asked for the book, chapter, and verse from those who say one must pray to receive salvation. I have asked for the book, chapter, and verse where any of the apostles or inspired evangelists ever asked a non-Christian to pray the “sinners’ prayer.” I have asked for book, chapter, and verse from preachers, students, and believers. I have yet to receive the answer as to where this is done. One

preaching student, when he asked his professors to help him to find such a verse was advised not to talk to me again.

The place where we ask for a clear conscience, the place where we ask for the forgiveness of sins, is the same place we show our faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ: in baptism. Baptism is no more of a work than praying the “sinner’s prayer.” The difference is: baptism is where God said to ask for forgiveness.

And now why are you waiting, Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord. — Acts 22:16.


Baptism for the Remission of Sins

■ **Baptism** is from the Greek word “baptizo” meaning a burial, immersion.

■ **Ephesians 4:4, 5** – There is . . . **one baptism.**”

Mark 16:16–
“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved . . .”


Galatians 3:27–
“For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”



Acts 22:16 –
“And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”

1 Peter 3:21–
“The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us . . .”

Acts 2:38 –
“... Repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins . . .”



BAPTISM IS ESSENTIAL FOR SALVATION

- Baptism is for the remission of sins — Acts 2:38
- Baptism washes away one's sins — Acts 22:16
- Baptism is involved in saving men — 1 Peter 3:21
- Belief + Baptism = Salvation — Mark 16:16
- God commands baptism — Acts 10:47-48
- Christ commands baptism — Matthew 28:19-20

IN DEFINITION, BAPTISM IS A BURIAL WITH CHRIST
Romans 6:4 • Colossians 2:12

IN FORM, BAPTISM IS BY IMMERSION

IN PURPOSE, BAPTISM IS FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS

IN FACT, IT IS ESSENTIAL TO ONE'S SALVATION

“And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” Acts 22:16

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Be Strong and Courageous

Joshua 1:6-9

By Aaron Patterson

Introduction

Joshua is now in command of the nation of Israel; Moses has died and Joshua is named his replacement; Israel is about to enter into the Promised Land. Within that land there will be enemies on all sides as they begin to fight for the land. What if we were in Joshua's shoes at this time, would we not be scared about the role we are about to take? For so long Moses had led this nation. He led them out of captivity from Egypt, led them to Mount Sinai and delivered the law to them. He led them up to the edge of the Promised Land, and now the only thing between them and their inheritance is the Jordan River. It's at this time God starts to encourage Joshua as he takes on the role of the leader of the Nation.

Joshua 1:5, "There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee."

How encouraging it would be to know that God would be with Joshua during this time, to know that no man would be able to stand up against him, and that God would be with him as he was with Moses—to know that God would not fail or forsake him. These words would have brought comfort to Joshua and to the nation of Israel, but there is more. Even today we can learn from what God told Joshua and see that the same is true today. When we become discouraged and downtrodden and everything seems to go the wrong way, we need to remember that God is with us—and we should gain strength and courage to keep going because of it.

In the following verses of Joshua chapter 1, Joshua is told three times by God to be strong and have courage. As we examine these scriptures we will see that we too can be strong and of good courage. The three points that we will see are (1) that we can be strong and courageous for God's people have an inheritance, (2) that we can be strong and very courageous when observing God's Law, and (3) that we can be strong and courageous for God is with us.

Be Strong and of Good Courage for God's People have an Inheritance.

Israel, with Joshua at the lead, is now at the point of entering into the Promised Land. It would be interesting to know what might be going through their minds at this time. Were they scared? Were they worried about the battles they were about to engage in?

If we look back to Numbers chapter 13, we see forty years in the past—at the *first* time this nation was about to enter into the land. At this time 12 spies were sent to check out the land, and they found that it was truly a land that flowed with milk and honey, that it was bountiful, but there was a problem. Ten of the spies were afraid of the inhabitants and brought back an evil report (Num. 13:31-33). Yet the other two, Joshua and Caleb, said they could take the land (verse 30). As a result, God did not allow them to enter the Promised Land at that time.

Now here they are after forty years in the wilderness, about to go into the land. Would they still be afraid? Would they be able to take the land? Moses is gone, who was their great leader, and now Joshua was in charge. Joshua is told to be strong because God had given them this land and they would take it.

Joshua 1:6 "Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swore unto their fathers to give them."

God had already given them the land. It was already their inheritance. All they had to do was to go and claim it. Today as Christians we also have an inheritance. We may not have to go into a physical battle as Joshua and the nation of Israel, yet we do have to fight for it. Our battle is a spiritual one as we can see in Ephesians 6:10-18. Our inheritance as Christians is a home with God, and a crown of righteousness (2 Tim 4:8). That is why we must be strong and of good courage, to keep pressing the fight. We must endure to the end. We must fight the good fight of faith. We must finish the course (2 Tim 4:7). If we do that, we

to can inherit a home with God. As for Joshua and the nation of Israel, they had to prepare to go to fight for a physical land that God had already promised to them. They also had to be strong in other areas also.

Be Strong and Courageous in Observing God's Law

Joshua is told to be strong in observing God's Law. At this time Joshua was to observe the law that Moses had presented from God—to observe it, to follow it, to keep the law. Think for a second about where Joshua was about to lead this nation. They were about to go into a land where idol worship was taking place. The temptation to go into such worship and forsake God's Law was very real because of their background in Egypt (see Joshua 24:15). They needed to be mindful of this, and the situations they would be facing.

Joshua is told to be courageous in following the law. It would not be popular to the idol worshippers. Joshua had to set the example for the people of the nation also. In the next two verses God tells Joshua to observe His law.

Joshua 1:7-8 "Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success."

The law was to be in front of them constantly. It was not to depart from them, and they were to meditate on it day and night. This is one area we today would do good to emulate. What would happen if we spent more time in study? To constantly have God's word before us? We need to examine the law we are under—the law of Christ. We need to be strong and courageous in doing the will of our God.

Today it is unpopular to study God's word. It is not what the world looks toward. Many turn away

from it. Regardless, we need to be mindful of God's word. The psalmist said it best "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Psalm 119:11).

What if we did just that? What if we put God's Law in our hearts often? Learned from it? Applied it to our lives? What good would come? Because we do have a choice to make. Will I follow God, or will I follow man's teachings? It is not about what a person thinks or what some scholar writes, but what God has

put into place. This was true in the Old Testament and is also true today. Joshua had to follow God's precepts to have the benefits from God. Peter said "we ought to obey God rather than Man" (Acts 5:29). We should make sure that

**We need to be strong and
stand on God's word,
and this takes courage.**

God's law is first and foremost.

It can be discouraging to see others following after their own motives. Often we see this very fact. Many want their own thoughts and intents to be fulfilled. Their pleasures, fame, and rule to grow. Even when those around us seem to be going in a different direction than what is written in God's word, we need to make sure to check it and defend God's word—to be like the Bereans who searched the scriptures daily (Acts 17:11).

Joshua was told to observe God's law and we today should do the same. We need to be strong and stand on God's word, and this takes courage. Joshua is told to be strong and courageous for a third and final time.

Be Strong and of a Good Courage because God is with Thee

"Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest." (Joshua 1:9)

Joshua, do not be afraid of what is before you. God is with you. He has told you he would not leave thee nor forsake thee. How comforting it would be to know this if we were in Joshua's shoes. God was not going to leave Joshua if he followed Him. He was going to be with them during this time. He would be there in the fighting for the land. He would not leave

them, but they had to follow God. In the next few chapters this would be made known to the nation of Israel.

Look at Joshua chapter six. Here they are, before the walled city Jericho, a city that was shut up and ready for battle. How could Israel ever penetrate this city if God was not with them? What if they did not follow God's instruction? What if they said "We will do it our way"? If they did not march around the city as God told them? Those walls would not have fallen; they would have failed. Yet they followed God's instruction and defeated the city.

Today it may not be popular to follow God, but we must. The Hebrew writer in chapter 13 verses five through eight shows us that the Lord is our helper and we should not fear what man may do to us. If we follow God, he is with us. It may be difficult to stand up and to say "I am of Christ," but we must.

Joshua said it this way "but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15). We have to decide who we will follow. Will it be man or God? We must choose. Joshua brings forth a great question to the people of Israel after they had taken

the land. They had seen through the battles that God was with them. They also had seen what happened when they didn't obey God's law. We too can see that if we follow God, we are blessed; if not, we will be cursed. We need to ask ourselves the same question that Joshua asked the nation of Israel. Who will we serve?

Conclusion

We have seen how Joshua was encouraged to be strong and courageous as he took on the role of the leader of Israel (1) because that great nation had a great inheritance if they observed God's law, and (2) because God was with them. We today need to have the same strength and courage, because we have a great inheritance also. But we too must observe God's Law, and if we do that he will be with us today. We must ask ourselves, "How can I have the strength and courage of Joshua?" We must remember that God is our helper and he is with us to be that strength. Let us all continue to be strong and of good courage in Christ.

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LIKE STARS IN THE UNIVERSE

By Bill Howard

Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe (Philippians 2:14-15, NIV).

Can you even begin to comprehend the magnificence of God's beautiful creation? When you gaze into the heavens above you on a clear night and perceive the blazing glory of the heavenly bodies that God has put there by His mighty power, the dazzling beauty is electrifying. How can you not be astounded then when God's word would compare His children to the majesty of the stars in all their sparkling radiance?

To a very great extent, we are living in a world that has fallen immeasurably in moral standing, concern for goodness, truth, honor, caring for our fellow man, and not the least, falling away from faith in that which matters: Faith in God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the commandments and promises of God. We have legalized liquor and gambling, each of which can destroy the lives of individuals and break families apart. In the name of civil rights, pornography is rife, and unborn lives are murdered by the thousands through abortion. The use and abuse of drugs (some

of which are legal, but being legal doesn't make it morally right) is rampant to the point of becoming a national crisis.

The family of God, if we are to be likened to the stars in the universe, in good conscience can neither participate in, nor support such activities. Peter pointed out in his epistle that Christians are: "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9, KJV). By the love of our God and the power of his word, you have been removed from the world of darkness into the true light, the presence of our God. John said his message was to declare to us that "God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin" (1 John 1:5-7, NIV). Now, the question you must consider: do you fully understand the magnitude of these truths? You have been cleansed from all sin. You are added to God's family. You are an heir to the kingdom and all that entails, and have assurance

of eternal life with God. You have been chosen, elected by your obedience. You are part of a holy nation. You are now different because you have entered a totally new life which is set apart from your previous life. Let's let the Apostle Paul explain this further. "The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ" (Romans 8:16-17, NIV).

When you honestly search your inner being, what do you make of all this? Don't attempt to answer that question until and unless you have deeply contemplated the above truths. You are a recipient of multitudes of blessings in your life: your family, your job, your home, your brothers and sisters in Christ and on and on we could go. However, when you sort everything out, there is only one preponderant that rises

above all others. When everything is placed in its proper niche, you should come to understand that the only thing that will be of importance in the end is: where will you be after you stand before Christ to be judged?

Our brother Jesus summed it up this way: "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:14-16, NIV). When we believe in the promises of God and accept his saving grace, salvation through his Son Jesus Christ, we can be nothing other than overjoyed. We will be recognized as God's children and shine like stars in the universe.



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ROUNDHOUSE

NOT JUST FOR RADICALS ANYMORE

By Keith Cozort



Have you ever been someone who had to “stand out in a crowd,” or be a non-traditionalist, or not conformed to the world’s standard (Rom. 12:1-2) or mold? I would assume most all of us have at one time or another. If we are members of the Lord’s church, then we are Christians and that is what the apostle Paul says we are supposed to do! Those who home school their children do such on a daily basis. It is true that the popularity of home schooling has increased dramatically over the last 10-15 years but for many years that was not the case. There are several reasons for this increased popularity of home schooling, but this is a rather recent phenomenon.

Almost thirty years ago, those who home schooled their children were looked upon as radicals, parents unconcerned about their child’s well-being, both educationally and socially. I should know, because I was one of those who felt just that way! After all, children have to go to school, public or private, in order to receive an adequate education. Right? Fortunately, my wife was curious about this “new” phenomenon and encouraged me to read some of the material she had found concerning home schooling and its advantages. Of course, home schooling wasn’t really a new thing because several of our country’s founding fathers were home educated. An-

yway, I read the materials and continued to think about the prospects of home schooling until finally I agreed that we would try it for one year, Kindergarten. Surely, we wouldn't do irreparable damage to our five year old, our oldest of three sons, simply by trying it for only one year. After a year of home schooling and my experience of driving a school bus for the local public school for a couple of years, which allowed me to observe the children's conduct and hear the language they used, I was convinced!

A couple of years later, in July of 1989, two home schooling, non-traditionalist, sets of parents happened to meet at the Apologetics Press Seminar in Montgomery, AL. Little did Mark & Teah McWhorter and Keith & Cheryl Cozort know that the meeting would end in the friendship of a lifetime and the beginning of an effort to help other members of the church who home schooled their children. Mark and I knew a handful of members of the Lord's church who home schooled but no more. It was determined that an encampment of some sort, for members of the churches of Christ only, would be beneficial since these brethren lived in several different states across the country. So, we contacted the brethren we knew and invited them to Pell City, AL, for a retreat lasting a few days.

We hoped these few days would help home schooling families to get together and encourage one another in their efforts. So, in October of 1990, *RoundHouse (RH)* began with 11 families totaling 50 people in attendance, coming from five different states. It is with a profound sense of gratitude that we acknowledge the major amount of the work necessary to putting on an activity like RH over the first 14 years was largely accomplished by Mark and Teah McWhorter, to whom we are greatly indebted. Interestingly enough, representatives from five of those original families still attend RH. We have had attendees from many of the states in the USA, even as far away as California and Alaska. Also, attendees through the years have included missionary families working in Africa, Ukraine, American Samoa, South Pacific islands, and the West Indies.

In 2004, we started meeting at the Bonclarken Conference Center in Flat Rock, NC, and this year's **28th Annual RoundHouse** dates are September 24-29. Registration begins at midnight on June 1. Registration can be completed electronically or you can download the registration forms and send them in

"the old fashioned way," via snail mail. You are encouraged to check out our website, RoundHouse.us for more details.

We learned quickly that RH fulfilled at least two needs almost immediately. First, it helped the children to realize they weren't the only ones in the world who were being home schooled, even though most of their friends and neighbors weren't. Many of those friendships which the children formed at RH have lasted through the years. We have had several who ended up getting married to someone they met at RH, including the editor of this publication, *The Quarterly*. As Bret Collier says, "The best part of RH to me is no matter how long it's been since you were there, once a RHer, always a RHer, and seeing other RHer's is just like seeing family, even years later." Mary Lehman said, "Even though we live in different places, RH friends are our best friends. We were so isolated in Delaware, but through the wonders of Skype and Facebook, we were able to be involved in each other's lives. This was especially crucial as they became teens."

Second, it helped mothers, generally the main educators in home schooling, to receive necessary emotional support and encouragement. Plus, it allowed them to receive suggestions and answers to their questions about curriculum and methods for educating their children. It's not unusual for RH to have a few mothers who come with their children but without dad. Most of the time this is because dad's work schedule will not allow him to be away from work at this time of the year. But RH members always try to do whatever we can to help the "moms without dads." Mkiyah Gonzalez said, "I love how when I arrived my very first year, I was made to feel welcome. I went without my husband and always had a helping hand."

We always invite and encourage extended family to come to RH as well. In fact, several times since its beginning in 1989, we were privileged to have four generations of family members present at RH. Maxine Barnes states, "Though I was a grandparent of homeschooled children, I attended several years. I was impressed from the beginning and know it continues to be this way, that the emphasis is not just fun and games, but spiritual and educational efforts as well." We try to make RH a great opportunity for families to be together!

In the early years, along with connecting families

to each other, RH tried to open doors of understanding within the church at large. We invited guest speakers including, Robert Waggoner, Winford Claiborne, Wayne Coats, Robert R. Taylor Jr., Rod Rutherford, James Boyd, Jim Dearman, Ernest S. Underwood, and others to come and speak at our mid-week evening Bible study period. This allowed these brethren to become familiar with home educated children and it also gave the children an opportunity to meet and get to know these brethren.

We realized quickly that we needed to have a Board of Directors. So, after our third RH a board was selected which included Mark & Teah McWhorter; Keith & Cheryl Cozort; Al & Chris Parr; and Mark & Joanne Bass. Over the years board members resigned and replacements were chosen as needed. Additional board members eventually included: Dennis & Brenda Woods and Burt & Michelle Fuller. The current board consists of: Keith & Cheryl Cozort; David & Debbie Heck; William & Katrece Howard; Larry & Lisa Kee; and Jeff & Cindy Madaris.

Each year we have a Bible theme and an academic theme which are chosen by the Board of Directors. The 2017 Bible theme is the Book of Acts and our academic theme is World Geography. We have a

Beginner's Bible Bowl for the toddlers which uses centers to teach Bible lessons, a Junior and Senior Bible Bowl with multiple choice questions taken from the Bible theme, plus daily devotional lessons which usually come from the same place. There is also a RH Fair which is centered around the academic theme, including activity centers run by our RH volunteers (a.k.a. parents and teens), plus a treasure hunt, arts and crafts, spelling bee, sporting activities, supervised canoeing, disc golf course, 40 ft. high rock climbing wall, and a zip line. We also have access to the Youth Activities Building (YAB) where there are basketball courts, volleyball courts, a walking track, plus we have our student presentations on two nights, student displays, all evening devotionals and some morning ones as well. Volunteers even cook evening meals Tuesday—Thursday for those who desire to purchase them which allows attendees to eat together as a group and become better acquainted.

If you know of any members of the churches of Christ who home school their children or maybe are investigating home schooling as an option, please let them know about RH and encourage them to check out our website, RoundHouse.us. We would like to hear from them!



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RESTORATION MOMENTS

The Conversion of Amos Allerton

From *The Life of Elder Walter Scott*, by William Baxter

One of the most prominent persons in the community [of Deerfield, OH] was Amos Allerton, a natural ruler of men, tall, erect, sinewy, of strong mind and clear judgment, which, in a measure, compensated for lack of educational advantages; a man of noble impulses, kind and helpful, yet severely just. In religious matters he was skeptical, rendered so by the discords and conflicting views of the various religious bodies; he could not imagine how a system could be divine which abounded in contradictions; how God could send men, as was then claimed, to preach doctrines subversive of each other: he supposed that the Bible must teach what the preachers of various denominations claimed that it did, and hence rejected the Bible. He had attempted to be religious according to the popular theories of the day, but they did not satisfy either his mind or heart; he could not endure to walk in doubt or darkness, or rest his hopes upon transient feeling or a peradventure; he desired to feel the rock under his feet; but the human theories to which he was directed were as uncertain and unsafe as the desert sands.

It was noised abroad that Walter Scott would preach at a private house in the vicinity, and, as his fame had preceded him, a large concourse assembled to hear him; among the throng was Amos Allerton, not at all favorably impressed by what he heard of the preacher and his new doctrine, but on the contrary, disposed to criticize and cavil. He had been told that Scott preached a water salvation (as his views of baptism for the remission of sins were termed), and on that bright morning on his way to hear the strange preacher, he had stopped at a clear brook to quench his thirst, and as he did so, he said in scorn and disdain: "Can this element wash away sins?" Reaching the appointed place, he found in the preacher not a glib and noisy religious polemic, but a meek, earnest, and gifted advocate of the pure and simple gospel of Jesus Christ, which he unfolded with a clearness, tenderness, and earnestness that he had never witnessed before. His skepticism yielded before the array of truth which was presented, and his heart was

touched with the love of Him who came to save a lost world. He saw that the gospel call was not to baptism only, but to an abandonment of sin to an earnest, true, and pure life. He listened for hours, which scarcely seemed more than minutes, every sentence convincing his judgment and appealing to his heart. The preacher closed with an appeal to those who believed the truth to avow their faith publicly in the Son of God.

Allerton started forward; Ephraim Hubbard, a faithful and earnest disciple, saw the movement and trembled, thinking that he was advancing to make some disturbance; but as he came nearer, he saw eyes not flashing with the light of rebuke and controversy, but melted to tenderness and tears, and with a shout of joy he welcomed him gladly. With profound earnestness he confessed his faith in the Savior of mankind, and was the same day buried with Christ by baptism; and the sun on that day set on few happier men than Amos Allerton. Nor was this change a transient one, but a change of the entire current of his thoughts and life; he soon began to teach others to walk in the way upon which he himself had entered. His rare, clear sense and spotless integrity soon made his influence felt, and a little practice sufficed to enable him to present his thoughts with a vigorous, common sense, and an earnestness that it was difficult to resist.

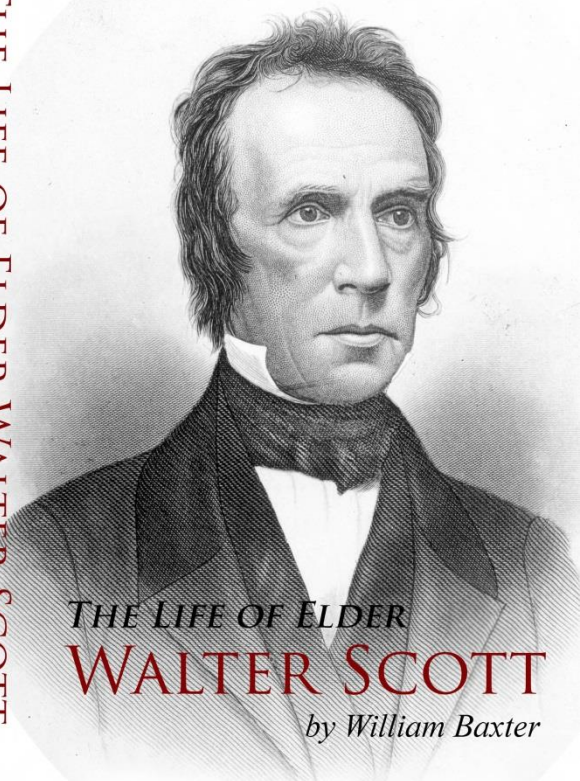
Grateful for his own escape from the dominion of doubt and chilling unbelief, he began to point out the way of emancipation to others. The cross and its bleeding Victim to move the heart, and the teachings of Jesus to direct the life, were used with wonderful power. His fame spread; large audiences gathered to hear the plain farmer, so suddenly transformed into a preacher of righteousness; and the curiosity which brought them to hear was, in many cases, changed into a deep and abiding interest in the great themes he presented; and scores and hundreds were, through his labors, brought to a knowledge of The way of life. Though destitute of the aids of learning, he was a vigorous and original thinker. His Bible was his

theological library; and from nature and society he drew illustrations which all could understand; while his zeal, his earnestness, and his life, all rendered his teaching searching, impressive, and convincing.

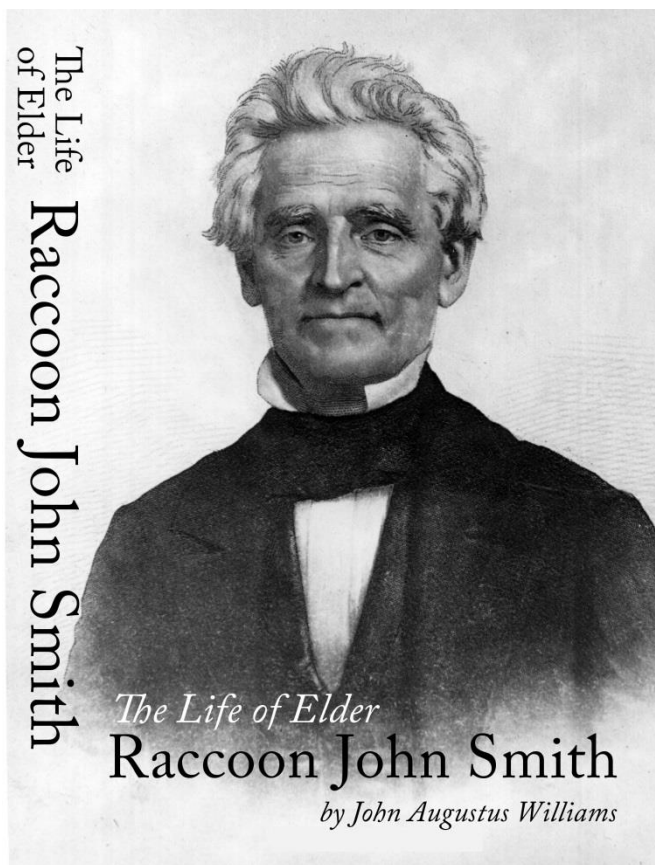
Living yet in a vigorous old age, the moisture

will gather in his eye, and his voice tremble with emotion as he speaks of Scott, who, nearly half a century since, helped him out of the perils of infidelity, and pointed out the true pathway on which the true light shineth, even the light of God.

THE LIFE OF ELDER WALTER SCOTT



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BIBLICAL BIOGRAPHY

Epaphroditus

By Bradley S. Cobb

This man is mentioned only in the book of Philip-
pians, but great things are said about him. The apostle
Paul was in Rome, awaiting his trial before Caesar,
but was concerned about the spiritual welfare of the
church in Philippi (Philippians 2:19). He wanted to
come himself, but that wasn't possible. So, in his
place, he sent Epaphroditus.¹

*Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epa-
phroditus, my brother, and companion in labor,
and fellow-soldier, but your apostle, and he that
ministered to my wants. For he longed after you
all, and was full of heaviness, because you have
heard that he had been sick. For indeed, he was
sick—near to death—but God
had mercy on him; and not on
him only, but on me as well,
lest I should have sorrow up-
on sorrow. Therefore, I sent
him eagerly, that when you
see him again, you might re-
joice, and I might be griefless.
Therefore, receive him in the
Lord with all gladness; and
hold him in honor: because he
was near to death for the work
of Christ, not regarding his
life, to supply your lack of
service toward me. (Philippians 2:25-30).*

Paul calls this man “**my brother**” showing the af-
fection that he had for him. Epaphroditus was not a
blood-relative of Paul.² He was a brother in the Lord,
but Paul makes it more personal by saying “my broth-

er.” He had a closeness, a fondness for this brother in
Christ. Epaphroditus was a friend, someone who
could be counted on to listen, and who could empa-
thize with the beleaguered apostle Paul. He helped
take care of Paul's needs, and did it in a way that
showed he had the heart of a servant.

He was a **co-laborer** with Paul in the gospel. He
not only spent time with Paul as a friend and brother,
but he was also a servant laboring for His master.
Since the Bible is inspired by God, this is actually
God's commendation of Epaphroditus as a laborer for
Christ. Paul worked to spread the gospel, even when
he was under house arrest in Rome (Acts 28:16-31),
and Epaphroditus may have been
one of the ones who helped organ-
ize the meetings in Paul's rented
house.

He was a **fellow-soldier** with
Paul. A soldier is involved in the
battle, and Epaphroditus was no
different.³ He fought side-by-side
with the apostle, using the sword
of the Spirit to convince both Jew
and Gentile alike that Jesus is the
Christ. Picture him there at the
house of the apostle Paul, answer-
ing questions from the Jews that
came to hear about Jesus, and

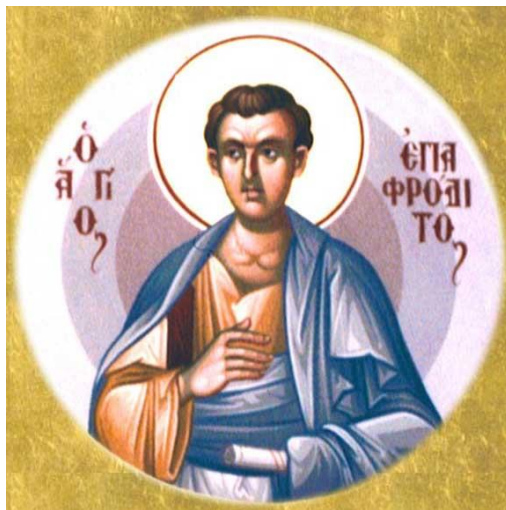
showing them from the Scripture that He is the Mes-
siah.

