

Defender



“I am set for the defense of the gospel”

Volume XXXI

2002

January

April

July

October

February

May

August

November

March

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Defender



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Farther Down The Slippery Slope We Go

Brad Harrub

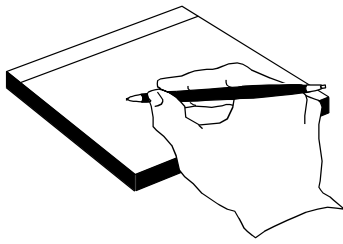
On October 13, just thirty-three short days after the World Trade Center tragedy, America lost eight more precious innocent souls. It was not until Sunday, November 25, 2001 that scientists at Advanced Cell Technology, Inc. announced they had created human embryos through a process known as nuclear transfer (cloning). (This is the same group of scientists who reported in the May 22, 1998 issue of *Science* that they had created a "transgenic" cow/human hybrid embryo.) In discussing their latest endeavor to clone humans, Dr. Michael West, president and CEO of the company, remarked: "I don't think this is safe yet for human reproduction" (CNN, 2001), and he then stressed that he does not support cloning to create human beings as a means of reproduction. However, his overall goals are not as altruistic as they might first appear. While Dr. West and his colleagues do not support human cloning as a means of human reproduction, they have absolutely no problem creating human embryos through cloning in order to extract the precious stem cells of which those embryos are composed. West argued: "There are people out there, people we all care for, who are suffering and dying and need therapies now" (CNN, 2001).

Playing on the emotions of individuals, Dr. West coldly remarked: "We're talking about making human cellular life, not a human life." He argued: "A human life, we know scientifically, begins upwards, even into two weeks." And so, hidden under the guise of what many refer to as "therapeutic cloning," America has found yet another way to destroy innocent life. Proverbs 6:16-17 states: "These six *things* doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look,

a lying tongue, and **hands that shed innocent blood.**" Who is more innocent than the unborn? Make no doubt about it, this latest declaration has taken us a **significant** step closer toward human cloning, and a significant step farther away from God and His Word. Creating human life for the sole purpose of later destroying it to obtain stem cells is immoral and evil.

The Advanced Cell Technology study involved eight eggs, two of which divided to form early embryos. One egg progressed to the six-cell stage before it eventually stopped dividing. Were these embryos human life or merely cells? The prophet Isaiah confirmed it this way: "Hearken, ye people, from afar; The LORD hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name....And now saith the LORD that formed me from the womb *to be his servant.*" (49:1, 5). Jehovah not only viewed Isaiah as a person prior to his birth, but also called him by name. Additionally, the Lord, speaking to the prophet Jeremiah, stated: "Before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb, I sanctified thee." (1:5). James observed in the book that bears his name: "The body without the spirit is dead" (2:26). If the body apart from the spirit is dead, then the opposite of that statement also must be true, in that if the body is living, then the spirit or soul must be present. It is obvious from these texts that God does not consider life to begin at birth, but rather at conception. Thus, upon conception, when that full complement of chromosomes is actively metabolizing and living, God already has placed within that living
(Continued on Page 4)

Notes From The Editor



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Drifting

One area where we have seen a tremendous amount of drifting is in the area of morals. This drifting is true whether one is speaking of the church or our nation as a whole. Through the years we have observed a great deal of change (drifting) regarding the views of marriage, divorce, and remarriage. As is always the case, whatever we see in society soon makes it way into the church. Thus, after a while, there was a great deal of change regarding these views in the church. At one time just about everyone held to the truth on his volatile subject. However, as divorces became more common in our society, there were some in the church who started teaching strange doctrines. Now, one can find just about any doctrine allowing divorce and remarriage for any and every cause (or no cause) and remain in that remarriage. Some have gone to the other extreme to refuse to allow divorce for any reason.

When we learn who has the right of marriage, then we answer all the questions dealing with marriage, divorce, and remarriage. Thus, let us study and learn who has the right to get married. We will see that there are three categories of individuals who have the God-given right to get married. The first class of individuals who have the right to get married are those who have never been married. They have the right to marry an eligible person of the opposite sex with God's approval. Paul informs us in 1 Corinthians 7:36ff that a father who has a virgin daughter does not sin when he gives her in marriage.

The second group of individuals who have the right to get married are those who have lost their previous mate through death: widows and widowers. They also have the right to marry an eligible person of the opposite sex. Paul uses the marriage state to illustrate our relationship to the Law—that we are dead to the Old

Law so we may be married to another law, the New Testament. "For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to *her* husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of *her* husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man" (Rom. 7:2-3). Thus, that one who has their mate die has the right to marry (an eligible person) without that marriage being sin. Paul also affirms this in 1 Corinthians 7:39: "The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord."

The third group of individuals who have the right to get married are those who have put their mate away (divorced them) for the cause of fornication. God gives a general rule concerning divorce. If you divorce you sin: specifically you commit the sin of adultery. "And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery" (Mark 10:11-12). Luke records it this way: "Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from *her* husband committeth adultery" (Luke 16:18).

Policy Statement

All correspondence written to *Defender*, myself (Michael Hatcher), or to the elders at Bellview concerning anything in *Defender* is viewed as intended for publication unless otherwise stated. While it is not the practice of *Defender* to publish our correspondence, we reserve the right to publish such **without further permission being necessary** should the need or desire arise.

Occasionally we receive requests to reprint articles from *Defender*. It is our desire to get sound material into the hands of brethren. Thus, it is our policy to allow reproduction of any articles that should appear in this publication. However, honesty should demand that you give proper credit when reprinting an article. You should give the author credit for his work and we would appreciate your including that you got the article from this paper.

Notice the previously stated verses from Romans also emphasis the same principle. If this is all we had to go by, then anytime anyone divorced (no matter what the reason), they would have to remain unmarried. However, a general rule of Bible study is that one must take everything the Bible says on a given subject and draw a conclusion that is harmonious to all. When we include in our study what is recorded by Matthew, then we learn that one who puts away their mate for fornication has the right to remarry an eligible person of the opposite sex with God's approval. Jesus stated, "But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.... And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except *it be* for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery" (Mat 5:32; 19:9).

These are the three categories of individuals who have the God-given right to get married. If one falls into some other category, they do not have the right to get married without committing (a continuous action) adultery. If someone is committing adultery, they must stop their adultery to go to heaven (see 1 Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:19). Yet, this group of people have become numerous in our society and then in the church. Individuals who divorce for some cause other than the fornication of their spouse and then contract another *marriage*. Instead of the Lord's church standing firm on God's Word, we have drifted with the changing of the times. Preachers have come up with every imaginable doctrine to allow these adulterers to continue in their adultery supposedly with God's approval.

What many congregations and elders do regarding this area is the "don't ask, don't tell" practice. They do not want to know anyone's situation for fear that they might have to deal with it. To facilitate this, they certainly do not want their preacher addressing this issue from the pulpit. They want the preacher to speak about the permanence of marriage and that we should not divorce, but do not speak about the only God-given exception of the marriage bond with the right to remarry and that those who do not abide by that law continue to commit adultery. Brethren, as J. D. Tant said years ago: "Brethren, we are drifting!"

On another matter in the November issue of *Defender*

in the editorial article we dealt with the issue of some trying to expand the role of women in the Lord's church. Just arriving is *The Christian Chronicle* (January 2002) in which they give evidence of this very point. They have a conversation with Jeanene Reese under their "Dialogue" page (20). They introduce her as: "director of the Center for Women in Ministry at Abilene Christian University." In introducing the conversation they state, "Jeanene Reese is a woman with a mission, and that is to encourage and prepare young women for Christian ministry. This she fulfills as the director of the Center for Women in Christian Service and as an assistant professor in the Bible, missions and ministry departments.... Reese shared with the *Chronicle* her thoughts about the realities of preparing women for ministry in a fellowship where the role of women has historically been limited." In response to the question: "As churches continue to change what happens in public worship will women have more opportunities?" Reese answered, "I think women will have more opportunities to serve in public ministry in churches that decide that is part of their identity. I think these churches are increasing in number, but I think they will not be the majority for a long time if ever." Since when has God allowed man to determine what is the identity of the church? God established the identity of the church and man is to conform to it. However, liberals like this refuse to be bound by God's established laws. Sadly, they are growing in number and being promoted by Abilene Christian University and *The Christian Chronicle*.

Important Update

Brother Malcolm Hill has an interesting statement in the Winter 2001 *Newsletter for Tennessee Bible College*. On page 2 he states: "Tennessee Bible College is the only degree granting institution that I know of that remains faithful to God and His Word. We in reality are what all conservatives think a school should be. They agree with us and our stand except on the theme of fellowship. Most of the conservatives would agree with us on Christian fellowship if it were not for their having to give up friends, loved ones, family members, fellowship preachers, gospel meetings, lectureships, etc. There is not a preacher in the entire brotherhood that can prove us wrong on the theme of Christian fellowship. If so, then let him step forth." He challenges the entire brotherhood to "prove us wrong" and if there is anyone

out there to “let him step forth.” In September 2001 issue of *Defender* page 6, we informed the brotherhood of the challenge brother Kent Bailey made for a debate between Malcolm Hill and Wesley Simons on the consistency of Tennessee Bible College and Malcolm Hill when it comes to fellowship. The exact thing Malcolm Hill challenges the entire brotherhood to do. Brother Wesley Simons immediately agreed to the debate challenge, but brother Malcolm Hill has consistently **refused** to accept this debate challenge. Knowing he has this debate challenge before him and knowing that he has refused, why would he then challenge “the entire brotherhood” to “step forth” to “prove us wrong on the theme of Christian fellowship”? Why will brother Hill not debate brother Simons? Is there something that brother Hill does not want us to find out? Is there something that brother Simons knows about brother Hill that he does not want revealed? Brother Hill, what are you hiding? Brother Hill, come forth and accept the debate challenge to do exactly what you have challenged the “entire brotherhood” to do? Stop being a coward!

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(Continued from Page 1)

embryo a soul. Therefore, we must analyze all new scientific technology with this truth in mind even when diseases such as Alzheimer’s disease and Parkinson’s tear at the very roots of our own families.

Is it any wonder that we have young people growing up today with no future plans, and who see no value in their existence? Children around our country watch as we kill our unborn young through medical research and abortion. They watch as we prematurely terminate the lives of our elderly through euthanasia, and they listen to news reports that describe how gunfire was exchanged over a pair of tennis shoes. Add to all of this, our children have been receiving a steady diet of evolution, that we are here by accident and originated from ape-like creatures, and you begin to understand why teens place such little value on human life, and why we have tragic school shootings.

In today’s world, there is a growing tendency to ignore the divine principle that life is God-given (Acts 17:28), and to view human life as that which may be destroyed at will. **We need to reaffirm that human life, as a gift from God, is sacred!** Should Christians make this an issue of moral and ethical concern, or should we as one man said, “Leave it so that discarding laboratory-grown embryos is a matter solely between a doctor and his plumber?” Can we afford to sit idly by and do nothing? James wrote, “Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth *it* not, to him it is sin” (4:17).

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References

CNN, (2001) “Doctor: Cloning not Safe for Reproduction, Despite Breakthrough,” [Online], URL: <http://www.cnn.com/2001/health/11/26/human.cloning/index.html>

Premillennialism: Is It True? (Part 1)

Tim Smith

We see and hear much about the doctrine of Premillennialism, and it would seem that *most* people in the world accept it as true without even so much as an honest investigation of the Scriptures. It shall be our purpose to examine several passages in an effort to determine if Premillennialism is true. If it is, let us accept it fully, but if it is not, may it forever be forsaken for the truth.

Although it manifests itself in a myriad of forms, the doctrine of Premillennialism basically states that at some future point our Lord will return to this earth and reign on a literal earthly throne for one thousand years. I am writing this series from the viewpoint that Christ will never return to this earth, but will come in the clouds where we (the faithful) shall be caught up together with Him and ever be with Him. The points we

shall consider in our short series will be statements which must be true for Premillennialism to be true, but which shall be proven false, therefore proving Premillennialism false.

Was the Land Promise to Abraham Ever Fulfilled?

The advocates of Premillennialism contend that the promise of God to Abraham was not fulfilled, and, therefore, Jesus must return to the earth and do what He could not do when He came before: set up a kingdom which controls the land God promised Abraham.

The promise under consideration was made in Genesis 12:1-3:

Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and

make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

Moses tells us that the promise was conditioned on their obedience to the commands of God:

And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe *and* to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God (Deu. 28:1-2).

Moses also tells us what will become of the children of God and the promise if the people refused to be obedient: “But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee” (Deu. 28:15). By means of summary Moses said:

See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; In that I command thee this day to love the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the LORD thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it. But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it (Deu. 30:15-18).

The promise was made, it was to be performed if they were faithful, it would not be performed if they were not faithful.

The Bible tells us not only about the nature of the promise and its conditions, but also we learn that God performed His promise in full. In Joshua 21:43-45 we learn that God gave Israel **all** the land He promised Abraham and they possessed it.

And the LORD gave unto Israel all the land which he swore to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein. And the LORD gave them rest round about, according to all that he swore unto their fathers: and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand. There failed not ought of any good thing which the LORD had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass.

How much land does God *owe* Israel? **None!** The extent of the land promised was defined in Genesis 15:18, and is as follows: “In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates.” According to 1 Kings 4:21 Solomon, as King of Israel, ruled over all of this “promised land”: And Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the river unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt.” Hear Nehemiah:

Thou *art* the LORD the God, who didst choose Abram, and broughtest him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees, and gavest him the name of Abraham; And foundest his heart faithful before thee, and madest a covenant with him to give the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Jebusites, and the Girgashites, to give *it*, *I say*, to his seed, and **hast performed thy words**; for thou *art* righteous:...So the children went in and possessed the land, and thou subduedst before them the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, and gavest them into their hands, with their kings, and the people of the land, that they might do with them as they would (Neh. 9:7-8, 24).

The Lord promised land to Abraham. He conditioned it on fidelity. He gave the people all He promised. They possessed it. They ruled over it. Their prophets pointed out that they had everything that was coming to them. Therefore, for the advocates of Premillennialism to suggest that God has yet to fulfill this promise is for them to go against the teachings of the Bible, and therefore, they are wrong. “For the word of the LORD *is* right” (Psa. 33:4).

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Naming The Fatherless

Burt Jones

“He said unto the sick of the palsy, Son” (Mark 2:5). The Bible does not give us the name of the man sick with palsy. In many Bible accounts, we not only have the name of the man, but we have the name of his father. For example, we know that the blind man in Jericho was Bartimaeus, son of Timaeus (Mark 10:46). When the name of a son and the name of a father is

given, the implication is that the son, the person, is important. This palsied man was a “no-name” boy. We do not know his name. We do not know his father. For that matter, **he** may not have known his father.

Fathers in the Bible give their sons status, a place in the society. They give them their identity. Today, as then, if a boy does not have a father, he does not have

full status as much as he and we would all wish for him that status. He is lacking in a full identity.

When I view our society today, I see thousands upon thousands of young men who are fatherless. They group themselves together into gangs ranging from the “Bloods,” the “Skinheads,” to the Aryan nation, simply because they seldom belong to a group known as the family as God would have it. As a boy, my friends and I were afraid to walk into a group of men standing on a street corner. We would give them a wide berth. Now I see grown men who are afraid to walk into a group of boys.

There is developing an interesting and tragic phenomenon. Fatherless boys are very often called by their **problem**—not by their **name**. They are categorized just as was this man in the text labeled—“sick of the palsy.” He was identified by his condition! Today the fatherless may be called: Troublemaker, Homosexual, Dopehead, Convict, Gang-banger, Rapist, etc. Fatherless boys become known for their predicament, their past actions.

As New Testament Christians we in the church of Christ fall woefully short in planning, or even having a plan to facilitate a plan, to reach these fatherless boys **and** girls. We are big on planning as were the battle-hardened soldiers of Israel, but one young and innocent shepherd boy named David, armed with a sling, a stone, and a firm belief in God; simply stepped forward and resolved the problem. It may take four of us to reach one child, but we **must** get to them and “bring them to Jesus” (Mark 2:3).

What did Jesus call this man who was called by everyone else as the one, “sick of the palsy”? Jesus

called him: **son**. He saw beyond the problem of this man and looked into his heart. He spoke to him, giving him a name that gave him a relationship. Jesus gave this man an identity, even before He forgave his sins and healed his body.

In calling this man *son*, Jesus was taking upon Himself the role of *father*. We must do the same! We **must not** wait until the fatherless are cleaned up, smiling sweetly, and correctly answering all the questions in Bible study. Jesus called this young man *son* while he was still sick. He did not condemn him for what had caused his palsy. Jesus loved him as he was. Now, I did not say that he saved him as he was, unconditionally. **Brethren, he healed him when he saw his faith** (Mark 2:5)!

We are admonished to be the example that we want our children to see and emulate. My children were and **are** told that they are vibrant, resourceful, rich soil and fertile ground white unto harvest. My daughter knew that **I** was her first date. **I** was the one who first took her to nice places. **I** was the one who attempted, although not always successfully, to show her the example of how a man should treat a woman with courtesy and manners, at the risk of incurring the wrath of some radical feminists. My daughter is accustomed to affection, praise, and kindness. She receives it today from the finest son-in-law a father could ever have hoped to have. Be father enough to explain to your children just who they **really** are to you and to God.

Every child needs an identity. Every child needs a father. The greatest gift ever given them will be in presenting them with a **name**!

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Press Release For Immediate Publication

Austin, TX—The Southwest Church of Christ is pleased to announce that the 21st annual Southwest Lectureship will be held April 14-17, 2002. The theme for this year’s lectureship is *New Converts*. Twenty-one speakers have been invited to come and lecture to an expected record number of brethren who will gather in Austin from across the nation to attend this year’s lectureship series.

During the lectureship, exhibits of various brotherhood publishers, mission efforts, and works from around the country will be on display (*upon prior approval*). In addition, the sermons and lessons delivered during this series will be published in hard-back book form and will be available during the lectureship,

along with audio and video tapes of this year’s as well as past Southwest lectureships. The Annual Southwest School of Bible Studies Supporters’ Dinner will also be held on Tuesday (April 16) of the lectureship. For further information regarding this dinner, please contact Joseph D. Meador, Director of the Southwest School of Bible Studies. R.V. and camper spaces are available at the Southwest building. For additional information and accommodations, you may contact:

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The Church's Origin: Man Or God?

Ronnie Hayes

No one will question the fact that many "Churches" are of human origin! Many are sincere and want to do what God would have them do, but they have been misled and do not realize that where they worship is of human origin. Is this important? How can one determine if where they worship is of Divine origin or human origin? The answer to this question can be found in these questions:

Is Where I Worship Based on God's Promises?

In Matthew 16:18, Christ promised to build "my church." Did Christ fulfill that promise? In Acts 2:47, when the "Lord added to the church," did Christ know which church to add these saved ones to? The body and the church are terms which are synonymous, and the Bible tells us that there is **only one** (Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4; Col. 1:18). Where you worship, do they teach there is "only one church" or for you to "attend the church of your choice?" What is taught about the promises of God can be an indicator of Divine or human origin.

Is Where I Worship Based on God's Pattern?

Worship has never been left up to man's discretion (Gen. 4:1-7; Lev. 10:1-2; Acts 2:42). Why would anyone think they could disregard God's pattern for

worship and their worship be acceptable? From the Bible we are taught to sing (Col. 3:16), pray (1 The. 5:17), give (1 Cor. 16:1-2), preach/teach (Acts 20:7), and partake of the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7). Is this what you do where you worship? If it is not, by what authority do you do what you do? Your pattern of worship can be an indicator of Divine or human origin!

Is Where I Worship Based on God's Pardon?

The Bible very plainly tell us that man cannot save himself (Jer. 10:23; Pro. 14:12), but that God has proved the means by which man can be saved (John 3:16; Tit. 2:11-12). The Bible tells us that one must hear the Word of God (Rom. 10:17), believe that Christ is the Son of God (John 8:24), repent of his sins (Luke 13:3), confess the name of Christ (Rom. 10:9-10), and be baptized to have your sins washed away (Acts 22:16). If this is not what you did to be saved, is your salvation based on human or Divine origin?

It is simple to know whether or not the church you attend is of divine origin. It is either described in the Bible or not. May all seek the church described in the Bible.

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Updated Study Aid

The 1988-2001 books and *Defender* issues of 1994-2000 are available on computer disk in Adobe Acrobat Reader (PDF) format (making it useful for both Intel and Macintosh computers). The Acrobat Reader is also provided on the CD. The CD is completely indexed allowing searches of all the books at the same time (you can find every occurrence of a word or phrase such as "baptism for the remission of sins" in every book at the same time). The cost of the CD is only \$50 in which you receive all 14 books (less than \$5 per book). If you purchased the CD with the 1999/1998 books, you can receive an update for \$40 upon the return of the CD, or last year's with 1988-2000 books for \$5.00 upon return of the CD. Postage/handling per CD is \$1.25. Take advantage of this great offer. Order from Bellview Church Of Christ.

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"I am set for the defense of the gospel"

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Premillennialism: Is It True? (Part 2)

Tim Smith

In our last article on this subject we noted that the land promise made by God to Abraham has been fulfilled, noting the passages which teach this. Therefore, there is no need for Christ to return to earth to fulfill this promise, for it has already been fulfilled. We encouraged our readers to examine the evidence presented and draw the conclusion that was warranted by the facts. We ask the same for this study.

Has God Promised to Restore Israel Nationally to Palestine?

Is it the case that God promised to restore Israel nationally to Palestine, but due to Him not expecting the Jews to reject Jesus in His initial coming to the **earth**, He was unable to make His promise good? If so, then perhaps there will be a need for Jesus to return to this earth and make good His Father's promise. If not, then another tenet in the doctrine of premillennialism is shown to be false.

The promise of God to restore Israel to Palestine was conditional, as we see in Deuteronomy 30:1-10:

And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call *them* to mind among all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath driven thee, And shalt return unto the LORD thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul; That then the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee. If *any* of thine be driven out unto the outmost *parts* of heaven, from thence will the Lord thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee: And the Lord thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers. And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart

of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live. And the LORD thy God will put all these curses upon thine enemies, and on them that hate thee, which persecuted thee. And thou shalt return and obey the voice of the LORD, and do all his commandments which I command thee this day. And the LORD thy God will make thee plenteous in every work of thine hand, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy land, for good: for the LORD will again rejoice over thee for good, as he rejoiced over thy fathers: If thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which are written in this book of the law, *and* if thou turn unto the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul.

Clearly, from the phrase in verse 2, "Shalt return unto the LORD thy God, and shalt obey his voice" to the phrase in verse 10, "If thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which are written in this book of the law," we see that the promise to restore them was conditioned on their obedience to the Lord's laws. The fact that it was a conditional promise indicates that the Lord need not fulfill it should the people not meet the conditions.

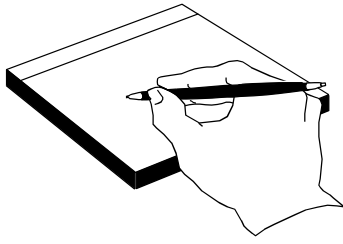
Because of the people's rebellion against the will of God the promise was amended in Isaiah 10:20-22:

And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* the remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no more again stay upon him that smote them; but shall stay upon the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, in truth. The remnant shall return, *even* the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God. For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return: the consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness.

Now notice, only a *remnant* would return, though there were to be many of them, "as the sand of the sea." It is no longer the aim of God to return each Jew to Jerusalem, but only a portion of the Jews because of their

(Continued on Page 3)

Notes From The Editor



**Michael
Hatcher**

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m-h@bigfoot.com

Drifting

The pioneer preacher, J. D. Tant, made the statement we have taken for the beginning point of this series of articles dealing with the general subject of *Drifting*. He said, "Brethren, we are drifting!" In this article, I would like us to look at the area of gambling. Many simply see nothing wrong with this work of Satan. Some realize *gambling* is wrong but then cannot recognize certain areas which fall into the general category of gambling (i.e. lottery, buying chances, cake walks, etc.).

Defenders of the vice of gambling often ask where the passage is which condemns the practice. They desire a specific verse which states that gambling is sinful. They fail to recognize that the New Testament sets forth principles by which we are to live. When actions are contrary to those principles then that practice is sinful. Thus, while the Bible does not explicitly state that gambling is sin, we can know that it is contrary to the principles God has given us to live by in the New Testament and is therefore sinful. Let us consider some of these principles.

First the Bible authorizes four ways to make money or gain possessions. First there is the law of labor. Working to earn a living is right and honorable in God's sight. At the beginning of time God placed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden and instructed them "to dress it and to keep it" (Gen. 2:15). After sin entered the world, God told Adam that "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread" (Gen. 3:19). In the Ten Commandments of the Mosaic Law, God instructed, "Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work" (Exo. 20:9). In the New Testament, God instructed that the one who stole is to no longer steal "but rather let him labour, working with *his* hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth" (Eph.

