

*God's Plan for Man:
the Nature and Authority
of Scripture*

The 1st Minnesota Bible Lectureship
Saturday, May 8, 2004

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Indeed, my heritage is beautiful to me.

C. King David, who or what did you seek to satisfy your heart's desire for position?

Psalm 27:4 One thing I have asked from the Lord, that I shall seek;

That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life,

To behold the beauty of the Lord,

And to meditate in His temple.

:5 For in the day of trouble He will conceal me in His tabernacle;

In the secret place of His tent He will hide me;

He will lift me up on a rock.

:6 And now my head will be lifted up above my enemies around me;

And I will offer in His tent sacrifices with shouts of joy;

I will sing, yes, I will sing praises to the Lord.

II. Second, consider King Solomon

1 Kings 3:5 God makes Solomon an offer. Ask what you wish Me to give you.

:7:7 O Lord my God, You have made me:7 O Lord my God, You have made Your:7 O Lord my God

David, yet I am but a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in.

:9:9 So give:9 So give Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people to:9 So give You

between good and evil. For who is able to judge this between good and evil.

Yours?

:12:12 Behold, I have given:12 Behold, I have given you:12 Behold, I have given you a wise and dis

no one like you before you, nor shall one like you arise after you.

:13:13 And I have also given:13 And I have also given you what you have not asked, both riches a

so that there will not be any among the kings like you all your days.

We shall go to King Solomon's book of Ecclesiastes We shall go to King Solomon's book of Ecclesiastes

questions asked of King David.

A.A. King Solomon, who or what did you seek to satisfy your heart's desire for? A. King Solomon, who or what did you seek to satisfy your heart's desire for? A. King Solomon, who or what did you seek to satisfy your heart's desire for?

Ecc. 2:1 I said to myself, Come now, I will test you with myself.

yourself.

Ecc. 2:8 I provided for myself male and female singers and the pleasures of many concubines.

many concubines.

Ecc. 2:10 All that my eyes desired I did not refuse Ecc. 2:10 All that my eyes desired I did not refuse

from any pleasure.

B.B. King Solomon, who or what did you seek to satisfy your heart's desire for? B. King Solomon, who or what did you seek to satisfy your heart's desire for? B. King Solomon, who or what did you seek to satisfy your heart's desire for?

Ecc. 2:5 I enlarged my works; I built houses for myself,

Ecc. 2:6 I made ponds of water for myself from which to irrigate Ecc. 2:6 I made ponds of water for myself from which to irrigate

trees.

Ecc. 2:7 I brought male and female slaves, and I had home born slaves. Also I

possessed flocks and herds larger than all who preceded me in Jerusalem.

Ecc. 2:8 I collected for myself silver and gold provinces.

provinces.

C.C. King Solomon, who or what did you seek to satisfy your heart's desire for? C. King Solomon, who or what did you seek to satisfy your heart's desire for? C. King Solomon, who or what did you seek to satisfy your heart's desire for?

Ecc. 1:16 I have magnified and increased wisdom more Ecc. 1:16 I have magnified and increased wisdom more

Jerusalem before me; and my knowledge.

Jerusalem before me; and my knowledge.

knowledge.

Ecc. 2:9 I became great and increased more than
Solomon sought himself to be the source for satisfying his
was there for his taking: wealth, posterity, power, and wisdom, and he was there for his
deny himself anything. (He was like a kid who had just bought himself anything. (store.)

Solomon lived like it was he who directed him
an old man that his own wisdom declared he had been an old man
of vanity, a chasing after the wind.

Ecc. 1:14 I have seen all the works which have been done
behold, all is vanity and striving after wind..

Ecc. 1:18 Because in much wisdom there is much grief, and in
results in increasing pain.

Ecc. 2:18 Thus I hated all the fruit of my labor for
for I must leave it to the man who will come after me.

Ecc. 3:19 For the fate of the sons of men and the fate of
dies so dies the other; indeed, they all have the same breath and they
advantage for man over beast.

:20 All go to the same place. All came from the dust and all return to the dust.

OO that Solomon would have made God his authority as his father David had.
God as his authority would have yielded him the eternal rewards rather
temporary. If He had made God his authority, he would have been guided by the
counseling of God rather than by his own. He would not have practiced them: he didn't walk the talk.

The frustration of Solomon was this:

1. No matter his worldly pleasure, it ended at death's door.
2. No matter his worldly wealth and labor, it also ended at death's door.
3. No matter his exalted position of king, as the most exalted intellectual on the face of the earth, this too ended at death's door.

Solomon propelled himself to death's door and he could take nothing
that had been his: no pleasure, no possession, that had been his: no
was lived in vain because he sought pleasure of the soul. He sought
Creator, and He sought the position of being served rather than to serve.

The psalmist in Psalm 49 expresses that such is the fate of the
to redeem himself. Ps. 49:7,8

- :7 No man can by any means redeem his brother,
Or give to God a ransom for him --
:8 For the redemption of his soul is costly,
And he should cease trying forever.
:9 That he should live on eternally;
That he should not undergo decay.

Those who go the way of Solomon are:

- :14 As sheep appointed for Sheol;
Death shall be their shepherd;
They have no habitation.

The psalmist goes on to say for himself:
:15 But God will redeem my soul from the power of Sheol;
For He will receive me.

III. Third, consider King Jesus

A. King Jesus, who or what did you seek to satisfy your heart's desire for pleasure? A
is the joy of Father.

John 17:13 (prayer to the Father)

But now I come to Thee; and these things I speak in the world, that
they may have My joy made full in themselves.

Hebrews 12:2 Who for the joy set before Him
shame.

Psalms 16:11 In Your presence is the fullness of joy.

B. King Jesus, who or what did you seek to satisfy your heart's desire for possession?

John 17:12 While I was with them, I was keeping them in Your name
which You gave to me.

John 17:22 And the glory which You have given Me I have given to them;
that they may be one, just as We are one.

John 17:26 I have made Your name known to them, and will make it
known; that the love wherewith You did love Me may be in
them, and I in them.

John 14:10 The Father abiding in Me does His works.

C. King Jesus, who or what did you seek to satisfy your heart's desire for position?

John 17:21 That they all may be one; even as You, Father are in Me, and
I in You.

John 13:4- God in the flesh washes His disciples' feet.

-He came to serve - He came to serve not to be served. While in the flesh He served,
serving, serving, before being crowned king by the Father, was serving, before being
own flesh.

Now on this side of the cross, this side of the resurrection:

It is Jesus who was the Servant, who now is crowned the King of
(Eph. 1:20-22)

It is Jesus who gives to His brothers what can be taken; it is Jesus who gives to His brothers what
eternally satisfies the soul's desire for pleasure, possession, and position.

*He is our pleasure - Philippians 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always!

*He is our possession - Galatians 3:27 All baptized into Christ have clothed
themselves with Christ.

Hebrews 4:10 For the one who has entered His rest
has himself also rested from his works,

*He exalts us to two positions: one in heaven and one on earth.

In heaven - Eph. 2:6 God raised us up with Christ and seated us with

Him in the heavenly places.
On earth -John 13:14 If I then, the lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another s feet.