He was the Philippian church's **apostle**, in that
they sent him to assist Paul. Paul calls him “your
messenger” (KJV), or more literally, “your apostle.”

¹ The word “send” in Philippians 2:25 is *not* a form of the
word “apostle.”

² Paul was from a very strict Jewish family. The name Epa-
phroditus is taken from the name of the Greek goddess, Aphrodite.
It is very unlikely that a strict Jewish family would name their
child after a pagan Greek goddess.

³ Gordon Franz, MA, professor and biblical archaeologist, ar-
gues that Epaphroditus was a retired Roman soldier, perhaps of
the Praetorian Guard—the “secret service” protecting the em-
peror of Rome. www.lifeandland.org/2009/06/epaphroditus-a-gambling-veteran/



The church in Philippi had heard about the arrest of Paul and his journey to Rome to await trial. How they heard about it isn't revealed, but their response is—they sent Epaphroditus. Given what is said about this man by Paul, it's not a stretch to imagine Epaphroditus volunteering for this mission of mercy. He was loved by the congregation there in Philippi (his return would cause them to rejoice), and he served as a very faithful representative for them, supplying service to Paul in their name.

He was a **minister**. That is, he was a willing servant.⁴ He cared for Paul's needs. That could include such menial things as acquiring groceries, but it could also include caring for Paul if he got sick. Some Greek manuscripts of the letter to the Philippians ends with the words "written from Rome by Epaphroditus." Quite possibly, Epaphroditus was one of the men who took dictation from Paul so that his letters could be written and sent out to the churches.

He cared for his family and friends. While he was in Rome, working side-by-side with Paul, helping him with his needs and teaching the gospel to others with him, Epaphroditus was homesick. Paul says that Epaphroditus "**longed**" for his brethren back home. He missed them greatly, but it didn't stop him from doing the work of the Lord there in Rome. If Paul was concerned about the spiritual welfare of the Philippian church, how much more was Epaphroditus, since those people were his friends and family!

He was "**full of heaviness**." He was deeply distressed, knowing that the Philippians were worried about him. Word about his sickness had made it to Philippi, and they were all very anxious over his welfare. And why wouldn't they be? He was loved by them and highly thought of. But now, Epaphroditus was extremely sorrowful because of their anxiety. The phrase "full of heaviness" is a Greek word that only appears three times in the Bible. The other two

times describe Christ on the night in which He was betrayed (Matthew 26:37, Mark 14:33).

He was **sick—near to death—because of the work of Christ**. This man was praised because his own welfare was unimportant to him. He worked with Paul so much and so hard that he got very sick—but it didn't matter to Epaphroditus, because he knew he was serving Jesus Christ. It's possible that this sickness was extreme exhaustion, leaving him susceptible to catching a virus or some kind of disease, and too weak to effectively fight it off. Paul said that Epaphroditus didn't regard his own life, but kept trying to make up for the lack of aid. This kind of gives the impression that Epaphroditus may have been working various jobs, trying to make sure that there was enough money to pay for Paul's rented house and supply the necessary food and supplies needed. If that is the case, then it's no wonder he ended up working himself sick. But he didn't care about himself—he was sent as an apostle by the church in Philippi to care for Paul's needs. And he was going to accomplish his mission, even if it killed him!

He was a man who fulfilled his mission. At the close of Paul's letter to the Philippians, he says these words:

But I have all [I need], and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, a fragrance of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God. (Philippians 4:18).

Epaphroditus,⁵ whose name means "delightful,"⁶ had been sent by the church to take care of the apostle Paul. He worked hard, both in physical and spiritual labor, almost dying as a result, but he made sure that he finished his mission. It wasn't until his mission was completed that he went back home to his friends and family.⁷

One day, we will be able to meet this wonderful servant of God in heaven!

⁴ The Greek word (*leitourgos*) describes someone whose love for someone or someplace causes them to undertake expensive care and duties at their own expense. Barclay says "They loved their city so much, [they] at their own expense undertook certain great civic duties. It might be to defray the expenses of an embassy, or the cost of putting on one of the dramas of the great poets, or of training the athletes who would represent the city in the games, or of fitting out a warship and paying a crew to serve in the navy of the state. These men were the supreme benefactors of the states and they were known as *leitourgoi*." (*Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, revised edition, The Daily Study Bible Series, page 49).

⁵ Some Bible students have attempted to identify Epaphroditus with Epaphras (Colossians 1:7, 4:12, Philemon 23), but this cannot be the case. Epaphroditus is from Philippi, sent by the church there, and who longed to return there. Epaphras is a minister from Colossae (see verses mentioned previously).

⁶ Some have suggested the name means "handsome."

⁷ David Lipscomb, as well as others, suggested that Epaphroditus was mentioned in Philippians 4:2-3 as the "true yokefellow" who was given the commission to stop the fighting between the women Euodius and Syntyche.



By Jake Schotter

Introduction

“Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.” (Ephesians 4:1-6, NASB)

What did Paul mean when he wrote these words to the church at Ephesus?

Ephesians 4:1 begins the practical section of Paul’s letter to the Ephesians. In it, he changes the direction from doctrine to duty, from position and principles to practice. In this section, Paul in essence says, “because of what I have said, this is what I want you to do.” Paul does this often in his letters to the various churches (Romans 12:1; Galatians 5:1; Philippians 2:1; Colossians 3:5; 1 Thessalonians 4:1). These letters could often be outlined into two

parts: the first is doctrinal and the other is practical. Chapter 4, again, is the transition point for the Ephesian letter.

Why does Paul stress this kind of method in his writings? One author connects the dots for us:

Right doctrine is essential to right living. It is impossible to live a faithful Christian life without knowing biblical doctrine. Doctrine simply means teaching, and there is no way that even the most sincere believer can live a life pleasing to God without knowing what God Himself is like and knowing the sort of life God wants him to live. Those who set biblical theology aside also set aside sound Christian living.¹

So, what has Paul been teaching up to this point? Ephesians 1-3 reveals to us how to be saved. In chapter 1, we are presented with the matter of God predestining those who are saved. God chose that those

¹ MacArthur, John. **The Believer’s Walk With Christ**. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2017: 15.

who believe in Him and are baptized and remain faithful will be saved. It's our choice but God has set the requirements. In chapter 2, we see that in order to receive the gift of salvation, we need to have faith. It is through faith that we receive the gift of salvation, because we cannot do it ourselves. We also read that there is no longer a distinction in the body of Christ between Jew and Gentile—no longer does salvation depend on race and heritage, but by faith. Chapter 3 is simply telling us that the mystery has been revealed. Do you see the flow? Ephesians 1:9-12 and 2:11-12 culminate into 3:6.

With all of this in the doctrinal section of the letter, we move to the beginning of the practical part in chapters 4-6. For the purposes of our study, we will only be looking at chapter 4. In this article, we will consider the topic of being worthy in regards to our calling—“walk in a manner worthy...”

The Call to a Worthy Walk (4:1)

“Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called...”

At the beginning of this immensely practical section of Ephesians, Paul calls us to recognize our worthy walk and to do just that—walk. Paul identifies himself as a “*prisoner of the Lord*.” When Paul was writing this letter, he was in a prison. This is a reminder to the Ephesians, as in 3:1, that he was going to suffer because he was being faithful to spreading the gospel, and he was going to be faithful no matter what. Paul practiced what he preached. B.W. Johnson wrote, “He was a prisoner because he was a servant of the Lord.”²

Paul, here, is establishing his credibility. If someone “*implore[s] you*” to change your lifestyle, wouldn't you expect them to live what they advocate? Paul says, “I do. I practice what I preach. I suffer for Christ and His cause.” Therefore, Paul declares that he is “*the prisoner of the Lord*.” Paul knows what cost living the Christian life entails; we must pay the personal price of obedience with pain

and persecution from time to time, as Paul experienced.

After establishing his credentials, Paul gives us our calling: “*I...implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called.*” Paul will elaborate on this more in the next few verses with the characteristics that describe a worthy walk. This is something that is not just a request, it is a challenge. It is a challenge to: “*walk...worthy.*”

Paul frequently describes the Christian life as a “*walk*” (Romans 6:4; 8:1, 4; 13:13; 1 Corinthians 3:3; 2 Corinthians 5:7; 10:3; Galatians 5:16, 25; Ephesians 2:3, 10; 4:1, 17; 5:2, 8, 15 just to name a few). It is no doubt a reference to our conduct. From

a study of the original languages, one author defined this word meaning an “ethical conduct or a way of living.”³ Paul uses this in a metaphorical way. However, when we look at the characteristics, it helps us to understand how our “ethical conduct” is to be as Christians. When Paul adds “*worthy*,” it makes

When we have these characteristics, we will be able to have unity in the body.

us want to ensure that we meet the expectation the Lord has for us. In Philippians 1:27, Paul writes, “*Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ...*” Believers are to live lives of integrity and to be consistent with what they believe and proclaim (Colossians 1:10; 1 Thessalonians 2:11-12; 4:1; Titus 2:10; 2 Peter 3:11, 14).

Our “*calling*,” is our response to God's invitation to be saved. This is effectively described by Guy Orison, Jr. when he wrote,

The “calling” is just a way of saying that God has invited us to be a part of this new creation and we accepted the invitation. God calls us every time the gospel message is preached (2 Thess. 2:14). And we accept God's call or invitation to salvation by responding in faith. That response involves re-

² Johnson, B.W. **The People's New Testament**. Delight, AR: Gospel Light Publishing Company, n.d.: 196.

³ Lincoln, Andrew T. **Ephesians**. Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 42. Dallas: Word Books, 1990: 234.

pentance and baptism. We take part in God's salvation when we accept His call.⁴

With our call to live a lifestyle that is worthy before Christ, what are we to exhibit? What are the characteristics of a worthy walk?

The Characteristics of a Worthy Walk (4:2-3)

"...with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

The chief end of giving these characteristics is to show the connection between the standard given to us and how we are to obtain it. Paul puts forth some necessities to walking in a worthy manner and living with integrity. Not only is this to be our disposition, but it is to be what makes all Christians unified. When we have these characteristics, we will be able to have unity in the body. Paul gives us six characteristics of a person that is involved in a worthy walk and has the desire for unity in the church.

The first virtue is "*humility*." This emphasizes our attitude toward ourselves. The Greek word comes from "*tapeinophrosune*." The definition is the same: thinking more of others more than yourself. William Barclay has some enlightening comments on the historicity of this word.

...this word is actually a word which the Christian faith coined... [I]n the ancient world before Christianity humility was not counted as a virtue at all. The heathen virtue is *megalopsuchia* which means great-heartedness. The ancient world looked on humility as a cowering, cringing thing to be despised and not to be desired.⁵

Barclay continues:

When people have so much on their hearts and they pour themselves out to us, we need to be an open ear.

Self-satisfaction depends on the standard with which we compare ourselves... the Christian standard is Jesus Christ and the demands of the perfection of God—and against that standard there is no room for pride.⁶

The importance of humility is emphasized throughout Scripture. If Christ humbled Himself, then we ought even more to humble ourselves (Philippians 2:7-8; Matthew 11:29). One of the earliest sins, if not the first, was pride (Genesis 3:6-7). We are constantly warned in Scripture to put away our pride (Proverbs 11:2; 16:18; 21:4). We are blessed when we humble our-

selves (James 4:6; Psalm 138:6; Proverbs 15:33; 22:4; 27:2). Most of all, to even be a Christian, we need to be humble as a child (Matthew 18:3-4; 3:11; John 3:30).

The second virtue is "*gentleness*." This helps us with our attitude toward others. Andrew Lincoln defined this characteristic as one involving "the courtesy, considerateness, and willingness to waive one's rights that come from seeking the common good without being concerned for personal reputation or gain."⁷ In the ancient world, the Greeks would use this in regards to taming a wild animal. Whether it would be a horse, lion, or any other of such type, it would require putting their emotions and character under control. We need an attitude of gentleness when dealing with other people (1 Corinthians 4:21; 2 Timothy 2:25; Titus 3:2).

Francis Foulkes quoting C.L. Mitton writes, "...meekness 'is the spirit of one who is so absorbed in seeking some worthy goal for the common good that he refuses to be deflected from it by slights, injuries or insults directed at himself personally, or indeed by personal considerations of any kind.'"⁸ Unity can only exist when we have a spirit of gentleness toward one another.

⁴ Orbison, Jr. Guy. "*Unity of The Spirit (Ephesians 4:1-6). Working in the Word*. Vol. 17 No. 4. Farmington: Walking in His Footsteps Publications, 2013: 2.

⁵ Barclay, William. *The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians*. The Daily Study Bible Series, vol. 10. Philadelphia: Westminster, 2017: 159.

⁶ Ibid. 160-161.

⁷ Lincoln, 236.

⁸ Foulkes, Francis. *Ephesians: An Introduction and Commentary*. The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, vol. 10. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 1989: 117.

Consider these passages: Proverbs 16:32; James 1:21; Galatians 6:1; 1 Peter 3:4, 15.

The third virtue is “*patience*.” Patience is long-suffering, withstanding the pressures of different backgrounds and different opinions. Patience does not take revenge for these differences. J.W. Shepherd wrote that our patience should stem from “recalling that we were called when sinners, that all of our privileges are proofs of God’s long-suffering.”⁹

Because God was patient with sinful humanity (Romans 2:4; 9:22; 1 Timothy 1:16; 1 Peter 3:20; 2 Peter 3:15), Christians need to display patience towards others (1 Corinthians 13:4; Galatians 5:22; Colossians 3:12; 2 Timothy 4:2). If we do not exhibit patience with fellow brethren, how can the body of Christ ever be unified?

This patience leads to the fourth virtue: “*showing tolerance to one another*.” This is to be able to deal with others and their short-comings. When people have so much on their hearts and they pour themselves out to us, we need to be an open ear. Foulkes goes on to write:

It is the practical outworking of long-suffering. ‘It involves bearing with one another’s weaknesses, not ceasing to love one’s neighbours or friends because of those faults in them which perhaps offend or displease us’ (Abbott). It is ‘that mutual tolerance without which no group of human beings can live together in peace’ (Stott).¹⁰

Paul told us to be tolerant with weaker brethren when he wrote to the Romans, saying, “*Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves*.” He

said something similar to the Galatians (Galatians 6:2) when he wrote, “*Bear one another’s burdens...*” What does “*bear[ing] one another’s burdens*” look like? John MacArthur wrote,

The attitude of forbearance will say, ‘I know you didn’t mean it. You shouldn’t have acted like that, but I love you.’ That kind of spirit instantly heals breaches in the Body’s fellowship. Whenever there is a problem in the Body, apply the salve of forbearance. Jesus was forbearing in the face of slander, insult, and physical abuse. He expects the offended Christian to assume the same spirit He showed toward His persecu-

tors. Peter describes and commands this attitude when he wrote, “Keep fervent in your love for one another because love covers a multitude of sins” (1 Peter 4:8). If we love only perfection, then we don’t have Christian love.”¹¹

All of these are manifested in the virtue of “*love*.” All of the previous characteristics that have been discussed previously culminate “*in love*.” Paul wrote so

clearly in 1 Corinthians 13:13 that the “*greatest... is love*.” Our love for fellow brethren is displayed by the “*humility... gentleness... patience... [and] showing tolerance for one another*.” When we show love, we desire the best and seek nothing but the best. “Love will always motivate us to find ways to preserve unity.”¹² Drawing on the context of bringing together Jews and Gentiles, “[i]t should be noted that that all these characteristics are necessary for the maintenance of the new community and for its exhi-

If there is division in the church, then there needs to be a diagnosis of what the problem is... what better fail-safe... than each individual having the humility, the gentleness, the patience, the tolerance, the love, and the diligence to do so.

⁹ Lipscomb, David and J.W. Shepherd. **A Commentary on the New Testament Epistles: Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians**. Gospel Advocate Commentary Set, vol. 4. Nashville: Gospel Advocate Company, 1952: 71.

¹⁰ Foulkes, 118.

¹¹ MacArthur, John. **The Body Dynamic: Finding Where You Fit in Today’s Church**. Colorado Springs: ChariotVictor Publishing, 1996: 66-67.

¹² Orbison, Jr. Guy. “*Unity of The Spirit (Ephesians 4:1-6). Working in the Word*.” Vol. 17 No. 4. Farmington: Walking in His Footsteps Publications, 2013: 3.

bition of unity to the surrounding world.”¹³ Paul, in Colossians 3:14, neatly ties all of this together when he writes, “*Beyond all these things, put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.*”

Therefore, we must be “*diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*” This transition effectively ends this section on the characteristics we are to have to accomplish our calling, namely how to “*walk in a manner worthy.*” The original language “conveys the idea of zealous effort and care (cf. 1 Thes. 2:17; 2 Tim. 2:15; 2 Pet. 1:10, 15; 3:14).”¹⁴ We must be zealous in our concern for the unity of the church!

“*The unity of the Spirit*” has troubled commentators. Charles Swindoll properly noted why we are able to have peace. He wrote, “Because Christ has established peace (Eph. 2:15)—and Christ is our peace (v. 14)—we are called to live in the beautiful ‘bond of peace’ (4:3).”¹⁵ However, what exactly is this “*Spirit*”? The obvious implication is that it is a reference to the Holy Spirit. It is true that through the Holy Spirit, working through the gospel (the word), united Jews and Gentiles (as Paul alluded to earlier regarding the mystery being revealed, Ephesians 2-3). Jackson commented that “the bond that holds us together is a result of the common peace we enjoy as a result of Christ’s atoning work and our relationship to him (cf. 2:14-17).”¹⁶

Another possibility comes from Guy Orbison, Jr. He wrote,

God’s Spirit within us. That is, it is God’s mind and heart that now guides us. What unifies us is the same ‘spirit’ within us. Just as every man has a human spirit, God has a

The church is the body of Christ from the past, present, and the future. Whoever has believed, been baptized, and added to Christ, is in the body.

spirit. And, God wants us to renew our spirits with His spirit. This means that He wants us to have His thinking within us so that we are changed from the inside out. This does not happen automatically, so we must be diligent to maintain unity by maintaining the same thinking (as in 1 Cor. 1:10).¹⁷

Through the means of the Holy Spirit we have the “*bond of peace.*” Our bond is what holds the body together and keeps it cohesive and united. J.B. Phillips’ paraphrase of this verse makes it clear: “Make it

your aim to be at one in the Spirit, and you will inevitably be at peace with one another.”

Robert R. Woodward says, “Paul is exhorting a unity of spirit in the realization that it has not been accomplished. This is proven by the definitive way in which ‘giving diligence,’ or an attempt or trial, is to be made toward that end.”¹⁸

If there is division in the church, then there needs to be a diagnosis of what the problem is—specifically, the six areas mentioned above. We need to be concerned about the unity of the church, and what better fail-safe we have to avoiding dissension and division than each individual having the humility, the gentleness, the patience, the tolerance, the love, and the diligence to do so.

The Church Has a Worthy Walk (4:4-6)

“*There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.*”

When the individuals of the body “*walk in a manner worthy,*” the chances greatly increase for the church to have a worthy walk. Just as we have individual safeguards against division among the Body,

¹³ Weed, Michael R. **The Letters of Paul to the Ephesians, the Colossians, and Philemon.** The Living Word Commentary series, vol. 11. Austin: R.B. Sweet Co., Inc., 1971:157.

¹⁴ Foulkes, 118.

¹⁵ Swindoll, Charles R. **Becoming a People of Grace: An Exposition of Ephesians.** N.p., 2001:101.

¹⁶ Jackson, Wayne. “Unity of the Spirit—Ephesians 4:1-6”. **Exalting Christ in the Church: Unsearchable Riches in Ephesians & Colossians.** Ed. David L. Lipe. Henderson: Freed-Hardeman University, 2002: 190.

¹⁷ Orbison, Jr., “*Unity of The Spirit (Ephesians 4:1-6)*”, 3.

¹⁸ Woodward, Robert R. **A Commentary on Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians.** Abilene: ACU Bookstore, 1986: 61.

the church has the safeguards of knowing if it is a saved church. Orbison, Jr. pictures the book of Ephesians as “The One New Man (2:15).” Christ is the head (1:22), the church is the body (1:22-23), and individual Christians are various members of the body (3:6; 4:25; 5:30). He emphasizes “this is the only man that will enter eternity. If one is not part of this picture, he has no hope.”¹⁹ In introducing this section in chapter 4, Orbison writes,

When you look at this One New Man, you are looking at God’s plan to save us all. It is God’s final and greatest creation. Paul has stated that we are His ‘workmanship created in Christ Jesus’ (2:10). Since it is God’s plan and God’s doing, He is the one who designed this new creation and is the one [who] sets the parameters for all its circumstances. Therefore, when you get the true picture of who we are in Christ and look carefully at this new creation, what do you see?... we can recognize God’s wisdom and find the basis for unity.”²⁰

The true church is faithful about being united in the seven areas that Paul quickly lists. No wonder Paul gave us the base line. If we are going to be united on the larger issues, the issues that we must be united on, then we must work on ourselves first. We must be united as individuals to be united as the body of Christ. The key to this whole section (4:1-6) is to make sure that the individual Christian and the entire church is united in its desire to “*walk in a manner worthy.*” This must mean that we accept some universal facts about the Lord’s church that He gave Himself. If we do not accept these, how is unity possible? How are we the saved church? This thought is to be at the forefront in all of our minds as we read these seven “ones.”

The number seven is very important in Scripture. It signifies completeness and perfection. Therefore, when we look at this passage as a whole, we see the complete and perfect body of Christ in all her glory. We may have six godly characteristics that promote unity (4:2-3), but that will never be enough to be the

truly unified and saved. We must have Jesus as the “*head of the body, the church*” (Colossians 1:18).

We are to be united about the existence of “*one body.*” The church is the body of Christ from the past, present, and the future. Whoever has believed, been baptized, and added to Christ, is in the body. Although there are tons of local churches around the world, they are still part of the universal church. The only difference is the geographical location. As Paul said in 1:22-23, the church is the body of Christ. We also see this in Ephesians 4:12; Colossians 1:18; 1 Corinthians 12:12-27.

It is erroneous to believe that the individual parts of the body are denominations! Paul asked a rhetorical question when he said, “*Has Christ been divided?*” (1 Corinthians 1:13). No! Just as the body of Christ was not supposed to be Paul, Cephas, Apollos, and Christ, today, we aren’t supposed to be Knox, Calvin, Wesley, and Christ! A body cannot exist if it is divided. Jesus said in Matthew 16:18 that He will build HIS church, not several churches or a church personalized just for you.

Then, there is the “*one spirit.*” The general consensus, again, is that this is a reference to the Holy Spirit. Orbison is consistent with his interpretation “that Paul is not talking about the 3rd person of the Godhead but about the spirit [attitude] of Christ.”²¹ Robert R. Woodward, on the other hand, interpreted verse 3 not as the Holy Spirit; but here, in verse 4, he does say this is the Holy Spirit.²² I tend to agree with Orbison regarding the meaning of the “*spirit*” here. The whole context is dealing with unity in the body and our interpretations should be consistent. As the body of Christ, we need to agree that not only is there “*one body*” but we must be of “*one spirit.*” Perhaps, a better rendering would be, “*one mindset.*” Why can’t denominations be a part of the one body? Because on so many important doctrines, they disagree! They are contrary to each other, contradicting the major tenets of what the Bible teaches. Our mindset is to be the same as Christ’s (1 Corinthians 1:10) and that does not have division.

We have been “*called in one hope of your calling.*” Since we have been able to respond to the call of salvation, we may have the confident expectation of eternal life with Him (Ephesians 1:3-14, 18). Jay Lockart wrote, “How does unity relate to the calling

¹⁹ Orbison, Jr. Guy. **A Study of the Letter Paul Wrote to the Ephesians with Guy Orbison, Jr.** Tackling The Text. 2013: 6.

²⁰ Ibid., 37.

²¹ Ibid., 37.

²² Woodward, 62.

and to hope? Paul said the Gentiles in the church there were at one time separated from Christ and without hope, but when they became Christians they had hope in Christ (1:12; 2:12).²³

This “*hope*” is the noun “*elpis*” in the Greek. This is abstract—we understand the concept but there is nothing tangible about it. However, it is a vital pillar of our faith (1 Corinthians 13:13) and shows exclusivity (Ephesians 2:12). Wayne Jackson succinctly describes this hope as “the resurrection of the body and the realization of heaven (Acts 23:6; Col. 1:5).”²⁴ For a comprehensive overview of what hope is, what our hope is in, where our hope comes from, and what we do with our hope, I recommend William Barclay’s book, “New Testament Words.”²⁵

As we continue the thought of this the church being united, we must agree, fourthly, that there is “*one Lord*.” The word “*Lord*” means that Christ has all authority (Matthew 28:18), has ownership (Ephesians 1:7; Acts 20:28; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20), is our Master, and He is King over His dominion. As Lockhart concluded, “Since we live under the authority of Christ, [we] are owned by Christ, [we] are servants of Christ, and [we] recognize Jesus as King, we are under the obligation to hear Christ, follow Him, and obey Him in all things.”²⁶

We are to submit to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. He is Lord! T. Alan Chrisope wrote,

The confession ‘Jesus is Lord’ is the single most predominant Christian confession in the New Testament. Not only does it occur in several passages which emphasize its sin-

If God has allowed many systems of belief as ways to enter heaven, then He would not have spent as much time as He did telling His people to have “no other gods before Me” (Exodus 20:3).

gular character as the Christian confession (e.g., Phil. 2:9-11; Rom. 10:9; 1 Cor. 12:13; 8:5-6; cf. Eph. 4:5), but it also occurs numerous times in variant form in the phrase ‘our Lord,’ a designation of Jesus which was so widely used that it became the distinctive and universally recognized Christian confession, known and acknowledged by all believers.²⁷

John MacArthur similarly writes,

He [Jesus] is Lord, and those who refuse Him as Lord cannot use Him as Savior. Everyone who receives Him must surrender to His authority, for to say we receive Christ

when in fact we reject His right to reign over us is utter absurdity. It is a futile attempt to hold onto sin with one hand and take Jesus with the other. What kind of salvation is it if we are left in bondage to sin?²⁸

The “*one body*” has “*one spirit* [mind]” because the head is Christ and we submit to Him as our “*one Lord*.” The single mind of the single body is in singular thought because it is the Lord who we submit to as our authority. As we have seen time in and time out with these “*one*” statements, they are absolutely exclusive.

The “*faith*” mentioned here is the system of beliefs. Warren Wiersbe wrote,

There is one settled body of truth deposited by Christ in His Church, and this is ‘the faith.’ Jude calls it ‘the faith which was once delivered unto the saints’ (Jude 3). The early Christians recognized a body of basic doctrine that they taught, guarded, and committed to others (2 Tim. 2:2). Christians may differ in some matters of interpretation and

²³ Lockhart, Jay, and David L. Roper. **Ephesians and Philippians: An Exegesis and Application of the Holy Scriptures.** Truth for Today Commentary. Searcy: Resource Publications, 2009: 197-198.

²⁴ Jackson, Wayne. **A New Testament Commentary.** Stockton: Christian Courier Publications, 2012: 393.

²⁵ Barclay, William. “*Elpis, Elpizein: The Christian Hope.*” **New Testament Words.** The Daily Study Bible series, vol. 18. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974: 72-76.

²⁶ Lockhart, 198-199.

²⁷ Chrisope, T. Alan. **Jesus is Lord.** Hertfordshire: Evangelical Press, 1982: 57.