4:28). Then Paul informs us "that if any would not work, neither should he eat" (2 The. 3:10).

A second way to make money is by the law of exchange. This is the buying and selling of goods. A person has a commodity to sell and someone else buys that merchandise. The person selling that good has the right to make money off of that produce. James tells of those who make plans without God (for which they are condemned). James records, "Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain" (Jam. 4:13). They were going to practice the law of exchange (they were not condemned for this but for leaving God out of their plans).

Another way to make money is by the law of loan. This is when someone has something which someone else needs and agrees to pay a fee for the use of that which he needs without buying the good. We usually associate this with the lending of money to another and he paying interest on that loan. Jesus authorizes this action in the parable of the talents (Mat. 25:14-30). The master told the wicked and slothful servant: "Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the ex-changers, and *then* at my coming I should have received mine own with usury" (Mat. 25:27).

The fourth way in making money is by the law of love. This is when something is given as a gift without any desire or expectation of something given in return. Jesus expressed this principle when he stated, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). This would include giving things (whether by gift or by inheritance) to family, friends, or whoever we wish to express our love.

As one considers these four authorized ways of gaining possessions or making money, gambling does not fit into any of these categories. Since everything we do must be done by the authority of Christ (Col. 4:17), gambling is sinful because we do not have Christ's authority for its action. However, gambling is sinful because it violates several principles found within God's Word. Let us consider a few of these.

Gambling violates the principle of faithful stewardship. *Steward* literally means house law and denotes the manager of a house. In a scriptural sense, one who has received a trust (gift) from God. God never gives up His ownership; the steward has the privilege of administering that which God gives him. We are to be faithful in that stewardship in using what God gives us to His glory and the furtherance of His cause. Paul wrote, "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ,

and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful” (1 Cor. 4:1-2; see also Luke 12:42; 1 Pet. 4:10). God does not approve of wasting His money by gambling it away.

Gambling is addictive; it brings you under its control. The Bible teaches us to practice self-control or temperance (1 Cor. 9:25; Gal. 5:23; 2 Pet. 1:6). The various powers God bestows upon man are capable of abuse, the right use demands the controlling power of the will under the operation of the Word of God. According to some studies 5% of gamblers will become compulsive gamblers. Others have said 10% of new gamblers will become addicts. This addiction leads to other sins (often to make up for the lost money). Sins that are often associated with gambling are: stealing, cheating, and lying. Often homes are destroyed because of gambling (see 1 Tim. 5:8), property is lost, and suicides increase. These things happen even to those who are not addicted.

Gambling sets a bad example. The Bible teaches us to be careful concerning our example. Paul told Timothy to be an example of the believers (1 Tim. 4:12). As such we are to “Provide things honest in the sight of all men” (Rom. 12:17). Gambling is setting a poor example in the sight of others and does not provide things honest because it is the dishonest gain of money.

Gambling violates the “golden rule” and the second great command. Jesus taught, “Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets” (Mat. 7:12). The second great command is: “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Mat. 22:39). For one to win in gambling, others must lose. You would be hoping (betting) that your neighbor will lose and you want his money without earning it lawfully (according to God).

There are other principles gambling violates as well as social ills caused by gambling. Thus, no Christian should be engaged in this activity. We need to return to a preaching and teaching on this subject especially considering all the forms of gambling in our society. *MH*

rebellion. But is this something that will yet happen? or has it already happened?

God placed a time on the fulfillment of this promise, saying:

Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Because ye have not heard my words, Behold, I will send and take all the families

of the north, saith the LORD, and Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof, and against all these nations round about, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, and an hissing, and perpetual desolations. Moreover I will take from them the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones, and the light of the candle. And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, *that I* will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the LORD, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations (Jer. 25:8-12).

Again the same prophet wrote:

For thus saith the LORD, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place. For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. And I will be found of you, saith the LORD: and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the LORD; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive (Jer. 29:10-14).

So from the citations so far offered we see that the promised return was conditional, that only a remnant would return, and that the return would happen 70 years after the departure.

In 2 Chronicles 36:17-19 we see that the period of captivity had begun:

Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age: he gave *them* all into his hand. And all the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king, and of his princes; all *these* he brought to Babylon. And they burnt the house of God, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with **fire**, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof.

From yet another prophet we learn that the 70 years not only started, but actually were accomplished and the promised return of the remnant happened:

Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and *put it* also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who *is there* among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel, (he is the God,) which is in Jerusalem (Ezra 1:1-3).

In Ezra 9:15 Ezra said, “O LORD God of Israel, thou art

righteous: for we remain yet escaped, as *it* is this day: behold, we are before thee in our trespasses.” Nehemiah spoke of the return of the remnant as well (Neh. 1:3), as did Haggai (Hag. 1:12-14). There is no need for Jesus to return to the earth and restore Israel nationally to

Palestine, for God has performed all that He promised in this respect.

We plan to continue these thoughts in a future issue.

1272 Enon Road; Webb, AL 36376

Denominationalism And Evolution

Wesley Simons

Most denominations would want you and me to believe that they oppose the principles of evolution. However, they must endorse some of the tenets of evolution to try and prove that denominationalism is from God. Of course, they fail in their effort as do the evolutionists.

The evolutionists must affirm that all things do not bring forth after their kind. Moses stated over three thousand years ago that everything does bring forth after its kind: “And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, *and* the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed *is* in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, *and* herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed *was* in itself, after his kind: and God saw that *it was* good” (Gen. 1:11-12). Those who teach evolution have had over three thousand years to prove Moses and the Bible wrong, but they have not and cannot.

The denominational world comes along and tries to tell you and me that John 15 affirms the concept of many different churches coming from the same vine. What would you think of me if I told you that I have one vine that produces watermelons, cucumbers, pumpkins, grapes, etc.? You would say that I am crazy. You would be right! Because everything produces after its own kind. Therefore, the denominational world finds itself promoting the evolutionists point of view that

everything does not bring forth after its kind.

The vine of John 15 produces only Christians. It does not produce Baptists, Methodists, Jehovah Witnesses, Mormons, etc. The Word of God is the seed that brings forth this fruit. “Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God” (Luke 8:11). The seed only (Bible) produces Christians only. The Bible plus a creed, human tradition, commandments of men, sayings of the Pope, etc., produces something besides a Christian.

We cannot have life unless we are joined to the true vine. We become part of the true vine by obeying the gospel of Christ. To put it another way, all people in manmade churches are lost because they are not drawing their life from the true vine. We must remember the words of Jesus: “But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up” (Mat. 15:13).

Here are some closing thoughts: “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof *are* the ways of death” (Pro. 14:12); “For every house is builded by some *man*; but he that built all things *is* God” (Heb. 3:4); “Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it” (Psa 127:1). May God help us to see the need of becoming a part of His life-giving Son.

2691 Hyw. 91; Elizabethton, TN 37643

Make plans now to attend the Twenty-Seventh Annual Bellview Lectureship

Date: June 8-12, 2002 Place: Bellview Church Of Christ

Theme: Beatitudes

Hear faithful men of God present lessons of the timely theme of the *Beatitudes*. We will certainly be dealing with the beatitudes found in Matthew 5, but will also study the ones found in Revelation. In addition to these 14 lessons, we will also consider the promised blessing stated to Abraham in Genesis 12:3 upon which all other blessings flow. We will also examine several of the beatitudes found in Psalms, along with others. Make sure that you are here for this great lectureship.

Spring Bible Institute Lectures

“A Study and Exposé of ‘Jehovah’s Witnesses’”

February 24-27, 2002

David P. Brown, Lectureship Director

Sunday, February 24

9:30 AM “Man—His Nature and Death”
 10:30 AM “Matthew 24—an Exposition”
 4:00 PM “The Nature of Christ’s Kingdom”
 5:00 PM “Why I Cannot be a Jehovah’s Witness”
 6:00 PM “The 144,000 and Eternal Life”

Johnie Scaggs
 David P. Brown
 Billy Bland
 Danny Box
 Eddie Whitten

Monday, February 25

9:00 AM “A Review of the ‘Russell-White Debate’”
 10:00 AM “Eternal Punishment and Jehovah’s Witnesses”
 10:00 AM Ladies Class
 11:00 AM “A Review of ‘Millions Now Living Will Never Die’”
 1:30 PM “The Holy Spirit and Jehovah’s Witnesses”
 2:30 PM “‘Watchtower’ and ‘Awake Magazines’”
 3:30 PM “Jehovah’s Witnesses and Apocalyptic Language”
 DINNER BREAK
 6:30 PM CONGREGATIONAL SINGING
 7:00 PM “Baptism and Jehovah’s Witnesses”
 8:00 PM “A Review of ‘The New World Translation’”

Roddy Covington
 Bruce Stulting
 Martha Bently
 David Baker
 Gary Grizzell
 Jeff Sweeten
 Tom Wacaster

Michael Hatcher
 Tyler Young

Tuesday, February 26

9:00 AM “The Terminology of Jehovah’s Witnesses”
 10:00 AM “Rationalism and Jehovah’s Witnesses”
 10:00 AM Ladies Class
 11:00 AM “‘The Godhead’ and Jehovah’s Witnesses”
 1:30 PM “Arianism and Jehovah’s Witnesses”
 2:30 PM “Jehovah’s Witnesses: Blood and Transfusions”
 3:30 PM “Jehovah’s Witnesses: Sin and Salvation”
 DINNER BREAK
 6:30 PM CONGREGATIONAL SINGING
 7:00 PM “Human Government and Jehovah’s Witnesses”
 8:00 PM “Jesus Christ: His Deity, Virgin Birth, Atonement, and Resurrection”

Tom Moore
 Royce Williamson
 Martha Bently
 Michael Light
 Paul Vaughn
 Randy Mabe
 David B. Jones

Terry Hightower
 Jerry Murrell

Wednesday, February 27

9:00 AM “Charles Taze Russell: Origin of Jehovah’s Witnesses”
 10:00 AM “A Review of ‘Russellism Unveiled’”
 11:00 AM “Does the ‘N.W.T.’ Uniformly Teach Jehovah’s Witnesses”
 1:30 PM “Revelation 20: an Exposition”
 2:30 PM “New Heavens and New Earth”
 3:30 PM “Judge Joseph Franklin Rutherford”
 DINNER BREAK
 6:30 PM CONGREGATIONAL SINGING
 7:00 PM “‘The Battle of Armageddon’ and Jehovah’s Witnesses”
 8:00 PM “A Summary of Jehovah’s Witnesses Doctrine”

Gary Summers
 Bob Patterson
 Darrell Conley
 Tommy Hicks
 Lester Kamp
 Kent Bailey

B. J. Clarke
 Lynn Parker

LUNCH PROVIDED BY THE SPRING CONGREGATION EACH DAY AT NOON

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MEMPHIS SCHOOL OF PREACHING 36th ANNUAL LECTURESHIP

3950 Forest Hill Irene Road; Memphis, TN 38125

March 31 - April 4, 2002

“Satan: Diabolical Ruler Of The World And Enemy Of God And Man”

SUNDAY, MARCH 31

9:30-10:20 AM	Satan: Factual or Fictional?	Kenneth Gossett
10:30-11:30 AM	Satan: His Origin, Nature, and Power (Limitations)	Barry Grider
6:00- 7:00 PM	Satan: Father of Lies, Murderer from the Beginning	Gary Colley
7:00- 8:00 PM	Satan's Work to Destroy the Home	Bobby Liddell

MONDAY, APRIL 1

9:00- 9:50 AM	Satan: His Names	Daniel Denham
10:00-10:50 AM	Satan: Engenderer of False Doctrine on the Holy Spirit	Keith A. Mosher, Sr.
10:00-10:50 AM	Satan's Wicked Influence on Eve and Consequences (Women's Class)	Corinne Elkins
11:00-11:50 AM	Satan: Engenderer of Catholicism	Tim Nichols
Class 1:	The Church of Satan, Satanic Bible, Satanic Worship	Kevin Beard
Class 2:	Demon Possession and Satan	Cliff Goodwin
Class 3:	Ananias and Sapphira and Satan; Paul's Thorn and Satan	Neal Pollard
Class 4:	“The Devil Made Me Do It” Refuted	Bill Williams
11:50- 1:10 PM	LUNCH	
1:10- 2:00 PM	Satan's Work to Destroy the Bible	Jackie Stearsman
Class 1:	Engenderer of Evolution and Humanism	Daniel F. Cates
Class 2:	Satan and Calvinism	Robert R. Taylor, Jr.
Class 3:	Satan's Wicked Influence on Delilah and Consequences (Women's Class)	Annette B. Cates
2:10- 4:00 PM	Dedication/Open House—N. B. Hardeman Library	
4:00- 7:00 PM	INTERMISSION	
7:00- 7:30 PM	CONGREGATIONAL SINGING	
7:30- 8:30 PM	Satan's Work to Destroy the One Church, It's Unity and Undenominational Character	Dub McClish

TUESDAY, APRIL 2

9:00- 9:50 AM	Satan, God of This World and Prince of Powers of the Air	Harrell Davidson
10:00-10:50 AM	Satan: Engenderer of False Doctrine on the Holy Spirit	Keith A. Mosher, Sr.
10:00-10:50 AM	Satan's Wicked Influence on Witch of Endor and Consequences (Women's Class)	Irene Taylor
11:00-11:50 AM	Satan: Engenderer of Protestant Denominationalism	Chuck Webster
Class 1:	The Devil's Sifter	Tommy J. Hicks
Class 2:	Why People En Masse Serve Such a Malicious Being	Kenneth E. Ratcliff
Class 3:	Delivering Erring, False Teachers to Satan; Satan and Imprisonment of Saints	Johnny Burkhart
Class 4:	“A Miracle a Day Keeps the Devil Away” Refuted	Tom Wacaster
11:50- 1:10 PM	LUNCH	
1:10- 2:00 PM	Satan's Work to Discredit and Destroy Faithful Gospel Preachers	Gary McDade
Class 1:	Satan: Engenderer of Modernism	T. J. Clarke
Class 2:	Satan and Calvinism	Robert R. Taylor, Jr.
Class 3:	Satan's Wicked Influence on Jezebel and Consequences (Women's Class)	Jane McWhorter
2:10- 3:00 PM	Satan's Work to Thwart God's Eternal Purpose	Kent Bailey
PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS AND SUPPORTERS SEMINAR		
3:10- 4:00 PM	Open Forum	Garland Elkins
4:00- 7:00 PM	INTERMISSION	
7:00- 7:30 PM	CONGREGATIONAL SINGING	

7:30- 8:30 PM	Satan's Work to Destroy the Moral Fabric of Society	Charles Box
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WEDNESDAY, APRIL 3

9:00- 9:50 AM	Satan: His Devices and Ministers	John Barcus
10:00-10:50 AM	Satan: Engenderer of False Doctrine on the Holy Spirit	Keith A. Mosher, Sr.
10:00-10:50 AM	Satan's Wicked Influence on Athaliah and Consequences (Women's Class)	Tish Clarke
11:00-11:50 AM	Satan: Engenderer of World Religions	Toney Smith
Class 1:	If I Were the Devil's Preacher	Greg Dismuke
Class 2:	Satan: Engenderer of Antiism/Radicalism	Royce Williamson
Class 3:	Satan's Seal at Pergamum, Satan's Synagogue at Smyrna	David B. Jones
Class 4:	Judas a Devil from the Beginning Refuted	Gary Buxton
11:50- 1:10 PM	LUNCH	
1:10- 2:00 PM	Resisting vs. Giving Place to the Devil	Tyler Young
Class 1:	Engenderer of Liberalism and Change Agent Agenda	Jimmy Ferguson
Class 2:	Satan and Calvinism	Robert R. Taylor, Jr.
Class 3:	Satan's Wicked Influence on Gomer and Consequences (Women's Class)	Celicia Grider
2:10- 3:00 PM	Satan's Work to Destroy the Local Congregation, It's Leadership	Billy Bland
3:10- 4:00 PM	Open Forum	Garland Elkins
4:00- 7:00 PM	INTERMISSION	
7:00- 7:30 PM	CONGREGATIONAL SINGING	
7:30- 8:30 PM	Satan's Work to Destroy the Schools	Gary Henson

THURSDAY, APRIL 4

9:00- 9:50 AM	Satan: Adversary, Tempter, Hinderer, Accuser	Mark Turner
10:00-10:50 AM	Satan: Engenderer of False Doctrine on the Holy Spirit	Keith A. Mosher, Sr.
10:00-10:50 AM	Satan's Wicked Influence on Herodias and Salome, Drusilla and Bernice and Consequences (Women's Class)	Dorothy Mosher
11:00-11:50 AM	Satan: Engenderer of the Occult, New Age	B. J. Clarke
Class 1:	The Devil's Work in the Media	Gary Summers
Class 2:	Satan's Seed and the Bruising of Christ's Heel	Lester Kamp
Class 3:	Michael, Satan, and Moses's Body: Satan Bruised Under Feet	Robert Kingsley
Class 4:	“Satan Working Supernaturally Today” Refuted	Marvin L. Weir
11:50- 1:10 PM	LUNCH	
1:10- 2:00 PM	The How, When, Why of the Binding of Satan	Paul Sain
Class 1:	Engenderer of Reincarnation Theory	Jerry Martin
Class 2:	Satan and Calvinism	Robert R. Taylor, Jr.
Class 3:	Satan's Wicked Influence on Idle Women and Silly Women and Consequences (Women's Class)	Cindy Colley
2:10- 3:00 PM	Satan: His Destiny; Hell, a Prepared Place	Wayne Jones
3:10- 4:00 PM	Open Forum	Garland Elkins
4:00- 7:00 PM	INTERMISSION	
7:00- 7:30 PM	CONGREGATIONAL SINGING	
7:30- 8:30 PM	Jesus, Who Brought to Nought Him that Had the Power of Death	Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

NOTE: There will be classes and activities for pre-school children daily, and also for the evening classes.

WATER/ELECTRICAL HOOKUPS PROVIDED

To Faithful Brethren In Christ:

December 2001

Someone said, very accurately, we “take things for granted until we lose them.” I admit I have been so guilty of this. Daily blessings such as walking, talking, hearing, seeing are tragically unappreciated.

My dear preacher friend, Bob Spurlin, has MS (multiple sclerosis) and has lost mobility, the normal use of his hands and arms, etc.—but he continues to spread the good news of Christ (as he has done for over thirty years).

Insurance exhausted, medical bills accumulating, the road ahead seems overwhelming. But almost three years ago, Tom Holland suggested to Bob that he express his thoughts, trials, and struggles in a book that might help others. This he did. Many of you dear ones purchased brother Spurlin’s first book, *Tackling Life’s Troubles*. Many were so generous to financially help this good family with financial help above the cost of the book.

Thanks so much for your support in the past.

The primary purpose of this letter is to let you know that a **new book** is now available from our dear brother. This volume is entitled: *Dial 911: Essentials To Living Life In The 21st Century*. It is 208 pages, containing 36 chapters. Note a few of the relevant and valuable subjects included: “Victory Over Grief”; “Who Am I To Ask Why”; “If I Were Young Again”; “September 11th, A Day Of Infamy”; “The Blame Game”; “Life If Full Of Surprises”; “The Legacy We Leave Behind”; and more.

We encourage you to purchase a **copy** or **several copies** of this excellent material. You will be greatly blessed and help a dear brother in Christ and his wonderful family at the same time. Sain Publications is honored and humbled to be involved in this project, but I personally want you to know that the Spurlin family will benefit from **all** that is given (minus the minimum expense of printing and mailing).

An individual copy is \$11.50 (which includes \$1.50 for mailing). A case of 30 books is \$300 (no charge to you for shipping when 30 are purchased at one time).

Write Bob Spurlin at 2101 Glenwood Drive, Hartselle, AL 35640, or by e-mail at prechteach@aol.com or phone him at 256-773-0295.

We appreciate any consideration of helping at this time.

Paul Sain

Updated Study Aid

The 1988-2001 books and *Defender* issues of 1994-2000 are available on computer disk in Adobe Acrobat Reader (PDF) format (making it useful for both Intel and Macintosh computers). The Acrobat Reader is also provided on the CD. The CD is completely indexed allowing searches of all the books at the same time (you can find every occurrence of a word or phrase such as “baptism for the remission of sins” in every book at the same time). The cost of the CD is only \$50 in which you receive all 14 books (less than \$5 per book). If you purchased the CD with the 1999/1998 books, you can receive an update for \$40 upon the return of the CD, or last year’s with 1988-2000 books for \$5.00 upon return of the CD. Postage/handling per CD is \$1.25. Take advantage of this great offer. Order from Bellview Church Of Christ.

Defender is published monthly (except December) under the oversight of the elders of the Bellview Church of Christ, 4850 Sauflay Field Road, Pensacola, FL 32526. (850) 455-7595. *Subscription is free to addresses in the United States.* All contributions shall be used for operational expenses.

MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR

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Defender



“I am set for the defense of the gospel”

Volume XXXI

March 2002

Number 3

Web Site: <http://www.bellviewcoc.com>

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THREE LITTLE WORDS THAT CAUSE GREAT BIG PROBLEMS

Danny L. Box

Recently I was approached by a new convert who wanted me to explain Romans 8 to him. He especially wanted me to address verses 28-33 where Paul wrote the following:

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the **called** according to *his* purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did **predestinate** to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did **predestinate**, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's **elect**? *It is* God that justifieth.

In the religion that he had left, this passage of Scripture formed the basis of some of their beliefs, and even though he had heard the Truth, and obeyed it, he still had some questions, as any babe in Christ would. The main reason for his confusion and misunderstanding (along with untold numbers of others) were the three words found here; **predestinate**, **called**, and **elect**. It is these three words that have caused some great big problems in the religious world today, and even in the church of our Lord.

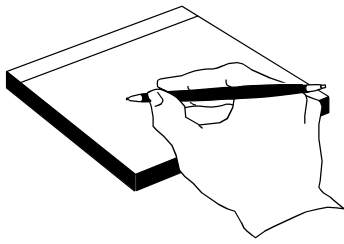
John Calvin took this portion of Scripture along with others and “wresting” the Scriptures and perverting the spiritual concept, made man a mindless entity in religion. His theory of Unconditional Election basically states that God picks and chooses who will be

saved and who will be lost, and that this election was done even before the world began. He goes on to teach, that the people God **predestinated** to save will be few in number, with everyone else being lost. There is nothing those of us who have not been preselected can do to receive eternal salvation, because this **predestination** is unconditional, individual, and unchangeable. By taking these three words, Mr. Calvin introduced some very dangerous doctrines into the world; Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace, and Perseverance of the Saints.

What Mr. Calvin forgot when he introduced these “damnable heresies” was what the Bible actually had to say about God and His grace. “Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him” (Acts 10:34). “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9). But since there is so much confusion over these three little words, and they do cause great problems in the religious world, let us take each word and study them individually, and hopefully develop a better understanding of what they mean.

(Continued on Page 3)

Notes From The Editor



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Drifting

In our continuing consideration of the drift that has taken place in the Lord's church today, we have considered how that we have drifted in our views of God and the Scriptures. Then we considered this from the standpoint of our worship, the plan of salvation, the fellowship of the church, and women's role in the church. The last general area we began viewing was from the standpoint of morals. Another specific area within this general area of morals is the subject of dancing.

In a study of this subject, one does find that the Bible mentions dancing specifically. In about eighteen passages it is mentioned without approval or disapproval, four times in direct connection with sin, and five times in an approving way. However, as one studies the Scriptures he finds a considerable difference between the dancing mentioned in the Bible and the modern dance. God's Word mentions solo dancing (2 Sam. 6:14), men dancing with men (Jer. 31:13), and women dancing with women (1 Sam. 18:6). Never does the Bible mention mixed dancing (men dancing with women) which is the kind of dancing seen today.

In the works of the flesh there are three terms which deal with the subject of dancing. Paul, by inspiration, writes, "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:19-21). The first of these terms is *lasciviousness*. It comes from the Greek word *aselgeia* which Strong's defines as "unbridled lust, excess, licentiousness, lasciviousness,

wantonness, outrageousness, shamelessness, insolence." While descriptions such as these could be multiplied many times over, the main idea of lasciviousness is that which tends to cause lust, wantonness, or shameless conduct. Vine's gives these additional thoughts: "absence of restraint, indecency,... The prominent idea is shameless conduct" (310). It is difficult to argue that the modern dance is shameless in its conduct and does promote lust. Thayer's quotes Fritzsche's comments from Romans 13:13 to give this additional thought after defining the word: "*wanton* (acts or) *manners*, as filthy words, indecent bodily movements, unchaste handling of males and females, etc." (79-80). As one views the modern dance who could argue that there are indecent bodily movements by the participants and that they handle each other in an unchaste way? This is a very apt description of the modern dance.