We have the heavenly position We have the heavenly position of living in the presence of God and reigning with Him, while on earth we are serving others as He served us.

Thanks be to the Thanks be to the Father for Jesus; Thanks be to the Father for Jesus; the perfect d willwill who expressed through the cross thatwill who expressed through the cross that God s love is is our spiritual guide and authority.

He is the one Who directs our steps and leads us back to He is the one Who directs our steps and and talk with God.

He is the One who leads His brothers through death s door experien He is the One w everlastingeverlasting pleasure, having Christ as their eternal possession, being beverlasting plea forever and ever.

JesusJesus was the Word that became Jesus was the Word that became flesh. Jesus was the Word t ofof God. David s Psalms express his owof God. David s Psalms express his own submisof God soul ssoul s hunger for the Word. I will close with a few selections from Psalm 119 (:17,18; :89-91; 129-131; 169-176)

NOTES

Can There Be Any Other Guide for Man Than the Bible?

Minnesota Bible Lectureship
by Ron Maynard
May 8, 2004



Ron Maynard is an evangelist with the Fishers of Men ministry, where he has served as an instructor in this personal evangelism training ministry since 1997, teaching in ten states and Russia. In his 34 years as a full-time evangelist he has worked with churches in Oklahoma and Minnesota. He and Louise have been married for 40 years and have three married children: Paul and Robin, Woodbury, MN; Mark and Andrea, Garland, TX; and Tammy and Derek, Kasota, MN. They have nine grandchildren. Ron holds a Doctor of Ministry degree in Church Growth and Evangelism from the Theological University of America, Masters and Bachelors degrees from the University of Minnesota at Mankato, and is a graduate of Bear Valley Bible Institute of Denver.

There is probably little doubt in the minds of almost all of us here that the Bible is the only guide for man religiously, and that each of us does believe that the Bible alone is God's word, that the Bible is true, and that whatever is contrary, contradictory or hostile to the Bible is error. So this might seem to be too basic or simple a topic for a lectureship like this if we all believe in this fundamental teaching. But in the last seven years of my work with the Fishers of Men ministry, teaching in 11 states, I have realized how important this issue really is to the Lord's church today.

For example, an elder in a large Texas church who was taking my class explained that women's role in the church was such a controversial subject and the eldership was so divided on it that they avoided taking any position on it. Clearly, they had no faith in the study of the scriptures to bring them to consensus on the matter.

In Ohio a young couple taking the class came to me privately and wanted to know how they could teach fifth and sixth grade students the basic plan of salvation, including faith, repentance, confession, and baptism without offending their parents because their youth minister, who was also in my FOM class, did not believe baptism was essential to salvation.

In an Arizona church, several members of my FOM class, including the wives of two elders, openly objected to even bringing up the Bible question of what type of music the Lord wanted in Christian worship because, it was too divisive and controversial.

A 70+ year old elder in a Texas congregation, who had been a Christian for over 50 years, stated that he had learned more basic Bible knowledge in the three month FOM course than he had learned in the previous 50 years of Bible classes and sermons.

We are living in a time when one of our Christian universities has called for the reforming of the churches of Christ. So from my perspective, there is no doubt that this is a very relevant and needed topic for the first annual Minnesota Bible Lectureship.

As most of you know who have taken the FOM training program, our material is a study in the basic fundamental principles of God's word. In assessing the need for this topic, I am reminded of the Hebrew writer's admonition in Hebrews 5:12: For though by this

time you ought to be teachers, you have need again that someone teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. There is an apparent lack of knowledge of the word of God, a lack of respect for the Bible as God's word, a lack of conviction that the word of God is absolutely true, and many of the brethren are unclear in their minds that anything that is hostile to or contradictory to the Bible is in error.

I'd like to direct your attention to II Peter chapter 1, which I will be using as the overall text for my lesson today. Peter clearly points out the need for man to have a clear guide in his spiritual life. Peter says, "Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; seeing that his divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.

Read II Peter 1- NASV

Why is the Bible the only clear and safe guide for man in his relationship to God today?

The Bible Is God's Word.

The Bible is "...the word spoken through angels.. that ...proved to be unalterable... and ..after it was first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard . (the apostles and prophets) God also bearing witness with them, both signs and wonders and by various miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.

Hebrews 2:2-4

Jesus said, "He who believes in Me does not believe in Me, but in Him who sent Me. And he who beholds Me beholds the one who sent Me. I have come as light in the world, that everyone who believes in Me may not remain in darkness.

For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me commandment, what to say, and what to speak. And I know that His commandment is eternal life; therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me. John 12: 44-46 ; 49-50

Paul tells us that, "All scripture is inspired by God..." 2 Timothy 3:16

Peter confirms this from our text in 2 Peter chapter 1, when he writes, "Know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture....was made by human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke by God .

There are many evidences that overwhelmingly show the Bible to be God's Word. Two printed resources I would like to recommend are: *Discovery and Reasons and Revelations* by Apologetics Press.

George W. Dehoff in his book, *Why We Believe The Bible*, offers additional evidence. He writes, "I want to believe the Bible because the greatest scientists, outstanding philosophers and best men of all ages past have accepted it as God's Word. By the preponderance of evidence we determine the validity of questioned legal documents, settle disputed dates, and ascertain the facts of science. Should we use this method in dealing with the Bible, we would be driven to the irresistible conclusion that it is God's Word.

A few notable examples will show us what others have thought of the Bible:

1. Dr. William Lyon Phelps, noted educator: I thoroughly believe in a university education for both men and women; but I believe a knowledge of the Bible without a college education is more valuable than a college course without the Bible.
2. Dr. Schurman, past President of Cornell University: The Bible is the most valuable document in English literature. No man can be called an uneducated man who knows his Bible and no man can be called an educated man who does not know his Bible.
3. Andrew Jackson: That Book is the rock on which this republic rests.
4. Abraham Lincoln: I am profitably engaged in reading the Bible. Take all of this book upon reason that you can and the balance by faith and you will live and die a better man.
5. John Quincy Adams: The first and almost the only book deserving of universal distinction is the Bible. I speak as a man of the world to the men of the world and I say to you, Search the Scriptures.
6. Daniel Webster: If we abide by the principles taught in the Bible, our country will go on prospering, but if we and our posterity neglect its instruction and authority, no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe may overwhelm us and bury us and our glory in profound obscurity.

We can agree with these great men and leaders who have said, The Bible is God's Word! And we share their concern about the fate of a nation who does not have faith in that Word..

The Bible is True.

Once again from our text, Peter tells us in 2 Peter 1:3, ...seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. And in verse 8:

For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. In verse 12: Therefore, I shall always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you already know them, and have been established in the truth which is present with you.

Over two thousand years ago, Jesus was praying for you and me today with regard to this truth and how God would use us to make the world aware of God and His Word.

Listen to the prayer of Jesus:

Read John 17:1-23- NASV.

The Bible is true. And that truth has been given to us, His people, that the world may know the glory of the Father and the Son.

The Things That Are Contrary to, Contradictory to, or Hostile to the Bible Are in Error.

We have seen that the Bible alone is God's Word and that the Bible is True.