²⁸ MacArthur, John. **The Gospel According to Jesus: What Does Jesus Mean When He Says “Follow Me?”** Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988: 210.

church practice; but all true Christians agree on ‘the faith’—and to depart from ‘the faith’ is to bring about disunity within the Body of Christ.²⁹

There cannot be multiple faiths, just as there can’t be multiple bodies of Jesus. Why? Because so much of what each faith and body does and says contradicts one another. We discussed this previously with the “*one body*,” but another false doctrine out of this ecumenical mindset is that all roads lead to heaven. Essentially, this system of beliefs is the same as what Paul saw in Greece (Acts 17:22-23). The Greeks had a god for everything and just to be safe, they made one for any other god they missed. Yet, as Paul clearly expressed, they missed the one true God. Yes, they were religious, but they were misguided and wrong. If God has allowed many systems of belief as ways to enter heaven, then He would not have spent as much time as He did telling His people to have “no other gods before Me” (Exodus 20:3). Why would He have made sure to make so many clear contrasts between Him and false gods and idols? If God allows people to believe what they want, there wouldn’t be “*one body*” under “*one spirit*” with “*one hope*.”

I believe Paul is onto something when he mentions “*one faith*” instead of “one Bible.” Most of the so-called denominations under Christianity use the Bible in one form or fashion. If they use the same Bible and that’s a sign that they are part of the true church, then why are they not unified? It goes against what we have studied already. It makes no sense! Harmony can only foster when we agree on the essential doctrines, the “*one faith*,” otherwise divisions will arise as they always have.

Paul proceeds to mention “*one baptism*.” The meaning of this is highly contested, sadly. A lot of it stems from the denial that baptism saves, even though the Bible clearly states this truth (1 Peter 3:21). Other problems arise from humans dividing the text and saying 4:4 is the Holy Spirit, 4:5 is the Son, and 4:6 is the Father. Although they arrive at

the correct conclusion that this is water baptism, using the hypothetical scenario that 4:5 would be the Holy Spirit verse, this would be spirit baptism, and this must be rejected. It is only speculation.

What is this “*one baptism*?” I must believe that there is only one way into the body of Christ: through water baptism. The connection in Acts 2:38, 41, and 47 is very clear: those who heard the message of Christ, submitted themselves to that message, and were baptized, were forgiven, they were added to the body Christ (see especially v. 41), and then participated in the activities of the church, as they were added. Those who were baptized were added to the body of Christ; they were saved.

Some commentators have reduced baptism to an identification with Christ. I partially agree with this because you are being united with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6:4-5). When you are baptized, you

are saved and added to the church. When this occurs, you are a Christian—A Christ follower. You identify with His name, His behavior, His expectations, and His church. So, when we think about the previous “one” statements by Paul, we see the logical progression. There is “*one body*” that is the true church. That true church is to have “*one spirit*” and therefore, those who are united in the church have the “*one hope*” of eternal life because they submit to the “*one Lord*” and His system of teachings, and to enter the true church and to be saved, you must take part in the “*one baptism*.”

Jay Lockhart summarized everything needed to know about this “*one baptism*” when he wrote,

The one baptism—the one that is valid today—is an immersion or burial in water, according to Romans 6:4 and Colossians 2:12. ‘Baptism’... involves a dipping or plunging [Walter Bauer]. The baptism commanded in Matthew 28:19, 20 requires going down into and coming up out of water (see Jn. 3:23; Acts 8:36, 38, 39). The subjects of New Testament baptism are believers who are willing to repent (Mk. 16:15, 16; Acts 2:38) and confess their faith in Jesus as the Son of God

It should be the uttermost goal of every Christian to maintain unity.

²⁹ Wiersbe, Warren. **Be Rich: Are you losing things money can’t buy?**. Colorado Springs: Chariot Victor Publishing, 1976: 98.

(see Mt. 10:32, 33; Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:9, 10). The fourfold purpose of baptism to be saved (Mk. 16:16; 1 Pet. 3:21), to have forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2:38), to be added to His church (1 Cor. 12:13), and to be in Christ (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27).³⁰

Lockhart continues to write about one of the most common excuses used to say that we are saved before baptism. He writes,

Some say that ‘for the forgiveness of your sins’ in Acts 2:38 means ‘because of’ instead of ‘in order to.’ However, it should be pointed out that ‘for the forgiveness of your sins’ is the same (in both English and Greek) as Matthew 26:26-28, where Jesus said that His blood was shed ‘for forgiveness of sins.’ Was Jesus saying that His blood was shed ‘because sins had already been forgiven’ or ‘in order that sins might be forgiven’? If sin had already been forgiven, why would Jesus have had to die? He died ‘in order that sins might be forgiven,’ and that is what Peter gave as the purpose of baptism in Acts 2:38. Baptism is inseparably joined to the forgiveness of sins. In and of itself, baptism does not earn or merit anything; but in the act of submission, one accepts God’s gift of grace—namely, the forgiveness of sins. That is the ‘one baptism’ of Ephesians 4.³¹

Paul concludes this section with *“one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.”* Let’s take this phrase by phrase, beginning with *“one God.”* *“[O]ne God”* is a very distinguished doctrine and permeates throughout the Bible. In the Old Testament, we read statements such as, *“Hear O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one!”* (Deuteronomy 6:4; 4:35; 32:39; Isaiah 45:14; 46:9). In the New Testament we read passages similar to James 2:19—*“You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.”* We have another clear affirmation of *“one God”* in 1 Corin-

thians 8:4-6 where we read, *“Therefore concerning the eating of things sacrificed to idols, we know that there is no such thing as an idol in the world, and that there is no God but one. For even if there are so-called gods whether in heaven or on earth, as indeed there are many gods and many lords, yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all*

things and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him.” As Paul clearly stated in 1 Corinthians 8, there are other people who have gods. They may support these gods and make them lords, per se, but they aren’t the true *“one*

God” Paul is talking about here, and they never will be! They do not have the ability to do anything except that which the people do for them, unlike the true God.

The word *“Father”* is only a reference to God’s relation to the saved. This can be seen in the topics dealt with in several other passages in Ephesians: 1:3, 17; 2:18; 3:14; 5:20. The apostle John in 1 John 3 makes it clear that there are two types of ‘families’ in existence: children of God and children of the Devil. A clear distinction is made by our attitude towards sin (3:4-10) and our love towards others (3:11-24).

Our ‘one God and Father...’ is ‘over all and through all and in all.’ That comprehensive statement points to the glorious, divine, eternal unity that the Father gives believers... We are God created, God loved, God saved, God Fathered, God controlled, God sustained, God filled, and God blessed. We are one people under one sovereign (‘over all’), omnipotent (‘through all’), and omnipresent (‘in all’) God.³²

Conclusion

It should be the uttermost goal of every Christian to maintain unity. The only way that is possible is if everyone does their part by *“walking in a manner worthy”* and is concerned about the church’s worthy walk, as well. The integrity of the Christian and the

If the body of Christ
is divided, there is no
other place to go.

³⁰ Lockhart, 200

³¹ Lockhart, 200

³² MacArthur, *The Believer’s Walk With Christ*, 38.

church is vital to have unity. Not only is the integrity necessary, but the acceptance of certain things (the “one” statements). In order to maintain the unity of the body, we must love one another and we must be true to the “one body... one Spirit... one hope... one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and Father of all...”

If the body of Christ is divided, there is no other place to go. The church of Christ is the “one body.” We must maintain this unity and stay true to God’s word, otherwise departure from the “one faith” is certain. There must be unity in the body of Christ for there is no other system that will save you.

To “walk in a manner worthy,” we must have excellent character. We have to continually work towards humility, gentleness, patience, tolerance, love, and diligence. As it was mentioned earlier, what better fail-safe we have to avoiding dissension and division than each individual having these characteristics.

To “walk in a manner worthy,” we must make the emphatic choice that we are going to be united on true doctrine... the necessary ingredients for unity

within the body of Christ. If we are not united on Paul’s “one” statements, we need to question our legitimacy as the body of Christ.

To “walk in a manner worthy,” we need to understand the exclusive claim Paul is making. Paul does not mention that there are multiple faiths, bodies, baptisms, and gods that lead to the same hope of heaven, eternity with God as the saved. Having multiple spirits of so-called unity does not do the ‘trick.’ You may be united, but it may be unity over the wrong things! Paul is very specific in saying these things.

People will always be attacking Christianity and how to get to heaven. However, no matter what people say, that does not change the way God “*predestined us to adoption as sons...*” We need this and we need to be faithful to the Lord’s body and live as true Christians that are saved. Only in this climate, will we be able to gain and maintain unity as the one true church of Christ. Only then and only then!

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(By Daniel R. Lucas)

Chapter Five: Paul Darst's Experience

Who can analyze an active human mind? Who can tell his own actual experience? It is almost as difficult as to sketch the Infinite. Why is it that hope and despair, faith and doubt, though utterly antipodal, dwell ever together in the same habitation? I fear we do not know now; we *may* know by and by. But on what is that very *may* based? Is it not akin to both faith and doubt? May we not often ascribe to doubt and despair the conviction that is the offspring of faith and hope? Truly faith must be natural, for it is universal. A child believes. Until deceived, it never doubts. Doubt is begotten of deception. Faith is the parent, the strength of possibility. Skepticism is unnatural. Nature is progressive. Progression is the result of anticipated possibilities. Possibilities dwell but little beyond the realm of probabilities. The probable and the possible can only be reached by faith. Faith is, therefore, an essential element of every natural mind. A religion of faith is, therefore, the only religion in harmony with nature, the only religion possible to man, the only reasonable religion. Reason is an important faculty of the mind. By it we distinguish truth and falsehood. True knowledge is thus possible. But reason can only act on the material that memory furnishes. The knowledge that memory possesses in the broad sense is the result of testimony. Testimony can only reach the mind through the instrumentality of faith. This is the order of nature and in harmony with reason. Faith is, therefore, reasonable and natural, and a religion of faith is the only rational religion. How strange then the operations of a strong, earnest mind like that of Paul Darst. The metaphysical philosopher says, "I think so;" the common expressions of Paul were, "I do not believe," "I doubt."

Our readers are already aware that his father had an uncertain religious status among his neighbors. Job usually put the question in this way: "If Albert Darst isn't a Christian, what's the reason he's always doin' Christian *acts*? I'd like fer some scrimptious

person to explain." He did not belong to the church or make a public profession of religion. He always attended the various churches, though he heard many things he thought entirely wrong. He said the preaching was much of it too "mystical" for him, and had too little sympathy in it for the great crowd of humanity. He never attempted to force his opinions upon his children, his only precept to them being, "to get all the information and light you can upon all subjects, and then act as your own better judgment shall dictate, and in all things be honest," for honesty with him was a cardinal virtue.

Reader, I hope it is with you!

The mother of Paul had been carried to the grave a few years before, and her memory in its sweet, unchanging sadness, was a fountain of freshness, ever-filling the soul of her son. She had been a deeply religious woman, and though she had implicit confidence in, and love for, her husband, she still felt that the rich, fallow nature of her son Paul needed more religious instruction than it received from the father. In this she was undoubtedly right, for it is better to form the character right at first, than to be compelled to reform it when once the wrong path has been taken. A new stocking can be knit from the raveled yarn of an old one, but the kinks will never entirely disappear. Doubtless we are all more or less kinked. But we will let Paul give a little of his philosophy and experience in his own words. It may assist us in the analysis of his character. With a few of his classmates and friends around him, one evening, he gave them the following:

"My mother was a truly devoted and pious woman. She seemed to grasp questions presented to the mind by a peculiar intuition that I did not understand. I ascribed it at first to her religion, but I am now satisfied that it is only one of the peculiarities of women, nature having endowed them with clearer intuitive perceptions than men. The power to love, the realm of the affections, seems more intense with them, and love is the intuitive faculty. I know it is said that 'love is blind,' but I doubt it, for I think that

love has the clearest intuitive conception. But if it is 'blind,' it can only move by intuition and not by reason or sense, so the proposition is still true. I was not at the time able to analyze my own mind, but was conscious of an intense desire to be religious, and sought every opportunity to attend meetings where religious people gathered to worship, and were there anything tangible in religion I should now be a Christian. When quite young I determined to turn my attention to religion, and seek for that which I regarded as necessary to my present and future happiness. I had thought much upon the subject, and heard many preachers, but everything seemed intangible to my mind. As a specimen, that you may see my difficulty, I will give you an instance: When the Rev. Mr. Fate came here to preach, I went to hear him. His first sermon, on the necessity of escaping the just judgments of God, was clear, and, if I had never been inclined to seek the salvation of my soul, that sermon would have impressed me with its importance. He announced the theme of 'Conversion,' for his next discourse. I was early at the meeting, to learn how I was to be converted, for I then felt the utmost interest in the absorbing question. The text was, 'No man can come unto me except the Father that hath sent me draw him.' He first said the text stated a fact, which seemed clear to my mind, although he proceeded to argue the question. His second proposition was to me the important question, 'How does the Father that sent Jesus draw men unto him?' I was at once completely absorbed in the subject. He proceeded to show that the Holy Spirit was the agent of the Father in the drawing, and that he performed the work by creating a new spirit within the man, as he was totally depraved and spiritually dead, so that he resistlessly gave himself up to the Savior. Man was a wholly passive being in the hand of God, who alone had the converting and sanctifying power, which he executed according to the counsels of his own will, without any merit or demerit on the part of the creature. He closed with the text 'Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord,' and I obeyed the injunction. I attended all the meetings and waited patiently for some power or impulse to move me to become a Christian, but none has ever yet visited me. I was told that if I joined the church, and put myself in the way of the Spirit, I might be called. Not desiring to take so important a step without proper information, I determined to examine the Presbyterian Confession of

Faith. Here I found that the minister had been faithful to the tenets of his church. I found, as you are aware, Wingood, the germ of all the teachings of your church on the subject, on the 20th page:

"By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life and others foreordained to everlasting death. These men and angels thus predestinated and foreordained are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished."

"At the same time it teaches that it was 'without any foresight of faith and good works or perseverance in either of them, or anything in the creature as conditions or causes moving him thereunto; and all to the praise of his glorious grace.'

"There was something in my nature that seemed to revolt at this idea, but such was the impression on my mind that I waited for a long time for the moving of the Spirit, oftentimes weighed down with the fear that I was one of the non-elect. Once I heard of a celebrated Methodist preacher, who had a great reputation as a revivalist, under whose ministry it was said that thousands had been converted. The first sermon made a profound impression on my heart, as with an eloquent tongue he portrayed the feelings of the sinful heart, and the awful condition of those who rejected the gospel and resisted the Holy Spirit. This I could see clearly and plainly, but when he came to an explanation of how a man was to escape from that condition, all was dark as erebus. The invitation was given for all who desired to escape, to come to Jesus, that they might be 'born again,' that they might enter the kingdom of God. Many went forward to try and seek religion, and I among the number. I say *try*, for I now see it was only a trial, and was so regarded by those who invited us, for I remember the hymn they sung when they gave the invitation:

*'Perhaps he will accept my plea,
Perhaps will hear my prayer,
And if I perish I will pray,
And perish only there,'*

"They seemed to *know* that a sinner would be lost, but were doubtful about his salvation; for the last verse of the hymn expressed it:

*'I can but perish if I go,
I am resolved to try,
For if I stay away I know
I must forever die.'*

"I went to the altar of prayer, and with full purpose of heart, did everything the preachers told me, for I had perfect confidence in their word. I was first told 'to pray to God for pardon, to exercise faith in Christ, to give myself entirely up, and the Lord would speak peace to my soul.' I prayed earnestly; I listened nightly to the experiences of those who had 'found religion,' but could not find it myself. I now see the reason, though I did not then; I was not so easily duped as the rest. Sometime I will tell you some of the 'experiences' I then heard. I looked upon them as all true then, but alas! none of them corresponded with mine, so I sought on and on, fully determined to find the Lord, but I was finally compelled to give up in despair. I see now how foolish I acted, for the whole thing is so inconsistent when a man comes to exercise his reason. I would not say anything to wound your feelings, but just look at the proceedings, and you have all seen many of them. Twenty-five persons go forward to the altar of prayer, all seemingly alike honest. Some are almost immediately converted, others at a later period, and others not at all. I will admit now for the sake of illustration, that all this is the work of God, that he gives to those who are converted the evidence of their acceptance with him. But just here is my difficulty; he gives to one a brighter, clearer evidence than he does to another. To one he gives an evidence or impression clear as the noonday sun, to another it is like the twilight ray. Now with me that is just as absurd as the fore-ordination of the Calvinists. It is partiality, making the very best of it. It will not do to say that the difference is in the persons themselves, for if both are accepted, and all the preachers I know anything about say they are, there can be no difference in the sight of God without partiality; and if God gives one more light than he does another, or a clearer knowledge of his acceptance, it is partiality.

If God would make known some absolute condition on which he would accept and pardon sinners, there might be some sense in it, and I might have been a Christian. If he had treated us like he did Adam, for even that apocryphal story has some sense in it, we might understand it. He told Adam the day he ate of a certain tree death should be made certain to him, and when he ate, God's word became an evidence to him, and the conviction reached his heart that he was a sinner; but I have talked with preachers of all denominations, and they are all in doubt and

mystery about the evidence of man's acceptance with God. If it were a physical sensation, tangible to the touch, or mental, do this and be saved, I might understand it, but they say it is a miraculous operation on the heart, and I confess I cannot comprehend it, and if there is any man living who has anything comprehensible on the subject, I confess I have not the honor of his acquaintance. Christianity may do for those who can understand it, but for me it is the veriest nonsense. I have lately read Paine's *Age of Reason*, Volney's *Ruins of Empires*, Renan's *Life of Jesus*, and Darwin's *Origin of the Species*; and I can begin to see something tangible on which my mind may rest."

His companions listened silently until he closed. Wingood was the first to speak, and he concluded Paul was one of the non-elect, though he might yet be called. Lanire and Belcamp thought he had too much reason and not enough faith, while Harvey told him it made no great difference what a man believed so he was honest. All felt however, a great interest in his welfare, and, at the suggestion of Lanire, resolved, that as "God must give the increase," they must depend on the power of prayer. To this all assented except Job, who was not much in the habit of praying, and closed the interview with what he called his "hoss sense philosophy," for everybody allowed Job to say what he pleased. Straightening himself up, he commenced:

"Feller travelers, let me give you my opinion on that passage of Scripture, if it ain't worth much. It says, 'Paul may plant' and its my mind that's the fust thing to be done. It says, also, likewise, that 'Apollos may water,' and I reckon that's the next thing to do. And when Paul's planted and Apollos has watered, then it are a reasonable conclusion that God'll do the increasin'. But if Paul don't plant, and Apollos don't water I'm of the opinion the Lord ain't under any particular obligation to do any increasin'. So, likewise, finally, if you want to see Paul soundly converted, I allow you'd better try and plant the truth into his mind, and water it with a little evidence, and then you can ask the good Lord to give it increase, otherways I'm of a doubtful unsettlement on the result of the issue."

Chapter Six: An Episode.

There were a few persons in Bethel, who, even in "Know-Nothing" times, might have been called "Know-Everythings," for that was their ostensible

calling. They could tell just what the minister's wife paid for her new bonnet, how much mercury Dr. Van Buren put in his potions, when the next wedding was to be and what the bridal ring cost; in fact, there was no incident or personal matter in all their range about which they were not thoroughly posted. I have even heard it said that one of them had discovered the exact age of Miss Penelope Prince, but that is somewhat doubtful. They were all excited one day by the announcement that one of the finest residences in the place had been purchased by a rich stranger, who expected to make it his home. His name was Leyden, had formerly been elected judge, and everybody called him Judge Ledyen. It is strange that in Republican America, a man once a judge is always a judge, once a colonel or a captain, or even a 'squire, he is always so. It is all right, I suppose, for things may be ornamental as well as useful. Judge Leyden was a man of somewhat aristocratic pretensions, being the possessor of wealth; and the Leyden mansion soon became a favorite resort of the elite of the town. Not the least among the attractions was his beautiful daughter, Rose, who, "With gentle mien, and sweet, attractive grace," presided over the gatherings at the home circle.

Judge Leyden was a rigid Methodist, and the deep religious nature of Rose made her as earnest a devotee of the religion of her father as ever bowed and worshiped at Christian or Pagan shrine. To doubt seemed a thing foreign to her nature, and, with conscientious devotion to her own convictions, she pursued the even tenor of her way.

Rev. Dickens set apart one day during his meeting for all the young members of the church to visit all their unconverted friends and invite them to meeting, and to seek the salvation of their souls. Rose, although somewhat of a stranger, joined a young lady friend, Kitty Lanire, and the twain started on their mission. They had called on quite a number, and were passing along the suburbs of the town, when Paul Darst overtook them. Paul was introduced to Rose, and they were soon engaged in an animated conversation. Paul marked the placid and hopeful expression of her countenance, and the seemingly earnest interest in his welfare with a feeling he could not understand. He had heard of the lovely daughter of Judge Leyden, but had not met her before.

They soon came to a bridge across a small stream, now swollen to more than ordinary fullness.

A washing out of part of the embankment on one side had lowered one side of the bridge, and it was as destitute of a railing as such bridges usually are.

Busily engaged in conversation, they did not notice it particularly until near the center, where it was a little icy, when Paul and Kitty were appalled to see Rose slip, and, ere she could recover her footing, disappear in the waters below. He knew not how he reached the spot, but ere she sank a second time, Paul held her in his arms and was making his way to the shore. Kitty, instead of screaming and wringing her hands, met them at the bank, and wrapping her cloak about Rose, they were soon safely housed by a good fire in a cottage nearby. Both were pretty thoroughly chilled, but a friend was called who soon brought a carriage and conveyed them home. The look of gratitude which Rose gave Paul as they parted made him forget that he was wet and cold, and Kitty said "it was just like a story," though she could not tell why Rose should be so reticent and the blood mount to her temples so quickly when she said so. After this Paul was a welcome guest at Judge Leyden's, the Judge himself, austere and stern as he was, kindly invited him to call, thanking him very freely for the assistance he rendered in saving his daughter's life. You may be certain he was nothing loath to accept the invitation — but why continue the details. It is the same old story our fathers have told our mothers in all the generations of the past.

"Just as I expected," says Deacon Straightback, "Of course he fell in love with her, it is as plain as can be." How do you know, my dear friend? Is that the way you did? If so, I won't ask you to own it now, but do have a little mercy on Paul and Rose. They were both young and — well, as Job would say, "its natural, or else the birds wouldn't mate themselves off, and each two on 'em have a nest of their own." I have confidence in Job's opinion.

"The thing sounds just like a novel exactly, and I don't believe in novels," says Elder Plato. I can't help it; I must tell the truth, novel or no novel. I am thankful love is not novel; it is real. "God is love." "Let love be without dissimulation." "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

Rose was Paul's neighbor. Paul was a neighbor of Rose.

There was nothing unnatural, wicked, or sensational about it. I do not believe in sensationalism, either in novels or religion. I have never read many

of them, nor heard many sermons of that kind. Whenever I pick up a book in which the principal hero gets so desperately in love that he cannot find courage to tell it out like a man, I drop it. When I hear a preacher who has more regard for his own appearance and style, than he has for the message and word he preaches, I let him alone. On the other hand when I find a man who has never loved, and decries all writing about love as sensational, I think he is too hardened to reason with, and when I hear a man read a sermon of dry, musty, theology, for fear he will do something or say something the Pilgrim Fathers did not tolerate, I vote him a — well anything you choose to call him. I am going to tell the truth about Paul and Rose as plainly as I can do it.

Paul loved Rose.

Rose loved Paul.

I have put in no “sighing breezes.” I have left out the “eolian zephyrs.” Romantic denouements have been excluded. Moonlight serenades have been judiciously exempted. Paul saved the life of Rose but I cannot see that he was to blame for it, or that I am doing anything wrong to tell about it. I have said nothing about how or when he told her the fact of his love. Everyone can paint the picture according to his own imagination. Like sensible people they allowed no one to be present on the interesting occasion but themselves. This is a truthful history. They have never informed us just how the thing was done. In fact I doubt if they remember themselves. I have heard there were eavesdroppers who could tell, but I hold no communication with that class of persons. They are always unreliable. They are thieves, if it is voluntary. If it is involuntary they will never tell what they hear. Therefore all I know is the result.

Rose loved Paul!

Paul loved Rose!

The Word of God approves their action. The teachings of history bear their testimony in the same direction. My own observation and experience teach me that they did right. Love is the basis of marriage. Marriage is of God’s appointment. The appointment is for the continuance and happiness of the race. Therefore Paul and Rose did right. Solomon was a wise man, though an ancient philosopher. He said: “Better a dinner of herbs with love, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.” I agree with Solomon.

Chapter Seven: An Investigation

Arnot Love was alone in his study. He was silent-

ly gazing out of his window at a golden sunset. Silvery clouds hovered along the horizon. The king of day was sinking to his evening rest. His brilliant rays were partially dimmed by the light fleecy clouds. The scene made a picture the envy of all artists. O the marvelous sublimity of nature, whose pencil can paint or whose pen describe? Expanding ether is a glorious background on which nature paints her ever changing pictures, on which we gaze with never satiated but always increasing admiration. I was told when a child there was a bag of gold at the end of the rainbow. I started to find it, but I cannot tell to this day whether it was the gold or the thought of analyzing the rainbow that most prompted me in the act. Alas, I have since found that gold will buy bread, and rainbows will not, and yet I love to look at rainbows. Faith calls them God’s token to Noah and the race. By and by perhaps God will let us look at one from the other side. Until then we can only admire and hope. But Arnot Love saw nothing of all this. He communed not with clouds and shadows, but with his own soul. His mind was a panorama in which he was viewing his own thoughts. He was bowing before the shrine of reason for the solution of a problem that troubled him. It has been the problem of our race. Each must solve it for himself. What is the path of duty? So intent was the working of his mind that, unconsciously, his lips formed in words the cogitations of the soul. Did he reason true to the line? Let us write down his words as he utters them and see:

“Let me look over the whole ground, untrammelled by my early education as far as possible. I most profoundly believe that God exists, a wise and Omnipotent ruler of the Universe. I believe the book we call the Bible to be a Revelation of his will to man. Now this is my difficulty. If God has given man that word and intended it to be a Revelation to man, how is it that man has made such a failure in understanding it? I find over a hundred different creeds and sects, who all disagree in many things, yet they all claim to found their faith on the Bible. How can this be reconciled with God’s wisdom and goodness?

“This is the only answer I can see: the things about which they disagree are not taught in God’s word at all. They are the deductions and speculations of man outside of the Bible. But is the Bible a plain book? All sects and parties seem to think that it is. What then must I conclude? Either all are mistaken but one, or all are wrong, or else the Bible is not a

plain book. The latter cannot be true, for then God either *could not* or *would not* make it plain. If he could not, then he is not Omnipotent, for he has the use of all languages and certainly could select one in which he could tell man what was right and what he ought to do. This even man can do; surely God is greater than man. If he *would not* make a plain book when he could, he is not good and benevolent, for no benevolent man would make a thing dark and mysterious that he desired to be understood and practiced by his fellows; and God is surely as kind and benevolent as man. The Bible must therefore, in what it teaches, be a plain book. But what shall I do? I am teaching one of those creeds differing from the others. If I hold fast the principle I must give it up. But I sat down to reason on principle, and I must follow it to a legitimate conclusion, if it sends me to oblivion or perdition. I am assured also that division among Christians is wrong, for Paul says in the first chapter of 1 Corinthians, in writing to “all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord,” that he beseeches them, “by the name (or authority) of our Lord Jesus Christ, that they all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among them, but that they be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.” This being the commandment, and God’s word being plain, how is it to be carried out? There is but one way that I can see. Where two honest, intelligent men have approached the Bible to find out what it teaches, and have come to a disagreement on a question, I must conclude that the thing about which they disagree is not an essentiality, and is to be laid aside as an untaught question; and that which all good, intelligent, and honest believers in the Bible say is right and taught there, is to be accepted. I am satisfied this rule will destroy sects, but will it not destroy essential truth also? I must test it further. What is the Bible, and what is its purpose? It is a large book and every part of it must have some special object in view, while all must point to some great center. The Old Testament contains history, law, and prophecy, all pointing to Christ. Moses was a great leader and I will go and inquire of him what position he occupies in the great economy of Salvation. He points me to the Christ, for he says, “A Prophet shall the Lord, your God raise up unto you of your brethren like unto me, him shall ye hear in all things that he shall say unto you: and it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not

hear that Prophet shall be cut off from among the people.”