A second word that is of importance to the study of dancing is *revellings*. It comes from the Greek *komos* which Vine's defines as "a revel, carousal" (293). Thayer says that it is "used generally, of feast and drinking-parties that are protracted till late at night and indulge in revelry" (367). Liddell and Scott say, "a revel, carousal, merrymaking,... it ended in the party parading the streets crowned, bearing torches, singing, dancing, and playing frolics" (460). Thus, revellings refers to parties in which drinking, singing or music, and dancing are engaged. Again, who would be willing to argue that this is not what is involved in the majority of cases where the modern dance is practiced? Goebel Music wrote concerning this aspect: "There can be no doubt but that revelry is any dance accompanied by 'jovial festivity with music and dancing.' No one can remove the fact that dancing is revelry!... you will be forced to admit that dancing is a mode of revelling and the Bible says that those who practice such 'shall not inherit the Kingdom of Heaven'" (14-15).

The last is the summary statement Paul makes: "and such like." It is as if Paul is saying that there are too many specific things to mention so in a broad sweeping statement he adds that anything like the other actions also fall under the same condemnation. If one foolishly wishes to argue that the modern dance does not fall under and is defined by the two previous words we have studied, then certainly this phrase takes care of it.

There is also the need for the Christian to be pure. Jesus said, "Blessed *are* the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (Mat. 5:8). Paul writes, "For I am jealous over

you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present *you as* a chaste virgin to Christ” (2 Cor. 11:2). As the bride of Christ (Eph. 5:22-33), we are to remain pure and not allow ourselves to be defiled. God’s grace teaches us that we are to deny “ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world” (Tit. 2:12). Peter adds, “Dearly beloved, I beseech *you as* strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul” (1 Pet. 2:11). James says we are “to keep himself unspotted from the world” (Jam. 1:27) as a part of pure religion and standing undefiled before God. The modern dance is certainly not a way in which one keeps himself pure. The design of it is to cause lust and impurity. After Paul stated the works of the flesh, he then gives the fruit of the Spirit. The next statement is: “And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lust” (Gal. 5:24). That includes the modern dance, those who belong to Christ will put it away so they can live in purity.

One question remains: Why dance? Sometimes many excuses are given but there is only one real reason. While some might claim they do it for exercise or others for the love of music and others to make them more graceful, etc., the real reason is because it excites the passions God placed within us. How long would dancing last if all dancing were done today with the same sex: men dancing with men and women dancing with women in separate places? The only ones who would really keep the dance alive at that point would be the homosexuals. Otherwise, the dance would die out. Christians will abstain from such sinful activities. *MH*

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(Continued from Page 1)

Predestinate

This word appears two times in this reading, and

the word **predestinated** appears two times in Ephesians 1. Mr. Webster defines it to mean: “to determine beforehand; to predetermine.” Taking this definition, the religious world says that man, as an individual, has already been predetermined to either be saved or lost. Where we will be for all eternity has already been decided before we were ever born and there is nothing we can do about it.

Now the question is, did God **predestinate** some to be saved and some to be lost? The answer is an emphatic: **Yes!** Ephesians 3:11 talks about God’s eternal purpose. In the foreknowledge of God, He knew that men would sin so He had a purpose or plan even before time as we know it began. That purpose was to save the souls of man. From this we can conclude that God did indeed **predestinate** man either to be lost or saved. But where we get into trouble, and get away from God’s Word is when we try to teach that this **predestination** was on an individual basis, and only a certain number was selected by God.

If the theory of predestination as taught by the world was true, then why did Christ have to come to this earth and die? If our eternal destiny had already been selected, there would have been no need for Him to come at all. Does not the Bible plainly state that He came “to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10) and that He is “not willing that any should perish” (2 Pet. 3:9)? If some of us have already been preselected by God to be lost, then why was Christ trying to save us? Was not that a waste of time on His part?

The question now is, who are those that are **predestinated** by Bible definition? Simply put, those that have been obedient. Our Lord said, “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” (Mat. 7:21). From the beginning of time, it has been, and will always be God’s purpose and plan to save the obedient, those that love Him, and will put Him first and foremost in their lives. These and only these are the foreordained and the predestined we read about in God’s inspired Word.

Called

The definition of *called* as used in this passage and other verses in God’s Word is “to summon to a specific duty or profession; an invitation.” In Calvinistic doctrine this term was used to mean that God invited only certain ones to be a part of His family, and when **called** by God, there was nothing we could do to resist.

Again, this takes away the free will of man.

Today, when the religious world talks about being **called**, they are usually referring to some miraculous summons from God that saved them. We have all heard denominational preachers refer to the fact that they were **called** to preach. All of these statements are relating this **call** to a literal summons from God.

The question is, who is **called** or summoned by God? Is it just certain individuals, and is it a literal summons for certain ones from the Father above? The **call** from God goes out to every man; “as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk” (1 Cor. 7:17); “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Mat. 11:28-30). Jesus told His apostles to summon all men of all nations, when He gave the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-28 and Mark 16:15-16. All men are **called** to be children of God (Mat. 5:9); saints (1 Cor. 1:2); servants (1 Cor. 7:21); and to a worthy vocation (Eph. 4:1).

Now, the final question we need to ask about being **called**, and the most important one is, **how** are we called? Is it some miraculous summons from God, as the denominational world believes and teaches? Again, look to God’s Word for the answer: “Whereunto he **called** you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 The. 2:14). “But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus” (1 Pet. 5:10). We could look also at 1 Thessalonians 2:12-13 which informs us that we are **called** unto the God’s kingdom and glory by the Word of God or 2 Timothy 1:9 which reveals to us that we are **called** by God through Jesus Christ. But, let us sum up what we have said about being **called**; it is a summons from God that goes out to all men through the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and those who heed the **call** and obey it will be saved.

Elect

The final word in this passage that has seemed to

confuse man over the years is **elect**. As used in Scripture, *elect* is defined as “chosen; given preference; in religion chosen by God for salvation and eternal life.” But, does God **elect** certain ones for salvation and eternal life? Again, the answer is an absolute: **Yes!** In fact, some fourteen times in the New Testament we find passages talking about the **elect** or the **elect of God**.

If we look back in history, it will bear out the fact that God does choose to give preference in this life. Look at Enoch and Elijah. These two men did not have to face physical death. Look at Noah and his family, who were spared from the flood. Look at Abram, who God later named Abraham and made the father of a great nation. Look at the nation of Israel who were called the children of God. We could go on citing other individuals or groups that were considered the **elect** of God. But, as we look at all of these individuals or groups, we see that they all had one thing in common, their faithfulness to God! That is the way we become one of the **elect** of God today. It is by an obedient faith, and not in some miraculous way of being singled out by God. Consider the following: “Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God’s elect, and the acknowledging of the truth” (Tit. 1:1). What made Paul one of the **elect**? Was it not the acknowledging of the truth and his faith in the Lord? Other Scriptures to consider include 1 Peter 1:2; 1 Thessalonians 1:3-4; and 2 Peter 1:5-10. In all of these and many others, the fact is clear, that if we want to be one of the **elect** we must have an obedient, working faith in Christ Jesus.

Now is man **predestined**? Absolutely! All men will either be saved or lost. Is man **called**? Without doubt! We are all called by the gospel of Christ. Are we the **elect** of God? Only if we have heard the Word of God, believed that Word, and been obedient to that Word. Then, and only then, are we one of the **elect**!

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Premillennialism: Is It True? (Part 3)

Tim Smith

In our first two articles on this subject we noted that the land promise made by God to Abraham has been fulfilled, giving the passages which teach this clearly; and, that the promise of God to restore Israel to Palestine was conditional, and that God has performed all of His words concerning this matter. We have encouraged our readers to go beyond all the emotionalism and sensationalism of the modern era and examine these subjects based on their merits in the light of the Scriptures. We ask the same for this study.

Has the Kingdom of Daniel 2, Isaiah 2, and Micah 4 Been Established, or Is it Yet to Come?

Is the kingdom here? If so, then that would remove the need for Jesus to return to this earth and establish it! If not, then Jesus would need to come back and do that. Let us see.

As for Daniel's prophecy, we see that four kingdoms were to come prior to the advent of the kingdom of God. These kingdoms were revealed to Nebuchadnezzar in a dream. Daniel was called upon to interpret the dream. In Daniel 2:38 we observe that the first kingdom, the "head of gold," was to be Babylon, the kingdom over which Nebuchadnezzar was king. From Daniel 5:28 we learn that the second kingdom was that known as Medo-Persia, "Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians." The third kingdom is identified as Greece in Daniel 8:20-21: "The ram which thou sawest having *two* horns *are* the kings of Media and Persia. And the rough goat *is* the king of Grecia: and the great horn that *is* between his eyes *is* the first king." The fourth kingdom was that of the Romans, those in power at the coming of Christ (Luke 3:1). Now, both secular history and religious history agree that these were the four kingdoms of Daniel's prophecy. The Roman kingdom was to be in power when the kingdom of God arrived: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, *but* it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever" (Dan. 2:44). Since the Roman kingdom has long been out of power, either the kingdom of Christ was established in the long ago or God lied.

Another bit of information from Daniel may be gleaned from comparing the prophecy of Daniel 7:13-14 and Acts 1:9 and 2:33. Hear first Daniel:

I saw in the night visions, and, behold, *one* like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom *that* which shall not be destroyed (Dan. 7:13-14).

Now hear Luke:

And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight...Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear (Acts 1:9; 2:33).

Notice the following parallels:

DANIEL 7:13-14	ACTS 1:9 & 2:33
Son of Man	Christ
Came with clouds	Ascended with clouds
TO ancient of days	TO heaven (where God is)
Received dominion, glory & kingdom	Exalted at right hand of God

Everything Daniel called for Luke attributes to the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Christ. Therefore, the kingdom spoken of by Daniel (and that of Isaiah and Micah) had to have come at that time, lest God was untrue.

John the baptizer said, in his ministry, that the kingdom of God was "at hand" (Mat. 3:2; Mark 1:15). Jesus said that the kingdom was "at hand" (Mat. 4:17). He said that would be "some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power" (Mark 9:1). Now, men may argue about how long "at hand" allows for, but Mark's account leaves no room for doubt; the kingdom would come before some of them died. Are there any 2,000-year-old people alive today? Part of the problem centers around men's understanding of the nature of the kingdom. People expect a physical kingdom, with a physical throne (to be considered in our next installment), and a physical king. Jesus flatly

denied that His kingdom would be anything like this, saying: “My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence” (John 18:36).

Prior to Pentecost of Acts 2, the kingdom is always spoken of as being yet in the future. However, after this pivotal point in our history, it is spoken of as being here now. Consider Paul’s words in Ephesians 1:20-23:

Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

What is there yet to be given to Him? All things are His, all things are “under his feet.”

Paul and the Colossians were in the kingdom in the first century, for he wrote: “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son” (Col. 1:13). Even John, the one whose “Revelation” is so misunderstood and misused, said that the kingdom was present in the first century: “I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ” (Rev. 1:9). The Bible tells us that the kingdom of God is here, and Jesus used *kingdom* and *church* interchangeably in Matthew 16:18-19. The kingdom is the church. Jesus will take it to God at the last day (Eph. 5:25ff).

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“YE SHALL BE HOLY”

Al Brown

“Like as he who called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living; because it is written, Ye shall be holy; for I am holy” (1 Pet. 1:15-16).

Every soul who has been delivered from the power of darkness has been translated into the kingdom of God’s dear Son (Col. 1:13f). He aspires to be holy, as his heavenly Father is holy. He sings of this in songs such as “Take Time to be Holy” and “More Holiness Give Me,” and he prays that it might be a reality in his life.

While he may long for this, he will find that it is not all that easy to practice such holiness, for the standard to which God calls him is the moral excellence that is characteristic of God Himself. Thus, he learns that being a true child of God entails becoming a new creature (2 Cor. 5:17) in whom the old things are killed out and are replaced by new things (Col. 3:5-16). For instance, he is to have new aspirations and goals, new attitudes and values, new priorities and standards.

This transforming of his mind is absolutely essential and is preliminary to effectively turning his life around and heading in a new direction (Rom. 12:2). He must determine that he will no longer be conformed to the way the world thinks and acts. He will have a new mind—the mind of Christ (Phi. 2:5). Since the mind of Christ is characterized as being dedicated to doing the will of God (John 4:34; 6:88), this will be his disposition too.

God has always expected His people to be holy. The divine imperative to Israel was: “Ye shall be holy; for I Jehovah your God am holy” (Lev. 19:2; see also Lev. 11:44f; 20:7). The standard to which He called them was the goodness—the moral excellence—which was the rule of His own character and conduct. God wanted them to be partakers of the divine nature. He wanted them to practice righteousness according to the divine standard toward one another and with their God.

The nation of Israel was an holy nation, for it was set apart for the service of God, and this is one of the primary meanings of holy. While some individual Israelites were determined to do what was right, as a whole, the nation ever consistently practiced holiness. So in an ethical or moral sense the nation was never really holy. On a few occasions, they expressed the desire to be holy, but such aspirations never lasted long enough for holiness to become known as a national trait.

Isaiah, however, foretold of a time when holiness would be a characteristic of God’s people. Beautiful imagery is used to describe the Messianic kingdom (Isa. 35). Streams of water and beautiful flowers and trees where only the desert existed before (Isa. 35:1-2, 6-7) depict the beauty and nourishment to be found in God’s kingdom, the church. The weak and infirm, the fearful and impaired finding relief (Isa. 35:3-6) speak of the spiritual healing, comfort, and strength which would be their’s in the body of Christ.

The figure of no one being found on the highway of holiness except the redeemed and nothing which could harm them (Isa. 35:8-9), looked forward to those who, being “called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1 Pet. 2:9), would practice righteousness; i.e., they would be holy, as He is holy (1 Pet. 1:13-16). The highway was the avenue by which they would come “with singing unto Zion.” In other words, they will come into the presence of God where they shall know joy inexpressible (1 Pet. 1:10).

To be delivered out of the wilderness of the world—the desert of sin, and to be reconciled with their heavenly Father through the precious blood of the Lamb is to know joy beyond compare (Heb. 12:22-24, 28). It goes without saying that Christians must continue to walk on the “highway of holiness” if they would perpetuate that fellowship with their God (1 John 1:6-7). The holiness of God demands righteousness in those who would walk in His presence. “Who shall ascend into the hill of Jehovah? And who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; Who hath not lifted up his soul unto falsehood, And hath not sworn deceitfully” (Psa. 24:3-4).

Sadly, some, who were delivered out of that desert of sin and enjoyed the rich blessings provided on the highway of holiness, for whatever reason, have turned

back into the burning, empty wilderness of the world (2 Pet. 2:20-22). How many brethren passively sit by and allow false teachers to lead them into infidelity, immorality, and rebellion against their God? It is not surprising that they no longer believe in God’s standard of righteousness or that they refuse to walk in it.

The amazing thing is: how can they possibly think that, polluted as they now are by their unholy practices, they can still walk in fellowship with the One who is infinitely holy? Everything in Scripture says they cannot. One can only suppose that Satan has so totally deceived them that they grasp neither the folly nor the enormity of their actions, much less the horrible, terrifying destiny that awaits them. Men walk with the Father only by walking in “holiness of the truth” (Eph. 4:23-24). *The truth* is God’s word (John 17:17). “Holiness of the truth” is the standard of holiness given in God’s Word.

If you are not walking on the “highway of holiness,” will you not repent of your rebellion and sin and be reconciled to your God? Not only will you avoid the tragic end that is the destiny of the lost, but you will enjoy the rich blessings reserved for those who walk on the highway of holiness, and you will bask in the sunshine of your heavenly Father’s fellowship. There is no greater blessing than this.

Deceased

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MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR

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Defender



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STEPPING ON YOUR TOES AT THE PROM

W. Kent Graham

Can you imagine Christ on the Dance floor? It is unthinkable! Equally unimaginable is the thought of a faithful Christian attending his or her high school prom! Naturally, our Christian youths feel left out as they witness their classmates eagerly preparing for this *big event*, and even our most faithful youths might be tempted to explain away the sin of dancing so that they can join in the *fun*. But deep down in our hearts all Christians know that dancing is wrong because it is sin! Parents of young Christians have a responsibility to be supportive of their young adult "children" as they face this temptation in life; parents must help their children to make the spiritually mature decision to forgo this activity, even though it is the school's *social event* of the year. The fact is that many Christian youths cannot make the right decision; they need help! If you are one who is contemplating, or possibly even looking forward to your high school prom, it is meekly suggested that you read this article with the very same spirit that it is written, in all humility. The evidence pointing towards dancing as a sin is voluminous, and you know it. Please refresh your memory and allow this article to jar you back to your good senses. If you do not, you will not only find yourself at the high school prom, but also at the gala event for your acceptance into the "University of Hard Knocks!"

Usually, it is not too difficult to detect that which is sinful. But we must face the fact that this task becomes much more difficult when the act in question is something that we want to do, or something that we like to do. It might be crystal clear to us that religious holidays of men are sinful; we might never seriously consider the virtues of alcohol, cigarettes, or chewing

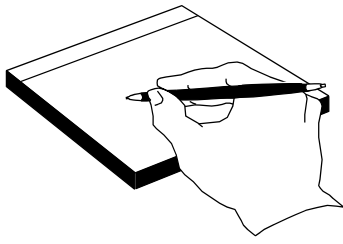
tobacco; but to those who love their religious holidays, or a little martini just to be social, or a quick chew of tobacco to calm their nerves, it is not so clear at all! Friends, most of us struggle with that "sin which doth so easily beset us"; the question is, "Will we allow that sin to beset us, or will we beset it?" the Bible says, "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good" (Rom. 12:21). If you can keep this in mind, "thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged" (Rom. 3:4).

So what is so wrong with dancing? Dancing is a "work of the flesh," and "they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal 5:21). Paul said, "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness" (Gal. 5:19). *Lasciviousness* denotes "excess, licentiousness, absence of restraint, indecency, wantonness." (*Vines Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*). The Greek linguist, Fritz Rienecker, defines it as "unrestrained living and unbridled acts of indecency" in public. The prominent idea expressed is that *lasciviousness* includes all shamefully indecent public conduct. Also included in Paul's list of "works of the flesh" is *revelings*. These were feasts which included drinking and dancing. Furthermore, the Bible condemns anything closely associated with these "works of the flesh" by adding, "and such like," at the conclusion of this list. (Gal. 5:21). Dancing is not pure, it is a public sin!

Because of its very nature, dancing is a work of the flesh. Basic psychology texts inform us that dancing is a form of sexual expression. To do this in public, and

(Continued on Page 4)

Notes From The Editor



**Michael
Hatcher**

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Drifting

To deny that the beautiful bride of our Lord Christ Jesus has drifted away from the solid foundation of the Rock especially in the area of morals is to deny the obvious. One of the most glaring examples is when we observe and discuss modest dress. The Scriptures state: "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works" (1 Tim. 2:9-10). Peter adds: "Whose adorning let it not be that outward *adorning* of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But *let it be* the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, *even the ornament* of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price" (1 Pet. 3:3-4).

Let us briefly look at some of the words found in these verses. *Modest* "describes one who disciplines himself and who may thus be regarded as genuinely moral and respectable" (Sasse 3:895). Thus, this word describes one who is wearing clothing which is appropriate or seemly to proper behavior. *Shamefacedness* deals with a sense of shame toward God. Strong points out that it is "a sense of shame or honour, modesty, bashfulness, reverence, regard for others, respect." This is one who dresses in such a way that they show reverence or awe toward God. Vine quotes Davies saying, "Shamefastness is that modesty which is 'fast' or rooted in the character... The change to 'shamefacedness' is the more to be regretted because shamefacedness... has come rather to describe an awkward diffidence, such as we sometimes call sheepishness." The last word we will consider is *sobriety*. Luck points out that this word "means first 'of sound mind'" (1150). Luck goes on to say, "A link

with *aidos* [shamefastness] may be seen. Proper conduct rooted in *aidos* is marked by restraint or modesty as distinct from *hybris* [a wicked act, also insult, scorn, contempt, often accompanied by violence, rape, and mistreatment of all kinds]" (1150). This is the person who will not be unduly influenced by the world and will thus reverence God above all else in the way in which they dress.

In both of the preceding passages Inspiration is dealing more with character than clothing, but God recognizes that clothing is involved in and makes up one's character. The godly woman will dress in such a way that it demonstrates that she is a Christian. What seems to be the specific problem Peter and Paul were dealing with is overdress. Women were dressing in such an excessive way (makeup, jewelry, etc.) that it drew attention to themselves. The specific problem we face today is underdress. Today, there is the desire to take the clothes off to show off the physical body and inciting the lust of the opposite sex. Some have argued that society sets the standard of what is modest and what is not. If society alone sets the standard for modesty in clothing, then if we wear clothes to a nude beach are we immodest? Of course not! While society might play a part of modesty in clothing, Christians need to realize that God has always set the standard for what is right and wrong. Does God give any indication as to what He considers modest? Indeed He does.

After God created man and woman they ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. "And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they *were* naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons" (Gen. 3:7). Yet, when God comes "walking in the garden in the cool of the day" Adam and Eve hid themselves from God. When God calls for Adam, Adam responds, "I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I *was* naked; and I hid myself" (Gen. 3:10). Even though they had sewed fig leaves together and made aprons, they recognized they were still naked. Thus, "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them" (Gen. 3:21). Swanson defines *coats* as "a basic garment reaching the knees and so a common garment for common wear and work." This was a garment that hung from the shoulders and would come to the knees. God was clothing their nakedness. Would it not be that something less than this would thus be considered being naked by God?

A second consideration of God's speaking concerning what He considers naked is His instructions to

the priests. As one would serve in the priests' office, they would have to wear certain clothing as instructed by God. Part of that clothing was specifically designed to cover their nakedness (which proves that men can be just as immodestly clothed as women). "And thou shalt make them linen breeches to cover their nakedness; from the loins even unto the thighs they shall reach" (Exo. 28:42). God did not want people seeing the priest's thighs because in seeing such they would see the priest's nakedness. Since the Old Testament priests are a foreshadow of New Testament Christians, would it not stand to reason that if the seeing of the thigh was considered seeing their nakedness in the Old Testament, that the same would be true today?

We find another pertinent passage in Isaiah as he is proclaiming judgment upon the Babylonians. God, through Isaiah, says, "Take the millstones, and grind meal: uncover thy locks, make bare the leg, uncover the thigh, pass over the rivers. Thy nakedness shall be uncovered, yea, thy shame shall be seen: I will take vengeance, and I will not meet *thee as a man*" (Isa. 47:2-3). To pass over the rivers there would be the need to uncover the thigh. Jackson writes, "They would flee across the country side, fording rivers (2). Like a nude person, Babylon's shame would be revealed" (93). Thus, in uncovering the thigh and making bare the leg their nakedness would be uncovered. Is not God indicating that when we uncover the thigh (make the leg bare) we are (by His definition) naked?

Brethren, we need to realize that clothing says something of us. When Christ healed a man possessed of demons, who prior to this healing had for a long time worn no clothes, he was sitting "clothed, and in his right mind" (Luke 8:35). When we are in our right minds we cloth ourselves as God would have us—one professing godliness. Yet, it appears as if many who claim to be Christians cloth themselves in such a way as to be chased rather than chaste. In Genesis 38 as Judah was traveling he saw Tamar who had "put her widow's garments off from her, and covered her with a vail, and wrapped herself" (v. 14), and thought she was a harlot because of her clothing. "When Judah saw her, he thought her *to be* an harlot; because she had covered her face" (v. 15). After he goes in to her, she once again "put on the garments of her widowhood" (v. 19). Clothing speaks. The wise man (and wiser still because he wrote by Inspiration) wrote, "And, behold, there met him a woman *with* the attire of an harlot, and subtil of heart" (Pro. 7:10). Yet, the fashion statements of our day are specifically designed for that specific

purpose. Theodor Reik is quoted by Humphrey as saying, "The other day the owner of one of our elegant dress stores stated that a dress is successful when it awakens in the man who looks at the woman the wish to take it take it off, to undress her." Don Humphrey added, "The seductive impulse theory of fashion is not a new one. Many experts have said, 'Fashion is sex'" (26). Christians will not wear such clothing that appeals to the lust of man, but will wear clothing that is modest in the sight of God (whether or not it is fashionable) because she knows that clothing speaks of her character. "A wise person once stated, 'If it ain't for sale, why advertise it,' and 'if we want men to see the image of God in us, we need to keep our bodies clothed'" (Baker 227).

One last thought is that modesty demands that we cloth ourselves in such a way as to not draw attention to ourselves especially the private, intimate parts of the physical body. Haley wrote, "Immodest dress does not just mean various degrees of **undress**, but also any kind of clothing which draws attention to body parts—to the point of causing impure thoughts in the minds of others.... Simply put, clothes that are too tight, too low-cut, too highly-hemmed or too thin are immodest" (346). Sadly, the church has drifted in this vital area of God's Word and Christian living. Not only have we observed immodest clothing being worn in everyday life, is also seen in our worship assemblies. Parents, make sure that you and your children are dressed in such a way that you profess godliness and not immodesty and ungodliness. MH

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(Continued from Page 1)

with someone other than your spouse is disgusting! Dancing requires that we free ourselves of all inhibitions and “let it all hang out” for everyone to see. To think that we would share with the world even a glimpse of what ought to be our most intimate form of expression, our sexuality, is shameless! It is not Christian conduct! Prof. Harry Stribes, a renowned champion dancer said, “I will say that I do not believe that a woman can waltz virtuously and waltz well, for she must yield her person completely to her partner.” Before you go to the prom ask yourself, “Am I ready to yield myself completely to my dance partner, and even do so in public for all to see?” Young friend, it is infinitely more wise to yield yourself to God!