There are many other religious books from various religious groups and the traditions of men that people follow today as a spiritual guide. What did Jesus and the apostles teach regarding what should be our guide and authority for our relationship with God?

Once again, from our text from 2 Peter 1 the apostle tells us we are ...those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Jesus our Lord. (verse 1) Grace and peace... have been multiplied to us , ... in the knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord. (verse 2) Peter continues to remind us what God's will is for us: ...by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. He goes on to tell us that we need to, in faith, supply moral excellence, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. Peter tells us that having and increasing in these will help us to be useful and fruitful ... in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

What happens if we are lacking in these things? We are ..blind; short sighted... and have forgotten that we were forgiven of our past sins. (verse 10)
...Therefore...be more diligent,...practice these things...

Notice the great promises that are given those who continue in these things.

" ...you will never stumble.

" ...in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom...will be abundantly supplied to you.

The real and present danger is that we will not follow or continue in the Truth of God's Word.

Paul warned in Gal 1:6-9 that there are those who are teaching another Gospel, but clarifies this by stating that there is not another Gospel. Those who teach any other gospel, other than that taught by the apostles, will be accursed.

Jesus warned, Mark 7: 5-9, about following the traditions and teachings of men instead of the commandments of the Lord and even that some are setting aside the commandments of God and teaching the words of men as though they were the commandments of God.

Jude 3 teaches us concerning the Faith, once delivered and speaks of our common salvation. This salvation is our only hope for heaven.

In I John 5:17, God teaches us that we can know we have eternal life...by what is written. John also confirms this again in John 20:30-31.

There are many books in the world with the teaching and wisdom of men. With other books, death is the end of man. With the Bible, death is the beginning.

In conclusion, today there is a clear and present danger of men and women following the wisdom of the religious world and not the Bible as God's Word.

It is my hope and prayer that we can affirm that the Bible is the only clear and safe guide for man in his relationship to God today, that the Bible is God's word, that the Bible is

true, and the things that are contrary to, contradictory to, or hostile to the Bible are in error.

NOTES

Can We Understand the Bible?

Minnesota Bible Lectureship

Dan McEwen

May 8, 2004



Dan McEwen worked for over five years with Mike Kinzler as an evangelist at the Moorhead church of Christ, Moorhead, MN (1997 - 2002). He continues to teach weekly adult Bible classes and be involved in service at the Moorhead church of Christ. Dan has a Bachelor of Biblical Studies, Bear Valley Bible Institute of Denver, Denver, CO (1997); Bachelor of Arts in Biology, Minnesota State University Moorhead, Moorhead, MN (2002), and in 2003 enrolled in the doctoral program in the department of biological sciences at North Dakota State University, Fargo, ND. Estimated finish data: 2007. He is interested in defending the Biblical truth in the field of Creation Science. He and his wife Amy have four children.

Introduction

Today in this country there are over 250 different religious denominations, which all claim to be followers of Christ but all claim to be followers of Christ but all interpret, and thereby understand, the Bible (Mead 1983). If very learned men and women, people who have been through seminars, advanced Biblical degrees, people who have studied the origins in ministry, and/or who have years in ministry, and/or who have thinking can have different views on the interpretation of Scripture and how to do God's will, we might wonder whether any of us can really understand the Bible.

Acknowledging that all do not understand the Bible alike begins a source of misunderstanding. We must agree that it comes from a source of misunderstanding. We must perhaps we all do not understand the Bible alike. Second, perhaps God is infallible or maybe He is not to be understood. Third, perhaps it is a combination of both. The correct answer is the first; we do in suspense. The correct answer is the first; we do in suspense. The correct answer is the first; we do in suspense. Our next speaker will investigate of our own human limitations. Our next speaker's purpose here today is to show how the other two answers are wrong. I want to convince you that God communicated to us His word and that when God gave us His word He had one meaning in mind if people derive more than one.

We should also acknowledge up front Ephesians 5:17, which says, "Do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is." If we believe in the Bible, and if we believe that God is infallible, God to give such a command to us implies that His will can be understood. We should acknowledge this to be the truth, and strengthen your faith in this proposition.

A convenient way to approach our topic is to think about how we might create a document that we wanted to be understood. What qualities it would have to be a document that was not contradictory in it would have to be a document that was not have to be a document that was written in a language have to be a document that was written in a language be understood by the most people possible. Third, it would have to be understood by the orderly and contextual, that carried a common theme throughout.

And,And, so, even though theAnd, so, even though the modern printing press, and massAnd, so, even thou
firstfirst century tongues were used for the express purpose of communicating thefirst century tongues
messagemessage to thmessage to the number of message to the number of languages in existence at
barrier.barrier. Today the Bible has been translated into 2287 lanbarrier. Today the Bible has been t
SocietySociety 2002). There are an estimatSociety 2002). There are an estimated 6,8Society 2002). The
moremore work to more work to do, but all of the major languages are covered and more work to do, but all o
inin the world have ready access to the Scriptures in their ownin the world have ready access to the Scriptur
andand make their minds up about how to understand instead of having others dictate to them
meaning.meaning. Can we, meaning people of mostmeaning. Can we, meaning people of most all nationalit
will? Yes.

Now,Now, the Now, the other point that is probably a bit more of interest to you, is that we
understandunderstand God s will becunderstand God s will because He gave understand God s will bec
thatthat could be understood by the most people possible. Here I am reminthat could be understood by t
quotequote from Albert Einstein who said that Things shouldquote from Albert Einstein who said that Thing
notnot simpler. Although Einstein wasnot simpler. Although Einstein was referring tonot simpler. Althou
Bible.Bible. One of myBible. One of my greatest automotive mechanic triumphs of my life was replacing a Bil
in my car. I do not know the technical ins and outs in my car. I do not know the technical ins and outs of hov
I succeeded was that someone saidI succeeded was that someone said to me, Take that thing and stick it the
thethe directions been to find the drive shaft, align the solenoid so that it ithe directions been to find the c
the carburetor an inch to the left and use thethe carburetor an inch to the left and use the torque the carbure
wouldwould havewould have thrown up my arms in frustration and ultimately failure. In general, as simple
as possible is a good motto to live by.

WhenWhen the New Testament was written there were some choices, of course, that God
hadhad in determining how He wouhad in determining how He would communicad in determini
contenderscontenders included Hebrew, Aramaic, Classicalcontenders included Hebrew, Aramaic, Classica
Koine.Koine. Of those He chose Koine Greek because it was a language thatKoine. Of those He chose Koine
to to the mostto the most number to the most number of people. Both Hebrew and Aramaic were liturgical, c
could be difficult, but &

Koine was more practical Koine was more practical than academic, Koine was more practical than
eloquence.eloquence. Itseloquence. Its grammaeloquence. Its grammar was simplified, e
generalized, inflections were dropped or harmonized,generalized, inflections were dropped or ha
made easier. Koine was the language of life and not of books (Robertson 1934).

And,And, of course, you llAnd, of course, you ll say that we do not speak Greek and so how is that relevant.
thethe principle that God intended tothe principle that God intended to simplify His word so that many people
When He had the choice of academic or simplified, He chose simplified.