“This points me to Christ, and all the prophets, David, Isaiah, Daniel, and all the rest, do the same. I come then to the New Testament and find that Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John have written biographies of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God. Why were they written? Let us see. John states it. “Many other signs truly did Jesus that 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).

The great object of these books is then to give the testimony concerning the Christ, and is the foundation work on which the faith and hope of life may rest. In his life, death, burial, and resurrection he lays the foundation for his supreme authority over the hearts and consciences of men, and gives us the commencement and completion of his personal work on earth. Before he leaves it, however, he must make some arrangement for the continuance of the work. He therefore calls his disciples around him, and gives that mission into their hands, fixing the time, place, and order of beginning.

“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, ‘All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world’” (Matt. 28:18).

“Thus it is written, and thus it behooved 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 among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem... But tarry ye at Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high” (Luke 24:46).

“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).

From this commission I see the following.

The scope of the mission — All the world, every creature.

Place of commencement — Jerusalem.

Time — When the Holy Spirit comes.

To preach, to make disciples — The Gospel, belief, repentance, baptism, remission of sins in the

name of Jesus Christ.

The next book must therefore be Acts of the Apostles, to tell men how to become Christians; and I find it contains the account of their labors in the conversion of hundreds and thousands, every one of whom heard the gospel and believed it, repented of their sins and were baptized, received the remission of their sins and become members of the Church of Christ, the keys of which the Lord committed to Peter. The next book must be then, if God is a God of order, a book to tell them how to live the Christian life, so we find twenty-one letters addressed to the Church, to instruct them in all their religious duties. Only one work remains to be done to perfect the book, and that is an unfolding, by vision, of what the future and the end is to be, and this we have in the Revelation, the closing book, which shows the New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven. Surely the Bible is a complete book, perfect in all its

parts, every book in it filling its proper place and purpose. It opens with the creation of man, his sin and loss of the “tree of life.” We then go on through the Old Testament but find no “tree of life.” The life of Jesus, the work of the Apostles, the letters of instruction have no “tree of life;” but when we reach the closing book, the Revelation, we find:

“Blessed are they that do his commandments that they may have right to the **tree of life**, and may enter in through the gates into the city” (Rev. 22:14).

Surely this is enough, and contains all truth essential to Salvation, and is so plain that all can see it. It is my duty to preach it to my people and to all the people of the town, and sectism must be destroyed, if it is accepted. But will that be the case? I shall see. If the worst comes to the worst I must try and patiently bear it.

[To Be Continued]



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Poetry Corner

Years of Holding Hands

By Larry Conger (Elk City, OK)

“What love they have,” would their friends say,
And yet most all have passed away
Thru years of time has taken toll
On those who’ve tired of growing old.
Now peace and rest have all their friends
With heads of stone to remember them.

But they are left just two as one,
Still holding hands and hanging on.
For she is weak, so by her bed
He prays for her and chapters read.

Though none recall her last words spoke
He communes with her thru touch and stroke
Of hair and hand and knows quite well
She knows he’s there, yes he can tell.

The world would say, “just let her die,
For you have many years of life.”
But the young they fail to understand
What many years of holding hand
And sharing life from deepest soul
Cannot be bought or taught or sold.

And knowing this he bowed to pray
And felt her hand go limp and fray
And knew with God was her next breath
In passing thru the ‘shade of death’.
He never raised his head from prayer,
Said, “thank you God for sending her.”

Peace and Assurance

By Gerald Cowan (Marion, IL)

Lord, You will keep in perfect peace
All whose hearts are set on You.
We trust You to keep Your promise.
We know You are just and true.

Conscious guilt makes cowards of us,
Fear that others may find out
That we have wandered from the path.
Faith has given way to doubt.

We believe Your grace and mercy
Can redeem us, so we live
Rejoicing always in the love that
Makes You willing to forgive.

And so we bring our sins to You,
Trusting in Your endless care.
We will not yield to temptation
Nor surrender to despair.

Keep us confident, our Father,
That in Christ we have release
From sin, and strong assurance that
In Him we have perfect peace.

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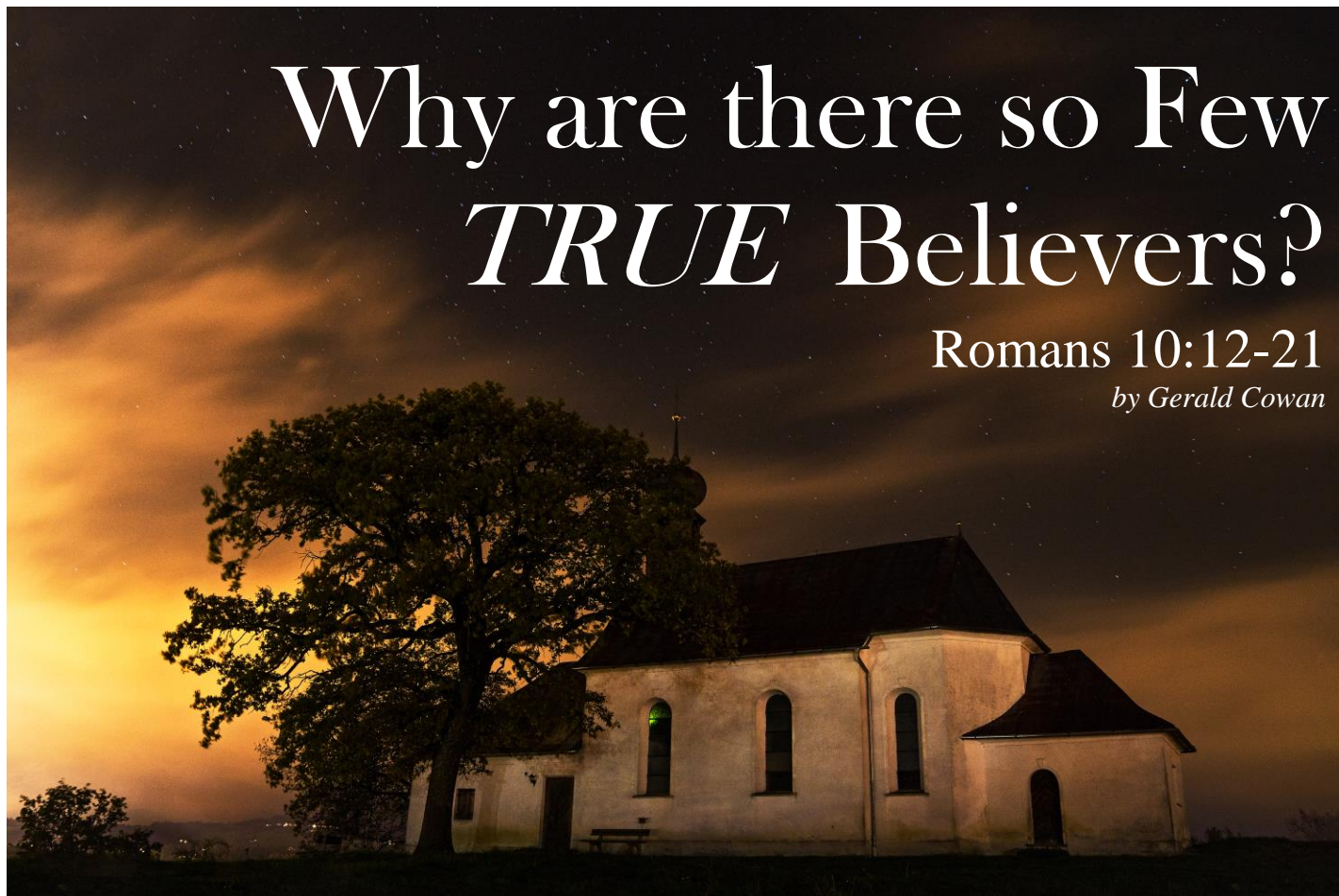
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Why are there so Few *TRUE* Believers?

Romans 10:12-21

by Gerald Cowan



According to Pew Research Center an estimated 89% of the people in the United States believe in God, that is, in a god of some sort. But only 63% say they are certain about it. Jews and most professing Christians believe in the God of the Bible. The majority of believers belong to an organized church or religious group of some kind. Even if they seldom or never attend, they claim to belong, to be “affiliated with” it. There is no way the United States can be called a “Christian nation.” We are a nation of many believers and non-believers, many Christians and non-Christians, and 9% say they do not believe in God or gods at all. These figures are dated 2014 which indicate a significant decline in theism in this country from prior surveys. The current number of believers and believers with certainty is no doubt less in 2017.

All true Christians
are true believers, but
not all believers are
true Christians.

The Bible says, “Many are called, but few are chosen” (Matthew 22:14). “Narrow is the way and strait (restricted) is the gate that leads to life, and few there be who go that way” Matthew 7:13-14). We often stress this point in order to emphasize the importance of being in the *right* way. Perhaps it would be more helpful if we rejoiced that there *is* a right way to be in. Imagine how dismal our prospects would be if we could not find the right way or were not allowed into it by God if we had ever done anything wrong.

All true Christians are true believers, but not all believers are true Christians. Simply believing that God exists and that Jesus Christ is His Son is not enough to save anybody. One is “not saved by faith alone” (James 2:24). It may sound negative to say it, but many believers are not saved by

God, even though they could be. We want to find out why it is so, and what can be done to correct the situation.

True believers are saved people, “chosen, elect of God.” So the question is, why are there so few *true* believers? Why are so few *saved*? Is it God’s fault or the church’s fault? We will find that the bottom line in failure to be saved is the fault of each person himself. We cannot blame or credit God or others for condemnation or salvation while denying personal responsibility.

GOD IS NOT TO BLAME IF A PERSON IS NOT SAVED.

God has revealed His nature and His will, the knowledge man needs for salvation. His eternal attributes, power, and divinity are apparent in nature (Romans 1:18-21). He has shown us what is good, and what He requires of us (Micah 6:5-8). Everything pertaining to life and godliness is given to us in Christ and the gospel (2 Peter 1:3-4).

God wants to save everybody. God does not desire that any perish, but that all come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9). He wants all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2:5).

God has made salvation possible and available to all in Christ (John 3:16, 1 John 2:1-2). Jesus invites all and assures those who come to him that they will find rest for their souls (Matthew 11:28-30).

God is able to save everybody who comes to Him through Christ as He has prescribed (Hebrews 7:25). It is not based upon a personal request one makes to God, such as the request that Jesus come into one’s heart. Calling upon the name of the Lord implies and necessarily includes obedience to His commands. Jesus himself learned the necessity of obedience through the things God allowed and required him to suffer (Hebrews 5:8), and having been thus perfected for his role in salvation the Lord became the author and source of salvation to all those – and only those – who obey him (Hebrews 5:9).

God is able to keep securely all who are obediently committed to Him. He is able not only to save them but also to keep them saved (Jude 24, 2 Timothy 1:12). But the obedience and commitment must be kept by the person who expects to be kept by God. There is no promise that once one has been saved, he has eternal life and salvation without further condition. We are called and saved with a hope of eternal

life (1 John 2:25), with the indwelling Spirit of God as an initial earnest or pledge of fulfillment by God (2 Corinthians 1:22). There is no “once saved always

**We should not expect
God to do for us what He
asks us to do for ourselves.**

saved and safe” pledge from God.

God calls believers to Himself. In Matthew 22:14 Jesus said, “Many are called, but few are chosen.” This is often misunderstood and misapplied. It has nothing to do with a supposed arbitrary choice on God’s part, a choice which would mean, “From among all those who answer the call God chooses to accept and save only a few.” It has nothing to do with arbitrary predestination or predetermination, which would mean, “God has already chosen those who will be saved or not saved, and nothing can be done to cancel or change it.” God requires submission by personal choice (Joshua 24:15, James 4:7). The fact is, the call of God is for everybody, with none excluded, as noted above in Matthew 11:28-30. See also Revelation 22:17 which assures us that “whosoever will may come and take freely” of what God offers in Christ. The call of the Lord comes only through reading, preaching, and teaching of the gospel (2 Thessalonians 2:13, 1 Peter 1:25). But none are effectively called until they hear and understand it so that they can obey it (Romans 10:17). Do not miss the point here: hearing requires someone to make the offer heard, but it also implies that the hearer calls upon and to the Lord by doing what he is instructed to do (Romans 10:16).

God can do what He says He will do (Isaiah 59:1-2). He is able to fulfill His promises of salvation (Hebrews 7:25). He is able to carry out his threats of punishment and damnation (Matthew 25:31-46). If God has said it, He will not fail to do it (Isaiah 46:10-11). Are you ready now to ask the question, “If God is not to blame for the lack or loss of salvation, who is? Why are people not saved?”

God requests cooperation and help from His people. We are not saved only by faith in the operation so God (Colossians 2:12), but by cooperation

with God, working together with God (2 Corinthians 6:1-2). God is able **to do exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think** (Ephesians 3:20-21). But He insists that we save ourselves (Acts 2:40) by working out our own salvation as He himself, working in us, enabling us to do what He wills (Philippians 2:12-13), obeying from the heart the doctrine and commandments given to us (Romans 6:17). The one who wants God's salvation and God's blessings has to do his own part. We should not expect God to do for us what He asks us to do for ourselves.

God wants Christians to be engaged along with Him in reaching out to others. Others will not hear and will not be persuaded to believe unless some believer tells them and encourages them (Romans 10:12-15). Why are there not more true believers who will share with God in evangelizing those who are not yet believers? Do not say God can save anyone He wants to save. It is not true. The truth may be stated something like this, as if God said to us, "You tell them what I have commanded and if they obey it I can and will save them." The saved are involved in their own salvation.

THE UNSAVED MAY BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR OWN CONDITION.

Why are they not saved? ***Perhaps it is because they have not listened and are not listening to what God says in His word.*** Each one must not only listen and hear, but "Take heed how you hear" (Luke 8:16) – take heed what you do with and about what you hear.

It may be that they have become comfortable and complacent in sin. Notice the Lord's lament and complaint in Jeremiah 6:15, 8:12). "Were they ashamed when they committed abomination? No, they could not even blush." The first realization of any sin may come as a shock to the sinner, and one is immediately uncomfortable, knowing he needs to correct it and be forgiven. But if one puts off the correction he soon gets over the shock and discomfort. People learn to put sin and their own spiritual deficiencies out of their mind. They may forget the sin, but it doesn't go away. God doesn't forget it. People add to their sins gradually and incrementally, like gaining weight. As long as the weight gain is gradual, one becomes accustomed to it bit by bit and may not even notice it, until he can't button his shirt collar and the jacket that used to fit so loosely becomes uncomfort-

ably tight. Clothes do not shrink while hanging in the closet. But bodies expand and putting on the clothes informs one of the fact. One may gain twenty or thirty or even fifty pounds and not "feel any different," because it has been a gradual gain. If he had the whole fifty pounds added to him at once he would be crushed and unable to function. So it is with sin. We suddenly wake up one day and find we are guilty of a whole range of sins – abuses, commissions and omissions, indiscretions – that we never intended to get into. We look at ourselves and wonder how we could have moved so far away from the purity and cleanliness in Christ that we once felt. If the whole burden of sin was dropped on us at one time we would probably be crushed, paralyzed, and embarrassed to tears.

Another aspect of this is that we get over our shock and revulsion, we get used to seeing and hearing certain things until they "don't bother us anymore." Alexander Pope's couplet comes to mind here:

*Vice is a monster of such frightful mein
as to be hated needs but to be seen.
But seen too oft, familiar with her face,
we first endure, then pity, then embrace.*

Movies and television, books and magazines, and music have dulled our senses until we can't even blush when people commit abominations. Some entertainment "stars" are creating a cesspool of moral and social garbage, filth, and sleaze. But their "fans" rush headlong to enjoy the degradation with them. Preachers lead multitudes astray and multitudes insist on being led astray. People want their ears tickled, and they search until they find someone who is willing to give them what they want. They will not keep him long if he does not do it and continue doing it (2 Timothy 4:3). Preachers want to be patted on the back – they want their ego massaged, and will not stay long where they aren't getting what they want. So there's a tradeoff: preachers tickle ears to get a pat on the back, and people pet and pamper the preacher in order to get their ears tickled. This kind of compromise is called getting along with each other, adjusting to each other's needs, maintaining compatibility. It should also be noted as a departure from God, a failure to believe God.

Some do not obey because they do not know how to call upon God. They have not been taught the true "plan of salvation" and their own part in it. They are doing what seems right in their own eyes, or right in the eyes of their teachers, but not what is right in the

sight of God. We must make sure they hear and know how to call upon the Lord (Romans 10:12-17).

Some do not obey because they do not believe in God. They do not even believe that he exists. And if He does exist, they don't want to know it (Romans 1:18-25, Mark 16:16).

Many who believe in God do not accept His will. They cannot be saved. They seem to believe that the terms of any covenant are negotiable. They believe God can be persuaded to change His mind. They seem to think that God's will and ways are tailored to suit each person, on an individual basis (Acts 10:34-35).

Many who believe in God do not believe God. Compare Paul in Acts 27:25, "I believe God." If believing that God exists, even that there is one and only one true and living God, were enough to save one, the devil and demons would be saved (James 2:19-20). James makes it clear: such "faith" without the required accompanying works is dead, accomplishing not salvation but condemnation.

They do not believe there is only one way to God. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. Nobody comes to the Father except by me" (John 14:6). In His own voice God said of Jesus, "This is my beloved Son. Hear him" (Matthew 17:1-5). Jesus is not one of the ways to God, he is the one and only way to God. The gospel of Christ is not one of the ways to God, it is the only way – it is the strait and narrow path that leads to righteousness and life (Matthew 7:13-14). All other paths and ways lead to destruction. Destruction and perdition are at the end of every path for one who does not believe in and obey the gospel of Jesus Christ (2 Thessalonians 1:8-10).

They believe they are acceptable to God in any church of their own choice (1 Corinthians 1:10-13, Psalm 127:1). They believe all churches are acceptable to God and cannot believe He will reject millions of sincere believers. They cannot believe God's ears are closed to their prayers and His face is turned away from them (1 Peter 2:12). If one is a sinner making no effort to change, his prayer will not be heard (John 9:31). Does God have Caller ID so He can screen all calls, deleting the ones He doesn't want to hear or answer? Does He have some sort of recording machine so that He can listen later to some calls and determine whether or not He wants to answer them? People think they are getting through to God simply because

they pray "in Jesus' name." They tell all, but they are not heard or acknowledged – no matter how they feel about taking their burdens, cares, praises, and petitions to the Lord.

They trust feelings and traditions, not the words of God. But feelings are unstable and fickle. The heart is deceitful (Jeremiah 17:9). Keeping human traditions can render the will and word of God ineffective (Matthew 15:9).

They reject God's Christ and refuse his words. They seem not to understand or believe that even though they reject him the Christ himself will judge them at the end and the words he has spoken or caused to be spoken will be the standard by which they are judged (Acts 17:30-31, John 12:48). Not on their degree of sincerity or conformity to their sincere beliefs, but rather upon his words, whether or not they believe and obey them.

They have given up God. That leaves Him with no recourse but to give them up too (Romans 1:25). Being atheists (without God, Ephesians 2:12) does not put them outside God's action. They will be devoid of His blessings but they cannot avoid His retributive action, His punishment.

CONCLUSION

Here is the last word, the bottom line. ***People are not saved because they have not obeyed and do not continue to obey the gospel of Christ.*** Everybody who calls obediently upon the name of the Lord shall be saved (Romans 10:9-12). Everybody who believes on the name of the Lord has access to salvation. He can become a child of God, a true believer, one of the chosen few. Everybody who fails or refuses to obey the Christ and his gospel will be marked as an unbeliever, not a true believer but an unbeliever, a disbeliever. There will be no place for them among the saved. The reason there are so few true believers is not that there is no God and no word from God – not because of any action of God. The paucity of true believers and the plethora of unbelievers is due to the improper response and the lack of a proper response to God and His Christ and His gospel.

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CHRISTIANS: *Different Generations*

By Joseph T. McWhorter

One of the many ways we human beings segregate ourselves is age. Older generations are often stereotyped as out-of-touch and younger generations are often called entitled brats. Classification is one of the means by which we come to understand the world around us. Today, six living generations are recognized in America: the GI Generation, the Silent Generation, Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials,

and Generation Z. These descriptions can be useful in classifying and understanding our world, but they can also be dangerous if we begin to see our group as the best. Eric Arthur Blair, more commonly known as George Orwell, speculated that *“Each generation imagines itself to be more intelligent than the one that went before it and wiser than the one that comes after it”* (Orwell, 2000, p.

51). Have you ever seen someone’s cheeks flush with frustration over their parents or grandparents not understanding some “simple” piece of technology or bit of information? Have you ever heard a grandparent announce that young people today just don’t understand what life is really about? Human nature often convinces us that individuals like us are better than individuals who are different. Age-related

differences are ripe for the picking.

This mentality is prevailing today perhaps more than it ever has. Families used to spend time together out of necessity. Children became shop workers and farmhands working elbow to elbow with parents and grandparents. The dinner table was a hub of conversation and intergenerational connection. The advent of the industrial age and now the technology age has

provided abounding opportunities to widen the generation gaps. The elderly are shuffled into dark, musty retirement facilities and the young are shuffled into impersonal daycares. Both are plopped in front of TVs to “keep them entertained.” Respect toward the elderly is a dying virtue and the young aren’t taken seriously.

The answer that much of society has

“discovered” has only served to worsen the situation. Many contemporary programs, outspoken proponents, and social justice groups entrench their peers in the position that their group really is the best. Instead of preaching more respect towards others, they often only demand more respect and authority for themselves.

Christendom has not been immune to the ravages

Instead of preaching more respect towards others, [generational groups] often only demand more respect and authority for themselves.

of generation gaps. One unfortunate sign of this division in many churches is the distinction between “traditional” and “contemporary” worship services. These isolated forms of organization often divide near the lines of age and generation. Doctrinal matters aside, it says something when professing Christians claim unity but cannot even sit through the same form of worship together. Young Christians get frustrated with previous generations being “stuck in tradition” while older Christians frown disapprovingly at younger generations when they have good-hearted ideas because “that’s isn’t how we do things.” As a result, many young people are flocking from more “traditional” churches or worse giving up on God completely while older individuals wag their heads in disappointment and shame. The dismal picture is one where both groups have begun to venerate and serve their own desires instead of working together to worship and serve at the pleasure of God. Sadly, pleas to restore the old ways and cries to innovate are sometimes no more than masks for a “me first” attitude. The generation gap has become a chasm with petty people on both sides. Both desire to lay claim to Christ’s body and thus that body is torn in two.

Society has dealt with this crisis poorly. How will Christians solve it? In all things—but most especially in matters concerning the body of Christ—it is our responsibility to fight for what is right, and what is right can always be found in God’s Word. What has our God revealed about generational cooperation and fellowship?

Let us begin with a picture of a healthy church. In Titus chapter 2, Paul gave Titus an inspired snapshot of such a church. It included the spectrum of humanity. He gave instructions for older men, older women, younger men, and younger women. The older were urged to pursue temperance, dignity, and reverence while the younger were told to be sensible and pure. They were recognized as different groups with different struggles and different abilities. They were distinct, but they made up the same church.

New Testament teaching makes it clear that both the young and the old deserve our love and care.

James wrote that pure and unstained religion included care for orphans and widows. Orphans were those without fathers but who were too young to care for themselves. Widows were those without husbands, yet were too old to care for themselves. Jesus Himself told His disciples to allow the small children to sit with Him in Matthew 19:14. In chapter 18 He put his arms around them and told His followers that children are an example of humility. He also pointed out the example of a widow in Luke 21. She gave all she had to God’s treasury. He highlighted her devotion and sincerity.

Hebrew Scripture speaks to the strengths and weaknesses of both age and youth. In Ecclesiastes 11:9-10 the Preacher warned the young man,

Rejoice, young man, during your childhood, and let your heart be pleasant during the days of young manhood. And follow the impulses of your heart and the desires of your eyes. Yet know that God will bring you to judgment for all these things. So, remove grief and anger from your heart and put away pain from your body, because childhood and the prime of life are fleeting.

Youth carries many blessings: vitality, enthusiasm, perspective. Solomon warns the young man not to use those

strengths in the wrong way because God is watching and the days will be gone more quickly than he may realize. Ultimately youth is vanity. That means it will blow away soon and we should not put our confidence in it.

At the same time, we cannot put confidence in physical maturity. Just as quickly as our youth passed, so will our golden years. James wrote that life itself is just a mist that comes up in the morning but is soon blown away (James 4:14). Contrasting which chapter of the human lifespan is better than the others is a fruitless task when we consider how fleeting those few decades are.

The real point is: life is short; use the time you have wisely. Paul echoed the same thought when he said, “*Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, make the most of your time,*

Sadly, pleas to restore the old ways and cries to innovate are sometimes no more than masks for a “me first” attitude.

because the days are evil” (Eph. 5:15-16). When we stop to consider just how short our lives are, especially compared to the everlasting God, any thought that one generation is better than another is put to rest. We all live the same short life, just a few years separated.

In Ecclesiastes 12:1, Solomon showed the benefit of youth when he wrote, *“Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near when you will say, ‘I have no delight in them’.*” He went on to write about how much harder it gets with age. He also said in Proverbs 16:31 that, *“A gray head is a crown of glory.”* Both have benefits.

One way we can gain counsel from Scripture is to look at Bible examples of individuals of different ages working together. A number of these exist in both the Old and New Testaments. Consider the example of Josiah and Hilkiah. Josiah was king of the nation of Judah. He is considered one of the best kings to ever rule over God’s people. In fact 2 Chronicles 34:2 reads, *“He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, and walked in the ways of David his father; and he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.”* He pursued God, He purged the nation of idolatrous worship, he restored the temple to the glorious state in which it had been, and he reinstituted proper worship to God. That sounds like the work of a remarkable king. The truly remarkable aspect of the story is his age. He began ruling at 8 years old. His search for God began at the age of 16. He was only 20 when he destroyed the idols and only 26 when he restored the temple and its worship. He was a young man who desired a right relationship with God and obedience to Him. He isn’t the only character in the story, though. Hilkiah was a priest of God. In fact, he was the high priest. He was an older man. His character is also shown to be righteous. Hilkiah found the book

of God’s law in the process of cleansing and restoring the temple. When he realized what it was, he immediately sent it to the king. Together, Hilkiah and Josiah, an old man and a young man, instituted one of the greatest religious restorations in history. Instead of letting their differences divide them, these two leaders worked in unison for God. They were certainly stronger for it.

Moses and Joshua are another great example. Moses was the leader appointed by God to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt and through the wilderness. He was an older man. Joshua was a young spy who believed in the power of God to conquer the enemy. In the wilderness, Joshua became a sort of “right hand man” to Moses. When Moses came to the end of his life, God handed the leadership of his

new nation of Israel to from Moses to Joshua. Those two men worked together in spite of decades of difference in their ages.

A striking New Testament example of intergenerational cooperation in the New Testament is the relationship between Paul and his young companions Titus and Timothy. Paul was chosen by God to be an apostle and evangelist for the brand-new Church. He was given divine wisdom, knowledge, and guidance. Timothy and Titus were young men whom he met on his travels. They were converted to Christianity and worked as evangelists themselves. Titus worked on the island of Crete and Timothy worked in the metropolis of Ephesus. Paul wrote them both letters that are extant for us today. He encouraged them and taught them by God’s inspiration. He showed them how to be evangelists. They followed and respected Paul as he followed Christ. Though they were young and Paul was aged, they were able to work together to spread the truth of Jesus and His body to the world.