Do not become angry at your fellow Christians “for trying to spoil your life.” It would be easier to just let you go without saying a word, but your brethren care more for you that you probably realize. Paul was continually warning young Timothy about the pitfalls of youthful indiscretion! You would be wise to heed Paul’s warnings just as Timothy did. Timothy was told in 2 Timothy 2:22, “Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.” You cannot “call on the Lord out of a pure heart” and plan to sin. Paul also told Timothy, “Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers” (1 Tim. 4:12).

It is our hope and prayer that you can see the wisdom in not participating in your high school prom. You must be strong to make the right decision because you will face persecution for not attending. If you have already rented a tuxedo, or if your mom has already started making your dress, it is still not too late to

change your mind. Would you do drugs after you came to realize it was wrong, simply because you had already bought them? Of course not! We must realize that not only do we make mistakes, but so do those whom we love and trust. Just because we may not have been taught by our parents that dancing is sinful does not make it okay. Please put aside all desperate attempts to justify your going to the prom. Do not think that you can dance without being affected in a carnal way, and do not think that you can dance so as not to excite your dance partner, because such thinking is nonsense! Do not say that you will go and socialize with our friends, and just watch them dance. Why would you want to gaze upon another person’s folly? Paul said, “Abstain from all appearance of evil” (1 The. 5:22). This means that when evil appears, abstain from it. If you go to the prom, you are not abstaining.

Every day Christians must decide to either obey God and remain faithful, or to disobey God and become unfaithful. We cannot dabble in sin and not get dirty! We must align ourselves firmly behind God and stay as far away from sin as we can. As we overcome sin, and its temptations, we develop our Christian character and become just like our namesake, Jesus Christ. As His brother said, “Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.” We can either faithfully and patiently endure while others dance their way to their demise, or we can join them. If you are not strong enough to resist Satan’s temptations, and you must go to the prom while knowing in your heart that it is wrong, there is something else that you should know: your partner will not be the only one **“Stepping On Your Toes At The Prom!”**

3802 Andrea Ln; Corpus Christi, TX 78414

Aselgeia

Jim E. Waldron

The above Greek word according to the highly respected lexicographer of the nineteenth century, H. J. Thayer, means “wanton (acts or) manners, as filthy words, indecent bodily movements, unchaste handling of males and females” (*Greek-English Lexicon of New Testament Words*. p. 79-80). It is translated as “lasciviousness” (KJV) and “licentiousness” (NKJV) and is listed along with adultery, fornication, (sexual) uncleanness and other things as a work of the flesh (Gal. 5:19). It certainly condemns sexual provocative dress, the reading of dirty books, watching lewd videos and salacious DVD’s, the telling of filthy jokes and unchaste handling of males and females along with

seductive bumping and grinding on the dance floor. Remember to provide an alternative for your child or charge in place of the prom. Protect your beloved son or daughter from being pawed and/or seduced to the sound of a percussion and string band. Often lust in the dance and booze afterwards leads to one night stands. One night stands lead to a loss of virginity, genital herpes, AIDS, et. al. An ounce of prevention is worth far more than a life of heartaches and continual visits to the doctor. Beloved by bold enough to warn your child against the things that are lascivious, and illicit sex, drugs, booze, and such like.

PO Box 123; Dunlap, TN 37327

Beatitudes

June 8 - 12, 2002

Saturday, June 8

7:00 PM Beatitudes Keith Mosher
7:45 PM All Families Blessed In Abraham; Gen. 12:3 Curtis Cates

Sunday, June 9

9:00 AM "Blessed Are The Meek"; Mat. 5:5 Lee Davis
10:00 AM Blessed Are Those Who Are Watching; Luke 12:37-38 Jason Rollo
Lunch Break
2:00 PM The Blessed Man; Psa. 1 Michael Hatcher
3:00 PM Blessed Are Those Of The First Resurrection; Rev. 20:6 Clifford Newell

Dinner Break

7:00 PM "Blessed Are The Pure In Heart"; Mat. 5:8 Stanley Ryan
7:45 PM Blessed Are The Readers And Hearers; Rev. 1:3 Michael Shepherd

Monday, June 10

9:00 AM "Blessed Are They Which Are Persecuted For Righteousness's Sake"; Mat. 5:10-12 Joel Wheeler
10:00 AM "Blessed Are The Peacemakers"; Mat. 5:9 Eddie Whitten
11:00 AM Blessed Are The Givers; Acts 20:35 Ken Ratcliff

Lunch Break

1:30 PM Blessed Is The Man Who Is Forgiven; Psa. 32:1-2 Jeff Archey
2:30 PM Blessed Is The Man Who Considers The Poor; Psa. 41:1 Tim Smith
3:30 PM Open Forum

Dinner Break

7:00 PM Blessed Is He Who Watches And Keeps His Garments; Rev. 16:15 Lynn Parker
7:45 PM Blessed Are Those Called To The Marriage Feast; Rev. 19:9 Bobby Liddell

Tuesday, June 11

9:00 AM Blessed Are Those Keeping The Sayings, Do His Commands; Rev. 22:7, 14 James Rogers
10:00 AM Blessed Is The Man Who Endures Temptation; Jam. 1:12 Wesley Simons
11:00 AM Blessed Is The Man Who Dwells In The Lord's House; Psa. 84:4 Mark Mosher

Lunch Break

1:30 PM Blessed Is The Man Who Trusts In The Lord; Psa. 2:12 Stacey Grant
2:30 PM Blessed Is The Man Who Fears The Lord; Psa. 112:1 Dub McClish
3:30 PM Open Forum

Dinner Break

7:00 PM "Blessed Are They Which Do Hunger And Thirst After Righteousness"; Mat. 5:6 David Brown
7:45 PM Blessed Are Those Who Rebuke Sinners; Pro. 24:25 Harrell Davidson

Wednesday, June 12

9:00 AM "Blessed Are The Merciful"; Mat. 5:7 Danny Box
10:00 AM "Blessed Are They That Mourn"; Mat. 5:4 Jason Roberts
11:00 AM Blessed Is The Man Whose Strength Is In Jehovah; Psa. 84:5 David Jones

Lunch Break

1:30 PM Blessed Are Those Dying In The Lord; Rev. 14:13 Guss Eoff
2:30 PM "Blessed Are The Poor In Spirit"; Mat. 5:3 Don Walker
3:30 PM Open Forum

Dinner Break

7:00 PM Blessed Are Those Who Keep Judgment; Psa. 106:3 Michael Light
7:45 PM Blessed Are Those Who Are Not Offended In Christ; Luke 7:23 Ronnie Hayes

Bellview Lectures Information

HOUSING

Free housing in the homes of Christians will be provided on a "first come, first served" basis (call our office at: 850/455-7595, or write at: 4850 Saufley Field Road, Pensacola, FL 32526). The Comfort Inn (8690 Pine Forest Road) is providing a special rate for those attending the Bellview Lectures. The price (tax not included) is \$59—1 to 2 people per room. Their phone number is 850/476-8989. Tell them you are attending the *Bellview Lectures* when making your reservations.

MEALS

The women of the Bellview Church of Christ will provide a free lunch Monday through Wednesday.

EXHIBITS

Limited reservations will be accepted subject to approval of the Bellview elders and available space. Exhibits are expected from schools, children's homes, bookstores, publications, and other projects of general interest to the brotherhood.

AUDIO AND VIDEO TAPES

All lectures will be recorded on cassette audio tapes and video tapes. These tapes may be purchased during the *Bellview*

Lectures or by mail order afterwards. Order blanks and price information will be available during the Bellview Lectures or by mail upon request. (We request the cooperation of all who attend the Bellview Lectures in keeping the pulpit area free of privately-owned recorders and microphones.) If you would like to make your own recordings, please see one of our sound technicians in the sound room.

BOOKS

The lectureship book, *Beatitudes* will be available to those attending the *Bellview Lectures* at a reduced rate of \$10. Others may purchase the book at the pre-publication price of \$11 prior to June 30, 2002, or afterwards at the regular price of \$12. It will contain thirty-five chapters and approximately 400 pages. Everyone will want to purchase a personal copy and perhaps additional copies for gifts.

TRANSPORTATION

If you will be flying to the Pensacola Regional Airport and will need transportation, please call or write our office. We will arrange to meet you, at no charge, if we know when, where, airline, flight number, and the number in your party.

Premillennialism: Is It True? (Part 4)

Tim Smith

We have, in earlier installments, noticed that the land promise God made to Abraham was fulfilled, thus Jesus need not return to earth to fulfill it at a later time. We also noticed that God has restored Israel to Palestine in keeping with His promise to do so, citing Scripture references which indicate the limits and conditions of that promise, thus eliminating the need for Jesus to return to earth to do this. We also noted that the kingdom of Daniel 2, Isaiah 2, and Micah 4 was established on Pentecost of Acts 2, thus eliminating the need for Jesus to return to earth to do this. We have encouraged our readers to examine the evidence presented and draw the conclusions warranted by the facts, and we ask the same for this material.

Is Christ Now Reigning on the Throne of David?

Advocates of the doctrine of Premillennialism contend that Jesus must return to earth and reign on the throne of David that the prophecies of God might be fulfilled. If this is the case, then Jesus certainly will return to the earth; but if it is not, then another tenet in this damnable heresy will have failed the test of examination. Let us see.

In the eighty-ninth Psalm we read:

For I have said, Mercy shall be built up for ever: thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens. I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations. Selah My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips...Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established for ever as the moon, and *as* a faithful witness in heaven. Selah (Psa. 89:2-4; 34-37).

From these verses we learn that God would see to it that David's seed would endure and his throne would be forever as the sun (until time ends). We also learn from these verses where the throne would be. Verse 37 says that it is in heaven. So, David's seed (Jesus) would sit forever (until time ends) on David's throne in heaven. Would Jesus have to set foot on earth again to reign on a throne in heaven? No, in fact, from our last article, we demonstrated that the kingdom is the church and that Jesus is now reigning over it, and He is in heaven.

We read from Samuel:

And as since the time that I commanded judges *to be*

over my people Israel, and have caused thee to rest from all thine enemies. Also the LORD telleth thee that he will make thee an house. And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took *it* from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever (2 Sam. 7:11-16).

These verses tell us that David's seed would be given an everlasting throne in his kingdom. But who is David's seed? Where is the proof of it? "Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell [hades—ASV], neither his flesh did see corruption" (Acts 2:30-31). Peter (by inspiration) applied the prophecy of Samuel to the resurrection of Christ. Jesus began to reign upon His ascension. His reign is in heaven, not yet to be in the future on the earth.

In Zechariah 6:12-13 we read:

And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name *is* The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD: Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.

These verses tell us that when Jesus is priest, He **would also be king. King and priest at the same time.** Hear Paul: "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are*, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:14-15). Jesus is now our priest, therefore He is now king. We know He could not be priest and king on this earth, for Paul also wrote: "For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the

law” (Heb. 8:4). He cannot be priest on earth, He would be king and priest at the same time, He is priest, therefore He is also reigning as king in heaven.

Sometimes people try to make a distinction as to the throne of David, the throne of Solomon, and the throne of the Lord, but see how they are used interchangeably in 1 Chronicles 29:23: “Then Solomon sat on the throne of the LORD as king instead of David his father, and prospered; and all Israel obeyed him.”

The issue is whether Jesus will reign on His throne in Judah. We contend not. This is proven by noting the words of the prophet Jeremiah:

Is this man Coniah a despised broken idol? is he a vessel wherein is no pleasure? wherefore are they cast out, he and his seed, and are cast into a land which they know not? O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the

LORD. Thus saith the LORD, Write ye this man childless, a man *that* shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah (Jer. 22:28-30).

In Luke 3:31 and Matthew 1:6 we see Christ as one who descended from David. In Luke 3:27 and Matthew 1:12 we see that He descended from Zorababel after Coniah. Therefore, according to God’s own prophecy, Jesus cannot reign on a physical throne in Judah, where Jerusalem is located.

To easily clear the issue up, hear Paul: “For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet” (1 Cor. 15:25). Jesus is now reigning. He is in heaven, on the throne of David, just as God promised and as the New Testament writers affirmed.

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Lee Davis Support

The Bellview Church of Christ elders agreed to take the oversight of brother Lee Davis in his work with Four Seas College in Singapore. This work was begun by brother Ira Y. Rice, Jr., in 1965. Since 1966 over 200 graduates have gone out all over the Far East with the gospel of Christ.

At this time brother Davis is raising his support with the intentions of beginning a limited schedule in the

Spring of 2002 and going full-time in January 2003. If you or the congregation you are with can help financially, please contact brother Davis for a packet describing the work, with reference letters, his background, and information on the college. He may be reached by phone: (856)435-3846 home, (423)346-3837 work, (931)544-0807 cell; email: leedavis@ureach.com. Send all support to the Bellview congregation.

Updated Study Aid

The 1988-2001 books and *Defender* issues of 1994-2000 are available on computer disk in Adobe Acrobat Reader (PDF) format (making it useful for both Intel and Macintosh computers). The Acrobat Reader is also provided on the CD. The CD is completely indexed allowing searches of all the books at the same time (you can find every occurrence of a word or phrase such as “baptism for the remission of sins” in every book at the same time). The cost of the CD is only \$50 in which you receive all 14 books (less than \$5 per book). If you purchased the CD with the 1999/1998 books, you can receive an update for \$40 upon the return of the CD, or last year’s with 1988-2000 books for \$5.00 upon return of the CD. Postage/handling per CD is \$1.25. Take advantage of this great offer. Order from Bellview Church Of Christ.

Defender is published monthly (except December) under the oversight of the elders of the Bellview Church of Christ, 4850 Saufley Field Road, Pensacola, FL 32526. (850) 455-7595. *Subscription is free to addresses in the United States.* All contributions shall be used for operational expenses.

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Defender



“I am set for the defense of the gospel”

Volume XXXI

May 2002

Number 5

Web Site: <http://www.bellviewcoc.com>

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Premillennialism: Is It True? (Part 5)

Tim Smith

Having before noted that the land promise made by God to Abraham has been fulfilled, that God did not promise to restore Israel nationally to Palestine in some future time—but that He did what He promised in the Old Testament—that the kingdom of Daniel 2, Isaiah 2, and Micah 4 has been established—and that we know it as the church—and that Christ is now reigning on the throne of David, we turn our attention to the next false tenet of Premillennialism. We have asked our readers to examine the evidences set forth in this series of articles and to draw only such conclusions as are warranted by the evidence offered. We believe these things to be true, and we believe therefore, that the doctrine known as Premillennialism concerning a return to the earth by Jesus to reign on a literal throne in Jerusalem is false.

Is the Church a “Substitute” for a “Postponed” Kingdom?

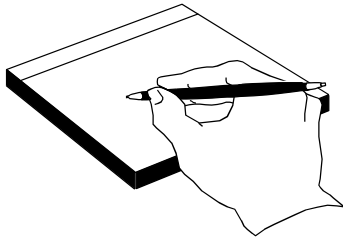
For this pernicious doctrine of Premillennialism to be true, the teachers of the doctrine must do something with the first coming of Christ and the church. If, as they contend, the Lord initially came to earth hoping to set up His kingdom but failed in such an effort due to the rejection of Him by His people, then, they further contend, the church was set up as a substitute institution until such time as the kingdom could be started. But, is this taught in the Scriptures? This is a serious point, for if Christ failed the first time, how are we to know that He will succeed the next? This point also calls into question the verity and reliability of the Word of God, for if God promised a kingdom and then failed to deliver, how may we know that He is telling us the truth on other matters? The key to solving this *problem* will

be in seeing if God knew before the coming of His Son into this world that the church would be established. If He knew, then it would be a false charge to say that the church is a substitute for a postponed kingdom. Also, since the Premillennialists contend that God thought Jesus would be accepted and allowed to set up His kingdom, if it can be shown that God knew about the rejection of Christ prior to His advent, this doctrine will be shown to be false. We intend to show that (1) the church was foreordained to exist before the foundation of the world; (2) Christ was foreordained to suffer for Christians, the church; and (3) Christians (the church) are called by a holy calling purposed by God before the world began. By showing these, we will demonstrate that God knew the church would be in existence prior to the coming of Christ and therefore it is not a substitute for a postponed kingdom.

The church was foreordained to exist before the foundation of the world. In Ephesians 1:3 we read, “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ.” Later in that chapter Paul wrote, “And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all” (Eph. 1:22-23). And again, in Ephesians 1:4 we read, “According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.” All spiritual blessings are located in Christ. To be in Christ is to be in the body of Christ, the church. God determined, not

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Notes From The Editor



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Drifting

Society has degenerated from a moral standpoint (which might be expected since they do not have a proper standard by which to live). However, that moral degeneration has crept into the church of our Lord. One area which we have seen that wickedness increase is in the improper use of the tongue. The tongue is a very powerful instrument which God has given unto us. This is the point James makes in his book when he writes, "Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things" (Jam. 3:5). The entire context (3:2-12) shows the power of the tongue in being used for good or evil. Jesus shows us the power of the tongue when He teaches that the basis of our judgment will be the tongue. "For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Mat. 12:27). There are several areas of study when we discuss the tongue, thus will only be able to touch briefly on these in this article.

God is a God of truth, and Jesus is spoken of as the truth (John 14:6). Lies find their origin in the devil (John 8:44). Today, society has a problem with telling the truth. Some will defend speaking lies by saying that it is simply being tactful. However, one can be tactful without telling a lie. Anytime we lie, we sin. Paul wrote, "Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another" (Eph. 4:25). Closely akin to lying is deception. There are now some who are teaching a doctrine which they have termed, "Biblical Ethical Deceit." However, as I read my Bible, I cannot find where the Bible ever uses *deceit* in any way other than it being contrary to God's Will, and that Christians are not to be deceived. How anyone can view God as one who will intentionally deceive man is abominable. If God deceives man, how can man possess any confidence regarding anything spiritual? How would we know that we have

been saved? Maybe God has deceived us regarding His plan of salvation? The same could be said about our worship, the one church, the organization of that one church, etc. Christians should never lie nor should we practice deceit.

Another great problem in the Lord's church is backbiting and gossip. These sins (and those associated with them) have destroyed the lives of many good people. Moses told the people of Israel: "Thou shalt not go up and down *as* a talebearer among thy people" (Lev. 19:16). Yet, sadly, many in the church do exactly what Moses said not to do. They love to go back and forth among others telling them everything they know. The wise man said, "A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter" (Pro. 11:13). One of the seven things which Solomon said are an abomination to God is "he that soweth discord among brethren" (Pro. 16:19). The one who practices gossip, backbiting, slander, talebearing (and related sins), so discord among brethren and thus come under the condemnation of the Almighty.

At one time men, in general, were careful about what they would say. While at times they would use coarse, indecent, vulgar, gutter language, men would be careful not to use such language in public or in the presence of women. My, how times have changed. Now it seems that women try to outdo men in vulgarity. Indecent language has become so common to our society that we are not even shocked when we hear such today. Sadly, we seem to be hearing more of this type of language used by members of the Lord's church today. Paul would tell us, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers" (Eph. 4:29). He would state the same basic thing to the Colosse brethren by saying, "Let your speech *be* always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man (Col. 4:6). He had told them earlier: "But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth" (Col. 3:8). Brethren, it is difficult not to allow filthy communication out of our mouths when we fill our minds with it on a daily basis by means of television and other media. We should be careful what we listen to because it will affect our speech.

Last, I would like us to consider the aspect of cursing and blaspheming. When God gave the Ten Commandments to the children of Israel, the third one he gave was: "Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him

guiltless that taketh his name in vain” (Exo. 20:7). God desired his name to be held in reverence and never used lightly. Jesus, in teaching his disciples to prayer, taught, “After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. (Mat. 6:9). In a similar manner as the filthy communication, we have seen the proliferation of taking the Lord’s name in a manner that is not holy and revered.

Members of the church will argue that they would never take the Lord’s name in vain. However, many of them have no difficulty in use euphemisms for His name. Not all euphemisms are bad, some are good and helpful, but many are simply another word for God, Jesus, or other spiritual matters. If using God’s name in a certain way would be taking “the name of the LORD thy God in vain,” then using an euphemism for God’s name would be taking His name in vain. Many have gotten into a bad habit of using euphemistic terms for God’s name and we need to work on our practice to put an end to it.

The tongue is such a powerful tool which God has given us. Let us make sure that we use it to bring praise to God and His name, and to please Him. *MH*

(Continued from Page 1)

after the rejection of Christ at the cross, but before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and without blame (saved) in Him. Therefore, God knew that the church would exist before the foundation of the world.

Christ was foreordained to suffer for Christians (the members of the church) before the world began. This is key. Can it be shown that God knew about the rejection of Christ prior to the world beginning? If not, this tenet of premillennialism may not be shown to be false; but, if it can be demonstrated that God knew about the rejection and crucifixion of Christ before it happened, then the *substitute* theory will be forever proven false. In 1 Peter 1:18-20 we read:

Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.

Before the foundation of the world God foreordained that we would be redeemed by the blood of Christ. What about Isaiah 53 and his depiction of the “despised and rejected” one who would be “led as a lamb to the slaughter”? Did not Philip tell the Eunuch of Acts 8 that

this was the Christ? This tell us that God knew about the rejection of Christ before it happened!

Then what about Ephesians 3:3-11:

How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The mystery, therefore, related to the salvation of the Jews and Gentiles eternally purposed for the church through Jesus Christ. God knew from eternity that the church would come into existence through the suffering of Christ and that all men who come to salvation would so come through the church.

Christians (members of the church) are called by a holy calling purposed by God before the world began. Hear Paul:

Who hath saved us, and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel (2 Tim. 1:9-10).

God saved and called us with the gospel, and so intended before the world began. Is this an after-thought? How can it be, for it happened before the world began.

The simple truth is that God was not taken by surprise by the rejection of His Son at the cross, but He knew about it all along. That is why John recorded: “He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name” (John 1:11-12). The church, being a part of the eternal plan of God, was not a *substitute* for a *postponed* kingdom. (For more information on the kingdom and the church, see Part 3 of this series.)

1272 Enon Road; Webb, AL 36376

Beatitudes

June 8 - 12, 2002

Saturday, June 8

7:00 PM Beatitudes Keith Mosher
7:45 PM All Families Blessed In Abraham; Gen. 12:3 Curtis Cates

Sunday, June 9

9:00 AM "Blessed Are The Meek"; Mat. 5:5 Lee Davis
10:00 AM Blessed Are Those Who Are Watching; Luke 12:37-38 Jason Rollo

Lunch Break

2:00 PM The Blessed Man; Psa. 1 Michael Hatcher
3:00 PM Blessed Are Those Of The First Resurrection; Rev. 20:6 Clifford Newell

Dinner Break

7:00 PM "Blessed Are The Pure In Heart"; Mat. 5:8 Stanley Ryan
7:45 PM Blessed Are The Readers And Hearers; Rev. 1:3 Michael Shepherd

Monday, June 10

9:00 AM "Blessed Are They Which Are Persecuted For Righteousness's Sake"; Mat. 5:10-12 Joel Wheeler
10:00 AM "Blessed Are The Peacemakers"; Mat. 5:9 Eddie Whitten
11:00 AM Blessed Are The Givers; Acts 20:35 Ken Ratcliff

Lunch Break

1:30 PM Blessed Is The Man Who Is Forgiven; Psa. 32:1-2 Jeff Archey
2:30 PM Blessed Is The Man Who Considers The Poor; Psa. 41:1 Tim Smith
3:30 PM Open Forum

Dinner Break

7:00 PM Blessed Is He Who Watches And Keeps His Garments; Rev. 16:15 Lynn Parker
7:45 PM Blessed Are Those Called To The Marriage Feast; Rev. 19:9 Bobby Liddell

Tuesday, June 11

9:00 AM Blessed Are Those Keeping The Sayings, Do His Commands; Rev. 22:7, 14 James Rogers
10:00 AM Blessed Is The Man Who Endures Temptation; Jam. 1:12 Wesley Simons
11:00 AM Blessed Is The Man Who Dwells In The Lord's House; Psa. 84:4 Mark Mosher

Lunch Break

1:30 PM Blessed Is The Man Who Trusts In The Lord; Psa. 2:12 Stacey Grant
2:30 PM Blessed Is The Man Who Fears The Lord; Psa. 112:1 Dub McClish
3:30 PM Open Forum

Dinner Break

7:00 PM "Blessed Are They Which Do Hunger And Thirst After Righteousness"; Mat. 5:6 David Brown
7:45 PM Blessed Are Those Who Rebuke Sinners; Pro. 24:25 Harrell Davidson

Wednesday, June 12

9:00 AM "Blessed Are The Merciful"; Mat. 5:7
10:00 AM "Blessed Are They That Mourn"; Mat. 5:4 Jason Roberts
11:00 AM Blessed Is The Man Whose Strength Is In Jehovah; Psa. 84:5 David Jones

Lunch Break

1:30 PM Blessed Are Those Dying In The Lord; Rev. 14:13 Guss Eoff
2:30 PM "Blessed Are The Poor In Spirit"; Mat. 5:3 Don Walker
3:30 PM Open Forum

Dinner Break

7:00 PM Blessed Are Those Who Keep Judgment; Psa. 106:3 Michael Light
7:45 PM Blessed Are Those Who Are Not Offended In Christ; Luke 7:23 Ronnie Hayes

Bellview Lectures Information

HOUSING

Free housing in the homes of Christians will be provided on a "first come, first served" basis (call our office at: 850/455-7595, or write at: 4850 Saufley Field Road, Pensacola, FL 32526). The Comfort Inn (8690 Pine Forest Road) is providing a special rate for those attending the Bellview Lectures. The price (tax not included) is \$59—1 to 2 people per room. Their phone number is 850/476-8989. Tell them you are attending the *Bellview Lectures* when making your reservations.