InIn contemporary times, people begin to search for God and recognize all the
churcheschurches that exist, and they get the literature that discusses how one group churches that exist
fromfrom another, and they read supporting literature from another, and they read supporting literature for t
whwherewhere they hear terms like soteriology, premillennialism, total depravity, cowherewhere they hear terms lik
eschatology,eschatology, theodicy, and transubstantiation.eschatology, theodicy, and transubstantiation. And
cancan never ponder such deepcan never ponder such deep subjects. But I say to you today that in its pristi
wordword was not meant to be theword was not meant to be theological; it wasword was not meant to be
andand much of theand much of the confusion that was introduced was introduced by men andand much of
meantmeant formeant for His word to be understood. meant for His word to be understood. Separated from
andand misinterpretations, if we takeand misinterpretations, if we take most any English translationand misir
eveneven a even a completed high schooleven a completed high school education is required to understand
understandunderstand the Bible because God made itunderstand the Bible because God made it understand
not a God of confusion but of peace & (1 Cor 14:33).

If you go back to Acts 2:5-8, you find that God did not choose them to spread His word but men from Galilee that had no education and their wisdom.

For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and will bring to nothing the understanding of the clever." Where is the wise man? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know, but God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men (1 Corinthians 1:19-25).

As you can see God did not speak positively, in general, about the world whose philosophies guided them instead of His word, which could probably put in many of today's theologians. We could probably put in many of today's theologians because he communicated it in human language.

III. We can understand God's word because it has a common theme

My last point today is that we can understand God's word because it has a theme throughout redemption. Again, I ask myself that if I were to be understood what kinds of qualities would I instill within it, to provide a consistent theme throughout. By a consistent something that has a beginning and end; so something that has a beginning and end; so argument, fits together like a puzzle, has a central idea, that it is not simply a collection of a number of nice things of man to his resurrection, God's love and man's redemption is a singularity of purpose to the Bible. We could see the following points:

- I. Old Testament
 - A. Redemption planned (Genesis 1, 2)
 - B. Redemption required (Genesis 3-11)
 - C. Redemption prepared for (Genesis 12 Malachi 4)
- II. New Testament
 - A. Redemption effected (Gospels)
 - B. Redemption shared (Acts)
 - C. Redemption explained (Epistles)
 - D. Redemption realized through prophecy (Revelation)

But, we may ask, what do we need to be redeemed from? But, we may ask, what do we need to be redeemed from? We might wonder why the laws in the first place. Jeremiah said, "I know, O LORD, that a man's way is not direct his steps (Jeremiah 10:23)."

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NOTES

Hallelujah, Praise Jehovah!

Psalm 148

Wm. J. Kirkpatrick

1. Hal - le - lu - jah, praise Je - ho - vah! From the heav - ens praise His name;
 2. Let them prais - es give Je - ho - vah! They were made at His com - mand;
 3. All ye fruit - ful trees and ce - dars, All ye hills and moun - tains high,

Praise Je - ho - vah in the high - est; All His an - gels praise pro - claim.
 Them for ev - er He es - tab - lished; His de - cree shall ev - er stand.
 Creep - ing things and beasts and cat - tle, Birds that in the heav - ens fly,

All His hosts to - geth - er praise Him, Sun and moon and stars on high;
 From the earth, O praise Je - ho - vah, All ye floods, ye drag - ons all,
 Kings of earth, and all ye peo - ple, Princ - es great, earth's judg - es all;

Praise Him, O ye heav'n of heav - ens, And ye floods a - bove the sky.
 Fire and hail and snow and va - pors, Storm - y winds that hear Him call.
 Praise His name, young men and maid - ens, A - ged men, and chil - dren small.

CHORUS

Let them prais - - es give Je - ho - vah, For His name a - lone is high,
 Let them prais - es

And His glo - - ry is ex - alt - ed, And His glo - - ry is ex - alt - ed,
 And His glo - ry *pp* And His glo - ry *p*

And His glo - - ry is ex - alt - ed Far a - bove the earth and sky.
 And His glo - ry

What Qualities are Required for One to Understand the Bible?

James 1:16-27

Minnesota Bible Lectureship
Baxter T. Exum, Evangelist
May 8, 2004



Baxter Exum graduated from Freed-Hardeman University in 1993 and is the full-time evangelist for the Four Lakes Church of Christ in Madison, Wisconsin. He has been married to Keola for nearly 11 years and has two children, Silas (7) and Tabitha (3). Baxter has been involved in Christian camping since 1993 and currently serves as the Director of Beaver Creek Bible Camp, which rents a county-owned facility near Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

Introduction:

Several years ago, a test of Bible knowledge was given to five classes of high school seniors. Unfortunately, most of them failed the exam completely. Some were so confused that they thought Sodom and Gomorrah were written by Matthew, Mark, Luther, and John. C accounts were created from an apple. Similar surveys have been delivered the Sermon on the Mount, and 79% could not name prophet. Some were almost as confused as the little boy prophet. Some were the wives of the Apostles!

One of the great blessings of living in this country is that one of the great blessings of living in this own language, and yet millions of people are still missing the tremendous of this book. This afternoon, I would like for us to question, I would like to encourage you to turn with me to James 1. question, I would like to encourage you to turn with me to James 1. in James 1 that answers this question in a very direct way.

The author of this book was most likely the half brother of the Lord. You might remember from the news several months ago that archeologists uncovered an ancient limestone burial box, dating to 63 AD, and an inscription simply says, James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus. That certainly applies to Jesus Christ, and if this box is authentic, it would be one of the earliest artifacts from archaeology to mention the name of Jesus.

Nevertheless, the book of James is a very practical book. James is entitled, What Christian Living is All About. That is a description of the book of James. James has also been called Proverbs. Another well-known preacher, Gospel of Common Sense. And again, that is also Gospel of Common

preached,preached, and we can hardly wait to hear a message from the Lord in our preached, and everyday reading.

TheThe reason why many people do not recognize the Lord s instruction is because they havehave not spent enough time listening to His voice in the first place. In John 10:27, Jesus said,said, My sheep hear My voice, and I know them,said, My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and thethe voice of the shepherd through experience, through manythe voice of the shepherd through experiencevoicevoice. Unfortunately, many people today (even though they have access to voice. U Scriptures)Scriptures) have gone fScriptures) have gone faScriptures) have gone far too long v themselves.themselves. Severathemselves. Several years athemselves. Several years ago, I remem grownrown up in a leading denomination, and when we sat down to study the book of Mark, thisthis young woman broke down in tears. She sat on thethis young woman broke down in tears. She s A All All my lif All my life I have attended church schools, all my life I have gone to church, but we alwaysalways had religion books, and this is the first always had religion books, and this is the studied thestudied the word of God! 30 years old,studied the word of God! 30 years old, in the USA, first time! She was then baptized for the forgiveness of her sins.