Both Eli and Samuel, God-appointed judges of Israel, failed to train their sons up in the fear of God. Because of their failure, both sets of children rebelled against God. The younger generation suffered for some failure of the older.

Negative examples of generational relationships also exist in Scripture. Both Eli and Samuel, God-appointed judges of Israel, failed to train their sons up in the fear of God. Because of their failure, both sets of children rebelled against God. The younger generation suffered for some failure of the older. Another example is Rehoboam. Upon taking his father's throne in Judah, he was given counsel by both his peers and the older advisors of his father. He disregarded the wisdom of the older counselors in favor of the more appealing counsel of the young. Because of that choice, he and his nation suffered.

These and other examples show that generations are stronger when they cooperate and respect each other. Each generation of Christians has its strengths and weaknesses. As we age, each chapter of life has its own benefits and hardships. Instead of looking at our own group or state and saying we must be the best, we should hear the words of Paul in Philippians 2:3, "*Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.*" We can develop a mindset that really believes that what is best for others is ultimately best.

In James 4:1, James pointed out the source of much disunity. It is following personal desires. When we follow our own desires and live our lives for ourselves, it is easy to look at older or younger folks and think, "I'm sure glad I am not them."

What are some practical ways we can help solve the problem we see in many churches today? We can begin by individually committing to establish relationships with people of different generations. If you are a young person, actually sit down by the sweet widow on the next pew one Sunday. Ask her about her life. Be patient and really try to understand her. Are you an older couple? Ask that new young family to dinner. Don't tell them how to raise their family. Don't criticize. Ask about their lives and hear about their triumphs and pains. Tell them about the beauty of your life together as a Christian couple. Are you a preacher or elder? Encourage the young boys and girls to be involved in the church. Give them opportunities to serve. Let your boys be involved in the worship service. Teach your girls to be greeters. Involve them all in campaigns to pass out flyers at grocery stores. Lead them by example and show them

what good leaders look like.

Another way that leaders could help solve the problem is to set programs in place that would bring different age groups together. Pair each young family with a more mature family for 6 months. Ask them to have dinner or do something together once a month. Have your high school and college students adopt a widow/widower for a quarter.

If your church participates in small group studies sometime during the week, ensure that those groups reach across generation gaps so that intimate Bible study can happen between people of all ages. Having older and younger disciples both give perspectives and insight of Bible truth can make a Bible study so much richer.

One way to include everyone in evangelism could be to have a "diversified portfolio" of methods. Have your older Christians take the youth group on a "door-knocking" campaign. On another occasion have the high school and college students teach the seniors how to use social media to teach people about Jesus.

It is easy for people of any age to think that we are unique in our experience of salvation. We tend to think no one could understand our struggles. Set aside a time when members of the church can get together and tell about how they came to know about Jesus, their decision to put on Christ in baptism, some struggles they faced for their faith, or anything they can share about their Christian life. Younger and older alike can hear and see that they are not alone. They can be strengthened and encouraged.

Really any project that reaches across a gap to include different generations can help to bring respect towards each other. Ultimately if we hope to succeed in this goal, we must seek the approval of God. The foundational step towards intergenerational cooperation must be prayer. Pray for unity. Pray that the different will come together and walk in God's light. Pray that the diverse can be one body. Pray that we will all walk into heaven with Jesus together. Pray that we can all worship God hand in hand for eternity.

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Sermon: The Wee BIG Man!

(Luke 19:1-10)

By Jesse Nelson

Introduction:

Illustration: What is the first thing that comes to your mind when I say, “Lawyer or Used-car salesman?”

1. Too often this world judges people based upon how they look, how they are dressed, what job they have, or maybe even what family they grew up in.

2. Jesus does not judge based upon those things; He judges based upon the potential of a person’s faith and He devotes time and energy to those groups of people.

3. Let’s look at the story of Zacchaeus and learn that this man with the least ideal job and stature, in the eyes of men, has the potential for great faith with God!

I. His Job

A. Tax Collector

1. Tax collectors were people who were under contract to collect tithes and various indirect taxes
2. The publicans were prone to extortion and malpractice from the beginning and they received a bad reputation because of it.
3. Tax Collectors (publicans) were thought of as sinful just because of the abuse by the majority of tax collectors out there.

B. The Stigma of Tax Collectors in the Bible

1. The Pharisee uses the tax collector as a negative comparison (Luke 18:11).
2. Jesus eating with tax collectors and sinners (Matthew 9:10, 11:19).
3. Tax Collectors used as a negative comparison in loving your enemies (Matthew 5:43-46).
4. Used as a negative comparison along with harlots about entering the kingdom before the Pharisees (Matt. 21:31).
5. Jesus even uses the tax collector as an illustration for disfellowship (Matthew 18:17).

II. His Circumstance

A. He was not going to allow his job to affect his relationship with Jesus (Luke 19:8).

B. He was not going to allow his wealth to stop him, which was a huge obstacle (Mark 10:25; 1 Timothy 6:10).

C. He was not going to allow his “stature” to interfere with Him getting to Jesus

D. Too often people blame their circumstances on their lack of faith or unwillingness to serve the kingdom

III. His Faith

A. Led him to repentance, which led him to salvation (Luke 19:9).

1. He was willing to give 50% of all of his possessions, and said he would give anyone he defrauded 4 times what he took.
2. This was more than what the Law required (Exodus 22:1; 2 Samuel 12:6).

B. He is a son of Abraham

1. Jesus is not as concerned with his physical relationship to Abraham, but that he took after Abraham’s faith
2. As a tax collector, in the eyes of the Pharisees, he gave up his right to be a child of Abraham.
3. Romans 4:13-25

C. Jesus invites Himself, and Zacchaeus prepares for His arrival.

Application:

1. In the eyes of men, Zacchaeus was the least likely to respond to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

2. In the eyes of Jesus, he met all the credentials; he had a willing repentant heart!

3. Zacchaeus was willing to conquer barriers and go out on a limb (or a tree) to get to Jesus...

4. Jesus told Zacchaeus that He was coming to his house, so go and prepare. How are you preparing for the coming of Christ and what obstacles do you need to overcome?!?!?



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Tabernacle Shadows

PART TWO

By Mark McWhorter

Position of the Tabernacle

The Tabernacle sat in the center of the Israelite camp with three tribes on each side. It is estimated that the encampment had 1.5 million people (Numbers 1:47-54; 2:3; 3:13-48). There was also a large number of Egyptians with them. Estimates for the land size of the camp vary between 12 and 40 square miles. The Tabernacle being in the center allowed equal access and equal protection for all Israelites.

Deuteronomy 23:14, "For the Lord thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp, to deliver thee, and to give up thine enemies before thee; therefore shall thy camp be holy; that he see no unclean thing in thee, and turn away from thee." A similar statement is made in Numbers 2:17.

The people were required to remain holy if they expected God to remain in their midst. God promised to leave them if they became unclean in his sight.

God is in the midst of the church today. Revelation 1:13, "And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle." Christ must be in the center of the Christian's life and in the center of each congregation. In all things he has pre-eminence, Colossians 1:18.

Two Key Men in Building the Tabernacle

There are two specific men mentioned in the building of the Tabernacle. Exodus 35:30-34, mentions Bezaleel and Aholiab. They were given the Spirit of God for inspiration. They were given wisdom, knowledge, and understanding. They were also given the skills to do all sorts of work. And they were given miraculous ability to teach all that they now knew.

Bezaleel's name means 'in the shadow of God.' Aholiab's name means 'tent of his father.' It is interesting that both of their names have reference to the Tabernacle being a shadow.

Christ is seen in both of these men. Isaiah 49:2, "And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in

the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he hid me." Proverbs 3:19, "The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens." Proverbs 3:20, "By his knowledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew."

Christ built the church. Matthew 16:18, "I will build my church." Ephesians 2:10, "For we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath ordained that we should walk in them."

Bezaleel was from the first chief tribe of the encampment, Judah. Aholiab was from the last chief tribe of the encampment, Dan. This shows that the first and the last were covered with this knowledge, understanding, and wisdom. But more importantly, as the two men are shadows of Christ, Christ is the first and the last. Revelation 1:8; 22:13 show Christ as the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and ending, the first and the last.

The Encampment Cross

Orientation for the Tabernacle begins on the East. This is the side of the Gate which gave access to God. The entrance to the Garden of Eden was on the East, Genesis 3:24. Moses was camped in front of the Gate to the Tabernacle.

Those encamped on the east side of the Tabernacle numbered 186,400. This was the largest number for any side.

Encamped on the opposite side, the west, were 108,100. This was the smallest number for any side.

Encamped on the north side, 157,600.

Encamped on the opposite side, the south, 151,450. The north and south are almost the exact same size.

If you were to take this figure with the East as the base, and raise it forward, with the west rising to the top, you would see a cross.

Now consider the names of the four leader tribes.

Judah is on the east and thus is the base. Judah's

name means *God be praised*. The base touches the earth. The church has the responsibility and honor of broadcasting praise of his name, Hebrews 13:15. Christ came to earth to glorify the name of the Father.

On the south side you have Reuben. Reuben's name means *See a son*. The world would see God's son on the Cross. Not a criminal, but Deity (Colossians 1:20; Hebrews 12:2). Jesus came to earth as the Son of God and the Son of Man. Referencing a son, there is a picture of family and love. Grace and mercy belong to the father and his son.

On the north side is Dan. Dan's name means *Judge*. Through his sacrifice Jesus became the Judge of the world. The Judge is above the world. He is a heavenly Judge, Hebrews 10:30; John 12:48. The Judge can only judge if there is a law. Thus, Dan also gives the picture of the Law. So, the two sides of the cross come together in the center.

Grace, mercy, and love meet the Judge. They are in equal balance. Grace, mercy, and love must equal the weight of the Law and the Judge. If the two are not equal, the cross falls to one side.

On the west side is Ephraim. He is at the top of the cross. Ephraim means *double fruit*. Christ gives all spiritual blessings. As Deity he has the authority and power to bless. As Creator he is the one giving heavenly things. While the cross is based, or sitting, on the earth, the blessings and fruits come from above. The largest section of the cross represents the praise and honor being given. That is where the chief efforts of those around the Tabernacle must be given. The double fruits will come. But the effort must not be primarily rooted in getting fruit but rather in glorifying God. If proper effort is given, fruit will come, and come bountifully. Blessings can only come down

to those praising him through his grace, mercy, love, and law. Blessings are not attainable without meeting in the center of the cross. Spiritual blessings cannot be received without looking up to Him who gives.

Why is the blessing side the smallest on the cross? A possibility is that the cross is on earth. The blessings received while on earth are great; but, they do not compare to the blessings received when entering eternal rest in heaven.

The Cross within a Cross

The furniture of the Tabernacle also forms a cross. The Ark and Mercy Seat are at the top. The Altar of Incense is joined with the Ark/Mercy Seat and also with the sides, the Candlestick and the Table of Shewbread. Then the base is the Laver and Brazen Altar. The Brazen Altar was the largest piece of furniture. The other furniture would fit inside it. So again, by raising the

picture of the furniture it is in the shape of a cross.

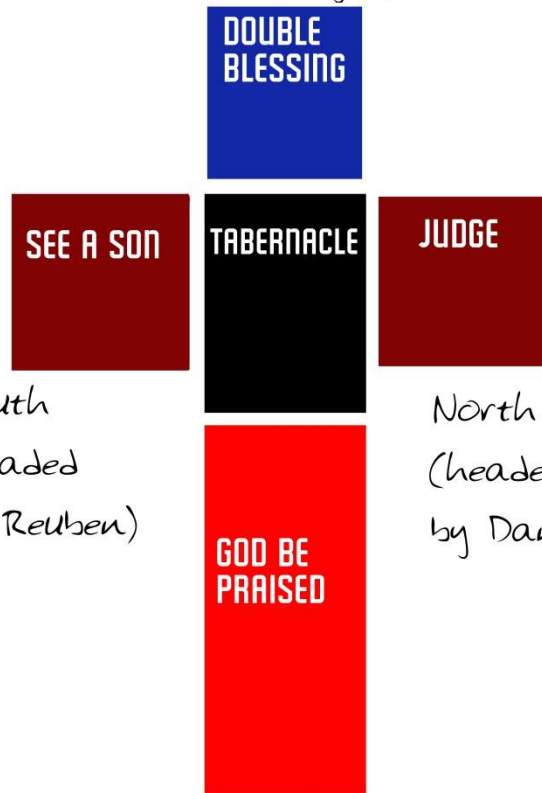
The Names of the Tribes and Levites as They Camped

On the east, you have the chief tribe Judah. Judah means *God be praised*. Moses and Aaron were also camped on the east between the Tabernacle and Judah. Moses is the one *drawn out* or *rescued*. Aaron is the *enlightener*. Then you have Issachar which means *he will bring reward*. Then you have Zebulon which means *permanent home*. When these names are put together you get the message, *God be praised. The drawn out enlightener will bring reward and a permanent home*.

It is not hard to see Christ in that message. Jesus said he came to glorify his Father. He came out of Galilee, of which was said that no prophet came out of it, John 7:52. He brought light, John 8:12. It is only

TABERNACLE CROSS

West (headed by Ephraim)



East (headed by Judah)

through him that the permanent home of Heaven is given as reward.

On the south, you find the chief tribe of Reuben. Reuben means *see a son*. The Kohathites camped between Reuben and the Tabernacle. Kohath means *assembly*. Then you have Simeon. Simeon means *hearings*. Then you have Gad which means *blessing or good fortune*. Putting these together you have *See a son. The assembly hears blessings/good fortune*.

Jesus is *the Son*. The assembly today is the church. It is only by being in the church that a person can continually hear the blessings and good fortune that comes by being a Christian.

On the west, the chief tribe is Ephraim. Ephraim means *double fruits or fruitful*. Between Ephraim and the Tabernacle was the Gershonites. Gershon means *expulsion*. Then you have the tribe of Manasseh. Manasseh means *causing to forget*. Then you have Benjamin which means *son of my right hand*. Putting these together you have *Be fruitful. Expulsion comes from forgetting the Son of my right hand*.

The Christian must be fruitful. Jesus is the Son of God. If a person forgets that and stops following Jesus, he is cast out by God.

On the north, the chief tribe is Dan, meaning the *judge*. The Merarites were between Dan and the Tabernacle. Merari means *bitter or sad*. Next you have Asher. Asher means *happiness*. Then you have Naphtali which means *my wrestling*. Putting these together you have *The Judge brings bitterness/sadness or happiness to my wrestling*.

Christ is the Judge. At the Judgment each person will have his/her life's workings (wrestlings) judged. That judgment will either bring eternal sadness or eternal happiness.

Standards of the Tribes

There are traditions from some scribes that each tribe had a flag (standard) of identification. The four chief tribes around the Tabernacle had interesting flags. Ephraim's flag had an ox. Dan's was an eagle. Judah's was a lion. And Reuben's was a man. These are the same creatures seen around the Throne in Revelation 4:6-9. Thus, representative of all those faithful to God gathered around God. The creatures give glory, honor, and thanks to God. They never rest in their work around the throne.

Another connection with this is how Christ is projected in the Gospels. Jesus is seen as King in Matthew. The Lion is considered a symbol of kingship.

Jesus is seen as the perfect man in Luke. Jesus is seen as servant in Mark. The ox is symbol of servanthood. Jesus is seen as the heavenly Son of God (Deity) in John. The eagle is a symbol of heaven.

While these standards are not stated in Scripture, it is interesting to see that these Jewish traditions actually fit with Jesus and his relationship with the church.

Keeping the Camp Clean

The leper was to live outside the camp, Leviticus 13:38-46. Those who were cursed were taken outside the camp, Leviticus 24:14. The rebellious were put outside the camp, Numbers 12:1-15. The unclean could hinder God's presence during battle, Deuteronomy 23:9-14.

God's principles of cutting off the unrighteous has not changed, Romans 11:22. The Roman Christians were encouraged to practice congregational discipline, Romans 16:17-20. Paul told the Corinthians not to fellowship fornicators, 1 Corinthians 5:9. Jesus told the churches in Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, and Laodicea to have proper self-discipline and discipline of others, Revelation 2-3. He threatened to remove their candlesticks.

This again shows the symbolism of the Israelites' encampment of the church. It is important to keep the church clean. Allowing sin to remain in the camp threatens the sanctification of the congregation with God.

There is much, much more to come in further issues of the Quarterly!

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Did Jesus Forgive “*Them*” While On The Cross?

Luke 23:34

By Jim Stutts

Denominations have taught for many decades that when Jesus on the cross prayed to His Father to forgive those who crucified him, that forgiveness was granted instantaneously. Others correctly argue that the prayer of Jesus was later answered on Pentecost in Acts 2. Also, false teachers and their disciples always point to the thief on the cross to justify their cheap salvation of faith/grace only and Calvinism. Though Jesus could and did forgive sins during his earthly ministry (*Mk. 2:10*), this was obviously done *before* His death. Since His death, a new law and plan of salvation was ratified and placed in force on Pentecost (*Acts 2*), fulfilling the prophecies of Isaiah 2 and Joel 2. We now live in the New Covenant dispensation or Christian Age.

If Jesus immediately forgave his persecutors on the cross, then:

1. They were forgiven without the *death of Christ*. Romans 6:1-6.
2. They were forgiven without the *burial of Christ*. Romans 6:1-6.
3. They were forgiven without the *resurrection of Christ*. Romans 6:1-6.
4. They were forgiven without the *complete blood-shed of Christ*.
5. They were forgiven without *belief in Him as God’s Son*. Jn. 8:24
6. They were forgiven without *repentance from their sins*. Acts 2:38
7. They were forgiven without *baptism for the remission of sins* Acts 2:38
8. They were forgiven without *being in Christ’s Kingdom/church for which he died*. Acts 2:47; John 3:3-5; Eph. 5:25

Thus, we can clearly see in a study of the above scriptures and time-line suggestions, that those who crucified Christ continued in their wickedness, not understanding what they had done until the full gospel was preached and obeyed on Pentecost, and *then* when understanding what they were guilty of, and only then were they forgiven of their sins—and not one second before!

Ways to Set Up Bible Studies

by James Sims Sr.

Using the tools of today

We have so many tools that we can use to reach out to teach those in the world about salvation. Each person is different in the way they like to learn, so it is good that we have various tools to use.

Back in the day, gospel meetings and door knocking were the main ways that churches spread the gospel to their community. In most places this is not as successful as it once was. Door knocking has been used by one denomination (not preaching the truth) so much that people have signs about no soliciting on their doors. With the way the world is in general, opening doors to strangers can be physically dangerous, so most people will not open their doors. Vacation Bible School (VBS) used to be an outreach but now it seems to end up being for the members of the body, as not many visitors, if any, come. Today, with all of the denominations at times abusing the gospel and putting on shows, people have become leery of these practices. Many have become skeptical of all religion because they feel their church is not truthful and that all churches are the same. People do not want their children involved with “church.”

...visitors must feel welcomed and physically comfortable; give up your scriptural seat! They are not familiar with your building.

Christ’s church is at times lumped in with all of the denominations. As we know, Christ’s church is not a denomination but the world does not know this. We constantly need to show everyone that we are different. We need to always preach and teach the truth. We need to show them we are not like denominations.

Then we can have the opportunity to show them what the Bible really teaches about their salvation.

The first tool we can use to reach people today is **technology**. Everyone is on their phone, tablet, or computer to find out about things. They like to research first before they try things. Because of this, one of the most important items a congregation can have is a website. It is the first thing most

people see about your congregation. Make sure the information is up to date and always attended to in regards to emails, calendar listings, and posted sermons. A website that has not been kept up to date is like a building that needs repair. It makes people wonder about the importance the church has in your life and that what else is being neglected? We know that this should not matter, but to outsiders this is

what they tend to think. Having a website can allow someone to find out about your congregation in the safety and comfort of their homes. People can be more receptive to listen to you if they have put their guard down by knowing about you first. For a person that is shy, this might be one of the easiest ways to spread the Word. It is easy to say, “check out our website” or leave them a card with the website information on it. If you stream your services this is a good way for them to see what your church service is like. On the website you can also have information for them like the DVDs, correspondence courses, and other tracts that can be mailed to them. As expressed in the previous article about building your foundation, be sure to have yourself ready to answer questions they may have after visiting or seeing your service on line.

As far as *inviting people* to visit your congregation, having special services annually like friend days, homecoming, or a special guest/visitor day is a good time to do this. It takes some of the pressure off when there is a special reason for inviting them. There is a good chance there will be other visitors. These events are good times to take a look at your building for repairs or a heavy cleaning. One time a member of the church had decorated the ladies room to make it more homey and inviting. Another member of the church told the member it was a waste as that was not important because that was not the reason that people were to come to services. It shouldn't matter, but visitors will notice. If you find items needing repair or cleaning, get it handled. It also does not hurt to change up things every now and then. Paint if need be. Move the plants around. Clean up the entrance. Update the bulletin board. (One visiting member told me they always take a look at the bulletin board where they visit, as it tells a lot about the congregation). Plant new plants (or at least make sure what you have is weeded). Have a work party or

do it yourself. Remember, to a visitor these can bring up red flags such as what else is neglected or why don't they spend some of their time at the church building.

Also, visitors must feel welcomed and physically comfortable; give up your scriptural seat! They are not familiar with your building. It can be a bit overwhelming. Offer assistance if you see a visitor. It is important that every time someone visits, you follow up by sending a card from the church and/or minister.

[The congregation's website] is the first thing most people see about your congregation. Make sure the information is up to date and always attended to...A website that has not been kept up to date...makes people wonder about the importance the church has in your life...

Just a short message acknowledging their visit and an open invitation for future visits or to answer any questions they may have. A card is usually better received. Following up with calls or visits later is best. We had a program at one congregation where the first and second time someone visited they received a card. The third time a phone call. After a fourth time a visit to see if they had any questions. This “visit” did not even mean going into their home. It could be done on the door step. We used this time to follow up with those that did not attend regularly also.

There are many tools that do the “talking” for you. With the different types of tools it makes it easy to reach many different people. As I stated before people like to learn in different ways. We have DVD's, tracts and publications, and printed Bible studies that can make it easy for someone to approach people. There are people that would prefer to watch, on their TV or computer, a 20 to 30 minute lesson rather than to read something. These are the people that would prefer a DVD. Some DVDs to consider are “Why Are There So Many Churches?” and “What Must I Do to be Saved?” along with the “Truth” DVD, all available from World Video Bible School (DVDs are \$1.00 each in quantity).

There are others that would prefer to read about a

subject. They would like the tracts and publications. Make sure you are using some of the newer tracts. Handing out some of the older tracts can be problematic, because though the message is still the same, they think it doesn't apply to them. They question the validity of 50 year-old tracts that have been sitting collecting dust in your church building. House to House, Heart to Heart offers many tracts as well as their publication which can be set up as a mailer to neighborhoods around your congregation. Other publications, such as *The Gospel Minutes* and *Seek the Old Paths*, just to name a couple, are good tools. For a good (though not completely up-to-date) list of publications available, check out GravelHill-ChurchofChrist.com and click on "Brotherhood publications."

For others that would prefer a formatted Bible study that is already laid out for them to use as their guide, as opposed to just studying or reading the Bible, there are correspondence courses, such as "God's Plan for Man." Correspondence courses are available at many brotherhood book stores. [Apologetics Press, House to House, and several others also produce correspondence courses. Check with Chula Vista Books or H&C Religious Supply, see their ads in this issue.] If possible it is best to match the tool with the person that you are trying to reach, but if you are not sure what they would like, hand out what you are most comfortable with presenting. A business card with the church information on it is good to include or at least a sticker on the item with a number or website to get in touch with someone. You can leave these tools everywhere.

Have business cards with the church information on them such as the website, contact information, service and class times. These are easy for all members to carry and use. If you have a chance to participate in a community event you can use this as a time to hand out any of your "tools." We used a community event to hand out VBS invitations to all of the kids. The invitation was attached to a blow up punch ball. It also helps to get your congregation's name out in the community so people hear and see it.

When talking about the website, I mentioned streaming of your services. This is a great tool for

many reasons. Those wanting to find out about your services can see it before showing up at the building; those traveling can take part in the service in case there is not a church where they are at; shut-ins can watch and feel a part of their congregation when they can no longer get out of their home for services; and the Word is reaching more and more people all the time. There are two ways to do the streaming. One requires a service to keep the worship services available to be watched at the viewer's leisure (archived). The other is live streaming. With this second option, people would have to watch as the class or service is happening. It may not be able to be archived. This way is less expensive and easier to manage. The live stream uses the VLC player added to your website for a continual view. Just make sure to turn on the microphone when needed.

Another outreach is to host a lesson on a local radio or TV station. One congregation that I was at had a half hour radio broadcast every Sunday morning an hour before Bible class on the local radio station. Even though it was local it was sent over several states. A woman that was attending the Lutheran denomination heard the radio broadcast. I was speaking on immersion

It is important that every member have some work within the church.

(I often use the word immersion instead of baptism to be clear on what the Bible means and not what some denominations have done with the word baptism by sprinkling). This woman lived 400 miles away from me but heard the Word. She e-mailed questions to me about how she was saved in her current religion. I would respond each week with more verses to teach her the truth. After several months she was immersed at the local church of Christ where she lived. She has become a very strong and supportive member of that congregation. She also told her friends from the Lutheran church why she was leaving. She continues to tell others about the truth. That radio broadcast was also heard by people in the town where I lived. Several came to the church from the broadcast. They heard the truth and then came to find out more. They were immersed and have become strong Christians. You never know who is listening. Take advantage of every opportunity to spread the Word.

A tool to use with the youth is to take them to a Bible camp run by members of the church. There are week-long sessions in the summertime and long weekend getaways during the year. Camp is a positive and true Christian environment where not only can young people be taught the Word, but they can be away from the outside world and around other Christians, who are living their life for Christ. It is a great place for one on one studies, group studies, and fellowshiping. This is a good place to share with others your story of how you came to be a Christian. I had many Bible studies with the young people there. I would always try to include others to sit in with us. (This is a good opportunity to teach young Christians how to teach the gospel in a one on one setting) One young man that I taught decided he wanted to be immersed. His parents came to the camp to see his immersion. They asked me what I had taught their son. I then had a Bible study with them. They heard the truth and a little later became Christians, leaving their denomination and following the Word of God.

An ad in your local phonebook or newspaper may be a way to get your congregation's information to the public but remember these are not used as much as they once were. Contacting the local hotels and asking how to be put in their book of local information may be a good way to get your congregation known. Also, sometimes realtors have books they give to new homeowners with local information.

It is important that every member have some work within the church. This keeps them included as well as spreads the load. This also assures that even if someone is out of town the work of the church will continue. You need to know who can help with giving you support when you reach out to teach someone about the Bible. It is important that new members connect with at least six people in order to feel connected and a sense of belonging. Every one of the congregation needs to be informed. Emails and texting are great for spreading information. Post information on your bulletin board. Some churches use a phone tree whereas the minister calls two people. Those two people then call their assigned two people and so on it goes.

The most important tool you have to use for Christ is yourself. Pray for guidance. Listen to what God tells you (not that He speaks directly in your ear, but how He guides you and answers prayers). Always remember to listen to those searching so that you can

answer the questions that they have and teach them what the Bible says about salvation. Always be yourself. People can tell when you are not. Always speak the truth. Study your Bible. Using the Modern Literal Version (New Testament) is also helpful. It gives you the Biblical Greek words and their meanings so you have the proper meaning for the word. Be ready at all times. Using the tools listed will help you to reach others, giving you the opportunity to have Bible studies to teach them about what they need to do for their salvation. Remain faithful. Remember Philippians 4:13: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Teach others, not because it is your job, but because of your love for saving their soul. Even when you don't understand fully what God is asking of you, be faithful. Always preach the whole counsel of God.