MEALS

The women of the Bellview Church of Christ will provide a free lunch Monday through Wednesday.

EXHIBITS

Limited reservations will be accepted subject to approval of the Bellview elders and available space. Exhibits are expected from schools, children's homes, bookstores, publications, and other projects of general interest to the brotherhood.

AUDIO AND VIDEO TAPES

All lectures will be recorded on cassette audio tapes and video

tapes. These tapes may be purchased during the *Bellview Lectures* or by mail order afterwards. Order blanks and price information will be available during the Bellview Lectures or by mail upon request. (We request the cooperation of all who attend the Bellview Lectures in keeping the pulpit area free of privately-owned recorders and microphones.) If you would like to make your own recordings, please see one of our sound technicians in the sound room.

BOOKS

The lectureship book, *Beatitudes* will be available to those attending the *Bellview Lectures* at a reduced rate of \$10. Others may purchase the book at the pre-publication price of \$11 prior to June 30, 2002, or afterwards at the regular price of \$12. It will contain thirty-five chapters and approximately 400 pages. Everyone will want to purchase a personal copy and perhaps additional copies for gifts.

TRANSPORTATION

If you will be flying to the Pensacola Regional Airport and will need transportation, please call or write our office. We will arrange to meet you, at no charge, if we know when, where, airline, flight number, and the number in your party.

Danny Box

On Wednesday, April 17, of this year, brother Danny Box called me telling me he was going to have a medical procedure the next day. He informed me about it and asked for the prayers of the congregation here at Bellview. That evening I announced about his medical procedure and we prayed for him. The next afternoon I received a call from a nurse informing me of some difficulty which brother Box had during the procedure. Sister Box then called me and gave me some more information and that brother Danny had been taken to the hospital in Birmingham. I kept in touch with sister Box the rest of that day and the next morning. On Friday, April 19, brother Box passed on to his reward. On Monday, April 22, I was one of seven preachers who had the privilege of eulogizing our beloved brother.

I had the opportunity of meeting Danny at the 1995 Bellview Lectureship. From that time forward, we grew together as close friends and fellow workers in the kingdom of God. I asked Danny to speak on the lectureship in 1999 when he dealt with the subject "Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drug Use." This was an area which brother Box had special knowledge because of his work as a registered nurse. He did such a great job in presenting the material, he was asked by several others to come where they preached to present it. Danny was a man who used his abilities and training for service to God. He was to speak on the lectureship this year with the subject "Blessed are the Meek; Matthew 5:7." I assigned that specific lesson to him because I believed that he exemplified a man who is meek. (The manuscript will be in the book, and, from my understanding, is the last manuscript brother Box wrote.)

There are so many wonderful attributes of brother Box that it would take too long to discuss all of them. He was a special man. This is evidenced by the viewing on Sunday, April 21. It was scheduled to be from 7:30 till 9. It was not till after midnight before the family was able to leave because of so many coming by. He

was so respected by others that they waited in line for hours to sign the register. The funeral took place at the East Pointe church building where Danny preached. The building filled up fast, and the men of the congregation put out every chair they possessed filling the isles and the back of the building. Still that was not enough to seat all the people who attended the funeral, so many had to stand. It was a wonderful testament to the kind of man brother Box was.

Brother Box was the type of person whom everyone liked. I do not know of anyone who did not like him. One person mentioned that the liberals might not like him, but I corrected that by saying that they might not like the stand he took, but they would like him. Another preacher pointed out that when Danny entered a room, the entire room would brighten up. This points out his friendly nature, but also he is one who would take a stand upon the truth of God's Word. He always stood with those who are right and would not tolerate error.

He was one who loved the Lord and gave himself to that work. Even though he was a full-time registered nurse, he also was the full-time preacher for the East Point congregation in Tuscaloosa, AL. Because he made his living as a nurse, he would not accept any pay from the congregation for several years to help them pay off the loan on the building. When he did begin accepting pay from the congregation, he did not use it to fill his pockets, but would give that money to the work of the Lord, contributing to many good works in the brotherhood.

Brother Danny was a good friend, as he was to many, who will be greatly missed. He was a big man physically, but a bigger man spiritually. Personally, I will miss him, and he will also be missed by the church. He has passed on to his reward and I am convinced that he is now being blessed in Abraham's bosom. To all who knew him and all those who read the material which he so capably wrote, "he being dead yet speaketh."
MH

Danny L. Box (1950-2002)

Barry M. Grider

Hundreds of friends joined family members in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, on Monday, April 22, to bid a

much too early goodbye to Danny Lester Box. Brother Danny, 51, was a faithful gospel preacher, strong sup-

porter of the Memphis School of Preaching, and a close personal friend. His sudden passing leaves a great void, especially for the Lord's church in the Tuscaloosa area. While one of the most kind and gentle individuals I have ever met, brother Danny was unashamed of the gospel, proudly proclaiming its saving message and defending it against all enemies.

Brother Danny was a regular contributor to various brotherhood publications and frequently appeared on lectureships. His sermons and writings will continue to influence many, for he, like Abel, "being dead yet speaketh" (Heb. 11:4). However, if you did not know brother Danny personally, you have missed out on a great blessing. I shall never forget his good humor, constant encouragement, and his easy going nature. The sound of his Alabama drawl could put anyone at ease. Truly it was a delight to be associated with brother Danny, as I was on numerous occasions. I especially enjoyed being with him and his good family last summer when I conducted a gospel meeting for the East Pointe congregation, where Danny served as the local

preacher. He and I visited together, ate Dreamland ribs together, talked Alabama football together, and encouraged each other in the Faith. I cherish those memories.

The funeral service for brother Danny Box took place at the East Pointe church building with eulogies presented by seven gospel preachers. Internment was in Memory Gardens, just a short distance away. Please pray for brother Danny's faithful companion, Patricia, a most godly and gracious woman; their exemplary children, Elizabeth and Daniel; Danny's parents, brother and sister T. B. Box; and Patricia's parents, brother and sister Bob Howton.

One particular attribute stands out when I think of Danny. He was always early to an appointment. He said his daddy taught him punctuality. Realizing he had an appointment with God (Heb. 9:27), Danny completed his task, and true to his nature, arrived at the gates of Paradise early. When my task on earth is complete, I too, shall pass over, and I look forward to seeing many friends, including brother Danny Box.

A Christian's Farewell Address

Danny Box

"For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Tim. 4:6-8).

The words of this text were some of the last spoken by Paul, and are filled with such emotion that they cause the sincere Christian to be filled-up whenever they are read. Paul recognized that because Christ was triumphant over death (1 Cor. 15:50-58), death was no longer something to be feared, but was more of a friend than an enemy to the Christian. Look with me now at the quiet courage with which Paul looked death in the face, and the statements that he made to encourage us.

"I am now ready to be offered": One translation renders this to say, "I am already being poured out." This indicates that Paul was already suffering and was expecting a violent death, but yet he was prepared for whatever the world would do to him.

"The time of my departure is at hand": Paul recognized that the time of his death was very close.

But he considered it only a departure to be with Christ, something he had desired for many years (Phi. 1:23).

"I have fought a good fight": Paul had started the fight the same hour that he had obeyed the Gospel and had continued that fight all the days of his Christian life. He fought the battles from within (1 Cor. 9:27), and from without (Eph. 6:10-18), and now his fight was almost over.

"I have finished my course": Paul indicates not only has he run the race with all his might, but he had run that race over a marked-out and well-defined track, the Word of the Lord. He had followed the law of Christ as faithfully as possible (Acts 20:24), and had reached the finish line in his race.

"I have kept the faith": Paul had guarded the faith (1 Tim. 6:10-12), he had defended the faith (Phi. 1:17), and he had lived as it directed (Phi. 3:12-14). Because he had done all of this, Paul had the assurance that a "crown of righteousness" awaited him, and the "Lord, the righteous judge" was going to give it to him. What a great farewell address delivered by this Christian man!

Deceased

Lectureship Update

There are some exciting things concerning our 2002 Bellview Lectureship which we want you to know about. The first of these is that the Lectureship will now be available on DVD in addition to the video and audio tapes which have been used in the past. As all know tape (whether audio or video) degrades over time. DVD's do not degrade and will be preserved over time (some have estimated a life span of 100 years). Also, we are transferring past lectureships to this format to preserve them (some of those tapes have already degraded greatly). If you would like a copy of the lectureship on DVD, they will cost \$10 per DVD plus shipping (we are estimating it to take 5 disks at this time, thus the cost of the entire lectureship on DVD would be \$50.00 plus postage and handling). This is an amazingly low cost for a permanent format such as this. We encourage you to order early, but please give us time to make copies of the disks because it is a slow process (our producing them in-house keeps the cost down but also adds to the time in reproducing them).

We would love to have everyone be able to come and attend the lectures in person. We know you would profit from both the lessons presented but also from the fellowship during the lectures. However, we know that not everyone will be able to come, thus, we are again making the lectureship available on the internet, with the help of Online Academy of Biblical Studies (OABS). OABS has agreed to host the lectureship on their web site. Thus, you may go to www.oabs.org and then click on "live events" and there will be a link for you to click on to watch the lectureship live, or you may go to our web page (www.bellviewcoc.com) and view it from there. Soon after that you may then view the lectures on their "events archive" page (last year's lectureship is available there). We want to thank Tom Bright for this great opportunity, and Gil Yoder and

Ted Thrasher for their help in doing the technical work.

Some might be wondering about the Books on CD's. We will be updating the CD's to include the new book, *Beatitudes*. (Most of these books are now out of print, thus at present this is the only way in which you may obtain them.) However, we are not standing still regarding our compact disk. Not only are we adding this year's lectureship book, we are also adding a few year's of *Defender*. On the previous CD we only had the 1994-2000 issues of *Defender*, we now will have the 1989-2001 issues. We have also added the book, *Hatcher/Schweitzer Exchange*. This booklet was a series of letters and newspaper articles while this editor worked in Burkburnett, Texas, with a Lutheran "pastor" there. The discussion centered primarily on the subject of Total Depravity, but also covered other issues as well. To my knowledge, this is the only material which has been published between a member of the Lord's church and a Lutheran of the Missouri Synod (there is the *Wallace-Stauffer Debate* but Stauffer was another type of Lutheran).

The format of all this material is in Adobe Acrobat (PDF). We selected this format so it can be used on both Microsoft operating systems and also Macintosh computers. We also provide the free reader on the CD (it can also be downloaded from the internet). With this format the CD is completely indexed to allow searches of all the material at the same time (you may find every occurrence of a word or phrase in every book at the same time). The cost of the CD is \$55 (plus shipping and handling). If you have purchased a previous CD, you may receive an updated CD from us by returning the previous CD and get the new one for a reduced price. This is a wonderful offer and is a marvelous way in which to aid your study of God's Word. Order from Bellview Church of Christ.

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MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR

**Write For Your
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Pensacola, FL 32526**

Defender



“I am set for the defense of the gospel”

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Addressing The Issue Of Dress

Jason Roberts

It seems that as the temperatures start to rise, our standards of dress begin to fall within the church. It is therefore not uncommon to see members of the Lord's church, who profess to be Christians, dressed like the world—even for worship services. During this time of the year, one does not have to go out into the public or turn on the television for very long before he is confronted with immodestly attired women and men. Many families will soon take their summer vacations and some automatically assume that it is permissible for them to take a vacation from their Christianity. Parents, who would never allow their sons and daughters to view, in their homes, the salacious literature depicting nude men and women, will take those same children to the beach where they will see men and women in scantily clad swimming suits—leaving very little to their imaginations. The father, who would never allow his teenage son to view the “Sports Illustrated Swimsuit Issue” in his house, is the same father who will take his son to the beach where he can view a live motion version of the same. The mother, who would never allow her teenage daughter to wear her swimming suit to the mall or to the supermarket, is the same mother who will take her daughter to the beach and allow her to parade herself in the same swimming suit in front of men. **And we are told that because everyone else at the beach is attired in the same fashion, it is considered to be perfectly normal!**

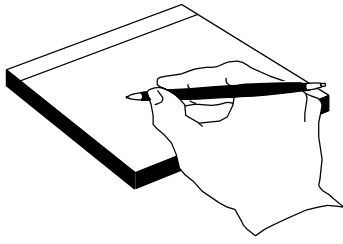
Those who are repulsed by immodesty and have the fortitude to speak out against it, are often accused of being “out of touch with the times,” having a dirty mind, or both. Christians, who love the Lord and who desire to please Him will not be intimidated by such

false accusations, but will unashamedly *expose* the indecent *exposure* with which they are confronted (Eph. 5:11).

Clothing and Character

The type of clothing one wears certainly says something about the character one possesses. When the Proverbs writer listed the deceitful tactics of the strange woman, among other things, he said, “And, behold, there met him a woman *with the attire of an harlot*, and subtil of heart” (Pro. 7:10). Note carefully the words “attire” (clothing) and “harlot” (character). It is evident that the clothing one wears, whether he admits it or not, does say something about his character. If this is not the case, then why do we sometimes hear people say when they see a woman who is scantily dressed, “She is dressed like a prostitute”? This is not to suggest that every woman who dresses immodestly does so for the express purpose of seducing men. However, we are fooling ourselves if we think that the clothing and sexuality are not linked together. Just about every clothing commercial shown today depicts a sexually suggestive innuendo or a scenario to advance the sale of their merchandise. Why? Because the clothing industry is keenly aware that there is a corresponding link between clothing and sexuality. The multimillion dollars they spend annually on these ungodly commercials is a mere fraction when one considers the money spent by the consumers whose eyes view them. They know that sex sells, and what better way is there for them to sell their merchandise than by *dressing it* (Continued on Page 3)

Notes From The Editor



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Drifting

Society has degenerated from a moral standpoint (which might be expected since they do not have a proper standard by which to live). However, that moral degeneration has crept into the church of our Lord. One area which we have seen that wickedness increase is in the improper use of the tongue. The tongue is a very powerful instrument which God has given unto us. This is the point James makes in his book when he writes, "Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things" (Jam. 3:5). The entire context (3:2-12) shows the power of the tongue in being used for good or evil. Jesus shows us the power of the tongue when He teaches that the basis of our judgment will be the tongue. "For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Mat. 12:27). There are several areas of study when we discuss the tongue, thus will only be able to touch briefly on these in this article.

God is a God of truth, and Jesus is spoken of as the truth (John 14:6). Lies find their origin in the devil (John 8:44). Today, society has a problem with telling the truth. Some will defend speaking lies by saying that it is simply being tactful. However, one can be tactful without telling a lie. Anytime we lie, we sin. Paul wrote, "Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another" (Eph. 4:25). Closely akin to lying is deception. There are now some who are teaching a doctrine which they have termed, "Biblical Ethical Deceit." However, as I read my Bible, I cannot find where the Bible ever uses *deceit* in any way other than it being contrary to God's Will, and that Christians are not to be deceived. How anyone can view God as one who will intentionally deceive man is abominable. If God deceives man, how can man possess any confidence

regarding anything spiritual? How would we know that we have been saved? Maybe God has deceived us regarding His plan of salvation? The same could be said about our worship, the one church, the organization of that one church, etc. Christians should never lie nor should we practice deceit.

Another great problem in the Lord's church is backbiting and gossip. These sins (and those associated with them) have destroyed the lives of many good people. Moses told the people of Israel: "Thou shalt not go up and down *as* a talebearer among thy people" (Lev. 19:16). Yet, sadly, many in the church do exactly what Moses said not to do. They love to go back and forth among others telling them everything they know. The wise man said, "A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter" (Pro. 11:13). One of the seven things which Solomon said are an abomination to God is "he that soweth discord among brethren" (Pro. 16:19). The one who practices gossip, backbiting, slander, talebearing (and related sins), so discord among brethren and thus come under the condemnation of the Almighty.

At one time men, in general, were careful about what they would say. While at times they would use coarse, indecent, vulgar, gutter language, men would be careful not to use such language in public or in the presence of women. My, how times have changed. Now it seems that women try to outdo men in vulgarity. Indecent language has become so common to our society that we are not even shocked when we hear such today. Sadly, we seem to be hearing more of this type of language used by members of the Lord's church today. Paul would tell us, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers" (Eph. 4:29). He would state the same basic thing to the Colosse brethren by saying, "Let your speech *be* always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man" (Col. 4:6). He had told them earlier: "But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth" (Col. 3:8). Brethren, it is difficult not to allow filthy communication out of our mouths when we fill our minds with it on a daily basis by means of television and other media. We should be careful what we listen to because it will affect our speech.

Last, I would like us to consider the aspect of cursing and blaspheming. When God gave the Ten Commandments to the children of Israel, the third one

He gave was: “Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain” (Exo. 20:7). God desired his name to be held in reverence and never used lightly. Jesus, in teaching his disciples to prayer, taught, “After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name” (Mat. 6:9). In a similar manner as the filthy communication, we have seen the proliferation of taking the Lord’s name in a manner that is not holy and revered.

Members of the church will argue that they would never take the Lord’s name in vain. However, many of them have no difficulty in use euphemisms for His name. Not all euphemisms are bad, some are good and helpful, but many are simply another word for God, Jesus, or other spiritual matters. If using God’s name in a certain way would be taking “the name of the LORD thy God in vain,” then using an euphemism for God’s name would be taking His name in vain. Many have gotten into a bad habit of using euphemistic terms for God’s name and we need to work on our practice to put an end to it.

The tongue is such a powerful tool which God has given us. Let us make sure that we use it to bring praise to God and His name, and to please Him. *MH*

(Continued from Page 1)

up, glamorizing it with a fine touch of sex appeal. The truth of the matter is ladies have a great appeal to men by just being themselves. In a world of lasciviousness, a modestly dressed woman becomes the rare jewel. A man could have his pick of worldly women. A modest Christian woman is worth more than all of them put together.

Mary Quaint—“The Mother of the Miniskirt”

Mary Quaint, who is known for designing the miniskirt, was interviewed in 1967 by *Newsweek* magazine. In the course of the interview, she said that the primary reason for designing the miniskirt was for girls who did not want to wait until dark to seduce a man into bed.

Am I the only woman who has ever wanted to go to bed with a man in the afternoon? Any law-abiding female, it used to be thought, waits until dark. Well, there are lots of girls who don’t want to wait. Miniskirts are symbolic of them (*Newsweek*, Nov 13, 1967).

Again, we hasten to say that this does not suggest that every girl who wears a miniskirt does so for the express purpose of fulfilling Quaint’s statement. However, it does not take a Solomon to figure that the majority of *ladies* who wear miniskirts do so for the

purpose of getting men to notice what they are wearing, or should we say what they are not wearing. This reminds me of a little boy who was lost. He was asked why he did not hold on to his mother’s skirt. He replied, “I couldn’t reach it.”

Quaint was later interviewed by *McCall’s* magazine, in which she defined the purpose of today’s fashion:

I mean today’s woman is proud of her body. She knows about dieting. She doesn’t need clothes with a built-in shape. She is the shape. And so she wants clothes that just sort of flow over her. She dresses to say I enjoy my body, I am sexy, I like men, I enjoy life. Her clothing is worn for decoration, provocation, and look at me. A lot of look-at-me-about-it (*McCall’s*, Mar 1970).

Come and Enjoy the Scenery

The late Thomas F. Eaves, Sr., in his excellent tract, *The Christian And Modest Clothing*, reproduced the below advertisement from a dance held at a denominational church in Memphis, Tennessee.

Super Star Production Presents

A HOT PANTS DANCE

Friday - Dec. 3

9 to 1

At the Second Presbyterian Church Gym

Poplar at Goodlet

Featuring - POST

ALL GIRLS wearing HOT PANTS get in
at ½ price

\$1.50 - regular

.75 - HOT PANTS

COME AND ENJOY THE SCENERY

Eaves went on to say, “That this statement (come and enjoy the scenery) explodes the often used justifications for immodest apparel, ‘I wear this type of apparel for comfort, or to keep cool’” (p. 7).

Some Revealing Inconsistencies

There are several thoughts which need to be addressed regarding the glaring inconsistencies found within the minds of those who seemingly see nothing wrong with the wearing of immodest apparel. First, if a woman wears her undergarments to the mailbox, she is considered to be inappropriately attired. However, the same woman, by today’s standards, is considered modest if she adds a little color to those same undergarments and wears them to the beach. Since when did the presence of sand, sun, and water automatically make this permissible? God’s laws regarding modest apparel are not cultural—they are universal. The beach or public swimming pool does not license the Christian to dress immodestly, just because our culture considers it

to be the norm. When culture sets the standard for what is right and wrong; then when the culture changes so do the standards. If the public beach is not a sexual pressure cooker, having the capacity to ignite lust in the hearts of those who go there, then why do thousands of college age students flock there for “Spring Break” each year? Do you suppose they go there for the purpose of just relaxing and getting a little sand, sun, and surf? Furthermore, what would happen if the beaches decided for next year’s “Spring Break” they would limit all of the women to one side of the beach (out of view of any men) and all of the men to the other side? How many would still go? Louis Rushmore expressed it ever so accurately:

Watching a woman bathe has been known to arouse unlawful lusts in a man. King David saw Bathsheba washing, lusted after her, committed adultery with her, fathered a child, murdered her husband, and brought much misery upon himself and the nation (2 Samuel 11:2-5). Is it advisable for women, especially those professing godliness, to bathe in the presence of men, whether it be sunbathing or swimming? (*Modesty: Biblical Investigation, Contemporary Application*, article taken from the Internet).

Second, if a woman answered the door in her slip, she would be embarrassed. However, the same woman could answer the door in a swimming suit (which reveals far more) and this is considered to be acceptable by society’s standards. Third, if a man were to walk through the mall wearing just his swimming suit, he would be dressed immodestly and would immediately be asked to leave by Security. However, the same man had the prerogative, with our culture’s stamp of

approval, to wear the same thing at the public swimming pool and beach. And we are told that this is supposed to be acceptable in the eyes of God.

Some Questions to Consider

First, is there an elder, deacon, preacher, or member of the Lord’s church, who would be willing to write an article for the church bulletin attempting to justify the practice of mixed undressing? *Second*, if the modern day swimsuit is not immodest, then what would have to be done to make it immodest? *Third*, if it is permissible to parade oneself in a bathing suit in the presence of those of the opposite sex at the beach, would it equally be permissible for the local church, after their Sunday morning worship service, to bring in some truck loads of sand, a large pool, and have a **“Fun in the Sun Day”**? Each member could then bring their bathing suits and everyone could then enjoy some good “fleshly fellowship” together. What makes it wrong for us to do this on the church grounds but right at the public swimming pool or beach?

What we do in moderation, the next generation will do in excess. For example, thirty years ago (in the United States) public schools had dress codes. Girls wore dresses and the boys wore dress pants and dress shirts. Today the standards are gone and practically anything goes. Therefore, the church must keep her standards high for the next generation. Older women should set a godly example for the younger women: a 24-hour example; not just a 9-to-5 or Sunday morning example (Tit. 2:3-5).

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Premillennialism: Is It True? (Part 6)

Tim Smith

In previous issues we have noted that the land promise made by God to Abraham has been fulfilled, that God’s promise to restore Israel to Palestine was conditional and fulfilled, that the “kingdom” of Isaiah 2, Daniel 2, and Micah 4 has been established, that Christ is reigning on the throne of David and that the church was a part of God’s eternal plan for the redemption of man and not an afterthought or a substitute for a postponed kingdom, each of which makes impossible the doctrine of Premillennialism. We now take up yet another tenet of this false doctrine. Each of these points are being considered for the purpose of demonstrating that the Bible does not teach this error, and that any man who does teach it violates the Bible.

Will there be a “Rapture?”