EarlierEarlier this week, I got an e-mail (through a friend)Earlier this week, I got an e-mail (through a friend attendedattended a worship service at the same denomination.attended a worship service at the absolutelyabsolutely amazed that the word of God was not read during the service. Iabsolutely amaze couldcould notcould not even find a copy of the Scriptures as she sat there in that service. There were nono Bibles in the pno Bibles in the pew racksno Bibles in the pew racks only the religi rememberedremembered studying as a child. Thisremembered studying as a child. This afternoon, v thatthat we have Bibles in our own language. Not all churches have Bithat we have Bibles in our own racks!racks! Let us be thankful that we have read fromracks! Let us be thankful that we have read from G positionposition of this congregation in Madison has alwaysposition of this congregation in Madison has thethe Scriptures, and if you are not ablethe Scriptures, and if you are not able to get one on your own, th WeWe teWe tell our visitors, If you do not have a Bible, take a good look at the BiWe tell our visitors hands right now it is yours. We do not want to see it again.

ManyMany times, though, just having (and even reading) aMany times, though, just having (and becausebecause there is a special attitude that is necessary for really bebecause there is a special attitude word.word. Soword. Someone has said that the best commentary on the Bible is the Bible, and word bestbest commentarybest commentary on being quick to hear best commentary on being quick to hear puttingputtingputting aside putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility re wordword implanted which is able toword implanted which is able to save your souls. When Jameswo filthiness, filthiness, he is using a word that could also be translated ear wax, and so the picturepicture is ofpicture is of a man cleaning out his ears &so he can hearpicture is of a man cleaning inin our lives can keep us from hearingin our lives can keep us from hearing the word of God. James tells the earwax and listen to God s word!

ThisThis isThis is the first lesson we can learn we are to approach God s word with an attentive and open heart. As James says, we are to be quick to hear.

- II. ThereThere is a second attitude that isThere is a second attitude that is necessary, and that is, we are to approach with a teachable spirit. As James says in verse 19, we are to be slow to speak.

SoSo many timesSo many times we are introduced to someone and within seconds we have forgotten the person s person s name. Experts have studiedperson s name. Experts have studied thatperson s name. we we were most likely payingwe were most likely paying more at we were most likely paying more than to what the other person was saying.

The Authority of the Covenants

Minnesota Bible Lectureship
Randy Martin
May 8, 2004



Randy Martin is an evangelist and shepherd for the South Twin Cities Church of Christ. He has been married to his wife Robin for over 21 years and they have 7 children. His previous work was with the Owatonna Church between 1990 and 1996. He is a graduate from the Bear Valley Bible Institute of Denver and has a Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts in Biblical Studies from Southern Christian University.

- A. It can be difficult determining what commands one should and shouldn't obey in Scripture. It can be difficult determining especially when most of those are found in the Old Testament.
 - B. We know that we shouldn't build an ark, but it is hard for us to know that we shouldn't build an ark, but it is really applicable for today.
 - C. We know some things are true for all times, but deciphering exactly can often be confusing.
 - D. Today I would like to address several largely unknown issues that lessen the confusion.
- I. THERE IS A MORE SCRIPTURAL WAY TO DIVIDE THE SCRIPTURE
- A. A part of that problem lies in the fact that a part of that problem lies in the fact that it gives the impression that all the commands on one side are no longer valid.
 - 1. However, the fact remains that there are certainly laws in what is called the Old Testament that all Christians have to obey, and not in the New Testament.
 - 2. This is demonstrated in things such as decrees for the Garden, and how God told Noah of things that are right and wrong until the Earth, like whoever sheds man's blood (9:6).
 - B. This is exacerbated by scholars separating Scripture into Old and New Testament.
 - 1. This is really not accurate at all, especially the new half is covenant and testament. This new half is covenant and testament.
 - 2. This leads to problems like the thief on the cross. People will say, "It's written in the New Covenant so that's how you're saved." Mosaic Covenant.
 - 3. What we have is the Scripture, with the sacred writings categorizing certain parts.
 - a. Some were very specific
Lk 24:44 - ⁴⁴Now He said to them, "These are My words which I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled. - (NASB)
 - b. The most common terminology is as follows.
Mt 7:12 - ¹²Therefore, however you want people to treat you, so you must treat them. - (NASB)

- c. It seems they described the difference chronologically.
 RoRo 15:4 - ⁴For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our hope. - (NASB)
- 4. Actually, The Bible is never called The Bible in The Bible.
 - a. The word Bible is from the Greek word biblia (from papyrus), meaning originally books. The phrase Daniel 9:2 (LXX) describing the prophetic writings.
 - b. Novum Testamentum (New Testament) was first used by Tertullian (190-200 AD).
- 5. I prefer to just use the older/previous and newer Scriptures to avoid confusion.

II. THERE CAN BE MULTIPLE COVENANTS OPERATING AT THE SAME TIME IN SCRIPTURE

A. Are there many covenants involved in the whole of Scripture?

1. Noahic

Ge 9:1-9 - ¹And God blessed Noah and his sons and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the earth. ² And the fear of you and the terror of you shall be upon every beast of the earth and on every bird of the sky; with everything that creeps on the ground, and all the fish of the sea, into your hand. ³ That is alive shall be food for you; I give all to you, as I gave the green papyrus. ⁴ But flesh with its life, that is with its blood, shall not eat flesh with its life, that is with its blood; from every beast I will require the life of man. ⁵ Whoever sheds man's blood, his blood shall be shed, for in the image of God He made man. ⁶ And as for you, be fruitful and multiply; Populate the earth abundantly and multiply. ⁷ And as for you, and to his sons with him, and to his sons with him, saying, ⁸ Now behold, I Myself do stand with you, and with your descendants after you; - (NASB)

2. Abrahamic

Ge 22:16-18 - ¹⁶and said, By Myself I have sworn, declares the Lord, saying, I have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son; and I will bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the sky, and your seed shall possess the gates of the sea. ¹⁷ And in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice. - (NASB)

3. Mosaic & others

22 Ch 6:9-11 - ⁹ Nevertheless you shall not build the house for My name, for you are born to you, he shall build the house for My name. ¹⁰ Now the Lord has fulfilled His word which He spoke; for I have risen in the place of my father David and sit on the throne of Israel, as the Lord promised, and have built the house for the Lord, the God of Israel. ¹¹ And there I have set the ark, in which is the covenant of the Lord, which He made with the sons of Israel. - (NASB)

B. How many covenants are truly gone?

1. It appears Noah's and Abraham's are still operating.

- a. Did you notice the Jerusalem council, through the Holy Spirit, bound the Noahic commands on the Gentile Christians?
- b. Do we give them their due?

2. However, the Mosaic one does not function since the temple has been destroyed.

- a. Many religions feel justified in adopting the defunct Mosaic system.
- b. They use it for things like tithing, not realizing it is wrong.
- c. But, of course, they leave 99% of it alone. The old system is not fun.

hell. - (NASB)

- b. That shall not commit adultery? Try not even lusting.

MtMt 5:27-28 - ²⁷ You have heard that it was said, You shall not commit adultery. ²⁸ But I say to you, that everyone who looks on a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her already in his heart. - (NASB)

- c. After all, how hard is to have no other God besides God of religious practice, not its maturity.

- d. It has simply been updated, like the Sabbath. It has simply been updated, like the Sabbath now since we have ceased from meritorious works.