To the brethren: "Peace to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen" (Ephesians 6:23-24)

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The Mystery Image of Marriage

By Perry Hall

Parents need to talk to their children about singleness, marriage, divorce, and homosexuality. Parents need to show how each are connected to one another because they are not separate topics. Parents also need to know and show how they are connected to obedience—because God is God and we are not—but even more deeply, to the image of God. In this article we are going to begin and end with homosexuality, and throughout it connect marriage to the image of God. While that might seem like an odd connection, hopefully by the end you will see how connected they all are.

Due to the director of the new live-action version of *Beauty and the Beast* celebrating what he called a “gay scene,” I had a conversation at dinner with my children (dinner is the best place for conversations). “What do you think your parents would do if one of our children announced they were gay?” One said a gay friend at school got kicked out of their family. I said that is not the response God wants us to have.

First, we would reaffirm our love for the child. Second, we would reaffirm what God teaches on homosexual activity (Romans 1:26-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10). Third, we would admit everyone has tendencies which they must guard against, especially sexual. Fourth, we would encourage them, letting them know there are people (some even we know) who fight against same-sex attraction who are faithful Christians. Some remain single (Mt. 19:12), and others with God’s help have a happy marriage (1 Cor. 6:11). And finally, we would search out the possible reasons for such feelings.

Personally, everyone I know who has same-sex attraction was sexually molested as a child. This is not a scientific settled question, and my experience is purely anecdotal. It is important to know that just because someone “feels” attracted does not mean they are homosexual. I have thought men were good looking, and in today’s cultural that is encouraged to mean I am gay. I was even called gay in middle school because I sat with my legs crossed (it was comforta-

ble!). Just because something is called “gay” doesn’t mean it is. Also, God doesn’t punish tendencies or feelings unless we act on them, whether homosexual or heterosexual. That “acting on them” would also include mentally lusting. Lusting is not thinking someone is attractive. It is mentally having sex with them (Mt. 5:32). That applies to someone homosexual, heterosexual, single, or married.

One thing positive that came from the movie controversy is it added an opportunity to speak to our children on the positive and godly Christian response to homosexuality. And now I want to expand that thought with you on the connection between marriage and the image of God.

Life without God is like looking in the mirror with the lights turned off – useless and unenlightening. Life minus God leads to a mess, confusion, and misunderstandings on even the most simple of truths. In fact, I will say life is impossible to understand without God. Life with or without God can be painful; loneliness can be suffocating, obedience can be a struggle. Often our burdens come from our own sins. Others come from struggling with our weaknesses. Pain and suffering can even come from serving the purposes of God. That means some sufferings originate from God. Which brings us to these questions: What right does God have to do that?! Is there a greater purpose to God’s commands than just obedience? Let’s answer these questions by looking at some obscure passages about certain marriages so that we can discover the mystery image of marriage.

I. Jeremiah - God Commanded Not To Marry.

Jeremiah could not marry by God’s command (Jer. 16:1-4). Because of God’s prohibition to get married, Jeremiah could not have children. This emptiness was not because he was physically unable, but rather God forbade him to. Harsh command. Maybe some might argue unfair. What right did God have in forbidding the personal happiness of Jeremiah that comes from marriage and children?

Yet consider the coming national and personal pain to be inflicted on Judah and its inhabitants due to its expulsion into captivity. Would worrying about a wife and children and losing them be worth having a wife and children? Sounds similar to another situation where Paul suggested – not commanded – the single life due to the “present distress” (1 Cor. 7:26).

While harsh, can we see God is trying to protect Jeremiah from future pain? God’s purpose was not to make Jeremiah suffer, but to exchange one type of suffering for another. Sometimes present, short-term anguish saves us from future, life-long sorrow. And yet, the human side longs for contemporary companionship. Maybe, I argue with myself, at least with a wife by his side, Jeremiah could have had some comfort during his own personal suffering...maybe. But not necessarily. Just as we are told to remember Lot’s wife; remember Job’s.

Which is worse, to be commanded not to marry, or to marry knowing you will see your wife and children suffer?

What right did God have to command Jeremiah not to marry or have children? God knew it was for Jeremiah’s own good. Plus, God is God; and we are not.

II. Hosea – God Commanded to Marry a Prostitute

Hosea’s wife Gomer was “a promiscuous wife;” and God had commanded that marriage take place (Hos. 1:2). Hard to believe isn’t it?! Not very comforting, is it? How to interpret the phrase “a promiscuous wife” or as some versions say, “a wife of harlotry,” is grammatically difficult. Very plainly, God commanded Hosea to marry a prostitute. Either God told Hosea to marry a woman who would become a prostitute, or else Hosea was commanded to wed a woman already practicing prostitution. Either way, God’s precept was not pleasant. It invited pain.

What was the purpose of this horrific command? God chose Hosea to represent Himself – what a blessing; and Hosea’s wife was to represent unfaithful Israel – what a curse. Can you imagine being married to a prostitute? God can! Can you visualize the hurt that comes from adultery? God is able to! Can you picture seeing your wife pregnant and knowing (or at least suspecting) that the child is not yours? Look at the name of Hosea’s second child – Lo-ammi (Hos. 1:9). It means, “Not my people.” Considering the whole martial set-up was parabolic, what would naming

your child, “not mine” symbolize? Gomer, Hosea’s wife, had gotten pregnant by having an affair, or more likely through prostitution. The point is, God suffers the pain of infidelity which many suffer.

So, which is worse, to be commanded not marry, or commanded to marry someone whom you knew would betray you? Jeremiah’s situation, while still lonely, is not as agonizing. Being single can be better than being married. God knows our pain. Restoration between Hosea and Gomer (and God and Israel) would come (Hosea 3). But even in the healing there is hurt; even in the longing there is loneliness.

What right did God have to command Hosea marry a prostitute? Hosea was given the privilege of illustrating God’s suffering and redemption to the people. So there is a greater purpose than Hosea’s individual happiness. Plus, God is God; and we are not.

III. God Killed Ezekiel’s Wife

Ezekiel, another prophet, is another living parable. God allowed Ezekiel to have a wife; and yet God said something personally dreadful to any loving husband:

Ezekiel 24:16 (HCSB) “Son of man, I am about to take the delight of your eyes away from you with a fatal blow. But you must not lament or weep or let your tears flow.

What was taken away? The desire of Ezekiel’s eyes, which was his wife. God will take her from Ezekiel, and the loving husband is not allowed to mourn outwardly, except to groan silently (v. 17). Only by looking at eternity can we even begin to understand. But in this life, is it better to have loved and lost, than not to have loved at all? Maybe...and only after the hurt has healed. An important follow-up theological question is, can a believer in God stay faithful after such a taking away? Can we trust a God like this? But again, this tremendous blow against Ezekiel’s happiness was parabolic of both God and Israel. Notice what Ezekiel preaches immediately afterwards:

Ezekiel 24:20-24 So I answered them: “The word of the LORD came to me: ‘Say to the house of Israel: This is what the Lord GOD says: I am about to desecrate My sanctuary, the pride of your power, the delight of your eyes, and the desire of your heart. Also, the sons and daughters you left behind will fall by the sword. Then you will do just as I have done: You will

not cover your mustache or eat the bread of mourners. Your turbans will remain on your heads and your sandals on your feet. You will not lament or weep but will waste away because of your sins and will groan to one another. Now Ezekiel will be a sign for you. You will do everything that he has done. When this happens, you will know that I am the Lord Yahweh."

God knew the loss that Ezekiel suffered. Loss leads to loneliness. So, which is worse, to be commanded not to marry; or commanded to marry a prostitute with whom you would be reconciled with; or knowing the delight of your eyes would be taken away from you by God? Pain comes with many choices. Loneliness comes in many forms.

What right did God have to kill Ezekiel's wife? Remember, there is a greater purpose than Ezekiel's personal happiness. Ezekiel is given the opportunity to be put in God's place; and Israel gets to learn how they have hurt God and themselves. Plus, God is God; and we are not.

IV. Marriage Is For Life; No Remarriage Except for Adultery

Jesus lived the single life which is the same result as one living divorced but not for fornication. In discussing marriage and divorce, Jesus Himself wisely goes back to the beginning:

Matthew 19:9-10 And I tell you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery." His disciples said to Him, "If the relationship of a man with his wife is like this, it's better not to marry!"

Loneliness is painful; pain itself can be lonely. But there are situations that are worse than loneliness. There are situations lonelier than being alone. Which is worse — to be alone and not married, or married and alone? Again, which is worse — to be alone with God, or alone without God? Heartaches come in many forms. And amazingly, no matter what kind of pain we suffer, God seems to have suffered just like us.

What right does God have to write the rules on singleness, marriage, divorce, and remarriage? First, understand that every marriage is to be a pattern of God's relationships; whether Yahweh and Israel, or Jesus and the Church. Just like Hosea and Ezekiel, we have the privilege of being a living parable of God. And the rule of no divorce and remarriage except for fornication is true to form; God did not divorce Israel except for fornication (Jer. 3:8).

The concept of "No Fault Divorce" is not only ruining families, and America, it is ruining the opportunity for us to model Jesus' love for His church to all the world.

What right does God have to write the rules of marriage? The right is greater than our personal happiness. The right is allowing us to teach the world by living the relationship of God with His "wife." Plus, God is God; and we are not.

V. Marriage is Defined as Between a Man and a Woman

When Jesus speaks about marriage, notice what He says,

Matthew 19:4-6 "Haven't you read," He replied, "that He who created them in the beginning made them male and female," and He also said: "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, man must not separate."

Marriage is much more than just a scriptural place to have sex. It is a process of two people leaving a mother and father, becoming one flesh, and becoming a mother and father also. In other words, marriage is the foundation of the family. A society that suffers from the breakdown of the family suffers a societal breakdown itself. Seeing this, we can see how premarital, extramarital, and homosexual marriages are all wrong for the same reason. It breaks down the family structure which destroys society. So this is again for our own good, but even more. It parallels Christ and the Church. We know the Holy Spirit uses this passage in Ephesians 5 to parallel the husband-

**...premarital,
extramarital,
and
homosexual
marriages are
all wrong for
the same
reason.**

wife relationship to the relationship of Jesus to the Church. Jesus too left His Father, to receive a bride, and make us one flesh with Him. Jesus did not marry a “man.”

Marriage is more than just about the happiness of two people. Notice again:

Genesis 1:26-28 Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness. They will rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock, all the earth, and the creatures that crawl on the earth.” So God created man in His own image; He created him in the image of God; He created them male and female. God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it. Rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and every creature that crawls on the earth.”

Jesus left His
Father, to receive a
bride, and make us
one flesh with Him.

Jesus did not marry a
“man.”

While the second “marriage ceremony” (Gen. 2:23-24) is about how the woman is made in the image of man (1 Cor. 11:7-9); the first “marriage ceremony” is about how man and woman together are made in the image of God. Since marriage is about a male and female together being the image of God, then what an amazing privilege and responsibility! Although God is not pictured as male and female, we do know that God is a creative being. A marriage made of a male and a male cannot create. A marriage made of a female and a female is just as barren. A husband and wife, male and female marriage, mirrors the image of God. Just as God was fruitful and filled the earth, a male and female marriage is the God-sanctioned mechanism to image that work by being fruitful and filling the earth.

Jim Garlow – “We know that God is neither male nor female. Yet we are made “in his image.” In spite of the fact that we are, as individuals, made in the image of God, the true, full image is expressed when the two halves of humanity complement each other and become one. If I understand the role of marriage properly, a male, by himself, is not fully

representative of all the descriptors of the image of God... At the same time, if I understand the early pages of Genesis correctly, a female, by herself, cannot do justice to the full spectrum of the image of God. However, when the two complimentary halves of humanity unite – physically, spiritually, mentally, emotionally and psychologically – the image of God, containing both tenderness and strength, is manifested. Male and female are made anatomically, emotionally and spiritually for oneness. Husband and wife, joined together, represent the full spectrum of the image of God.”

America, and other parts of the world, has become so morally degraded as to legalize marriage between two men or two women. Such is unscriptural for several important reasons:

1. Contrary to God’s design for marriage (i.e., male and female)
2. Contrary to God’s design of the human bodies (i.e. unnatural sex)
3. Contrary to God’s design to have human marriage pattern His marriage.

Consider this last one. If homosexual marriage is acceptable in God’s sight, then which wife is the head, and which husband subjects himself to the other? Which husband is the weaker vessel if both are the same kind of vessel? Which wife must lay down her life for the other wife? Which wife is Christ? All of the rules of a marriage have been thrown out. But then again, society – and “Christianity” – has already done this:

- Done away is marriage for life except for fornication.
- Done away is husband the head of the wife.
- Done away is sex reserved for marriage.
- Done away is the joy of having children only in marriage.

Because “Christianity” has forgotten that our marriages model God’s, marriage has been degraded in

worth. No wonder our country has forgotten marriage is only between a male and a female. It had already forgotten everything else God said about marriage.

As we have seen with Hosea, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, we also living such a parabolic life is not unusual. Christians are to teach the world by our marriages. This is far more than just some rules God made up. This is even more than just an application of “plumbing.” Homosexual marriage is wrong because it corrupts God’s message having mankind teach Jesus’ marriage to His church. Homosexual marriage is as wrong as Jesus committing homosexual sex. Therefore homosexual marriage is wrong for the same reason divorce for any cause is wrong. It does not illustrate to the world Jesus’ marriage to His bride.

Conclusion

Paul states about marriage and Jesus’ relationship to the church as a mystery (Eph. 5:32):

“Unbeknownst to the people of Moses’ day (it was a ‘mystery’), marriage was designed by God from the beginning to be a picture or parable of the relationship between Christ and the church. Back when God was planning what marriage would be like, He planned it for this great purpose: it would give a beautiful earthly picture of the relationship that would someday come about between Christ and His church. This was not known to people for many generations, and that is why Paul can call it a ‘mystery.’ But now in the New Testament age Paul reveals this mystery, and it is amazing. This means that when Paul wanted to tell the Ephesians about marriage, he did not just hunt around for a helpful analogy and suddenly think that “Christ and the church” might be a good teaching illustration. No, it was much more fundamental than that: Paul saw that when God designed the original marriage He already had Christ and the church in mind. This is one of God’s

We must look beyond the personal legal questions about marriage – not because they do not matter – but because they point to a greater purpose... God is asking everyone to live out His marriage in theirs.

great purposes in marriage: to picture the relationship between Christ and His redeemed people forever!” (George Knight III, “Husbands and Wives as Analogues of Christ and the Church” in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, edited by John Piper and Wayne Grudem [Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991], 175-76).

One of our goals in this article was to reveal part of the mystery of marriage; that it is a relationship that displays to the world the image of God.

When a man is about to be married, it is often said half-jokingly and half-seriously, that he has no say about how the wedding goes because the wedding is her day. From an American, human point of view such is no doubt true. Plus, most men just don’t care about the color of the napkins at the reception. But the Bible tells us that the wedding day is ultimately God’s day, because the marriage is God’s.

We must look beyond the personal legal questions about marriage – not because they do not matter – but because they point to a greater purpose. God is not making laws just to make laws, or giving commands just to cause pain. God is asking everyone to live out His marriage in theirs. The very first time God’s image and likeness is mentioned, it is mentioned within the boundaries of a marriage. While there are many ways mankind exhibits God’s image, one that must not be forgotten is our marriages are made in the image of God. While God is a plurality in unity, so is a marriage. God is three in one; a marriage is two in one plus God.

“When a man and a woman celebrate the Sacrament of Matrimony, God as it were ‘is mirrored’ in them; He impresses in them his own features and the indelible character of his love... Marriage is the icon of God’s love for us... Indeed, God is communion too: the

three Persons of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit live eternally in perfect unity. And this is precisely the mystery of matrimony: God makes of the two spouses one single life. The Bible uses a powerful expression and says ‘one flesh,’ so intimate is the union between man and woman in marriage. And this is precisely the mystery of marriage: the love of God which is reflected in the couple that decides to live together. Therefore a man leaves his home, the home of his parents, and goes to live with his wife and unites himself so strongly to her that the two become — the Bible says — one flesh.” (“Pope” Francis)

Which is worse – pain and loneliness without God, or pain and loneliness with God? Life is less painful and less lonely when God is with us, even if obeying God causes us pain and loneliness.

What is this article about? Five essential points:

1. Let us not be too quick to bemoan our own lives, wishing we lived someone else’s. I doubt any of would want to change places with Jeremiah, Hosea, or Ezekiel.
2. Let us be quick to go to God with our pain, suffering, and anguishes, knowing He has suffered too. We see this poignantly when Hosea and Ezekiel’s marriages mirrored God’s own suffering.
3. Let us accept what God has chosen for us. God is God; and we are not.
4. Let us glory in the responsibility and privilege of paralleling the image of God for the world in our marriages.
5. Let us parents prepare our children by living God’s image in our marriage, and by talking to them about their relationship with God

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Encouragement & Exhortation in the WALK of the Christian

By Jim Mitchell

*"I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to **have a walk worthy of the calling with which you were called**, with all lowliness and gentleness with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:1-3).¹*

*"Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ also forgave you. Therefore be followers of God as dear children. And **walk in love, as Christ also has loved us** and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma" (Eph. 4:31-5:2).*

*"For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. **Walk as children of light** (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), proving what is acceptable to the Lord" (Eph. 5:8-10).*

*"See then that you **walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil**" (Eph. 5:15-16).*

*"For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding: that you may **walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God**:" (Col. 1:9-10).*

*"As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so **walk in him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving**" (Col. 2:6-7).*

*"**Walk in wisdom** toward those who are outside, redeeming the time" (Col. 4:5).*

Forms of the word "*peripateō*" are found almost 100 times in the New Testament, with half of those

occurrences located in the Gospels and Acts and used literally. The term is found around 30 times in the letters of Paul where he typically takes that which literally means to "walk," or "walk about"² and uses it in a metaphorical sense to encourage the child of God in the journey of life. The way Paul uses the word not unusual, as such a usage of "walk" predates the language of the New Testament, being found as far back as the days of Aristotle.³ We still use the term "walk" in similar ways today.⁴ If, for the moment, focus is made on the way the above verses use this term, what lessons are to be learned, and how do these verses challenge and encourage us in the 21st century?

² Liddell & Scott translate it: "walk up and down, walk about, traverse" and metaph. "walk" and "live." *A Greek-English Lexicon Compiled by Henry George Liddell & Robert Scott*, (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1968) p. 1382. see also C. Mack Roark, "Interpreting Ephesians 4-6: God's People in a Walk Worthy of His Calling," *Southwest Journal of Theology*, vol. 31, no. 1 Fall 1996 (p. 32-42). "The exhortation is to 'walk worthy.' The Greek verb translated by KJV and NASB 'walk' (*peripateō*) is regularly used by Paul in the modern sense of 'live,' or 'conduct oneself.' The rest of Ephesians will build on this verse" (p. 32).

³ Regarding the metaphorical usage of "walk", see Bob Stallman "Divine Hospitality in the Pentateuch: A Metaphorical Perspective on God as Host" (PhD diss., Northwest University, 1999). "While most certainly not the first ever to reflect on the subject of metaphor, Aristotle's treatment of the subject is not only the oldest extant but clearly the most influential" (p. 10). "It is one thing to recognize that metaphor is much more than a way to embellish a thought and to assert that it has cognitive power to foster insight. It is another thing to qualify that assertion in terms that everybody can accept. At present, a definitive or comprehensive theory of metaphor does not exist and the subject as a whole has points of intersection with many other disciplines" (p. 33).

⁴ The continued usage of "walk" in non-literal ways is attested in idiomatic expressions where it is used (along with accompanying words) to describe various life situations. For example, idioms such as "walk a tightrope", "walk tall", "walk the floor", "walk on eggshells", "a walk in the park", etc., indicate the ease or difficulty with which certain circumstances in life are faced.

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, all verses are quoted from the New King James Version.

Ephesians 4:1-3

Setting the Stage & Defining the Ingredients in the Walk of the Christian

To the Christians in Ephesus, Paul set the parameters within which qualities and characteristics of their walk in Christ were to be found. The word translated “worthy” (axios) carried with it the idea of “counterbalancing,” conveying the thought of something “weighing as much, of like value, worth as much as something else.”⁵ The significance of such a description becomes evident by the fact that Paul exhorts the Lord’s church in Thessalonica, Philippi, and Colossae to live the same way (I Thess. 2:12; II Thess. 1:11; Phil. 1:27; and Col. 1:10).

In addition to providing the foundation upon which the elements of this walk are to be based, Paul also gave the Ephesians a glimpse of the goal he was setting before them, the same goal which Paul was also endeavoring to reach. In striving for the “goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:14), Paul told the Philippians he had given up everything, and emphasized to them what was needed if they were to eradicate such distractions from their lives as well (Eph. 4:17-32). Paul’s desire to gain Christ (Phil. 3:8) kept before him the focus to “know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means I may attain to the resurrection from the dead” (3:10-11).⁶ He admonished the Ephesians to “put on the new man which was created according to God, in righteousness and true holiness” (4:24).

Why this concern with the walk of these Christians, and how do these verses both challenge and encourage us? Ephesus was a city where Paul spoke boldly in the synagogue for three months and taught daily for two years in “the school of Tyrannus” (Acts 19:8-10). It was at Ephesus that “many of those who

had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all” (19:19). The temple of Artemis (Diana), one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, and its cultic worship held a tight grip on Ephesian culture (19:23-41) and it was here that the message of the Gospel of Christ threatened the influence of the “banking and financial center for the province of Asia.”⁷ With the “walk” (i.e. “counterbalancing”) of Christ in view, weighing the value of the “unsearchable riches of Christ” (3:8) with the materialistic, hedonistic life in which the “the rest of the Gentiles walk” (4:17-20) provided a stark contrast between Gentiles who were “alienated from the life of God” (4:18) and Gentiles who were “imitators of God as dear children” (5:1). The instruction Paul gives deals with steps vital to attaining worthiness in one’s walk of life.

First of all, Paul begins his discussion by stating that this walk should be “with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering” (ASV, KJV, NKJV).⁸ It has been argued that even this initial wording, especially with regard to meekness/humility, stood the typical understanding of the Greek and Roman mindset of the day on its head. “...Paul interprets what his opponents call the weakness of his bodily presence...as lowliness, – that is, humility – when face-to-face with the Corinthians. But in Greco-Roman culture humility wasn’t considered a virtue.”⁹ The child of God was

⁷ Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity: Third Edition* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2003) p. 198. See also Bruce Morton, *Deceiving Winds: Christians Navigating the Storm of Mysticism, Leadership Struggles & Sensational Worship* (Nashville, TN: 21st Century Christian, 2009) p. 12, 13. Chrysostom, wrote (between 197 and 112 AD): “You know about the Ephesians, of course, and that large sums of money are in their hands, some of them belonging to private citizens and deposited in the temple of Artemis, not alone money of the Ephesians, but also of aliens and of persons from all parts of the world, and in some cases of commonwealths of kings, money which all deposit there in order that it may be safe...” *Oration* 31:54.

⁸ The NASV translates this phrase “with all humility and gentleness, with patience”, while the NIV translates it as “Be completely humble and gentle; be patient.”

⁹ Robert H. Gundry, *Commentary on the New Testament: Verse-by-Verse Explanations with a Literal Translation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010). In commenting on 2 Cor. 10:1-2, Gundry also notes: “So in mentioning his humility as “lowliness” Paul is both associating it with the Christ’s meekness and mildness and admitting to not measuring up to the stand expected of him by his opponents (compare 12:21).” p. 1324. Kenneth Wuest states that the word “in pagan Greek meant only abject servility, slavishness, a groveling, mean-

⁵ Liddell & Scott. p. 171. Note that the authors indicate it may have been after the time of Homer a shift in the usage of the term occurred toward “moral relation,” and yet, such a shift would still retain aspects of the basic concept of being weighed in the balance.

⁶ While in the Philippian letter, Paul expresses what he personally gave up for Christ and the goal for which he was personally striving, in the Ephesian letter Paul uses terms of inclusion – “In him we have redemption” (1:7); He made His grace “to abound toward us in all wisdom” (1:8); He made known “to us the mystery of His will” (1:9); “In Him also we have obtained an inheritance” (1:11).

faced with going against cultural norms to embrace the life, teachings, and purpose of the Son of God and to share the same with everyone they met. The concern was one of bringing honor and glory to God and to Jesus the Christ rather than working to attain honor and glory for themselves. The practical result of *long-suffering* is described by Paul in the following two phrases: (1) “*bearing with one another in love*” (v. 2), and (2) “*endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*” (v. 3). That these two items are descriptive of one’s patience should be without question, but how often have you seen children of God profess that they are patient people while manifesting a void in their life in these two areas?

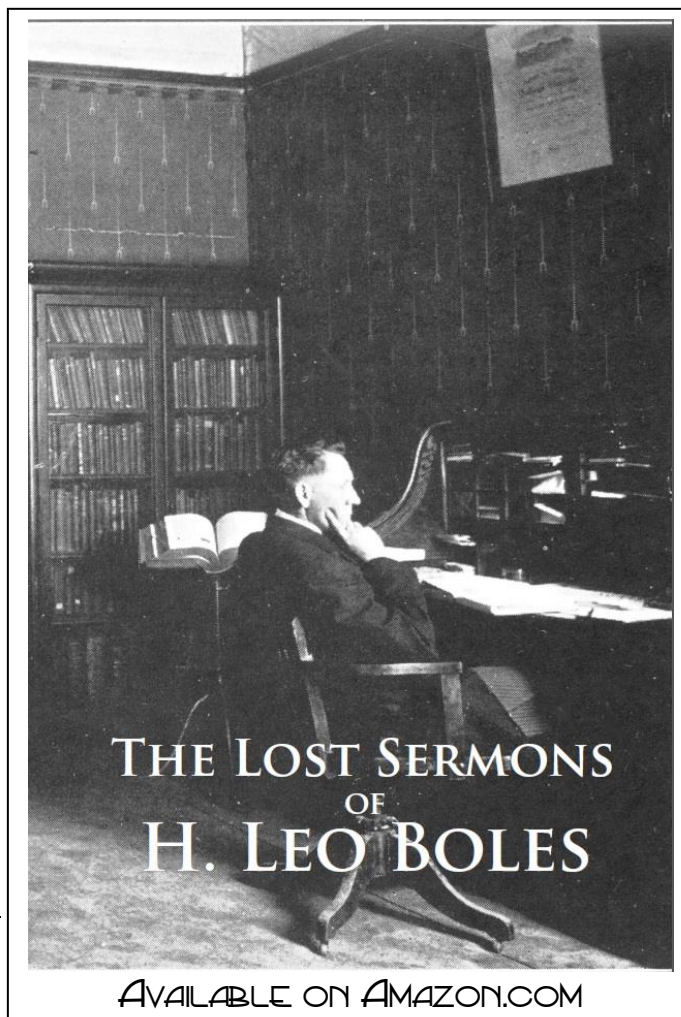
Second, after dealing with basics of the faith (4:4-6), various gifts and areas of service within the body of Christ (4:7-11), and the purposes for which those areas of service exist (4:12-16), Paul returns to the topic of the walk of the redeemed (4:17). The Ephesian Christians should “*no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles*”; and after enumerating why that was the case (4:17-19), he returns to positive instructions concerning the Christian walk (4:20-5:2). In order to walk in a way faithful and pleasing to God, and that kept them on the narrow road that leads to life, Paul instructed them to: “*put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt...*” (v. 22); “*be renewed in the spirit of your mind*” (v. 23); “*put on the new man which was created according to God,*” (v. 24); “*each one speak truth with his neighbor*” (v. 25); “*not let the sun go down on your wrath*” (v. 26); work, that you may “*have something to give him who has need*” (v. 28); speak “*what is good for necessary edification*” (29); put away everything which is negative (v. 30); and “*be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ also forgave you*” (v. 31).

In the third place, Paul’s instructions focus the basis for their spiritual walk in love. “And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma” (5:2). The outgrowth of a walk regulated by our love for Christ, and for God and His word, was to live in such a way that the light of the life of Jesus was seen in their life. “*For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.*

Walk as children of light” (5:8).