The Premillennial advocates teach that the church will be “raptured.” They contend that 1 Corinthians 15:51-52 and 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 show that a rapture of seven years will occur, but this is false. First Corinthians 15:51-54 is the conclusion of the whole chapter dealing with resurrection. Consider:

But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; then they that are Christ’s, at his coming. Then *cometh* the end, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be abolished is death...Behold, I tell you a mystery: We all shall not sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump:

for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. But when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory (1 Cor. 15:23-26; 51-54—ASV).

Now, what happens when Christ comes as per these verses? (1) The end of time occurs. (2) The kingdom will be delivered back to God (not received from Him). (3) All opposition to God will have been overcome. (4) The end of Christ's reign will occur (not the beginning). (5) Death will be destroyed. Notice that there is no time allowed in these verses for a seven-year rapture! The only way for it to happen (as per these verses) is for God to have not told us about it.

What about 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18? These verses show a similar picture (as to the righteous saints) when Christ comes:

But we would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them that fall asleep; that ye sorrow not, even as the rest, who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that are fallen asleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we that are alive, that are left unto the coming of the Lord, shall in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words (1 The. 4:13-18—ASV).

By these verses, then, when Christ comes: (1) The Resurrection will occur. (2) The dead in Christ will rise first. (3) Those alive in Christ will be caught up to Christ in the air. (4) The Christians will have overcome death and will ever be with the Lord. John 5:28-29 shows that at this same time the wicked shall also be raised and judged by God. There is simply no time for a seven-year rapture period in the scriptural accounts of the end of time.

Revelation 20:4

Those who advocate this error contend that Revelation 20:4 teaches a literal millennial reign of Christ on earth. First, hear the verses:

And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, the old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years,

And cast him into the abyss, and shut *it*, and sealed *it* over him, that he should deceive the nations no more, until the thousand years should be finished: after this he must be loosed for a little time. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and *I saw* the souls of them that had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God, and such as worshipped not the beast, neither his image, and received not the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they lived, and reigned with Christ a thousand years (Rev. 20:1-4—ASV).

John saw the **souls** of martyred Christians and faithful Christians, not their bodies. (This is Revelation 6:10 answered and fulfilled).

That figurative language is being employed, and not literal, is seen by the phrases in verses 1-3: Abyss (bottomless pit—KJV); Dragon; Chain to bind Satan; 1,000 years. In the context, the 1,000 years does not have to be literal. God often uses this in a figurative way (Psa. 50:10; Deu. 7:9; Exo. 20:6), and in this context it is clearly so used.

Verse 4 pictures dead saints reigning with Christ. It does not, however, mention: (1) The final coming of Christ. (2) The bodily resurrection from the grave. (3) A reign on earth (of any kind). (4) A literal throne in Jerusalem. (5) The rapture (a word not found in the Bible). (6) The physical kingdom of Israel being restored. Verse 4 does show the reign of Christ with the souls of dead Christians while time continues in the heavenly realm (as Christ continues to reign over His spiritual kingdom, the church). There is no place in God's plan for a 1,000-year reign upon the earth.

Conclusion

We have shown that each of the tenets of premillennialism is false. To accept premillennialism is to deny the power of God (the gospel) and the sacrifice of His Son. The gospel of Christ is the power of God to save. It involves the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Therefore, Christ had to suffer for the sins of mankind for God to be a just God. Sin demanded a perfect sacrifice. Premillennialism preaches a different gospel, one that has God putting Christ here the first time to be king on earth and having His rejection and death as a surprise to God. Paul told the Galatians to reject all gospels which differed from the true one (Gal. 1:6-9).

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Time: No Cure For Sin

Israel Crocker

The Devil is our enemy, and lies are one of his weapons to destroy us. Of course we know that Satan will not approach us himself and attack us in a literal way. However, he will use the influence of his temptations to bring us to sin.

God be praised there exists a cure for sin, and the only cure is Jesus Christ. Christ became the sin offering for our sin: “For he [the Father] hath made him [Christ] *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor. 5:21). Christians have the blessing of the forgiveness of sins through the precious sacrifice of Jesus.

Brethren sometimes make a terrible mistake when dealing with sin. Some believe they can let sin “go away” without taking care of the matter in the way that God has provided. John wrote, “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 cleanseth 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” (1 John 1:7-9). When a Christian (not an alien sinner) commits sin, he/she is **obligated** to confess the sin and pray for forgiveness (cf., Acts 8:20-24).

A Strange Occurrence

As mentioned in the title, time is no cure for sin. This principle is found in a strange occurrence of the Bible. “And it came to pass by the way in the inn, that the LORD met him, and sought to kill him. Then Zipporah took a sharp stone, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast *it* at his feet, and said, Surely a bloody husband *art* thou to me. So he let him go: then she said, A bloody husband *thou art*, because of the circumcision” (Exo. 4:24-26).

What seems so strange about the event mentioned above is the person with whom it is concerning: Moses. Moses had just been commissioned by God in the wilderness to go to Pharaoh and tell him to let God’s people go (Exo. 3). God reassures Moses that he (i.e., Moses) is capable for the task. After some deliberation, Moses is convinced. So, Moses returns and gathers his family to meet his brother Aaron. Yet, before Moses and his family met Aaron, the Lord “sought to kill”

Moses.” Why? It seems Moses was not completely prepared for the task that lies before him.

How Much Time?

Circumcision was first given by God to Abraham as a sign of the covenant between them. “And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which *is* not of thy seed” (Gen. 17:11-12). The covenant of circumcision was peculiar to the Hebrews, which were descendants of Abraham. This means that all of the sons of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had to keep this covenant as a sign of God’s promise.

Moses, being reared by the wife of Pharaoh (cf., Exo. 2; Heb. 11:24-27), was a descendent of Jacob by way of Amram; but Moses apparently had neglected to keep the covenant by not circumcising his son Gershom. God did not give this covenant to certain descendants of Abraham; all were expected to be faithful to it.

Please notice how much time has passed since the birth of Gershom, until Zipporah saves Moses. Stephen’s sermon reveals how old Moses was when he fled from Egypt. “And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds. And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel” (Acts 7:22-23). Moses fled into the wilderness at the age of forty, and soon after has a son by Zipporah (daughter of Jethro).

The Bible provides another clue as Moses was sent by God to the Israelites, “And Moses *was* fourscore years old, and Aaron fourscore and three years old, when they spake unto Pharaoh” (Exo. 7:7). Moses was eighty years of age when commissioned by God. We do not know how much time passed before Moses fled from Egypt and until Gershom was born, but we gather that not much time had passed according to Exodus 2:16-22. Hence, there was a long period of time between the two events (i.e., the birth and circumcision of Gershom). Safely, one could say over thirty years had passed.

Tainted Leadership?

Even though Moses had a divine task from God, and even though Moses had great faith before this event (i.e., Heb. 11:27), God still could not let the sin of negligence remain in the new leader.

Moses had tremendously important tasks before him. He was going to lead God's chosen people out from the Egyptian bondage, and rebuke the rebellious Pharaoh by casting plagues upon Egypt. Not only this, but Moses would be the mediator of the Law given to Israel on Mt. Sinai. Yet, Moses could not serve God in these ways and still be negligent of keeping the covenant himself. Moses would have been a hypocrite.

Moses would repeatedly rebuke the Israelites for their lack of faith and disobedience to the law that would be revealed through him. For example: "And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the LORD; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin" (Exo. 32:30). Moses discovered the Israelites worshipping golden calves by Aaron's guidance, while he was communing with the Lord on Sinai. Moses could not have rebuked his kinsman if he himself were guilty of negligence.

What Is the Point?

All of the time that had passed did not make the sin of Moses' neglecting circumcision "go away." The length of time did not remove Moses' responsibility to repent (correct the situation), nor did Moses' important mission dwindle God's divine justice against him. The Lord met Moses at the inn, and was about to slay him; Zipporah had to fulfill Moses' obligation. Time is no cure.

No man's sin is overlooked because of his importance in the church. If we commit a sin, whatever it may be, we need to handle it immediately. If the sin is in a public fashion so the church and the community are aware of it, we need to take care of the situation properly—in a public way. We cannot expect the sin to just "go away" in time. Sin will be forgiven, but forgiveness takes place on God's terms.

The Lord has given Christians a tremendous gift in Jesus' blood. We possess the ability to have forgiveness of our sins; all we have to do to have sin forgiven is to repent and pray for forgiveness. Children of God who leave sin present in their lives, believing that the problem will just "go away" may be **met** by the Lord at Judgment Day instead of an inn. Time is not our savior, Jesus Christ is.

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Updated Study Aid

The 1988-2002 books, *Defender* issues of 1989-2001, and the *Hatcher/Schweitzer Exchange* (an exchange of letters between Michael Hatcher and a Lutheran "pastor," Keith Schweitzer, on the subject of Total Hereditary Depravity and other matters) are available on computer disk in Adobe Acrobat Reader (PDF) format (making it useful for both Intel and Macintosh computers). The Acrobat Reader is also provided on the CD. The CD is completely indexed allowing searches of all the books at the same time (you can find every occurrence of a word or phrase such as "baptism for the remission of sins" in every book at the same time). The cost of the CD is only \$55 in which you receive all 15 books (less than \$5 per book), plus postage/handling fee of \$1.25. If you purchased a previous version of our CD, then check with us for an upgrade at a significant reduction in price upon the return of the CD. Take advantage of this great offer. Order from Bellview Church of Christ.

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Defender



"I am set for the defense of the gospel"

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Withdraw from One in Another Congregation?

John West

The subject of withdrawal of fellowship is not a popular one today. It has been avoided by numerous congregations of the Lord's people. However, there are still a few who follow the Word of God and practice discipline as is laid out in the Bible. Among those who practice church discipline, questions arise concerning *who* can be disciplined. Some also have questions concerning the validity of withdrawal today. God has always required discipline among His people. In Genesis three, Adam and Eve sinned and were disciplined by God. In Joshua 7:1-6, Achan and his family were disciplined for disobedience. In Acts 5:1-11, Ananias and Sapphira suffered the discipline of death for lying to the Holy Spirit. In every dispensation of time, God has required discipline. Why would it be any different in the twenty-first century?

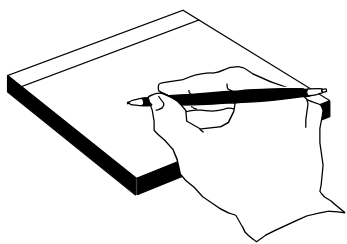
We will now notice two scenarios which may arise in a congregation and discuss the scripturalness of them. First, a person (person A), who is a member of congregation B, is sowing discord in congregation A. Does the eldership of congregation A have the authority to withdraw from person A who is sowing the discord? Some will argue that since the person is a member of another congregation (congregation B) that the eldership of congregation A has no authority because of "church autonomy." Brethren, we need to start using common sense when it comes to the Bible. Liberals, for years, have used this to escape withdrawal for unscriptural practices. Now, go back to the scenario and think about it carefully. If a person in congregation B is sowing discord in congregation A, then the elders in congregation A have every right to mark and withdraw

from this person. That person **cannot** hide behind "church autonomy" to destroy another congregation. Notice Paul's statement: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (Rom. 16:17-18). This verse goes past congregational lines of autonomy. **Any** person causing division is to be marked and avoided. In 1 Timothy 5:20 Paul wrote, "Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear." If a person is sowing discord, he is sinning and must be rebuked before all. Not only does congregation A have the right to withdraw, but if the elders of congregation B were *worth their salt*, they would also mark that individual as well if he refused to repent.

Now to scenario two. A person who is a member of congregation (A) sows discord in that congregation. He then moves his membership to another to avoid withdrawal, but continues to sow discord in congregation A. Can the eldership in congregation A withdraw from this person after he has left? The answer to this one would be the same as to the one above. The eldership in congregation A has every right to withdraw from someone causing division in their flock. Brethren, a problem today in the church is that man will often *church hop* to avoid any form of discipline, but when man is sowing discord among his brethren, he must be marked. Paul in writing to Titus gave the eldership the authority to stop the mouths of the "unruly and vain

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“Q” or *Quelle*

In all probability the majority of our readers have absolutely no idea what “Q” or *Quelle* is, much less why they should be concerned about it. In fact, many are probably wondering why I would even write about it. *Quelle* is a German word referring to source and shorted with the abbreviation “Q.” It is not my intention of going through a complete study of this subject. However, a little background is important.

The idea of Q resulted from trying to solve the synoptic problem. Matthew, Mark, and Luke are similar in content, order, and wording. The synoptic problem is the effort to explain the similarities and the differences in these three accounts. To explain these similarities (and differences) different explanations were given (these are not given in chronological order). One theory was that all three accounts were dependent upon an earlier **Aramaic gospel**. Another theory was the **oral tradition**. This view involved four steps: (1) the event occurred, (2) it was told repeatedly so it became widely known, (3) it became fixed so it was told the same way, and (4) was written down in an account. There was also the **Augustinian theory**. This basically stated that Matthew, Mark, and Luke were written in that order and each had access to the earlier accounts. The **two gospel theory** is another attempt. This basically states that Matthew was written first, then Luke was written and based upon Matthew. Last Mark was written and it was based upon the other two. Another theory is the **Markan Priority without Q**. This states that Mark was written first, then Matthew (based upon Mark) then Luke (based upon Mark and Matthew).

The last two theories are those which specifically involve Q (*Quelle*). They are called the **two source theory** and the **four source theory**. Both of these theories claim that Mark was written first, then Mat-

thew and Luke copied from Mark. However, there are things in Matthew and Luke which are not in Mark, thus (it is claimed) those two books must have had another source of material. This other source material would have contained the sayings of Jesus and is thus called *Quelle* (shortened to Q and meaning source). This is the two source theory.

The four source theory is closely related to the two source theory. This theory also claims that Mark was the first account written and Matthew and Luke copied from Mark. It also claims that they both used the Q document and copied from it. However, this did not answer the question about the material that is exclusive to Matthew and material exclusive to Luke. Thus, to explain this material those who hold the four source theory have invented two other documents from which Matthew and Luke copied. The material exclusive to Matthew was copied from a document normally referred to as “M,” and Luke copied from a document called “L.” Some would claim that instead of these (“M” and “L”) being written documents, they were oral traditions. The claim that Mark was the first account written was influenced by the Darwinian theory of evolution. Darwin claimed that things began in a simple form and evolved to more complex forms. Since Mark is not as complex as Matthew and Luke, Mark must have been written first.

You might be asking why I would even deal with something such as this. Should any of these views even concern us? You will note elsewhere in this issue of *Defender* the statement made by David Hester in which Dowell Flatt of Freed-Hardeman University holds to and teaches the priority of Mark and the existence of “Q.” Brother Flatt holds to the four source theory (he claims to know there is “Q” but questions how many sources were used). Brother Flatt is a professor of Bible at Freed-Hardeman. My question would be why has brother Flatt been allowed to teach such trash as this and pervert the minds of the students? Why has not Milton Sewell and the board of directors not done something to put a stop to this atrocity? Such teaching destroys the faith of God’s Word.

Ultimately, the theories mentioned above (including the idea of a “Q” source material) deny the inspiration of the Bible. Paul wrote, “All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Tim. 3:16). The holders of these views state that Matthew, Mark, and Luke could not have written what God gave them, they had to get their material from

some source document or oral tradition. The very reason all of the previous theories were postulated was because individuals denied the miraculous element of the Bible. They begin with the assumption that nothing miraculous could happen so they are forced to offer an alternative to the origins of the Bible and its contents. These are the various views of those who have denied God's involvement with the Bible. The Bible states, "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. 1:20-21). The Bible writers did not need a Q document or oral tradition to write. The Holy Spirit brought to the writers all truth and a remembrance of everything Jesus said. "But the Comforter, *which is* the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26). To hold to and to teach such theories, denies what the Bible claims for itself and its writers. Thus, we cannot fellowship those who would deny such plain teachings of God's Word for the folly of man.

Another Update

On May 28, 2002, brother David Hill of Tennessee Bible College wrote brother Dub McClish saying, "I know this—neither Dad nor anyone else here at TBC that I know of is fearful of meeting you or anyone anytime and proving things written or spoken." I did not realize that brother Malcolm Hill (David Hill's "Dad") has agreed to the debate challenge made by Kent Bailey between Wesley Simons and Malcolm Hill. As we have documented in previous issues (September 2001 and January 2002), brother Wesley Simons agreed to the debate challenge when it was given; brother Hill has refused. Brother Hill can you now give us the details of when and where the debate will be held so all can know of your acceptance (per your son's statement)?

MH

(Continued from Page 1)

talkers and deceivers" (Tit. 1:7-11). Those sowing discord definitely fit in that category. Notice the Proverb writer in Proverbs 6:16, 19: "These six *things* doth the LORD hate: yea, seven *are* an abomination unto him... A false witness *that* speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren." Sowing discord is a

sin whether a person is a member of one congregation or another.

Why should the eldership of congregation A practice discipline on a person who left congregation A or never was a member of the congregation? There are a number of reasons. First, discipline is practiced to save the person's soul. Paul shows in 1 Corinthians 5:1-11, that a person in sin is not to be fellowshiped. Notice, however, verse five: "To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." The verse means that fellowship is to be withdrawn so he will realize the seriousness of his sin and repent before he loses his soul. Second, discipline is practiced to keep the church pure. In 1 Corinthians 5:6-8, Paul shows that the "old leaven" must be purged to keep the church pure. If the discipline does not take place, then the church could be destroyed internally by division. Disease in the physical body must be removed to keep the body pure and the same is true with the church. Third, discipline is practiced to help the church progress. In Acts 5:11-14, the church grew (progressed) after the discipline of Ananias and Sapphira. Had they not been disciplined, the church would have been hindered in growth.

When a person is sowing discord within the body of Christ, he must be disciplined. An eldership not only has the authority, but more than that, the **responsibility** to mark and avoid any who are trying to destroy the church. Brethren, when we start following God's Word and start using common sense, the man who sows discord will not have an audience, because the faithful will mark and avoid him.

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Editor's Note: Br ethren, can you imagine Paul, in writing by the inspiration of God, saying, "A man that is an heretick [A factious man— ASV] after the first and second admonition reject; as long as he is a member of your congregation otherwise you have no right to do anything about him and he can destroy the flock of God among you?" (Tit. 3:10)? Or writing, "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us, but only as long as he is a member of your congregation otherwise you can do nothing about him even though he is doing everything he can to destroy the congregation" (2 The. 3:6)? Brethren, such is ludicrous! Yet, that is the sad position some elders are now taking simply so they can continue

in their fellowship with those from whom another congregation has withdrawn. Brethren, this is a sad

state of affairs. Let us think clearly about this and practice the discipline God requires.

To All Interested Brethren:

David W. Hester

Last year (2001), I directed the Central Alabama Lectureship. Among those who participated was Dowell Flatt of Freed-Hardeman University. It was brought to my attention that brother Flatt teaches the supposed priority of Mark, the supposed existence of the “Q” source, as well as the claim that Mark did not pen Mark 16:9-20.

First, let me assure you that not only do I **not** believe those doctrines to be true, I have also taught (and continue to teach and preach) the truth of Markan authorship of 16:9-20, the fact that “Q” is a chimera that exists only in the minds of liberal professors, and that Matthew more than likely was the first Gospel account, with Luke being next, and John being last—not using either Mark or “Q” as sources.

Second, while at first I thought having brother Flatt was a mistake in judgment, I now am convinced it was more than that. I know that I have offended some, and for that I apologize and ask for your forgiveness.

Third, may I assure everyone that from now on, I will be **extra** careful and vigilant as to who speaks on any future lectureships I direct. Not to belabor the point, but last fall was a very difficult time for me and my family, due to the loss of my mother-in-law. Additionally, I was contemplating a move from Morris, AL, to where we are now in Manchester, TN; consequently, I was very distracted, and my judgment and vigilance was not what it usually is. Nonetheless, I was wrong; I again ask your forgiveness.

I hope and trust that we all can move forward in our determination to spread the Gospel, oppose error, and restore the erring. If you have any further questions, you may contact me at dwhest@netzero.net or (931) 728-3306.

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Introductory Matters: On April 8, 2002, I received a series of question from a young man who wrote, “I have some questions about The Church of Christ.... I am in the process of studying The Church of Christ and would like any additional information that you can give me. I appreciate your time in answering these ques-

Editor’s Note: As a lectureship director, I certainly see the need for vigilance as to whom I ask to be on and who is on the Bellview Lectureship. However, this is likewise true as editor of both “Defender” and our weekly bulletin “Beacon.” It should likewise be true of every bulletin editor. Yet, so often what we observe is that men who themselves are sound will allow advertisements of congregations who are no longer holding to true doctrine to be in the bulletin they edit. We also see sound men who will have articles in the bulletins they edit by men who teach false doctrine. Brethren, when will we wake up and see that these actions (and others like them) are wrong? Yes, I realize that some may slip through without our knowledge, but we are not speaking of those. What we are talking about are those whom we know to be false teachers and using them anyway. This is nothing more than bidding God speed to them (2 John 9-11) making us a partaker of their evil.

I also want to commend brother Hester for making this right. So often it seems like someone who does something wrong, instead of making it right like brother Hester has done, will instead try to defend himself or attack those who bring it to his attention. It seems that they will do anything except take responsibility for their actions. What is right is that when we do something wrong, to correct the wrong (in as public of a way as the wrong) asking forgiveness of brethren and God, then go on with the Lord’s work. This is what God wants on our part. Then when someone properly corrects a mistake they have made, all are to forgive them (with all that forgiveness implies). We should thank brother Hester for the fine example he has set in making things right and now move on in the work of our Savior.

tions.” Upon further correspondence with this young man he wrote, “I have been collecting material on The Church of Christ for about the last year or so and doing all of the reading that I can on the church and its doctrine. My wife’s family is in The Church of Christ and we have talked about the differences in their beliefs

and mine because I am Independent Baptist. I came up with a list of questions that I had concerning some things that I did not completely understand about The Church of Christ and I have been e-mailing them to Churches of Christ on the east coast. All the questions are about is some things that I would like to have better explained to me.” He sent 23 questions in his original e-mail to me. Over the next few months I will be

placing his questions (without any editing on my part) and my answers to him in *Defender*. His questions will be numbered and indented with my answers immediately following. I did write a prefatory remark which is also included. Since he sent these to others, there might be other publications which will also include responses by those brethren. I pray that this will be a profitable study to others.

Questions About The Church of Christ

Michael Hatcher

Prior to answering these questions, please be aware that these are my answers and mine only based upon my study of God’s Word. Since the churches of Christ have no central organization and no creed books (except the Bible), I cannot speak for (nor do I try to speak for) the churches of Christ in general. Instead of studying the churches of Christ, I would suggest you study the Bible. The Bible (not the churches of Christ) is our standard of judgment. Simply because a group of people use the expression *church of Christ* on the door does not mean they are the Lord’s church (the church of Christ). Only those who follow the Bible and the Bible alone are the church of Christ (i.e., the church one reads about in the Bible, the only one our Lord built, died for, and will save on the last day). Thus, I would encourage you to study the Bible and follow it as your guideline. I also want you to know that I intend on placing these answers in the publication which I edit: *Defender*.

1. How many types of sinners are there? If there is more than one type of sinner where does The Bible make this distinction?

Sin is sin, and it separates one from God. However, there are different types of sin. There are sins of omission (where we fail to do something God has commanded), and there are sins of commission (where we do something God has commanded us not to do). Also there are two different classes (or types) of people in the world. There are those who are lost and those who are saved (many other terms could be used for these). When one becomes a Christian, he becomes a child of God. Does one who is not a child of God sin? Yes. Can one who has become a child of God sin? Again the answer is yes (Rom. 3:23), which was written to those who were Christians (1 John 1:7-10). Simon, for

example, became a child of God but sinned afterward (Acts 8:13, 18-23). The real intent of your question, I believe, concerns how we deal with sin. One who has never obeyed the gospel and becomes a child of God must obey what God says to become such. Upon hearing God’s Word (John 6:45) he must have faith (Heb. 11:6) and upon that faith he must repent of his sins (Luke 13:3), confess his faith in Christ as God’s Son (Rom. 10:10), and be baptized for the remission of his sins (Acts 2:38). One who is a child of God and commits sin must do what Simon was told to do (repent and pray—Acts 8:22, 24), which is consistent with what John wrote in 1 John 1:9 (confess your sins).

2. Can you find the complete plan of salvation in any one verse in The Bible? If not why?

No, one cannot find the complete plan of salvation in one verse in the Bible. I would ask you the same question: Can you find the complete plan of salvation in any one verse in the Bible? The reason you nor I cannot is that the Bible is not written in that way. A basic rule of Bible study is that one must take everything the Bible says on a given subject and draw a conclusion that is in harmony with everything the Bible says on it. By doing this we can learn what the plan of salvation is.

If we could take only one verse and ignore the others, then I could take what Jesus said in John 3:16 and say that only belief saves a person; nothing else is needed (including God’s grace, love, repentance, baptism, etc.). Another person could go to what Peter wrote by inspiration in 1 Peter 3:21 and say that it is baptism which saves a person; nothing else is needed (including God’s grace, love, belief, repentance, etc.). In that case we would certainly have a contradiction

within the Bible. However, when you put both of these together (along with other passages) and draw a conclusion which is in harmony with both (all passages), you then learn the truth.