HebHeb 4:8-11 - ⁸For if Joshua had given them rest, He would not have spoken of another day after that. ⁹There remains therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God. ¹⁰For the one who has entered His rest, He also ceases from his works, as God did from His. ¹¹Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, that we may not become like those who do not enter it because of disobedience. - (NASB)

- E. It also needed to go since it was intentionally designed as faulty.

1. It was only faulty in that it could not accomplish what it was never designed to do.

2. The fault lay with them, that is the people. They simply could not obey the commandments. The fault lay with them, that is the people's disobedience.

Hebrews 8:6-8 - But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted and ratified in blood, not with animals and their blood. For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no need for a second. For finding fault with them, He says, "Behold, days are coming, says the Lord, when I will effect a new covenant with the house of Israel and with Judah;

- F. It fulfilled its temporary function.

1. It was only temporary law until the Abrahamic covenant was fulfilled.

GaGa 3:15-18 - ¹⁵Brethren, I speak in terms of human relations: even though it is only a man's covenant, yet when it has been ratified, no one sets it aside or adds conditions to it. ¹⁶Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He says, "I will be your God, and you shall be my people." And to see that the promise might be confirmed to you, it was ratified by the Law. ¹⁷What I am saying is this: the Law, which was added 430 years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void. ¹⁸For if the inheritance is based on law, it is no longer a promise; but God has granted it to Abraham by means of a promise. - (NASB)

2. It was added to teach about sin and be a tutor to lead us to Christ.

GaGa 3:19 - ¹⁹Why then was the Law added? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, until the promise should be fulfilled. ²⁰For our sake, a curse was pronounced on the Law, that we should be redeemed from its curse, inasmuch as we were held captive by its regulations. - (NASB)

GaGa 3:23-25 - ²³But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the Law, to be brought into the full view of God. ²⁴Therefore the Law was our tutor to lead us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵Now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. - (NASB)

3. It would instruct many things.

- a. There is unreal damage occurring because people aren't following the Scripture.

- b. For example, they can't believe in a judgmental God because of the numerous accounts of God's wrath found there. They are not taking it out.

IV. REALIZE WE HAVE NOT BEEN RELEASED FROM ALL IN THE PREVIOUS SCRIPTURES

- A. Jesus did not come to abolish the older Scriptures.

MtMt 5:17-18 - ¹⁷Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. ¹⁸For I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is fulfilled.

toto abolish, but to fulfill.¹⁸ For truly I say to you, For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law, smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law.

1. Many are confused here as to what is not abolished, that is, the Law.
a. The Law was mostly known as the 5 books called the Torah, the Pentateuch, not just the specific laws given within those books known as the Mosaic Law.

b. The prophets are all the other books.

2. He did nail to the cross the decrees of the Mosaic covenant and the Law with it.

Col 2:13-14 -¹³And when you were dead in your transgressions and in the shadow of the law, of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven you of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven you all transgressions, ¹⁴having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross. - (NASB)

3. He only abolished the specific commandments found in the Law.

Eph 2:14-15 -¹⁴For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one, by abolishing in Himself the barrier of the dividing wall, ¹⁵by abolishing in Himself the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, - (NASB)

a. The context would include those Mosaic commandments found in the Pentateuch, and those other commandments in the Law.
b. That would include things like the Ten Commandments, the ceremonial laws, and the civil laws.

c. That would include things like the Law of Moses, the Law of the Lord, and the Law of the King.

B. Though most of the commandments found in the Law and the Law are still operational per context. We have not been released from the Law.

1. For example, the Law prior practice teaches us about God's character, far what things should not be.

a. That true religion must be far more than following a set of rules that kills.

2 Co 3:1-6 -¹Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need some letters of commendation from men? ²Our hearts are known and read by all men; ³being manifested that you are a letter of Christ, cared for by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit on tablets of stone, but on tablets of human hearts. ⁴And such confidence we have through Christ toward God. ⁵Not that we are adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. - (NASB)

Ga 3:10 -¹⁰For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for as many as are written, Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, to perform them. - (NASB)

b. There are no set of laws that can be given by which mankind can be saved.

Ga 3:21-22 -²¹Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! If a law had been given which was able to impart life, indeed have been based on law. ²²But the Scripture has shut up all things under the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. - (NASB)

c. It taught us a lot about the details of sin.

Ro 7:7 -⁷What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin if the Law had not said, You shall not covet. - (NASB)

2. It also teaches countless foundational truths that must be applied. It is the foundation requiring obedience.

Ro 15:4 -⁴For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our encouragement through perseverance and the encouragement of the Law.

(NASB)

- a. What do we learn from David & Goliath? David God then most things go fine. When trouble.
 - b. What do you learn from Nadab and Abi church don't understand the concept that church don't understand in our religion. God still doesn't accept strange fire.
 - c. What about the beginning of creation? What are the precedents found in the Garden for the roles of male and female? They're still operational.
3. It is still binding on many practical operations of day of the next verse is the older Scripture.
- 22 Ti 3:16-17 - ¹⁶All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof for correction, for training in righteousness; ¹⁷that the man of God may be equipped for every good work. - (NASB)
- a. How will one know how to practically follow this explanation on how?
Eph 6:4 - ⁴And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. - (NASB)
 1. If it wasn't for Deuteronomy and Proverbs I would have been lost.
 2. It's still true and binding, including the rod on the backside of the rebellious.
 - b. How will we know the details of being an excellent wife if we don't read Proverbs 31?

IV. THE NEW SCRIPTURES GIVES THE ULTIMATE RELIGIOUS SYSTEM AND INFORMATION

- A. It reveals that as opposed to the Old, the New reveals that as opposed to the Lk 22:20 - ²⁰And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood. - (NASB)
 1. This is repeated in 1 Corinthians.
 2. The blood and what it represents is the covenant.
 3. Early Christians were in the covenant not having one single read.
- B. It teaches that the New Covenant can then only be written on the hearts of people.
Heb 8:9-11 - ⁹Not like the covenant which I made with their fathers by the hand of Moses to lead them out of the land of Egypt; For they did not continue in the covenant, And I did not care for them, says the Lord. ¹⁰For I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel After those days, says the Lord, I will put My laws in their minds, And I will write them upon their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be My people. ¹¹And they shall not teach everyone his neighbor, saying, Know the Lord, For all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest. - (NASB)
 1. The Mosaic Covenant was the written contract, whereas the New Covenant is the writings that describe and guide the Christian through the covenant.
 2. No one can be born into it. The only way to get in is to know the Lord.
 3. No one can say, Here is a law for me to obey and I will be there.
 4. It is the true way in which I will be their God and they will be My people.
- C. We find out that the New Covenant is designed to be far more merciful.
Heb 8:12-13 - ¹²For I will be merciful to their iniquities, and I will not remember their sins. ¹³When He said, A new covenant, He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear. - (NASB)
 1. Though there is much more mercy, there are, of course, still new laws that are associated with this New Covenant. But there are some things that are associated with this New Covenant. But come down to whether you're trying to give your God your whole being.
Jas 4:17 - ¹⁷Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, his sin is

it is sin. - (NASB)

RoRo 14:5 - ⁵One man regards oneOne man regards one day above another, another regardsOne ma
Let each man be fully convinced in his own mind. - (NASB)

RoRo 14:14 - ¹⁴I know and am convinced inI know and am convinced in the Lord Jesus that nothing is u
but to him who thinks anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. - (NASB)

RoRo 14:23 - ²³But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from
faith; and whatever is not from faith is sin. - (NASB)

2. But these are obeyed out of love and devotion. It is a very simple system.

Jn 14:15 - ¹⁵ If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. - (NASB)

3. OneOne is noOne is not losOne is not lost because they don t follow the laws of the newer Scriptur
everyone would be lost sinceeveryone would be lost since everybody has violated them sinceever

4. OneOne is only lost when they give up following One is only lost when they give up follow
teachings due to a heart problem.