Finally, Paul’s instructions to the church in Ephesus emphasized both responsibility and urgency. “*Look carefully how you walk: not as unwise, but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil*” (5:15-16 – Hugo McCord’s translation of the NT, 1988).

I have often heard Christians say that the Lord’s church isn’t growing like it did through the 20th century (or the 1st century for that matter) because “people just aren’t as interested in the Bible and eternity as they used to be.” Frankly, I don’t believe history agrees with that conclusion. The 21st century (with all of its problems), is not more hedonistic, humanistic, or paganistic than the world Christians in the past have reached with the Gospel. Is it possible that the “walk” of the Christian has changed along with the times? When first-century Christians fled from Jerusalem because of persecution, they “*went about proclaiming the message*” (Acts 8:4 – McCord’s translation). May our *walk* take God’s word seriously enough that each of us strive to do the same.



spirited disposition, but in the N.T. has been glorified in its meaning.” Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest’s Word Studies: Ephesians and Colossians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1953) p. 94.

Quotes to Ponder

David spent a large part of his reign in subduing his enemies, conquering the rightful territory of the kingdom, and preparing an inheritance of wealth and power for his son Solomon, who managed, within forty years, to so misuse and squander it that his successor had to be content to rule over the diminutive territory of Judah and Benjamin — about three thousand six hundred English square miles! It is the ever old and ever new story, which everybody knows, and which nobody believes. David, born in poverty, reared in the school of adversity, trained by hard necessity to self-denial and self-reliance, wins his way from the sheep-cote to the throne, and from a feeble and precarious sovereignty to an enviable dominion among the nations. Solomon, born in wealth, reared in self-indulgence, and succeeding to a dominion which cost him nothing, although, by inheritance and special endowment gifted with wisdom above all his fellows, within two-score years brings his kingdom to the brink of ruin, sinks himself in the depths of folly and wickedness, and, at less than threescore, — when he ought to have been in a glorious prime, happy in the loving homage of his subjects, and in the respect and admiration of other nations, — is a weary, cheerless old man, a sated and disgusted sensualist, a base idolater, with shattered nerves, and clouded spirit, and wrecked faith, sinking into a hopeless grave. And yet, we are never done mourning over the ills of poverty — never done sighing after wealth and luxury! What short-sighted, unreasoning children we are!

(Isaac Errett, *Evenings with the Bible*, Vol. 1)

It is not the voice of the multitude, but the voice of truth, that has power with the conscience; that can produce rational conviction and acceptable obedience.

(Thomas Campbell, *Declaration and Address*)

One of the direct results of worldliness is a decline of benevolence.

(*A History of the Baptists in the Southern States East of the Mississippi*)

We are to keep in touch with the times in which we live. Our religious work must have reference to the religious needs of the men and women of our time. Our battles must be fought with the enemy

which confronts us today. Our fathers served their generation, and we must serve ours.

(J.H. Garrison,

The Reformation of Nineteenth Century)

[T]he early advocates of the cause of reformation were won, not so much by his [Alexander Campbell's] masterly discourses, as by friendly intercourse...

(Thomas W. Grafton, *Alexander Campbell: Leader of the Great Reformation of the Nineteenth Century*)

They [Young People's Societies] were found alike in Baptist, Methodist, and Congregational churches — in a very few instances in Presbyterian churches also. Considerable opposition was manifested by the more conservative, both ministers and laymen, to the organization of such societies; and in cases not a few there were good reasons for anxiety regarding the probable influence of a young people's society. If it were what its name implied, and only young people constituted it, a patent objection was that it would tend to make an unwise and unscriptural line of division in the church. This was not wholly a theoretical objection; for there were societies in the "sixties" [1860s] that actually accomplished such a division. The result of such an age-line, in a church of average human nature, would be an increasing feeling of independence on the part of the young people, and increasing perplexity and irritation on the part of the pastor and older members. Friction, if not conflict, was inevitable. Moreover these societies of young people were too frequently organized for social reasons mainly. Their chief ostensible purpose was the maintenance of a young people's prayer meeting, and generally they did manage to keep such a meeting just alive, but often at what a poor, dying rate! The real purpose of many societies was to furnish their members "a good time." The sociable flourished when the prayer meeting languished; so-called "literary entertainments," with oysters and ice cream, would bring together crowds, while only a few could be drawn to the place of prayer; the gastric nerve was cultivated at the expense of piety, and "the cooking-stove apostasy" found some of its brightest exemplars in these societies.

(Henry C. Vedder,

A History of the Baptists in the Middle States)

Temptation:

THE SAME TODAY AS YESTERDAY

By Devin Self

If you're reading this, then more than likely you know someone who has said something like: "I'm not sure if I can do everything the Bible says for me to do. You just don't understand how hard my temptations are—I can't overcome them!" A lot of the reason people might be quick to say this is that they are surrounded by friends or acquaintances that aren't strong enough to overcome the temptations either. And really, why don't we understand how difficult their temptations are? Is it because we don't have these specific temptations ourselves? Maybe this is true, or maybe it's because we're trying to do what is right in the name of the Lord, and think that we are exempt from temptations? Well I'll tell you this, no one is exempt from temptation, and there aren't any temptations out there that haven't been experienced before.

...no one is exempt from temptation, and there aren't any temptations out there that haven't been experienced before.

But that's the good thing about the scripture—with it we have the power to overcome any temptation. And if you do hear someone say these common excuses, why not share this verse with them? 1 Corinthians 10:13:

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.

Man has been around for quite some time now

and from the beginning there have been temptations. Just look at Eve in the garden, Genesis 3:6:

And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

Also note not only did this affect Eve but it also affected Adam. So you would think after all this time there would be some answer to all those temptations that man has experienced over and over, wouldn't you? There is an answer: living according to God's commands—same as it has always been. God is everlasting and will not permit us to suffer any temptation that is uncommon to man. We have a habit of thinking *our* temptation is different, but it isn't. Read with me about Jesus in the wilderness in Matthew 4:3-10:

And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Je-

sus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

*We have a habit of thinking **our** temptation is different, but it isn't.*

Not only does the devil know the difference between right and wrong, but he will do anything in his power to cause someone to sin. Whether it is manipulating scripture, making promises filled with lies and deceit, or pushing those *little* sins, he is at work. Ultimately the sins are still the same; they just might be covered with a different camouflage.

Remember what God promises us in 1 Corinthians 10:13, that no temptation will be one that we do not have the capacity to reject and overcome. Read in Ezekiel 18:20:

The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.

This passage clearly shows that no matter what the iniquity may be, there will be no temptation beyond the ability of the person to handle—he is held responsible when he gives in to that temptation.

God also sets limits in the spiritual world as he has in the physical world just like he shows us in Job 1:8-10:

And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth

evil? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.

Satan knew all too well he could not touch Job or anything around him because the Lord protected his servant Job. He was watching over him just like he will watch over us and not let any temptation come about on us that we cannot overcome ourselves. Not only that but he will also make a way for us to escape the temptation—we just have to look for it and take

it. When we don't take that way of escape, we must return to God in humble repentance.

Consider 1 John 1:7-9 as we close these thoughts:

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Not only [will God not permit us to be tempted above what we are able,] he will also make a way for us to escape the temptation—we just have to look for it and take it.

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OVERCOMING TEMPTATION

SELECT SCRIPTURES

By Gantt Carter

One of life's greatest questions is that of purpose. Why are we here on this planet? For what purpose did God create us?

God certainly did not create us because He needed us, but He created us to bring Himself glory and honor. He placed us in this universe, the temple He created for Himself, to be His image bearers. We are to reflect His glory to the world like mirrors pointed at a 45-degree angle. We are to **show His splendor** and to **spread His sovereignty**. By inspiration of the Spirit, Moses records,

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth" (Genesis 1:26-28).

We are here for our Creator's pleasure (Revelation 4:9-11). We should all join the psalmist in singing, "For Yahweh takes pleasure in His people; He adorns the humble with salvation" (Psalm 149:4).

We are tempted to sin by being tempted to focus on and reflect a different "glory" (see Romans 1:18-32). When we give in to the temptation, we depart from our created purpose, and we ultimately sacrifice our right to life (see Romans 6:23a).

Examination

Can we overcome temptation? Yes. We may not be able to overcome every single temptation that

comes our way in this life, but we certainly can learn to overcome temptations (1 Corinthians 10:13; James 1:12; Genesis 39:7-12). After we put on the Messiah by being immersed into Him (Galatians 3:26-27), we should not even expect to live a sinless life, but we are to strive for a life where we sin less (1 John 1:5-10).

One major way to help us develop our ability to fight back against temptations is to understand more fully the nature of temptations. The Word of God provides us with several insights into how Satan appeals to us to pull us away from God. Anytime you can understand your enemy, a large part of the battle is already won. Let us example together the nature of temptation.

Please consider these words from the apostle of love,

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever (1 John 2:15-17).

John warns us to not love or treasure this world. He makes this as important as anything else he writes about in his letters by connecting this directly to God's love. We truly know that we know the One who has sacrificed Himself for us and His love is whole in us when follow His Word (1 John 2:1-6).

The seriousness of this issue is also brought home by John's words about the temporary nature of the world and its sinful desires. Understanding this truth can help us immensely in overcoming temptation. The activities and things that are involved in our temptations will not last, but doing the will of God is directly connected to the eternal God (cf. 1 John

3:16-17; Isaiah 40:5-8; 1 Peter 2:22-25).

What does John mean by “world”? The world here refers to a system that is against God. He is not talking about the created world in general which is good and beautiful. He explains by talking about the desires of the flesh and the eyes, and the pride of life. These form the three basic forms of temptation, the avenues that Satan and the world of sin use to attack us. This author submits that all temptations/sins fall into at least one of these basic categories.

The term for “desires” here is often translated as “lusts.” The Greek term is ultimately a neutral word for passionate desire. The real question is what we desire and to how intensely we desire certain things in life. Longing for the things of life to a high degree is the basic meaning of idolatry.

Let us now examine the three basic aspects or types of temptation.

Pleasure/Passion

The first method of Satan mentioned by John is the desires of the flesh. Many temptations appeal to our physical urges and impulses. The basic idea here is a temptation to feel good apart from God’s will. We want to feel good in a way that dishonors God whenever we give in to this kind of worldly enticement. When we eat more than is healthy for us, we are wanting to feel something in that moment. When we stay up at night viewing inappropriate images on an electronic device, we are seeking to feel good.

There is nothing inherently wrong with feeling good or seeking pleasure, but we must not throw aside the glory of God to do so. In fact, the ultimate pleasure is only to be found in Him (Psalm 16:11). Understanding the difference between infinite pleasure and lesser pleasures is quite helpful in maintaining a healthy lifestyle before God.

Possession

The second form of temptation listed in the text above is the desires of the eyes. The desire of the things we are greedy for and hold so tightly in our hands. Materialism and covetousness are both at the core of this temptation. This desire is the desire to have something that dishonors God. The desire can be also wanting to possess something in a way that dishonors God (whether initially or ultimately) or even a level of desire that is not godly. Ultimately, giving in to this temptation is deciding to throw away the gold of Deity to replace it with some copper thing

(cf. Luke 9:23-25).

After setting forth the beauty of overcoming temptation, James explains,

Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God,” for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death (James 1:13-15).

A great example of this temptation is found in the book of Joshua:

Then Joshua said to Achan, “My son, give glory to the Lord God of Israel and give praise to him. And tell me now what you have done; do not hide it from me.” And Achan answered Joshua, “Truly I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and this is what I did: when I saw among the spoil a beautiful cloak from Shinar, and 200 shekels of silver, and a bar of gold weighing 50 shekels, then I coveted them and took them. And see, they are hidden in the earth inside my tent, with the silver underneath” (Joshua 7:19-21).

Achan confesses his sin of theft in this passage, but notice how he describes his thought process. He says he “saw” the valuables, he “coveted them”, and then he “took them.” That seems to be the pattern: We see it, we want it, and then we sometimes take it. Compare this concept with Deuteronomy 5:21 and Matthew 5:27-28.

Extra thought question: Have you ever noticed that Joshua equates confession of sin with praising and glorifying God?

God has created a world of great beauty and variety for our enjoyment, and the problem is not with the things of this world or our pleasure in them. The problem is in the way we attempt to replace God with them, by allowing them to reign in our hearts and control our days.

Pride/Place

The third and final way that Satan and world attempts to pull us away is that of pride or place. The basic temptation here is to be something, or to be something apart from the will of our Master.

The Greek term John uses for “pride” was used

by Plutarch to describe sham doctors, claiming to be able to cure anything. It involves the concept of thinking and claiming to be something you are not in reality. We must be careful of the danger of being conceited and thinking too highly of ourselves.

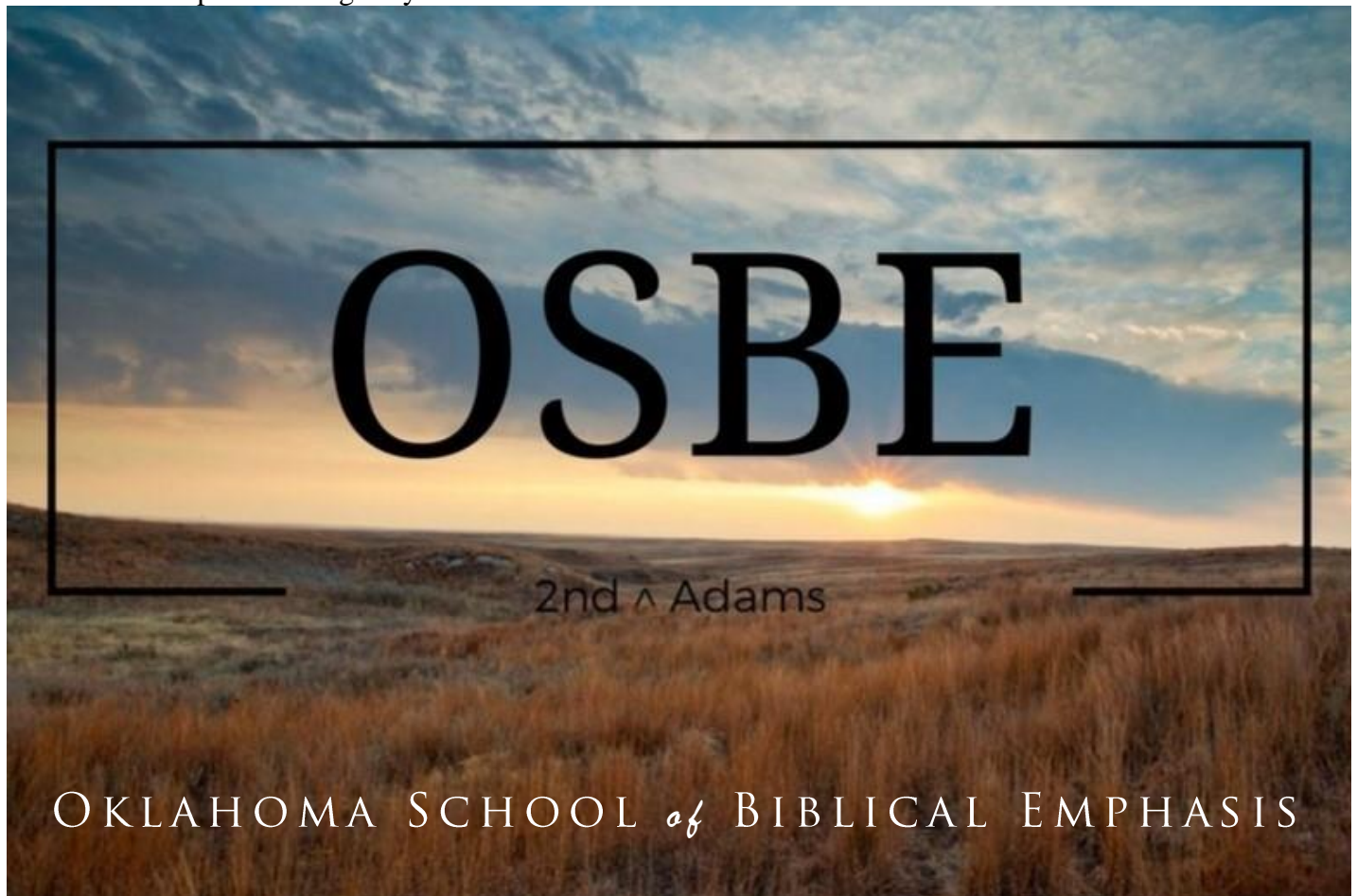
“Life” in 1 John 2:16 is the word from which we get our English words like biology. The word refers to the things of earthly life, to how one makes a living, etc. For comparison, see Luke 15:12, 30; 21:4. Paul told Timothy to not even be entangled in this “life” (2 Timothy 2:4), and we certainly ought not to be haughty in such activities of this life.

The fourth chapter of the book of Daniel provides us with an impactful lesson on the nature and consequences of arrogance and egotism. Nebuchadnezzar, the king of ancient Babylon, is literally brought down from his prideful height by the God of heaven

and earth (Daniel 4:29-33). He comes to his senses and declares the praises of Yahweh to all (Daniel 4:34-36). Please consider and apply his words that close the chapter:

Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, for all his works are right and his ways are just; and those who walk in pride he is able to humble (Daniel 4:37).

In the context of describing temptation, James gives us the way to overcome temptation (vs. 12-15) with the Word of God (vs. 16-22). If the Master wills, we will continue our look at the nature of temptation and how to overcome in next quarter’s edition of the Quarterly.



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To glorify God, to edify Christians, to help preachers improve their knowledge and ability, to strengthen church leaders, and to reach out with greater influence to the community.

But Thou Art Rich

By Kyle Frank

Looking at the title, we are reminded that those in the church at Smyrna were considered to be rich (Rev. 2:9) but according to the only true appraisal—that of the Lord, they were in truth poor or poverty-stricken. His is the only true appraisal of any particular situation. You *might* think that you are wealthy when in fact, you are poor, blind, and naked.

There are only two kinds of riches. The first is found in Luke 12:16-21—*And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: and he reasoned within himself, saying, What shall I do because I have not where to bestow my fruits? And he said This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater and there will I bestow all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, be merry. But God said unto him, Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee; and the things which thou hast prepared, whose shall they be? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.* This is the wealth that men chase throughout all the days of their lives. This is not the wealth that comes from God but by the hands of those who labor all the days of their lives.

How do people become rich? First, in temporal things, there are many ways to become rich. People may earn their riches, or they may find their riches, or they may have riches given unto them.

Second, True riches cannot be earned in the absolute sense of the word. Eph. 2:8—*for by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.* Still, required conditions must be met. 1 Tim. 6:12, 19—*Fight the good fight of the faith, lay hold on the life eternal, whereunto thou wast called, and didst confess the good confession in the sight of many witnesses... laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on the life which is life indeed.* This involves true obedience.

Third: True riches may be found or discovered and then possessed. Matt. 13:44, 46—*The kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hidden in the field;*

which a man found, and hid and in his joy, he goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field... and having found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it. That, then, requires action and sacrifice. Even in this sense, the riches are not earned. Someone else has provided them.

Fourth, True riches are given or have been given. James 1:17—*Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning.* Let us view these true riches which have been given us by God.

God has given to all of us the power to become children of God. John 1:12: *But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name.* His children are rich. They are heirs. Rom.8:16-17: *The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified with him.* We can assuredly conclude that these rich people at Smyrna had exercised that right. They had done what was necessary to become children of God. Gal. 3:26-27—*For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ.*

John 3:3-5 *Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*

Matt. 12:50—*For whosoever shall do the will of my Father who is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother.* The question for us all is that have we so done?

God has given all of us a guide, or a treasure map, telling how to find true riches. This is found in 2 Tim. 3:16-17 *Every scripture inspired of God is*

also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work.

The apostles called the gospel the unsearchable riches of Christ. Ephesians 3:8—*Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, was this grace given, to preach unto the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.*

It is necessary to conclude that those at Smyrna had used this guide and had followed it. Have we? God has given us an *example* to show that it is possible to find true riches. John 13:15—*For I have given you an example, that ye also should do as I have done to you.* Those are the words of the Savior that we are encouraged to follow! 1 Peter 2:21—*For hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow his steps.*

Remember! He was tempted as all of us. Heb. 4:15:—*For we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but one that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.* We can see that Jesus was now giving those at Smyrna further instruction. We have all of the required instructions (2 Peter 1:3). Do we possess true riches as did these? Heaven has paid the *price* for all of this. Christ was given to provide all of this. Eph. 5:2—*and walk in love, even as Christ also loved you, and gave himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for an odor of a sweet smell.*

1 Tim. 2:6—*who gave himself a ransom for all; the testimony to be borne in its own times;*

John 3:16—*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life.*

Since these at Smyrna were rich, we must conclude that they had taken advantage of this great provision. But, have we? Christ has given *assurance* (more riches) of His presence to those who obey Him and keep on obeying. Matt. 28:18-20 *And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.* It must be that these at Smyrna had kept on observing all those things which Jesus had commanded, for He said they were rich. Notice the assurance. "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28:20).

Will you be rich? You can never be rich until you avail yourself of His provisions! God, in His infinite mercy, has looked down upon the lowly children of man and has paid the highest, most horrible payment that could be paid. Because of his love, we have the opportunity to become rich—rich in the only way that truly matters. Cast off the world's riches, and seek the heavenly riches, those which only will matter.

THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF JACOB CREATH

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An UNEXPECTED Conclusion

By William Howard

The funeral of Menachem Mendel Schneerson was an odd event. It was not odd that a 92 year old man died from a stroke. He had a history of heart problems going back several years before his death in 1994. He was the leader of an ultra-orthodox Jewish movement (or sect, or cult) called the Chabad-Lubavitch. They are Hasidic Jews and he was their Rebbe for forty-three years (note: a Rebbe is far greater than a mere rabbi). In the last years of his life he was considered by his followers to be the Messiah. He did not deny the charge. How did his followers come to that conclusion? It couldn't have been from Moses or any other prophet. Schneerson was born in what is now the Ukraine. He was the son of a rabbi. He started nothing and fulfilled nothing. Thus the kingdom promised in Daniel was not started by Schneerson. He died for no one. He never stepped foot in Israel. His lineage is entirely unknowable thus it cannot be proven he is a decedent of David. He was born centuries after the Roman Empire and the temple. He fulfilled no prophecy. There are no signs associated with him. So, what criterion do his followers use to think he is the Messiah?

- 1) He was a good man.
- 2) He was a generous man.
- 3) He set up Jewish schools around the world ... and that's about it.

This is proof? Why would God have the prophets write so much describing the Messiah and the events surrounding His life on earth if it simply did not matter? The prophecies might be fulfilled or they might

not. Who knows? It would seem odd that the prophecies given throughout the Old Testament match perfectly with Jesus of Nazareth, a man in the first century, but must be disregarded by modern day Jews. These prophecies have no relation to a man living in the 20th century but somehow Menachem Mendel Schneerson is the Messiah and Jesus is not. Is this really the way God works? Would God make things concerning the Christ hopelessly confusing?

Here begins the grand irony. The only prophetic fulfillment anticipated in Schneerson's life as messiah

was an expectation at his death. It was believed that when he died he would resurrect. The idea of a resurrected Messiah is found in the Old Testament but has been denied by Jews since the resurrection of Jesus. The very idea has been mocked and ridiculed but now accepted when applied to Schneerson. Jewish rejection of a resurrected Christ has been renowned for centuries but now suddenly confessed and anticipated by a significant orthodox Jewish community. The question is this: why throw out every other prophecy which could identify the Messiah except the one which has been denied for two thousand years? I suppose it would be the last possible prophecy to hold onto and perhaps the most telling if Schneerson was to resurrect. It would certainly turn some heads. But this is not the end of the irony.

Schneerson's followers expected him to resurrect

In the last years of his life, Menachem Mendel Schneerson was considered by his followers to be the Messiah... And they believed that when he died he would resurrect.



after three days. There was even a planned celebration at his memorial by some because they expected him to rise up. How did they ever come up with the idea of three days? Scriptures like Psalm 16:27 teach that the Holy One of Jehovah would die, enter Hades and then return. But there are no Old Testament prophecies which speak of a three day period from the death of the Messiah to His resurrection. The only place where that information is found is in the New Testament, beginning with a quote from Jesus of Nazareth in Matthew 12:39-40. He spoke of the sign of Jonah. Until that point in Scripture there was no mention of the sign of Jonah—there was no mention of three days in the tomb. The followers of Schneerson could only have gotten that idea from the life of the real Christ. One would have to ask: what have they been reading? It is as though they are say-

ing, “Our man can be the messiah if he follows the pattern of Jesus.” I believe this gives insight into the minds of some modern day Jews which have not changed since John 12:42: “Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *Him*, lest they should be put out of the synagogue.”

Afterward: In my research I found one article on the subject written by a Jewish man who researched the Lubavitch Messianic movement. In interviews he discovered factions inside the Lubavitch camp: part believing that Schneerson had to be the messiah, while others could not accept it. Some went to investigate prophecies in the Old Testament found that Schneerson could not be the messiah... but Jesus might be.

BIBLE BROADBAND

By Stephane Maillet

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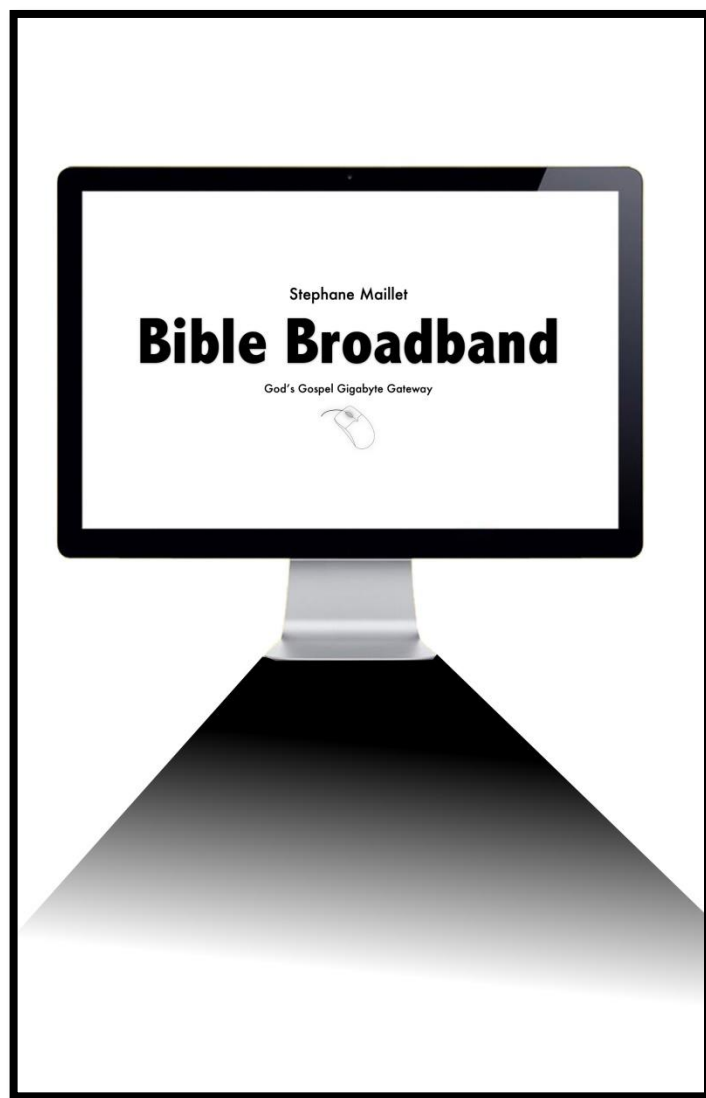
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Did the Thief on the Cross Live Under the New Testament?