3. Mark 16:16 says *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned*. Is it possible to believe without being baptized? What damns a person?

To avoid the fallacy of equivocation (using the same word in different ways) this answer must be lengthy and with some background material necessary. *Belief* (and its different forms) can be used in different ways (determined by the context). It can be used as simply an acknowledgment of certain facts (I call this faith specific, specific in regard to one step in salvation). The passage you mention is one where Jesus is using believe in a specific way. Some other passages where it is used in this way would be: Acts 18:8; 19:18. This is a type of faith which a person can possess and not be baptized and thus not be saved. This is the faith of the demons (Jam. 2:19; Mat. 8:29). This is the faith many of the chief rulers possessed (John 12:42-43), but it would not save them (even as it will not save the demons), because they would not confess Him (see Mat. 10:32-33). Thus, it is possible to believe (specific faith) and not be baptized.

However, faith is also used in another way to include all of man's response to God (I call this faith generic). A couple of the many passages which show this would be 1 Peter 1:9 where the end of your faith is eternal salvation; thus faith here is representing all of man's response to God (2 Cor. 5:7). Ephesians 2:8 is another example where verse 10 shows that the good works God has ordained are included in faith. Additionally, when one views their conversion, it did include baptism (Acts 19:5). A couple of passages where faith includes baptism would be Acts 2:44 where believers are together, but the believers are those who had

repented and been baptized (vv. 38-41). Another example of such is the Philippian jailor in Acts 16. In verse 31 Paul told him he needed to believe, in verse 32 Paul preached God's Word to him, in verse 33 we observe his repentance (in washing their stripes) and his baptism; then in verse 34 he is then called a believer. The belief in verse 34 includes his repentance and baptism. In this type of faith (generic) one cannot believe without being baptized.

What damns a person? Very simply, sin is the basic answer. Sin is that which separates us from God (Isa. 59:1-2) or causes spiritual death (Rom. 6:23; Jam. 1:14-15). Since we are saved by God's grace, which is available to all men (Tit. 2:11), through faith (man's obedient response to God; Eph. 2:8), it would be incorrect to say that we are damned because God's grace was not sufficient (in that it did not save someone). However, if we do not have faith (we do not respond obediently to God's grace, which teaches us—Tit. 2:12), we will be damned. In Mark 16:16, since faith (specific) is the first step of that salvation process, if a person does not have faith, he will be damned. If your real question involves why Jesus did not add "and is not baptized" to this part of the statement, there is simply no need to add such a statement (in fact, it would be foolish to add such). One who does not have faith (specific faith is being used in Mark 16:16) cannot be baptized scripturally. Thus, without faith (specific) a person will be damned. (Allow me to use an illustration: "A person who eats and digests food will live, a person who does not eat will die." There is no need to add anything about digesting food in the later part of the sentence because a person who does not eat cannot digest food.) The question though is, will specific faith save a person? Jesus has already answered that it takes both specific faith and baptism to be saved. I might ask you the question as to which is right: (1) belief plus baptism equals salvation, or (2) belief minus baptism equals salvation?

The Precious Blood Of Christ

Steve E. Yeatts

When I was growing up, I was taught the dogma of the Baptist religion. I remember hearing that it was the blood and only the blood of Jesus Christ that could cleanse one from sin. As most children will during their

formative years, I accepted that statement with blind faith. Now that I am a member of the church of Christ I can reflect upon that statement with a much different perspective. I understand now with much more clarity

that it is the blood, but how we avail ourselves of it is much different than what I was taught as a child.

Jesus Christ said in Matthew 26:28, "This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Clearly as Hebrews 9:22 tells us: "Without shedding of blood is no remission." But how and when do we obtain that remission? Paul wrote in Romans 6:3 asking: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" Being baptized puts us into Christ and His death and the act of baptism is the implementation of the commands of Jesus Christ and His Scriptures.

Where our denominational friends and family members are egregiously confused is that the blood is undeniably linked to the Lord's church. Some decry any connection between the church and the blood, but the Bible clearly states that the blood Jesus Christ shed was for the purpose of purchasing the church (Acts 20:28). So, for one's reasoning to be sound in accepting the blood; one must also accept the church that exists as a result of the blood of Christ. That is a crucial line of demarcation between the church and the religious world at large, the fact that the very life-giving element (the blood) bought the church which one must be a part of

to have eternal life.

It is unfortunate that the denominational world, that claims to esteem the blood of Christ so much, are the ones who do their best to disassociate themselves from the very Scriptures that tell us how to avail ourselves of that precious blood. Romans 6:4 says, "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Baptism is that burial of a person dead in sin that identifies us with the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are buried because we are dead (spiritually), and we are raised because we are made alive by the blood of Jesus Christ, which we contacted by our fulfillment of the commands of the Word of God.

I hope and pray that we as the church of Christ are never identified with disregarding the blood of Christ. We should honor, respect, and preach the blood unequivocally as our cleansing element. The key is to emphasize that our doorway to that blood is contained within the waters of baptism where we put on Christ and the **purpose** of baptism is what is so important.

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Updated CD Study Aid

The 1988-2002 books, *Defender* issues of 1989-2001, and the *Hatcher/Schweitzer Exchange* (an exchange of letters between Michael Hatcher and a Lutheran "pastor," Keith Schweitzer, on the subject of Total Hereditary Depravity and other matters) are available on computer disk in Adobe Acrobat Reader (PDF) format (making it useful for both Intel and Macintosh computers). The Acrobat Reader is also provided on the CD. The CD is completely indexed allowing searches of all the books at the same time (you can find every occurrence of a word or phrase such as "baptism for the remission of sins" in every book at the same time). The cost of the CD is only \$55 in which you receive all 15 books (less than \$5 per book), plus postage/handling fee of \$1.25. If you purchased a previous version of our CD, then check with us for an upgrade at a significant reduction in price upon the return of the CD. Take advantage of this great offer. Order from Bellview Church of Christ.

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MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR

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Defender



"I am set for the defense of the gospel"

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UNTO DEATH Early Martyrs For The Faith

Tim Smith

"Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast *some* of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Rev. 2:10).

Martyr means, "one who testifies by his death to his faith or principles; one who suffers acutely" (*Webster's Dictionary*). There are many records of men and women who have been martyred through the years, many of them for the Cause of Christ. Let us take a few minutes to consider a few of them. We see in the verse cited above that the necessity of dying for the principles of truth was and is a duty of the faithful follower of the Lord. Regardless of what the world does to us, our allegiance must be to Him. Although they were not immediately made to die for the Lord, the attitude of Peter and John as given in Acts 4:19-20 would lead them to such a fate in the future: "But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." If it comes down to Jesus or living another few years, we must choose Jesus.

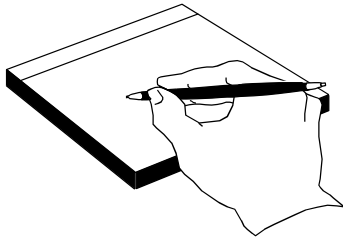
Jesus. Of course, the only man who ever suffered innocently as a martyr was Jesus Himself. He "did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth" (1 Pet. 2:22), and yet still He was offered on the altar for our offenses. He was dragged before the civil authorities on false charges, testimony was borne against Him by these paid prevaricators, He was unjustly condemned to

death, and crucified. He thought more of the work God had given Him to do, and our souls and eternal well-being, than His life itself. In submitting to the cruelty of men He fulfilled the prophetic utterances that went before Him, and set the example for others to follow. Others did indeed follow, and of some of them we read in the Bible.

Stephen. Stephen had been preaching faithfully the Word of God. His message was powerful: so powerful that "they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake" (Acts 6:10). Because of this "they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and *against* God. And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon *him*, and caught him, and brought *him* to the council, and set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law: For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us" (Acts 6:11-14). The charges against him were true, for Jesus really did say those things and no doubt Stephen really did preach them. He had to have known that his lot was to be martyrdom, he had to realize that their hatred and bitterness to the Lord and all who served Him was too great to be overcome by persuasion. Yet, still he preached to them. He gave them a lesson in their own history, including their guilt with respect to the Lord. He may have been able to

(Continued on Page 3)

Notes From The Editor



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Hatcher**

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Purity

Jesus, in that great Sermon on the Mount setting forth those essential principles of Christianity, states, “Blessed *are* the pure in heart: for they shall see God” (Mat. 5:8). God has always called man to be pure. He might not always use the specific word or state it explicitly, however He does call man to be pure throughout the Bible. We as Christians are to practice pure religion: “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, *and* to keep himself unspotted from the world” (Jam. 1:27). Paul told Timothy to “Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men’s sins: keep thyself pure” (1 Tim. 5:22). John wrote that “And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure” (1 John 3:3). *Purifieth* is a continuous action verb so the one who has hope of eternal life with Christ continues to purify himself. John has previously revealed how a Christian who commits sin can purify himself: “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 cleanseth us from all sin.... If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:7, 9). A person purifies himself by obedience to the object standard of God’s Word: “Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently” (1 Pet. 1:22). Let us consider four areas in which we are to be pure.

God calls us to be pure in **thought**. The wise man Solomon wrote, “For as he thinketh in his heart, so *is* he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart *is* not with thee” (Pro. 23:7). If we are what we think, and we are to be pure, then we must be pure in thought. Jesus

said that evil things come from within (i.e., the thoughts of man) to defile man (Mark 7:20-23). Thus, it is imperative that we think properly. “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things *are* honest, whatsoever things *are* just, whatsoever things *are* pure, whatsoever things *are* lovely, whatsoever things *are* of good report; if *there be* any virtue, and if *there be* any praise, think on these things” (Phi. 4:8).

It seems as if it is very difficult to keep our thoughts pure in our society. It appears as if everything we come in contact with directs our minds away from God and the right. Our thoughts are influenced by what we see and hear. The entertainment industry has made sure that we see and hear that which sways us to evil. They have used one of the most powerful forces within man to affect him for that which is immoral—sex. They have promoted ungodly and corrupt speech within our society so now we are bombarded with gutter language of all types. We must make sure that what we see and hear will bring us to God and righteousness: that it will keep our hearts pure. Purity in every other aspect begins with purity of thought, so we cannot be pure without this.

God also demands that we be pure in **heart** or **affection**. The statement by Jesus in Matthew 5:8 certainly includes our affections when Jesus says we are to be “pure in heart.” Paul tells us: “Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and *of* a good conscience, and *of* faith unfeigned” (1 Tim. 1:5). Our love (charity) must come from a pure heart, and without purity of heart we will not have biblical love. Yet, without love for the Father, Christ, the Word of God, the church, et. al., we cannot be in a right relationship with Him.

James tells us: “Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *ye* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *ye* double minded” (Jam. 4:8). The cleansing of one’s hands deals with the purity of one’s outward life while the purifying of the heart relates to the source of those actions. When our affections, our heart (in all its aspects) are pure, then can our lives be pure. Without that purity of heart, we will live ungodly lives. The question is: Where do our affections lie? Do we love the world or love God (1 John 2:15-17)? Only by loving God with a pure heart will we have hope of eternity with Him.

Our **actions** are to be pure. We are to make sure that that which we do is pure. Paul warned Timothy: “Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men’s sins: keep thyself pure” (1 Tim. 5:22). Paul

is dealing with the actions which Timothy would take and encourages him not to engage in the sins which others will participate in, and in so doing he would be keeping himself pure. Earlier Paul had told him, "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Tim. 4:12). One of the ways we exemplify Christianity is through our actions in being pure in our lives. However, when we fail to live in purity, we influence others to sin.

God expects that our **speech** be pure. Not only should our actions be pure, but we need to make sure that the words we use are pure. Our language should not be like the language of the world. They belong to Satan and talk in such a way as to show it. Paul wrote, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers" (Eph. 4:29). In the parallel book, Paul wrote, "But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth" (Col. 3:8). We need to be careful what we say for we shall be judged by those words. "But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Mat. 12:36-37).

A final thought is that if we wish to convert others to Christ. David wrote, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me *with thy* free spirit. *Then* will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee" (Psa. 51:10-13). David realized that he could not teach others God's way and convert sinners till he personally had a pure or clean heart. We cannot win others to Christ if we do not first portray Christ in our lives. Let us be pure in heart and keep ourselves unspotted the contamination of this world. MH

(Continued from Page 1)

have denied Jesus and lived, though of this we cannot be sure. He certainly could have compromised and at least have had a better chance of survival. But, he did none of this. He was true to the Lord, and did not let up, even a little. As he drew his comments to a conclusion, he said, "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and

ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers *did*, so *do ye*" (Acts 7:51). They did not like his message, and the Bible says that "when they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with *their* teeth...Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, And cast *him* out of the city, and stoned *him*" (Acts 7:54, 57-58). He died a noble death, never denying his Lord, never looking back. He is remembered as the first Christian Martyr. This was, according to the historians, about A.D. 34 or 35.

James. Some ten or so years later, A.D. 44, we read of the death of James at the hands of Herod on this wise: "Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth *his* hands to vex certain of the church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword" (Acts 12:1-2). There is a story from an uninspired historian which says that as James was being led to die his accuser, since converted to the Lord, fell down at James' feet and repented, and was also put to death with him. The manner of martyrdom is said to have been beheading.

Philip of Bethsaida in Galilee, was said to have died in Heliopolis in Phrygia. "He was scourged, thrown into prison, and afterwards crucified, A.D. 54" (*Fox's Book of Martyrs*, p. 3).

Matthew. The tax-collector was said to have been slain with a "halberd" (Ibid.), which was a "medieval weapon which consisted of a long staff to which an ax was affixed with a spearlike point" (*Webster*). This was said to have occurred in A.D. 60.

James The Less. The record as it has come to us is that at the age of ninety-four he was beaten and stoned by the Jews; finally having his brains dashed out (Ibid.). He was the author of the epistle James in the New Testament, wherein the evidence of his willingness to die for the Lord was demonstrated by his doctrine (cf., Jam. 1:12f).

Matthias. This *replacement* for Judas was said to have been stoned at Jerusalem and then beheaded (Ibid.).

Andrew. This brother of Peter, indeed the one who brought Peter to Jesus, was said to have been crucified up-side-down in Edessa (Ibid.).

Mark. This writer of the Second Gospel (as they appear in our Canon) was said to have been dragged to pieces by the people of Alexandria (Ibid.).

Peter was said to have been crucified, like his brother Andrew, up-side-down. His death was during

the persecution of Nero. Though weak at moments, secular historians depict a devoted and faithful martyr in the end (Ibid.).

Paul a Roman Citizen, was not subject to crucifixion, but was murdered none-the-less under the persecution of Nero in Rome, and died by beheading (Ibid.).

Jude. He was the brother of James, and was commonly called Thaddeus. He was, if reports are true, crucified at Edessa in A.D. 72 (Ibid., p. 4).

Bartholomew. He was said to have been cruelly beaten and then crucified by idol worshippers (Ibid.).

Thomas. He who would not believe until he could see the nail prints in the hands and feet of the Lord was said to have been thrust through with a spear while preaching in India (Ibid.).

Luke. This penman of the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles was supposed to have been hanged on an olive tree by the idolatrous priests of Greece (Ibid., p. 5).

Simon. This Simon, the Zealot, was said to have been crucified in Britain in A.D. 74. Having formerly zealously sought Jewish independence, he now received spiritual independence in Christ (Ibid.).

John. This “disciple whom Jesus loved” died in exile on the Isle of Patmos, after writing his final work, the last book in our New Testament (Revelation). “He was the only apostle who escaped a violent death” (Ibid.).

Barnabas. The means of his martyrdom are not reported, but it was supposed to have happened in A.D. 73 (Ibid.).

Ignatius. According to Eusebius (*History of the Church*), Ignatius was condemned during the reign of the Emperor Trajan (A.D. 98-117) and taken to Rome and fed to the wild animals as a part of the public festivities. He was reported to have said, “I am His

wheat, ground fine by the lion’s teeth to be made purest bread for Christ” (*Ignatius, To The Romans*, p. 4).

Polycarp. Though an old man, he was sought out by the Roman authorities for crucifixion because of his faith in the Lord. He was told that he could swear to the gods of Rome and live. He refused. He was told to say, “Down with the infidels!” which is what the Romans considered Christians (as they did not believe in the Roman gods). According to *The Martyrdom of Polycarp*, he motioned with his hands toward the crown, and said, “Down with the infidels!” indicating the Romans and not the Christians. The Governor was reported to have said, “Take the oath, and I will let you go...Reville your Christ.” The famous (alleged) response of Polycarp was, “Eighty and six years have I served Him, and He has done me no wrong. How then can I blaspheme my King and Saviour?” He was burned at the stake and then driven through with a dagger.

We have no way of knowing the certainty of reports which have come down to us from sources outside of the Bible, but the ones offered do not seem to me to violate anything written in the Bible. We do not agree with the theology of Ignatius and Polycarp, as the rise of Catholicism was taking place and their teachings reflect some of the heretical positions which would later be espoused by Catholicism. But the fact of the great persecution then raging, the difficulty of serving Jesus in a world which sought the eradication of all His followers, and the dedication and faith of these men is truly amazing and worthy of consideration. We live in a time of relative ease with respect to our liberties to pursue Christianity. For this we are most grateful. But, despite the absence of physical threats, our level of devotion must be as great as theirs. If we were called upon to die for Him, would we be strong enough to do it?

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Change

Danny L. Box

The *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* defines the verb form of *change* as “to cause to be different; to exchange for or replace with another; to lay aside, abandon, or leave for another.” The noun form of the word from the same source means: “the act, process, or result of altering or modifying; the replacing of one thing for another; substitution; a transformation or transition from one state, condition, or phase to

another; something different.”

In our own personal lives none of us like change. Most of us are “set in our ways,” and will resist every attempt to get us to do anything different or try new things. Many will go through their whole life and never vary from their set routine of doing things. We like order, and will strictly enforce this order in our own lives. However, many who will resist change in their

personal lives are the very ones who are trying to **change** the Lord's church. They are trying to make the church different, and are replacing the doctrinally sound fundamental issues of the church with ideas and opinions of men. They have abandoned the Word of our Lord, or else have replaced it with a watered down liberal version of the true Word. Due to the efforts of these proponents of change, a transition is taking place in many congregations of the Lord's body. This transition is taking many congregations further and further away from that first century church we can read about in God's inspired Word. Lets look at some of the issues that many are trying to change in the church.

Plan of Salvation

God's approved plan of salvation is being changed. My Bible, the inspired Word of God, tells me that all men **must** hear the true Word of God (Rom. 10:17); and once they have heard the truth, they **must** believe that Word (John 8:24; Heb.11:6). When they have believed the Word, they **must** repent of their sins (Luke 13:3), and then they **must** confess Christ as the Son of God (Rom. 10:9-17; Mat. 16:16; Acts 8:37). Then finally the person **must** be baptized in the name of Christ for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; 1 Pet. 3:21). This is God's plan according to the Book, but many of my brethren are making changes in this plan. They are substituting denominational baptism for true baptism into the one body, and are telling people they are safe with this. Many are leaving the actual confession before men out of the plan all together, and stating that when you walk down the aisle, that is your confession of faith. But saddest of all is the fact that many are advocating that baptism washes away all sins, and that you can go back into the adulterous relationship without changing anything because your sins have been washed away. These changes in God's plan have caused many to believe that they are saved when in reality they are not.

Worship

God's approved plan for worship is being changed. God tells us that all men must worship Him "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23-24). This is worship with the right attitude of heart based on the true Word of God. Included in the pattern God has given us for approved worship, we find we must preach/teach the truth (Acts 2:42; 20:7), we must sing praises to God (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16), we must offer up prayers (Acts 2:42), we must give of our means (1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 9:7), and we must partake of the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 16:2;

Acts 2:42; 20:7). However, to be more appealing to the masses, the proponents of change have advocated that we do different than that which is approved. They are advocating that we substitute clapping, humming, or verbal noises for singing. They are also advocating that singing does not really limit us only to vocal music, but to be "more pleasing" to God we need to add instruments to our singing to get it to sound better. No longer is congregational singing pleasing, but now due to change we have choruses, choirs, and solos in those who call themselves the church of our Lord. Worship that was once done to the glory of the Father, in reverence and godly fear, is now done with shouting, clapping, laughing, and is merely entertainment instead of worship.

Leadership

God's approved plan of leadership is being changed. God has ordained that the church has Christ as its head (Eph. 5:23). God directed that qualified men are to oversee the church in the office of elders, and other men are to serve as deacons for the purpose of ministering to the needs of the church. We find the qualifications of these men in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1, and men who lead the church in this capacity must meet all of the qualifications to be acceptable to God. But again we see changes being made in this leadership role. Men with no children, or the husband of more than one wife (without scriptural basis), or men who cannot or will not teach, or men who hardly ever attend the services, or whose influence is tarnished are being installed in the position of an elder. It is no wonder then that congregations are having problems. Also we are seeing more and more congregations delegating leadership roles to women, and anyone who has any Bible knowledge at all knows that this is **not** approved by God.

Fellowship

And finally, God's approved plan of fellowship is being changed. God has told us who we are to fellowship: those of like precious faith (2 Pet. 1:1; 2 Cor. 6:14). He has told us who to avoid: the world and those of the world (Rom. 12:2; 1 John 2:15). He has also told us how to walk; in the light, and that we are to stay away from the unfruitful works of darkness (1 John 1:5-7; Eph. 5:11). Apparently though, the proponents of change have either not read God's Word thoroughly enough on the issue of fellowship, or else they are ignoring what He has had to say on this issue. We see *brethren* who are now advocating that we can fellowship those of the denominational world because there

are “sincere, knowledgeable Christians” in all religions. We also see men who profess to be gospel preachers *swapping* pulpits with those of the denominational world, and even inviting these people to speak at different lectureships. Many are advocating that we extend “the right hand of fellowship” to all those who profess to be Christians because we will all end up at the same place, we are just taking different roads to get there. How sad!

Brethren and friends, in some areas of our life change is good and is okay, but in the area of our spiritual well being change can be deadly. God has told us what to do to be saved. He has told us how to

worship. He has set the leadership roles for the church, and He has told us who we can fellowship. Now if we try to replace His instructions with those of our own, or if we substitute something that will make the church different or alter it in any way, then on the day of judgment we will die the second death, and be lost for eternity. Please consider Proverbs 24:21: “My son, fear thou the LORD and the king: *and* meddle not with them that are given to change.” Now if you are guilty of trying to change the church or are worshipping in a church that has been changed, will you not repent before it is eternally too late!

Deceased

Introductory Matters: In the July issue of *Defender* we began looking at some questions an Independent Baptist sent me (and several others). He sent 23 questions in an email to me and to which I responded. These are the answers that I wrote to his questions. I encourage you to go back and read the introductory information from the July issue along with the first three questions and answer. This is the second installment of these questions and answers with his questions numbered and indented (otherwise without any editing) and my answers immediately following. I pray that this will be a profitable study to others.

Questions about The Church of Christ

Michael Hatcher

4. Explain the difference between water baptism and Holy Spirit Baptism.

Holy Spirit baptism was a promise (Acts 1:4-5), while water baptism is a command (Acts 10:48). Holy Spirit baptism was never promised to all Christians (Acts 1:4-5), while water baptism is for all men (Mark 16:15-16). Holy Spirit baptism was administered by Jesus (Mat. 3:11), while water baptism is administered by man (Mat. 28:19-20). Miracles were associated with Holy Spirit baptism (those who received it always displayed miraculous power such as, speaking in tongues; Acts 2, 10), while salvation is associated with water baptism (Acts 2:38). Holy Spirit baptism was limited as to time, as evidenced that Jesus was the Administer of it (cf., Eph. 4:5), while water baptism is till the end of the world. Water baptism is into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Mat. 28:19), while Holy Spirit baptism is not. Water baptism is a visible representation of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (Rom. 6:3-4), but this is not the case with Holy Spirit baptism. The purpose of Holy Spirit baptism (see John 14:25-26; 16:12-13) is basically fourfold: (1) to teach the apostles all things, (2) bring all things that Jesus said to their remembrance, (3) guide them into all

truth, and (4) show them things to come. These four things are miraculous in nature, and man does not possess them today. Water baptism’s purpose is for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).

5. When does one receive the Holy Spirit?
When is a person baptized by the Holy Spirit?

First, no one today receives Holy Spirit baptism. Holy Spirit baptism was limited to the apostles and possibly Cornelius (see Acts 1:4-8; 2:1-4, 10-11). See comments above as to Jesus being the administer of it, its purpose, etc.

When one receives the Holy Spirit is again dependent upon what you mean by your statement. If you are talking about the reception of miraculous gifts or miraculous powers, then no one today receives that aspect of the Holy Spirit. Miracles ended when the revelation of God’s Word was completed (1 Cor. 13:8-13; Eph. 4:11-16).