5. ThisThis is because their actions proveThis is because their actionsprove the lawsare not writtenThis i
that God gives can be taken back.

NOTES

Obedient Faith: The Key to Salvation

Minnesota Bible Lectureship
Dan Mayfield
May 8, 2004



Dan Mayfield preaches for the church of Christ in Owatonna, Minnesota, the congregation he helped to establish in 1990. Previously, from 1989 to 1990, he preached in Wray, Colorado. Dan graduated from the Bear Valley Bible Institute of Denver, and received a Bachelor of Arts in Management Communication from Southern Christian University. He is presently working on a Master of Arts in Biblical Studies. Dan and Hazel, his wife of 25 years, have five children, 2 sons-in-law, and a granddaughter named Georgia.

Introduction

Most religious folks today would be surprised to know that Jesus taught belief and confession of Him is not enough to be saved. Many have falsely believed that faith alone an internal better felt than told faith is the first requirement for salvation; and second, that faith is God s gift to only an elect few. Both points are wrong and do not do service to God s message of love for all men. If boiled down to their essence, they teach that some men are saved by a dead, inactive faith which was given to them by God because He required that they have it. This error which is perpetuated by many makes God a respecter of persons and makes salvation unavailable to the majority of souls. In response, let it be stated clearly that God s saving grace is offered to all men through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and anyone who believes and obeys the Gospel will be saved. The key to receiving God s gift of salvation is having an obedient faith.

Many who seek salvation in Christ are told simply to pray the *sinner s prayer*. The following is representative of what they are told to pray:

"Just accept Christ into your heart through prayer and he'll receive you. It doesn't matter what church you belong to or if you ever do good works. You'll be born again at the moment you receive Christ. He's at the door knocking. You don't even have to change bad habits, just trust Christ as Savior. God loves you and forgives you unconditionally. Anyone out there can be saved if they ... Accept Christ, now! Let us pray for Christ to now come into your heart."

Jesus said, Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. ¹ To be saved by God requires that the sinner give more than lipservice to God. He said heaven is for those who do the will of God. The whole idea that people can be saved without obeying God is foreign to the Bible. Everyone who knows what is the appropriate response to God s offer of salvation also knows when it is that a sinner first receives the forgiveness of sins. Christians who want to spread the Gospel of Christ need to teach the necessity of obedient faith while also emphasizing the unmerited grace of God.

The Salvation We Proclaim

TheThe salvation God offers to every man and woman is what we yearn for in our soul.

¹Matthew 7:21

Since the beginning of time, when the first sin was committed, the creation was subjected to futility. And Paul says of man: and not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body....but if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it. ² God is offering to all people what they yearn for in their soul: freedom from sin and the hope of the heavenly home.

Without the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, this would not be possible. Paul writes, in [Christ] we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, ³ This blessing is only possible because of Jesus perfect life, His sacrificial death, and His resurrection from the grave. When we speak on the subject of salvation, we are talking about the forgiveness of sins and promise of eternal life which God offers to all men through Jesus Christ, His Son. To the Corinthians who believed and obeyed the Gospel they were taught, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature. ⁴

When does a man receive this salvation? How we answer this question is important. Some say you do nothing, God already did it. Some say you believe, or when you accept Jesus into your heart, or when you confess that He is Lord, or when you pray the sinner's prayer. Some say you must repent of your sin and be baptized. Our task is to cut through the maze of answers and discover what the Bible says. To get to the correct answer, we must talk about faith.

The Bible Says Salvation Is By Faith

When Jesus returns a second time, the Hebrew writer says it will be for salvation for those who eagerly await Him. ⁵ How does He determine that someone is eagerly awaiting Him? To eagerly await the coming of Christ implies the person is living different than the unbelieving masses. A man who has faith in God has prioritized his life and is walking by faith--not by sight. The people who are eagerly waiting will be living a life of faith because that what God's grace calls for and requires. To the Ephesians, Paul said that by God's unmerited favor you have been saved through faith. ⁶ God requires that a man have faith to receive His salvation. Jesus said to Nicodemus, for God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. ⁷ Jesus did all of the hard at the cross, but faith is required of the sinner to benefit from it. Jesus asked, when the Son of Man comes [again], will he find faith on the earth? Jesus asked this because faith is the only thing that can save. And this is the victory that overcomes the world our faith. ⁸ Paul said to the Romans, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ Men of faith have the hope of eternal life. Will Jesus find faith on the earth when he returns?

Among those who want to go to heaven, some choose the alternative to faith which is self-justification. However, unless a man is sinless, any attempts to justify self through works are doomed. Since all have sinned, even the best man on earth still falls short of

²Romans 8:23,25

³Ephesians 1:7, cf. Rom 5:6-9; Heb. 9:14; 1 Peter 1:18,19

⁴2 Corinthians 5:7

⁵Hebrews 9:28

⁶Ephesians 2:8

⁷John 3:16

⁸1John 5:4

⁹Romans 5:1

the glory of God. Paul shows a better way, saying, but now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe.¹⁰ How good is that! For everyone who is locked into the idea of trying to be good enough to get to heaven, Paul says to put your faith in God. Faith is truly the victory that overcomes the world. With faith placed firmly in God not in my own works, not in some human standard of goodness grace is abundantly supplied. Why would man trust in anything but God's salvation found in Christ?

This Faith Is Not Faith Alone

Having established that sinners are justified before God by faith, the question is now, what kind of faith? In saying that salvation is not by faith alone, we are not saying that salvation is by faith plus something else. Salvation is by faith, from first to last, from beginning to end.¹¹ Martin Luther was right to reject the works system of Catholicism which included the sale of indulgences and paying for sin through acts of penance. But Luther erred, going to the other extreme and led many to equate Catholic works with all necessary forms of obedience to God. His German translation of Romans 3:28 says, for we maintain that a man is justified by faith alone apart from works of the law. The word alone is not found in the Greek text and by his insertion of it, he limited faith to something internal and de-emphasize obedience to God. Other denominations followed his lead. The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church States, wherefore, that we are justified by faith, only, is a most wholesome doctrine and very full of comfort.

How do we respond to this? The only time faith alone is mentioned in the Bible is in James, who says, you see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone.¹² A faith alone doctrine must deny the necessity of any and all of God's commandments. Those who say faith alone mean salvation is by faith plus nothing, and the conclusion is that salvation comes before prayer, confession, repentance, baptism, and any other act of obedience. But James shows that a faith that isn't doing is a dead faith.¹³ Why do some dare to teach a doctrine of faith without works for salvation when James says, be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.¹⁴ Faith alone doctrine is contrary to the teachings of Christ and His apostles. We have to conclude that a man's faith must be in the saving grace of God; but a dead, inactive faith cannot save. Salvation is necessarily by faith, but not by faith alone.