Question: *Since both thieves on the crosses were still alive after Jesus died (their legs had to be broken to quicken their death while Jesus was already dead) did they live under both the Old and New Covenant? –An Inmate in Oklahoma*

Just so the readers can have a bit more background to the question, the one asking has been taking a Bible correspondence course, and one of the questions was “Did the thief on the cross live under the Old Testament, the New Testament, or neither?” The student searched, and wasn’t sure because both of the thieves were still alive after the death of Christ—albeit a very short time.

First, let me thank you for asking such a great question. It shows that you’re putting a lot of effort, thought, and consideration into your Bible study, which is great!

The thieves both lived and died under the Old Testament, and we’ll look at a few ways to show that this is the case.

First, the gospel is the *death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ*. The New Testament is based completely on this gospel. Peter preached it that way (Acts 2:22-24). Paul proclaimed it that way (I Corinthians 15:1-3). When the thieves were on the cross, Jesus had indeed died, but He had not yet been buried or resurrected. The gospel (the “good news”) had not yet happened when the thieves died. So, they did not live under the New Testament, because the gospel hadn’t happened yet.

Second, entrance into the New Testament was based on baptism *in the name of the Father, and of*

the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19-20). There was no baptism into the name of Christ until the Day of Pentecost, 50 days after the resurrection of Christ (Acts 2:1, 38). Jesus had told the apostles not to preach until they received “power” (the miraculous working of the Holy Spirit) in Jerusalem (Luke 24:49, Acts 1:4-5, 8). Therefore, it was impossible for anyone to be a part of the New Testament until Pentecost.

Third, the New Testament is the *Will* (as in “last will and testament”) of Jesus Christ. A will is not in force until after the person is dead (Hebrews 9:16-17). But just as obvious is this: the official *reading of the will* takes place days after actual death—sometimes weeks or months afterwards. Until the official reading of the will, there’s no way for people to follow it. The *will* of Christ was not officially read, and its contents made clear and binding, until the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2). Until that time, all Jews (which the thieves almost certainly were) were still living and answerable to the Old Testament.

Fourth, When Jesus told the repentant thief on the cross, “today you will be with me in Paradise,” Jesus was still alive (Luke 23:43). Thus, there is no doubt whatsoever that the thief’s salvation was acquired prior to the death of Christ—therefore we can say with 100% sureness and accuracy that his salvation was guaranteed based on his actions under the Old Testament.

Fifth, *God is no respecter of persons*. The thieves had lived their entire lives under the Old Testament, and now they find themselves nailed to

crosses—unable to do much more than struggle to breathe and talk. It is obvious that one of the thieves was repentant, and Christ promised him he would be saved. But if the New Testament instantly started and was therefore binding on all Jews the moment Christ gave up the ghost, then the thieves (including the repentant one) were both lost with no possible way of being saved. As we saw above, baptism into the name of Jesus Christ is a requirement for salvation under the New Testament (see also Mark 16:16, I Peter 3:21). Neither one of the thieves could be baptized into the name of Christ, because they were nailed to crosses when Jesus died. God will not make it *impossible* for someone to be saved. That would make Him a respecter of persons (Acts 10:34).

For this same reason, we can know that the New Testament was not binding on anyone else until Pentecost. Because if it was, then God made it *impossible* for anyone to be saved from the death of Christ (or the resurrection, if you want to use that as the starting point) until Pentecost, fifty days later. That would make God a respecter of persons, which He is not. There has *always*, for *all people*, at *all times*, been the possibility of salvation through obedience to whatever law of God they lived under. The thieves on the crosses are no exception to this rule.

Thank you for your dedication to studying and understanding God's word.

—Bradley Cobb

The Bible and the Law of Cause and Effect

By Bill Roderick

The most basic of scientific principles is the concept of cause and effect. It can be stated simply thus: every material effect must have an adequate cause. Common sense tells us that a building requires a builder. No material thing can create itself.

The Bible shows us how to reason from the effect back to the cause.

For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God (Hebrews 3:4).

The apostle Paul in Romans 1:20 brings out the principle of cause and effect in regards to the whole universe.

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 (Romans 1:20).

What do you mean Paul? Well, His everlasting power and Godhead (i.e. cause) are obvious through the things that are made (i.e. the effect).

Now let's define our terms more precisely. Every material effect must have an adequate cause. By adequate we mean that the cause must be both qualitatively and quantitatively superior to the effect. Moreover the cause must be prior to the effect.

Is there intelligence in the universe? Yes. Well, then it took greater intelligence to cause it. Is there life in the universe? Yes. Then it took greater life to cause it. Is there morality in the universe? Yes. Then it took greater morality to cause it. Is there power in the universe? Yes then it took greater power to cause it. Is there logic? Most folks get the picture by now.

Let's for a moment consider an objection to this line of reasoning. Some might say that since every effect has a cause then something must have caused God. There are two errors in this objection. First, we did not say every effect. We said every material effect has an adequate cause - that point stands.

Second, how is it that we assume that God is an effect? The Bible says He is cause. Can anyone prove otherwise?

The most basic of scientific laws, the law of causality points directly to God as creator.

Children's Puzzle Page

THE GOOD SHEPHERD

1. Jesus called himself the _____
 - a. Good Pizza
 - b. Bad Shepherd
 - c. Good Father
 - d. Good Shepherd
2. The sheep will hear the Shepherd's _____
 - a. Snoring
 - b. Words
 - c. Voice
 - d. Bones
3. What will a shepherd do for the sheep?
 - a. Feed them
 - b. Lead them
 - c. Protect them
 - d. All of the above
4. Why do sheep need a shepherd?
 - a. To style their wool
 - b. To teach them English
 - c. To cook them
 - d. Because they are dumb.
5. Why is Jesus the Good Shepherd?
 - a. Because he is hungry
 - b. Because he likes wool coats
 - c. Because he died for his sheep
 - d. None of the above.
6. Who are the sheep?
 - a. The Jews
 - b. The Gentiles
 - c. Animals with wool
 - d. The church
7. Jesus did **NOT** say "I am the _____"
 - a. Resurrection
 - b. Life
 - c. Death
 - d. Good Shepherd
8. What three things did Jesus put together:
 - a. Way, Truth, Pie
 - b. Hay, Truth, Light
 - c. Way, Truth, Light
 - d. Way, Truth, Life
9. Jesus said, "I am the Alpha and the _____."
 - a. Beta
 - b. Gamma
 - c. Delta
 - d. Omega
10. How many sheep did the shepherd leave to find the one?
 - a. Twenty-Six
 - b. Nine hundred and twelve
 - c. None
 - d. Ninety-Nine
11. Why did the shepherd go looking for the lost sheep?
 - a. Because it was scared
 - b. Because it forgot to take the GPS
 - c. Because that one sheep was important to him
 - d. Because he'd have to pay for it if he lost it
12. Who told the story about the shepherd and the lost sheep?
 - a. Moses
 - b. David
 - c. A talking sheep
 - d. Jesus

THE TEEN PAGES

(Writings by Teenage Christians)

Are You?

(by Hunter Hill, age 16)

Are you just alive,
or are you living?
Are you warm and still,
or cold and shivering?
Are you alone,
or are you with others?
Do you choose to run in the sun,
or close the shutters?

Do you choose to open up business,
or close up shop?

Do you choose to stand still,
or hop?

Do you listen to others,
or avoid conversation?

Do you hate your job,
or love your occupation?

Do you listen to the word of God,
or do you just hear it?

Do you tap out,
or can you take a hit?

Do you know that God is always with you,
or do you ignore the guidance?

Do you want the right to choose,
or do you just want to live by chance?

Are you here *at* the church?
Or are you here *as* the church?

Are you just alive,
or are you living?
Are you warm and still,
or cold and shivering?

Behavior To Others

(by Paul Cobb, age 16)

We often hear the phrase; “do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” We hear it, believe it, but do we DO it? Do we show partiality toward one another? You’ve heard James 2:2-4 several times. Look at it with me:

For if a man comes into your congregation with a gold ring, in bright apparel and if a poor man in filthy apparel also comes in, you may have looked upon him who is wearing the bright apparel and may have said to him, Sit here; good; and you may have said to the poor person, Stand there or sit here under my footstool. And did you not discern among yourselves and then became judges with evil reasonings? (Modern Literal Version)

And just a few verses later, the Bible says “Love your neighbor like yourself” (James 2:8).

The dictionary meaning of neighbor is A. someone who lives nearby, or B. a Fellow human being. The biblical meaning of the word is a human that needs help.

There’s a man on the side of the street that has a flat tire. (Now I’m sure that all of you have had that problem or will have that problem at some point.) Now let’s say that you have enough tools in the back of your car to do the job. There are 2 choices that you can make.

Choice #1. Stop and help the man with his flat, or
Choice #2. Drive on and just ignore him.

Which one would you make?

Imagine there is a well-off man living in a nice house, plenty of things, and a bunch of old clothes that he doesn’t like. Then a poor man dressed in old rags, covered in blisters, and most likely lives under a bridge, comes up to the well-off man’s door. And the poor man asks for a warm coat and shoes. He explains that he has been turned down by every employer that he’s tried out at. The well-off man looks at him and sees a very skinny human being that hasn’t eaten in about two or three days. And he says “Peace be with you; be warm and have some food then may you be on your way.” But he doesn’t give him anything! This is similar to a pair of verses in the New Testament (James 2:15-16).

But there’s more to the story. The poor man goes to another man’s house. The other man’s house is about what any normal person lives in. nothing fancy or expensive. And the poor man asks this man for help. But unlike the well-off man, this person gives help to the poor man.

Now which one of these was the “Good Samaritan” of the two? Read again James 2:2-4, then look at verse 9.

But if you have shown-partiality, you work sin, being convicted by the law as transgressors.

Jesus once told a parable to his Disciples about mercy. You may have heard it.

Then Peter having come to him, said, Lord, how many times will my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Until seven times?

Jesus says to him, I do not say to you, Until seven times, but, until seventy times seven. Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is similar to a certain king who wished to settle the account with his bondservants. And when he had begun to settle the account, one was brought to him, a debtor of ten thousand silver talents. But he did not have anything to repay him with, so his lord commanded him and his wife and children and all things, as many things as he had to be sold and the money to be repaid to him. Then the bondservant falling down, worshiped him, saying, Lord, be patient with me and I will repay all of it to you. And the lord of that bondservant, having compassion on him, released him and forgave him the loan.

But that bondservant went out and found one of his fellow bondservants, who owed him a hundred denarii and he took hold of him and was choking him, saying, Repay what you owe me. Then his fellow bondservant falling down at his feet, pleaded with him, saying, Be patient with me and I will repay you. And he did not wish to, but went and cast him into prison, until he should repay what was owed.

And his fellow bondservants having seen the

things that had happened, were extremely sorry. And having come to their lord, they told all the things which had happened. Then his lord called him and says to him, You evil bondservant, I forgave you all that debt, since you pleaded with me. You ought to have shown-mercy also on your fellow bondservant, even as I had shown-mercy on you. And his lord being angry, gave him to the torturers, until he should repay all that was owed to him.

So my heavenly Father will also do to you, if each one of you does not forgive his brother his trespasses from your hearts. (Matthew 18:21-35)

Now since you've heard the story again, which one will you be? Will you be the one with the proper attitude of mercy towards others? Or will you be the one whose faith is dead, and who will be delivered to the tormenters?

Just a few more verses I'd like you to look at before we close

I was hungry and you gave me food to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me a drink; I was a stranger and you brought me in; I was naked and you dressed me; I was sick and you visited me; I was in prison and you came to me.

Then the righteous will answer him, saying, Lord, when did we see you hungry and nourish you? Or thirsty and gave you a drink? And when did we see you as a stranger and bring you in? Or naked and dressed you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and came to you?

And answering, the King will say to them, Assuredly I say to you, Inasmuch as you did it to one of these, my brethren, even the least, you did it to me. Then he will also say to them at the left, Go away from me, you the cursed into the everlasting fire which is prepared for the Devil and his messengers: for I was hungry and you did not give me anything to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink; I was a stranger and you did not bring me in; naked and you did not dress me; sick and in prison and you did not visit me.

Then they will also answer him, saying, Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or as a stranger or naked or sick or in prison and did not serve you?

Then he will answer them, saying, Assuredly I say to you, Inasmuch as you did it not to one of these, the least, neither did you do it to me.

And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into everlasting life. (Matthew 25:35-45).

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About the Authors

Gantt Carter is married to the former Julie Jonhson. They have two young children and reside in Elk City, OK. He has been preaching for about a decade, and he is currently the preaching servant for the 2nd & Adams congregation in Elk City. He enjoys fishing, martial arts, and spending time with his family and friends. Gantt delights in God and in studying the Word of God. His greatest desire is to glorify God with his life and to encourage others to do the same.

Paul Cobb is a song leader, songwriter, musician, artist, writer, animator, and is quite fun to be around. He is 16 years old, and is presently attending the Gravel Hill church of Christ.

Gerald Cowan has been preaching the gospel for over 50 years. In addition to many mission trips to Albania, he has also taught in the British Bible School, and has spent the past 2 ½ decades working for the Lord in Southern Illinois. He has an email publication (Gerald Cowan's Personal Periodical) that he sends out for free to all who are interested.

Kyle Frank is a Christian, Restoration Movement enthusiast, and book lover. His writings have appeared in *Gospel Light* as well as *Faith and Facts Quarterly*. He has edited a three-volume set of the Life and Letters of Jacob Creath Jr., two volumes on Elder Benjamin Franklin, the autobiography of Daniel Sommer, as well as compiling *The Lost Sermons of H. Leo Boles*.

Perry Hall has been preaching over 30 years, with a degree in History and Philosophy. He has been married since 1984, and has 4 children. He says, "We have two who are adopted and two we got the old fashioned way. I mention this to encourage adoption (Jms.1:27) - Moses and Jesus were adopted. Two of my children are black and racial harmony is a real-life concern of mine. My parents now have 10 out of 16 grandchildren not biologically related to them. As for a hobby I like motorcycles because you can't fit a wife and 4 children on a motorcycle."

Hunter Hill is the co-founder of Real Talk (a high school poetry club), plays in the band, is in drama, and enjoys parkour on occasion. He worships the Lord with the church in Dale, OK.

Bill Howard has been serving the Lord for more than half a century, preaching in small congregations, and presently serving as an elder in Dale, Oklahoma. He has written two books to aid new converts in Christian growth: *Believest Thou This*, and *Whom Seek Ye?* He has also written a series of detective novels (*Rick Wade: Investigations*), set in the 1950s/60s, which he is proud to say are good, clean, old-fashioned detective stories without filth (see pages 19 and 38 for more on these books).

William Howard lives with his family in Dacula, Georgia. He spends much of his time absorbed in books arbitrarily chosen. Currently he is reading *The Complete Folk and Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm*, *The Making of the American Essay*, and *Terry and the Pirates 1934 to 1936*. William enjoys writing while eating sushi – but that was expensive so he had to stop. He walks in the woods, composes jazz and preaches on Sunday.

John Krivak preaches for the church of Christ in New Castle, Pennsylvania. His family includes Becky, his wife, two daughters, three grandchildren, and occasional foster children. He's been a Restoration Movement enthusiast since the baptismal waters flooded over him, and he has a special appreciation for Alexander Campbell. His studies of the Bible at Harding University emphasized Biblical Languages, and his favorite professor was Dr. Paul Pollard. He may be contacted at jkrivak@zoominternet.net.

Joseph McWhorter is an Alabama native turned Texan. He is a graduate of the Southwest School of Biblical Studies in Austin, and preaches for the Canyon Lake church of Christ. He and his wife, Michelle, are currently raising two dogs, multiple chickens, and the occasional stray cat.

Mark McWhorter is a former medical professional, a research fanatic and history nut, a missionary, a book-seller (with his wife, Teah), and that doesn't even come close to all that he does. He has written for several brotherhood periodicals, spoken on several lectureships, helped present Restoration Movement seminars, and was integral in starting Roundhouse, an annual gathering of members of the church who homeschool.

Jim Mitchell obtained his Bachelor of Arts from Freed-Hardeman University & Master of Divinity from Oklahoma Christian University, and has been preaching for more than 35 years and has worked with congregations in Florida, Virginia, and Oklahoma. He served as the minister for the church of Christ in Harrah, OK, from 2006 to 2014 and is now the pulpit minister for the Cherokee Hills church of Christ in Oklahoma City.

Bill Roderick has been the preacher for the Gravel Hill church of Christ (Moreland, AR) since 1968. He is a retired lineman and a retired school bus driver. He enjoys reading, playing mahjong, and spending time with his grandchildren.

Roderick Ross, better known as “Rod,” has been married for 42 years to (he believes) the most wonderful, caring woman on the earth (as well as the best cook), with three grown children (married), and nine grand-children from ages 1-14. A lover of baseball, Ohio State football, hunting, fishing, Roy Rogers movies, and American history. As his youngest son once said, “You know everything nobody wants to know, and everything nobody cares about.” He suffered a stroke in 2011, which left him legally blind, unable to drive, read and work; but, he still believes that everyone should do what they can. He maintains a website, three Facebook groups, three Facebook pages, sends out an email lesson Monday – Friday, teaches Bible class, preaches every Sunday morning and evening, and does a weekly radio program. He does each of these in small time frames, followed by power naps.

Jake Schotter (17 years old) is an aspiring preacher in Goodyear, Arizona. He loves studying the Bible, reading books, preaching, and writing about the Truth. He has been preaching since 2009. He has been very fortunate to be able to grow his library to over 2,500 books and loves ordering them for cheap prices. He currently attends West Valley

church of Christ and can be contacted at jakeschotter@gmail.com. He is planning to attend Freed-Hardeman University in a couple of years, after he graduates from high school.

Devin Self is a member of the Gravel Hill Church of Christ in Dover, Arkansas. From a very young age he knew he wanted to serve the Lord. Going to church camps, youth devotionals, and vacation bible schools were part of his favorite childhood memories, as well as the many great influences that kept him growing stronger. He is married to his wonderful wife of 2 years, Kelsey, and they hope someday to have children to be raised up with Christ as their foundation.

James Sims excels at working with small congregations, and building them up in the faith. He has worked with congregations in Nevada and Florida (currently working with the church in Floral City, FL), and has much practical experience in reaching the lost for the Lord.

Jim Stutts preached for the first time in 1956, and did local work in the Carolinas and Florida for 40 years. He served as co-editor of the *Carolina Christian Magazine* for several years with Howard Winters and later David Pharr. He lives in Jacksonville, FL, and loves to spend time with his children and grandchildren.

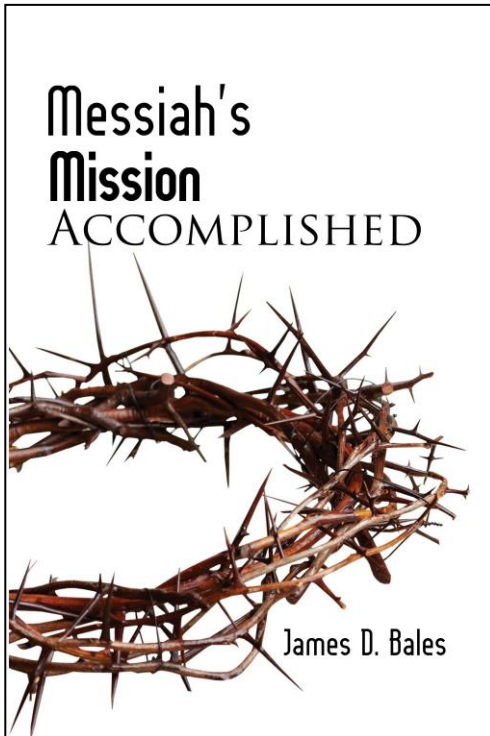
Bradley Cobb is married to his best friend, and they have four Christian children. He has had many careers—media distribution (aka paperboy), stacker of dead, frozen chicken (aka worked for Tyson Foods), dumpster diver, janitor, and some other, less exciting ventures prior to becoming a preacher. He likes to write, play guitar and piano, and spend time with his family and with other Christians. What he doesn’t like doing is moving...

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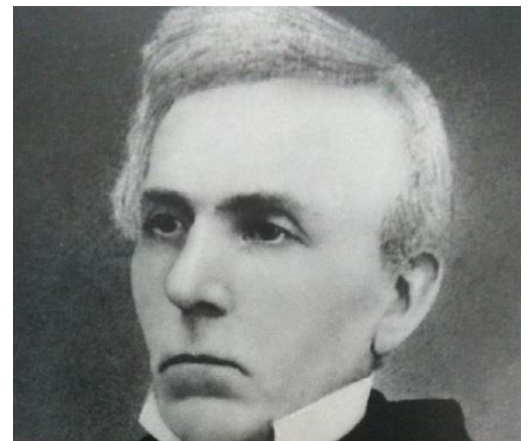
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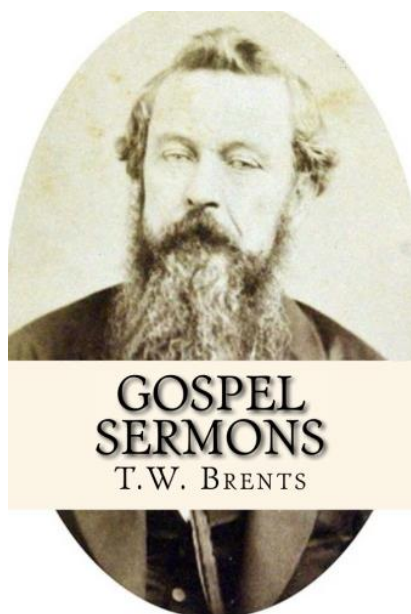
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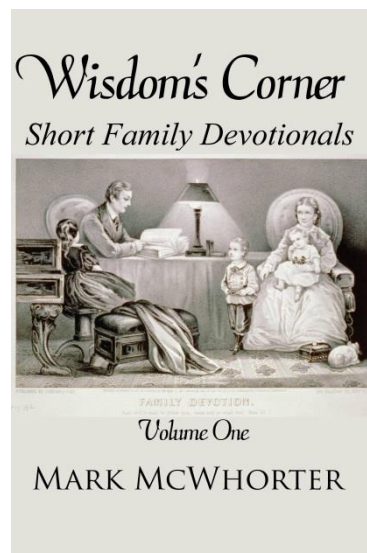
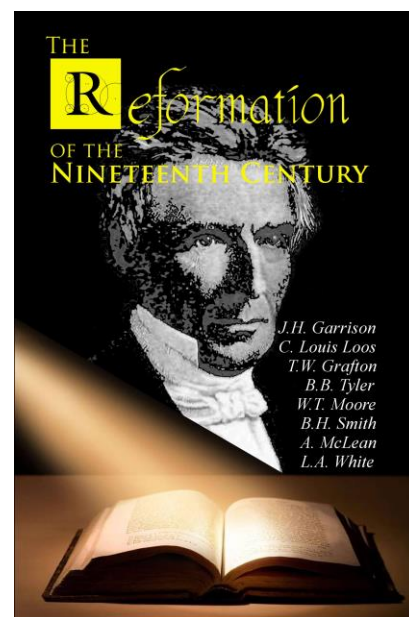
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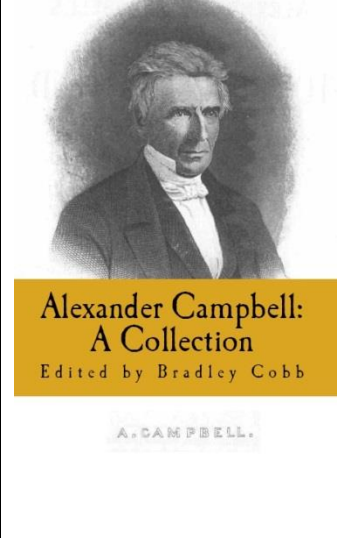
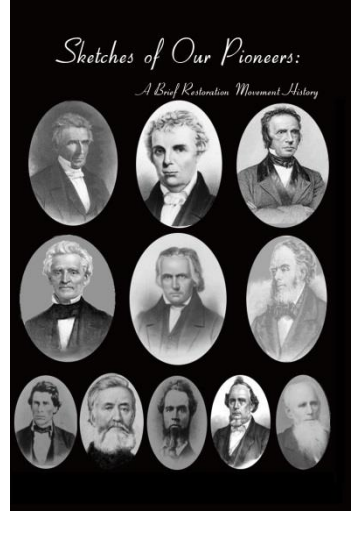
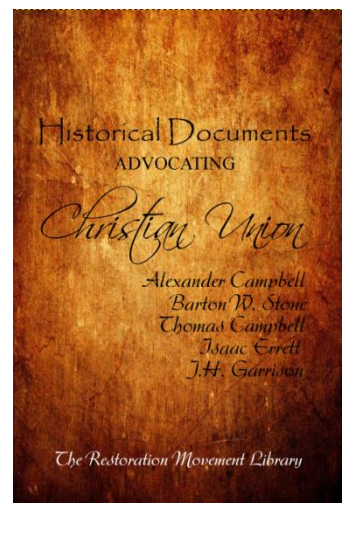
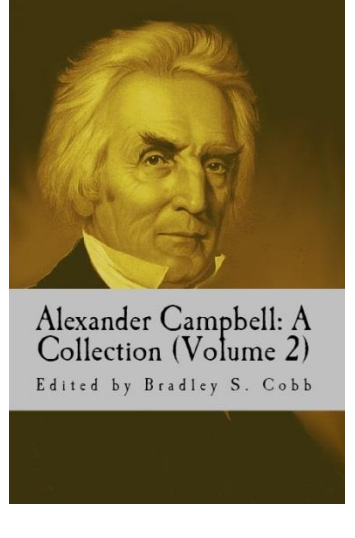
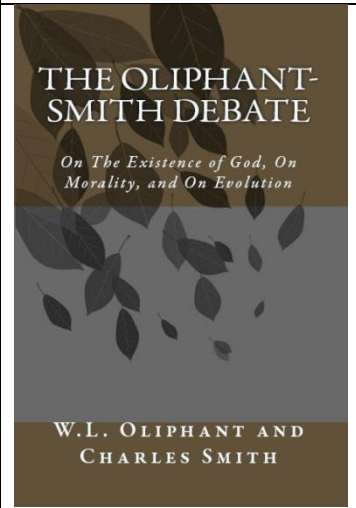
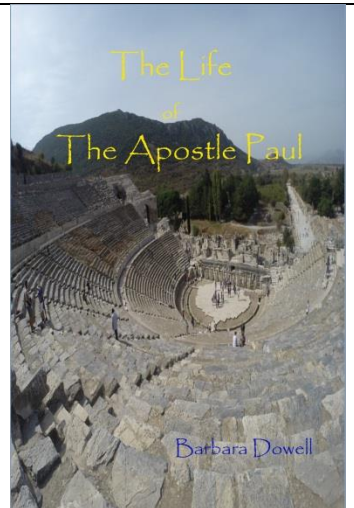
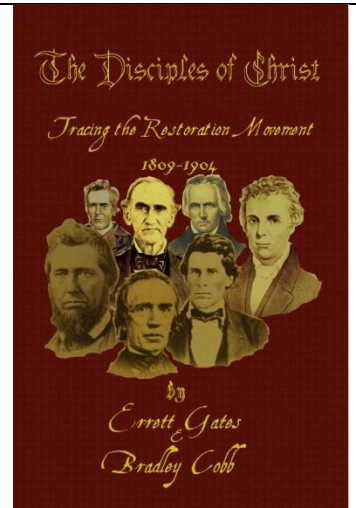
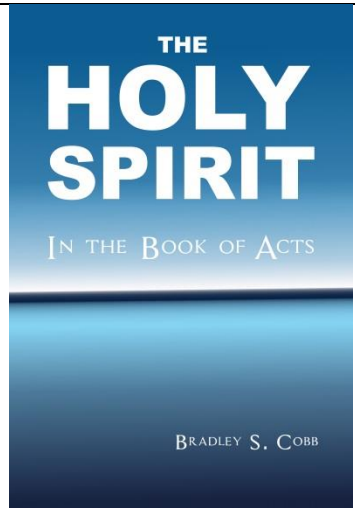


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