The Example of Abraham

*If Abraham had not obeyed by faith, he would not have been justified by faith.*¹⁵

According to the Bible, Abraham is an excellent example of the kind of faith Christians are to have today. His life is recorded in Genesis 12 through 23. When God told Abraham to go forth from your country, and from your relatives, and from your father's house, he did it.¹⁶ The Hebrew writer says, by faith, when he was called,

¹⁰Romans 3:21,22

¹¹Romans 1:17

¹²James 2:24

¹³James 2:20,26

¹⁴James 1:22

¹⁵Accessed at: <http://members.datafast.net.au/sgram/fl14.htm>

¹⁶Genesis 12:1

obeyed.¹⁷ The faith that justified Abraham cannot possibly be separated from the obedience he exhibited. Abraham was not justified by his works, but he was justified through an obedient faith. Late in Abraham's life, when God told him that he would have a son, Abraham and Sarah both trusted God and conceived a child. Paul said of this, yet with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform.¹⁸ To put it in other words, Abraham and Sarah had relations with each other by faith. They believed God and God rewarded them with a son for their faith. And then even later in Abraham's life, when God told Abraham to offer this same son as a sacrifice, Abraham started out to do that very thing.¹⁹ The Hebrew writer says, by faith Abraham, when he was tested offered up Isaac,...²⁰ With all of this testimony concerning Abraham, in what way would we say he was an example of faith if we did not have his obedience to point to?

In no way is Abraham an example of someone being justified by faith alone. Abraham's faith in God did not negate the necessity that he obey God. Paul's message to the Romans, that Abraham was justified by faith, was directed to certain Jewish Christians who still sought to be justified by their own righteousness and goodness and superiority. His message to them was that justification comes only through faith in Christ. This is why he said in the Galatian letter, you have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.²¹ Justification cannot come by law-keeping, or by circumcision, or good works, or by any human effort. Abraham obeyed, but did not think he earned salvation. He did not think his various acts of righteousness merited for himself eternal life. This is what Paul means when he says, but to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness.²² Be careful that you not interpret it does not work as does not need to obey. You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected.²³ Faith alone doctrine is not Biblical.

The Bible Teaches That An Obedient Faith Is Essential To Salvation

In 1 Corinthians 13, the apostle went to great lengths to show that spiritual gifts would cease and faith, hope, and love would remain. Well that's fine, but what is faith, hope, and love? These things, without which we are lost, have no meaning unless they are made manifest in deeds. To the Thessalonians, Paul said he was, constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ...²⁴ If anyone loves Christ, it will be seen in what he is doing. If anyone has faith in Christ, it will be seen through his obedience to God. The saving faith which Paul speaks of is alive, vibrant, active.

It is inevitable that we obey somebody. There is no neutral corner to take; either a man is a slave of sin or he is a slave of God's righteousness. Paul, in his letter to the Romans, while emphasizing justification by faith, said the Christians obeyed from the

¹⁷Hebrews 11:8

¹⁸Romans 4:20,21

¹⁹Genesis 22:3

²⁰Hebrews 11:17

²¹Galatians 5:4.

²²Romans 4:5

²³James 2:22

²⁴1 Thessalonians 1:3; cf. 5:8

heart that form of doctrine to which they were committed.²⁵ He clearly showed that their obedience took them from being slaves of sin to being slaves of righteousness.²⁶ And not once, but twice Paul spoke of the obedience of faith, that we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith.²⁷ The subject of obedience or works was not anathema to Paul. But Paul would never suggest that anyone put their faith in their works. Peter wrote you have in obedience to truth purified your souls...²⁸ Peter wasn't suggesting that they put their faith in their works, but their obedience was clearly integral to their purification of sins. Anyone who thinks that preaching obedience to God somehow nullifies His grace is confused. It doesn't. Preaching faith in self or faith in one's works or faith in some person certainly would nullify God's grace, but an emphasis on obedience to Christ does not equate with putting our faith in our works. If it did, the Hebrew writer would have it all wrong when he said, [Jesus] became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation.²⁹ Paul and Peter agreed the Gospel of Jesus Christ necessitated obedience. Their message was clear that anyone who did not obey the Gospel of Jesus Christ would be eternally lost.³⁰ Jesus, too, saw faith and obedience as necessarily united. He said, why do you call Me, Lord, Lord, and not do what I tell you?³¹ Jesus was not impressed by someone who said they believed, but did not obey. He said, not everyone who calls Me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter.³² He said, if you love Me, you will keep My commandments.³³ To our Savior, faith and love must be integrally connected with obedience.

How can sinful man hope to have eternal life if, after hearing the good news of Christ, he does not repent and does not confess and is not baptized? Obedience to God is essential because the cross of Christ demands it. Doesn't the good news of the cross demand confession? Didn't Paul write, if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved?³⁴ The faith alone doctrine doesn't allow for this as it does not allow for necessity of prayer, confession, or repentance, but Peter said we must repent and return so that our sins might be wiped away.³⁵ When Peter spoke to a crowd for the first time on Pentecost, he did not preach Luther's faith alone doctrine. When the crowd asked Peter what they should do, he directed them to repent and let each one of you be

²⁵Romans 6:17,18

²⁶The transformation Paul describes in Romans 6:17,18 is shown to have occurred when the Christians were buried with Christ in baptism and were raised by their faith in the working of God which was mentioned in the same chapter, see Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12

²⁷Romans 1:5; 16:26

²⁸1 Peter 1:22

²⁹Hebrews 5:9

³⁰2 Thessalonians 1:8,9; 1 Peter 4:16

³¹Luke 6:46

³²Matthew 7:21ff

³³John 14:15

³⁴Romans 10:9; cf. Mt. 10:32,33, Everyone therefore who shall confess Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven.

³⁵Acts 3:19

baptized ?³⁶ When Paul calls for the Christian to repent and confess, he does not nullify God's grace unless the person begins bragging on his works instead of boasting in the blood of Christ.

Concluding Remarks

Two things can be said of the man who will be saved: first, his faith is in God to save; and second, he is obedient to God. If you believe the Bible is God's word, and if you want to receive the blessings revealed in it, then you must obey the Gospel of Christ. Paul said the Gospel is the message of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.³⁷ In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus chastised his disciples for not believing when other disciples told them Christ was resurrected.³⁸ He then directed them to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to all creation. He said, He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned. This last verse shows once again that God is looking for in us the obedience of faith. Jesus said unbelievers will be lost and obedient believers will be saved. Obedient faith, not faith alone, is the key to salvation. If you believe in Jesus and want to be saved by His blood, then obey Christ by turning from sin, confessing His name, and being baptized unto the remission of sins.

And now why do you delay,
arise and be baptized and wash
away thy sins, calling on His
name. ³⁹

NOTES

³⁶Acts 2:38

³⁷1 Corinthians 15:1-4

³⁸Mark 16:14

³⁹Acts 22:16