The Scriptures do affirm that the Spirit dwells in the Christian. The Scriptures also affirm that the Father and Son dwell in the Christian. Thus, when a person becomes a Christian, he receives the Spirit (but not for the purpose of receiving miraculous powers).

6. Is baptism a birth or a burial? Explain.

It is both, depending on the figure you are using. Jesus uses the figure of a new birth (which is found in the act of baptism) in John 3:1-21. Paul uses this figure in Titus 3:5 (washing of regeneration—see the NIV “washing of rebirth,” or the NRSV “water of rebirth”). It is a birth in the sense that one is being born into the family of God.

Paul uses the figure of baptism being a death, burial, and resurrection in Romans 6:3-4 and Colossians 2:12. This figure is showing a death to the old man of sin (Gal. 2:20) and a coming up out of the water of baptism to walk in newness of life (resurrection).

7. What washes away a person's sins, the blood of Jesus or the waters of baptism?

What does the Bible say? Jesus said that He shed His blood for the remission of sins (Mat. 26:28). We have redemption through His blood even the forgiveness of sins (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14); the blood of Christ cleanses us from all sin (1 John 1:7). Then, Revelation 1:5 says that the blood of Christ washes away our sins. To deny that the blood of Christ washes away sin is to deny what the Bible clearly teaches.

What does the Bible say? Peter, by inspiration, said that baptism is for the remission (or forgiveness) of our

sins (Acts 2:38). Ananias told Saul (who later became the apostle Paul and recounted by Paul) to arise and be baptized and wash away your sins (Acts 22:16). To deny that the baptism washes away sin is to deny what the Bible clearly teaches.

How do we harmonize this apparent conflict? We find that the blood of Christ was shed for every man (Heb. 2:9). Yet, Jesus teaches us that the majority of men will be lost (Mat. 7:13-14). If the blood of Christ washes away sin and it was shed for every man, then why is not every man saved? The answer is because they have not applied that blood to their sins. How do you teach that one applies the blood of Jesus to his sins? Do you teach that one must physically get some of the blood of Jesus and wash in His physical blood? (Yes I am being facetious). The way one applies the blood of Christ which washes away our sins is in the act of baptism. That is why the Scriptures speak of the blood of Christ washing away sins and baptism washing away sin. In baptism God applies the blood of Christ to our sins, and thus those sins are washed away.

Baptism is in reality nothing more than the proper response of an active faith to God (as mentioned earlier under question three). Thus, I could ask you the same question regarding belief. Which washes away a person's sin: the blood of Christ or faith?

Updated CD Study Aid

The 1988-2002 books, *Defender* issues of 1989-2001, and the *Hatcher/Schweitzer Exchange* (an exchange of letters between Michael Hatcher and a Lutheran “pastor,” Keith Schweitzer, on the subject of Total Hereditary Depravity and other matters) are available on computer disk in Adobe Acrobat Reader (PDF) format (making it useful for both Intel and Macintosh computers). The Acrobat Reader is also provided on the CD. The CD is completely indexed allowing searches of all the books at the same time (you can find every occurrence of a word or phrase such as “baptism for the remission of sins” in every book at the same time). The cost of the CD is only \$55 in which you receive all 15 books (less than \$5 per book), plus postage/handling fee of \$1.25. If you purchased a previous version of our CD, then check with us for an upgrade at a significant reduction in price upon the return of the CD. Take advantage of this great offer. Order from Bellview Church of Christ.

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MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR

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"I am set for the defense of the gospel"

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OUR SHINING LIGHT: REAL OR PRETENDED?

Tim Nichols

We live in an age of pretending. Those with products to sell use advertisers who compete with one another to see who can convince the public that they really *care*. The goal is often to produce the appearance of quality and concern more than it is to produce the substance of the same. Wise and enduring businesses work on the substance and, for the most part, let the appearance take care of itself. They promise only what they can deliver and they often try to deliver more than they promise. But wise and enduring businesses are becoming increasingly rare. They seem to be the exception to the rule which says "appear to care and the world will beat a path to your door." When such businesses are tested by time, however, they seem to rise like a star and fall like a rock while the wise and enduring businesses slowly grow and quietly prosper.

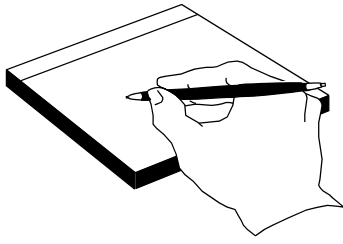
The same has been observed among churches of Christ. In the 1950s we were the fastest growing religious body in the U.S.A. Without slick advertising, flashy slogans, "church growth" consultants, and other such things, the church grew when the gospel captured the sincere hearts of men and women who were willing to simply teach the truth to others with genuine simplicity. In those days, it seems, the substance of the gospel, the reality of the truths of the Bible, and the distinctive doctrines of the New Testament were absorbed into the sincere hearts of people who truly loved God and, therefore, loved His Word. No attempt was made, generally, to seduce or trick people into *coming to church* or into being baptized. We openly told the world where we stood and invited them to actually repent and to really walk with us in the light of His Word. Many who were truly converted in those

days were first offended by what they heard. They only came around to the rigid demands of the gospel when they discovered that the truth, and the church that proclaimed it, were not prepared to budge.

But somewhere between that day and the present, the emphasis began to change. Individual Christians and, with them, churches began to look for ways to draw large numbers of people by almost deceptive means. This is not a judgment of men's hearts. I have actually attended *workshops* at which I have been instructed in the fine art of avoiding answering the honest questions of those we would teach. The idea seems to be that it would be better if people did not really know who we are until they are one of us. Proceeding from this premise, some brethren have attempted to appear to be what they perceived the world to want us to be. After using this procedure to waltz people into the churches, it is not possible to keep such faithless converts without continuing the dance. Consequently, the worst possible sins that can be committed in our pulpits (according to this approach to things) is to clearly preach the simple gospel of Jesus Christ, to name the sins that ought to be forsaken, to declare the whole counsel of God, and to tell our people what God requires. These things are considered *offensive* no matter how true they may be to the Word of God. Our brethren seem more likely to encourage the preacher to repent of teaching the unvarnished truth than they are to lovingly encourage unfaithful brethren to repent of their sins and return to the Lord. This process causes the church to cease being the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Tim. 3:15). More accurately,

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Notes From The Editor



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Does the Holy Spirit Lead Us Directly in Addition to Leading Us by His Word? (Rom. 8:14)

The doctrine that the Spirit directly leads man in addition to the guiding of the Scriptures is the direct product of the Calvinistic doctrine of irresistible grace. Steele and Thomas thus aver:

The **gospel invitation extends a call** to salvation to every one who hears its message... But this outward general call, which extends to the elect and non-elect alike, will not bring sinners to Christ. Why? Because men are by nature dead in sin and are under its power... Therefore, the **Holy Spirit**, in order to bring God's elect to salvation, extends to them **a special inward call** in addition to the outward call contained in the gospel message. Through this special call the Holy Spirit performs a work of grace within the sinner which inevitably brings him to faith in Christ. The inward change wrought in the elect sinner enables him to understand and believe spiritual truth... Thus the once dead sinner is drawn to Christ by the inward supernatural call of the Spirit who through regeneration makes him alive and creates within him faith and repentance (48-49).

M. B. Riddle adds to Lange's commentary on Rom. 8:14: "That this leading means a continued and special influence of the Divine Spirit, is obvious" (259). Lenski asserts: "From what our own spirit does and is to do the apostle advances to God's Spirit who enables our spirit to do the Spirit's will;... God's Spirit is leading us" (520).

Sadly, some of our own brethren are teaching the exact same doctrine. One illustration will suffice. Furman Kearley wrote:

It is the conclusion of this author that... the Spirit leads and aids the Christian in his efforts to righteousness. It is a further conclusion that gospel preachers and teachers have been driven to the extreme view that the Spirit leads only through the Word because of arguments in debates with religious groups which stress direct operation of the Holy Spirit... The fact that one does not know exactly how the Spirit might lead Christians internally, does not take away from the comforting thought that the Spirit does help (43).

With the understanding that we are not discussing the work that the Spirit does in the area of providence, this writer (i.e., M.H.) affirms that the only way the Spirit leads men (whether in conviction, conversion, sanctification, edification, et al.) today is by the means of His Word. This is not a discussion of the **fact** that the Spirit leads us, but a discussion of **the way** He leads us. All accept the fact that the Spirit leads us. When we discuss the way He leads us, we must conclude that He either leads us directly or indirectly (through a medium). Most of us correctly affirm that the Spirit leads us **indirectly** (through a medium) by means of the Scriptures only and **not directly**.

There has never been any question among Bible-believers that the Spirit does lead us through the Word of God. However, a few passages emphasizing this are appropriate. In John 14-16 Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to the apostles. Notice the work of the Spirit as revealed by Jesus: "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged" (John 16:8-11).

On the day of Pentecost the Spirit came upon the apostles (Acts 2:1-4) as Christ promised, in order to guide them into all truth, bring to their remembrance all that Jesus had said, and show them things to come (John 14:25-26; 16:12-13). He came upon the apostles to carry out His work of convicting or reproving the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. Notice **how** He accomplished this work. The apostles began to speak (Acts 2:4), and the people heard "the wonderful works of God" (v. 11). Peter said, "hearken to my words... hear these words" (vv. 14, 22). "Now **when they heard this**, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and

brethren, what shall we do?” (v. 37, emp. MH). By use of the **Word** the Spirit had convicted them of sin. Peter **said** to repent and be baptized for the remission of their sins, **teaching** them how to be righteous and prepared for the Judgment (Acts 2:38). “And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls” (vv. 40-41, emp. MH).

The Spirit did His work by the words that were spoken. Being led by the Word of God, the people were being led by the Spirit and became sons of God (Rom. 8:14). Then, as sons of God, they “continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine [the Word of God] and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42).

In Acts 7 Stephen addressed his hearers in the following words: “Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye” (Acts 7:51). How were they resisting the Spirit? By resisting the Word of God, they were resisting the Spirit, as their fathers had done. What had their fathers done? “Yet many years didst thou forbear them, and testifiedst against them by thy spirit in thy prophets: yet would they not give ear: therefore gavest thou them into the hand of the people of the lands” (Neh. 9:30). They would not hear the Word spoken by the prophets as revealed by the Spirit. The Spirit was working through the Word.

In Ephesians 3:1-5 the Spirit revealed the mystery of Christ to the holy apostles and prophets. Paul, one to whom the Spirit revealed that mystery, wrote so that, when the Ephesians read the letter, they would understand the knowledge which the Spirit was revealing. The Spirit was leading the Ephesians (and us) by the written Word. Paul wrote that “the Spirit speaketh expressly” (1 Tim. 4:1). The Spirit was speaking clearly—leading by means of the Word of God as written by Paul. In each of the letters to the seven churches of Asia (Rev. 2-3) it is stated, “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.” The Spirit was speaking and leading, but **how**? When they read what John wrote by inspiration, the Word of God, the Spirit was speaking. The Spirit was working—speaking—through the written Word.

It is obvious (and all agree) that the Spirit does lead us through the medium of the Word of God. However, is this the only way the Spirit leads men today? Does the Spirit also lead us directly? **Absolutely**

not! To affirm that the Spirit leads in some other way (i.e., other than indirectly by the Word of God) one must find some affirmation or example of such taking place in a non-miraculous way, of which there is none; therefore we conclude that such does not take place. Additionally, we have a direct statement informing us that the Spirit works through the Word. “And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God” (Eph. 6:17). Paul wrote that we are to “be filled with the Spirit” (Eph. 5:18). In the parallel passage Paul explains being “filled with the Spirit” as, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom” (Col. 3:16).

Consider the following comments from Whiteside on Romans 8:14:

Nothing is here said as to how the Spirit leads people; but as Paul is still developing his theme that the gospel is God’s power to save, it is certain that the Spirit leads through the power of the gospel. The gospel was revealed by the Spirit. In that revelation the Spirit tells us to follow his directions. But if the Spirit, independent of the gospel, leads people to become children of God, then the gospel is not God’s power to save. We are sure Paul did not make an assertion about the Holy Spirit that contradicted his theme and his argument (177-178).

Thus, when we show that the written Word of God is all-sufficient, we then realize there is no need for the Spirit to lead us in any way other than through the written Word. Paul writes, “All **scripture** is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3:16-17; emp. MH). The Scriptures find their origin in God (“holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,” 2 Pet. 1:21) and not in man. The purpose of the written Word is: (1) doctrine (teaching, that which one is taught); (2) reproof (establishing what is right or wrong upon the basis of the Bible); (3) correction (restoring to an upright state); and (4) instruction in righteousness (the whole of an individual’s training and education). The results that are attained by the proper use of the Scriptures are: (1) one becomes “a man of God”—the Spirit leads us through the Word to be sons of God (Rom. 8:14); (2) one is made perfect, complete, lacking nothing, spiritually mature; and (3) one is thoroughly (thoroughly) furnished to all good works—given everything he needs for accomplishing God’s will. This passage (i.e., 2 Tim. 3:16-17) alone shows

that we do not need a direct, immediate leading of the Spirit today; all we need in order to be sons of God is the Bible. Other passages support this fact.

John reveals unmistakably that the purpose of writing his gospel account is to produce belief in Jesus which will lead to life (abundant life now and eternal life later): “And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name” (John 20:30-31).

No one needs anything in addition to the written Word to come to belief and to have life. Peter tells us: “According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (2 Pet. 1:3-4).

God, through His Divine power, has given us His Word as revealed by the Spirit (John 14:25-26; 16:12-13). Through that Word He has given us **all** (not a few, some, many, or most) things that pertain to life and godliness. That includes everything we need to become Christians and live the Christian life which will lead us to Heaven. Through this Word we can: (1) escape the corruption that is in this world that comes through lust (1 John 2:15-17); (2) be partakers of God’s nature—be like our God; and (3) have an entrance into the everlasting kingdom (2 Pet. 1:11). If **by means of the Scriptures** the Holy Spirit produces these results, there is no need for a **direct leading of the Spirit**.

Finally, notice that John informs us that one purpose in writing was that we not sin: “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (1 John 2:1). The tense of the Greek verb, translated “sin,” connotes the idea of a single isolated act of sin (i.e., “that we sin not a single time”). (The Greek tense of sin is Second Aorist Active Subjunctive. The aorist primarily denotes punctiliar or point action, thus, that ye do not commit a sin—a point action or isolated act of sin.) If this were possible, how could it be accomplished? We can overcome temptation (thus avoiding sin) only by the written Word of God (cf. Mat. 4:1-11, the account of Jesus’ victory over temptation and sin by use of the written Word—“It is written”). John does give us the comforting thought that, when we commit an isolated act of sin, we have an

advocate—someone to plead our case—with the Father. However, the Scriptures give us everything we need to overcome sin within our lives. Thus, the written Word of God is all that one needs to become a Christian, to live the Christian life, to overcome sin within one’s life, and eventually to get to Heaven. Hence, the only way the Spirit leads man today is by the indirect medium of God’s Word.

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(Editor’s Note: This was part of a chapter I wrote for the 1996 Annual Denton Lectureship book “Studies in Romans” edited by Dub McClish (pp. 449-454). I would encourage all to buy each of the ADL books. They are well worth the money!)

It is sad that brethren Mac Deaver and Bob Berard have taken the position noted above. Although the position they hold is not technically Calvinistic it is closely related. It is actually more Wesleyanism than Calvinistic. According to ISBE, Wesley held that “sanctification is a subjective and inward change, a genuine renewal of an individual beginning in the new birth. The former [justification], properly understood, is a work of God accomplished through His Son, the latter [sanctification] a work of God accomplished through His Spirit” (4:329). Notice how the Deaver doctrine parallels Wesleyanism concerning this. In an article written by Berard, he wrote, “the Holy Spirit is the Person of the Godhead who personally imparts spiritual life in the heart of the person being baptized” (16). Brother Deaver wanted to be more specific so he adds this: “If the reader would require even more precision, it could be said that the Holy Spirit changes the heart during baptism (Titus 3:5) and then moves into the heart to take up His indwelling after the heart is cleansed (Gal. 4:6).” We wonder what the heart was prior to baptism: was it depraved as the Calvinist

teach? This also seems to be why they have now begun teaching that every Christian when he is baptized, is also baptized of the Holy Spirit (See the documentation of this in *Contending For The Faith*, Aug. 2002). What then does the Spirit do as He personally indwells the Christian? The Deaver's and Berard teach that He "personally helps the Christian...It is through this Helper that the Father and Son make their abode with and assist their chosen people to live the life God prescribes in His complete, infallible, and final revelation, the Bible" (16). According to their view (although they might not wish to state it), one cannot live the Christian life without the direct help of the Spirit. Thus, if a Christian sins, it is not his fault, the Spirit did not give him the help he needed. This false view destroys personal responsibility. It is my prayer that these men will return to faithfully teaching God's Word and leave this Wesleyanism doctrine where it belongs—with the denominational world. *MH*

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(Continued from Page 1)

since the church is the pillar and ground of the truth, the process causes the *church* to cease to be the church of Christ no matter what the sign may say.

Christians often seem to become confused about what they need to do and be to please God and convert sinners. God is watching and people are watching. Some are paying much more attention to what flawed human eyes are seeing than to what God sees with

flawless vision. These are more interested in appearing to be right and righteous than they are in being holy in the sight of God. Their actions are governed and directed by human approval rather than by divinely-revealed principles. They walk by sight in the purest sense rather than by faith. What the Bible teaches means less to them than what men think of them. Their religion is purely external. Their behavior is inconsistent with itself and incompatible with what they profess to believe. They behave and speak in one way when surrounded by one group of people, and in quite another way when surrounded by another.

With pasted-on smiles and honey-coated words they outwardly suggest that they have genuine love for their brethren. But the smiles and the words are performed in the hopes of producing some effect to follow. They are not done because of some divine principle that came before them. When push comes to shove, however, they are ready to shed such *love* as a filthy garment and abandon their relationships with the family of God at the drop of a hat because there was no commitment to the family or to the Head of the family behind the facade of smiles and words. When the smiles and words fail to produce the desired effect, they disappear.

Let us *get real* with ourselves, our neighbors, our brethren, and with God. We need to return to the humility that acknowledges that we are not wiser than God, to the trust that concedes that God's way is always the right way, to the reticence that refrains from judging what is not ours to judge, and to the confidence that God is able to direct our steps (collectively and individually) to where we need to go. Life is short and eternity is long. God is watching and so are men. Make up your mind whose approval you seek.

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Introductory Matters: In the July issue of *Defender* we began looking at some questions an Independent Baptist sent me (and several others). He had sent 23 questions in an email to me and to which I responded. These are the answers that I wrote to his questions. I encourage you to go back and read the introductory information from the July issue. This is the second installment of these questions and answers with his questions numbered and indented (otherwise without any editing) and my answers immediately following. I pray that this will be a profitable study to others.

Questions about The Church of Christ

Michael Hatcher

8. What significance if any did Alexander Campbell play in the "Lord's Church"? If he restored the church were there any people saved during the period before the church was restored?

Alexander Campbell called people to do only what God has authorized in the New Testament. With an understanding of the seed principle (which is that seed produces after its kind—Gen. 1; Gal. 6:7): if you plant God's Word in honest hearts, it will produce the same

thing it produced in the New Testament—Christians (nothing more and nothing less).

In talking about Campbell restoring the church, he did not do so if you mean that the church did not exist. Prior to Campbell there were congregations of the Lord's church. If you would like more information concerning this you can find such at <http://www.traces-of-the-kingdom.org> (although this site only deals with congregations in England). What Campbell did was not to start something but added to what already existed, but again, he simply used the seed principle. Additionally, Campbell was more well known than some of the others who were already involved in calling men to do only what God had authorized.

I would also add that for all the good that Campbell did, his conclusions about certain doctrines are wrong. My faith is not based upon what Campbell did or taught, but upon what the Bible teaches.

9. Do belief, repentance, and confession go together? If you do one aren't you doing them all?

While this question is partially answered under question number three (please refer to that answer), the answer to this one is no. Belief, repentance, and confession are different things. Please consider a couple of passages regarding these distinctions. John 12:42-43 states that many of the chief rulers believed on Jesus but would not confess Him (see Mat. 10:32-33 about those who will not confess Him) for fear of the Pharisees. Obviously belief and confession are not the same in this passage. In Acts 20:21 Paul says that he preached repentance toward God and faith in Christ. This shows that faith (belief) and repentance are two different actions. James 2 (especially verses 17-26) reveals that the demons believe (see verse 19), yet I doubt that you would say that the demons have repented or confessed. Thus James (by what I am assuming you would agree with) shows that belief is different from repentance and confession.

10. Will God hear the prayer of a sinner?

John 9:31 says: "Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth." This verse seems clear enough. However, to offset what is clearly stated, some argue that the man who spoke these words was not inspired. However, the situation was such that he was in an argument with the leaders of the Jews, and if he had stated something which was wrong, they would have noted it. Thus, the statement is correct. Also, he stated that "we know." How did they know? It was

because the Scriptures had revealed it. Notice a couple of passages from the Old Testament which show this principle true. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear *me*" (Psa. 66:18). "Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me" (Pro. 1:28). "The LORD *is* far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous" (Pro. 15:29). "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer *shall be* abomination" (Pro. 28:9). There are other passages, but these show God's attitude regarding those who are sinners.

We also learn this by hearing what the Scriptures teach as to whom God will hear. "For the eyes of the Lord *are* over the righteous, and his ears *are open* unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord *is* against them that do evil" (1 Pet. 3:12). "Confess *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (Jam. 5:16). One must find some passage which teaches that God hears the prayers of a sinner, which no one can find.

In answering this question, I am not dealing with a Christian who simply commits an act of sin. That person has the right to pray (being a child of God) and ask for forgiveness of his sins (1 John 1:9; Acts 8:22). However, understand that this person is not a *sinner*. He is not living a life of sin, his direction is that of righteousness, or as John puts it "walking in the light," yet while doing his best he commits an act of sin (1 John 1:7-10).

11. In Acts 9:15 Jesus refers to Paul as a chosen vessel, how can he be a chosen vessel if he was not saved on the road to Damascus?

Before answering your question, allow me to pose the question as to how Saul (Paul) could be saved while still in his sins? You are saying that he was saved on the road to Damascus, yet Ananias told him (after he was in Damascus) to arise and be baptized and wash away his sins (Acts 22:16). If he was saved on the road to Damascus, then what sins needed to be washed away. The fact that he needed his sins washed away proves that he was not saved on the road to Damascus.

Simply because one is a chosen vessel does not mean that he is saved. In fact, if you look at the verse, you see the purpose of Paul's choosing. God does not say that he was chosen for salvation; he was chosen to bear God's name to the Gentiles, before kings, and the children of Israel. It does not mention that he was

called to be saved, yet that is the position you are taking. He was called for the purpose of doing this function or deed. The same thing is true concerning Cyrus the Great. Isaiah prophecies that Cyrus would release the children of Israel to return home. In Isaiah 44:1-4, Isaiah calls Cyrus God's anointed (the LXX

uses the term *christ*) and says that God called him. Yet, I do not know of anyone who would argue that Cyrus was saved. God called him for a specific task, to allow the Israelites to return home. In the same way, God called Saul for the purpose of a specific task, bearing God's name to the Gentiles, kings, and the Israelites.

"REMINDE ME NOT TO BUY A CAR FROM THEM"

Tracy Dugger

One night I was driving down a populous road in Roanoke, Virginia. I stopped at the red light and noticed in the turn lane next to me a car with its hood up and flashers blinking. An older gentleman was looking under the hood. I rolled down my window and asked if I could be of any assistance. A woman stepped out of the car to respond to me, explaining how they had been sitting there for a while trying to start the engine. They also informed me that they were test driving this brand new car, fresh from the dealer. I then asked if they wanted a ride to the dealership. She explained that the dealer was the one sitting in the driver's seat attempting to start the car, but that he might need a ride. I laughed and jokingly remarked, "Remind me not to buy a car from them."

This episode reminded me of some Christians. Is it not sad to hear of a Christian living like the world? Just as the car episode would make me think twice about buying a new car from that dealership, Christians who do not live as they ought to can deter unbelievers from obeying God. Always remember, people are watching us as we try to be examples to the world. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Mat. 5:16). Let us be very cautious not to cause anyone in the world to cast stones at the church because of our conduct. Consider carefully Paul's words in Romans 2:23: "Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?"

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The 1988-2002 books, *Defender* issues of 1989-2001, and the *Hatcher/Schweitzer Exchange* (an exchange of letters between Michael Hatcher and a Lutheran "pastor," Keith Schweitzer, on the subject of Total Hereditary Depravity and other matters) are available on computer disk in Adobe Acrobat Reader (PDF) format (making it useful for both Intel and Macintosh computers). The Acrobat Reader is also provided on the CD. The CD is completely indexed allowing searches of all the books at the same time (you can find every occurrence of a word or phrase such as "baptism for the remission of sins" in every book at the same time). The cost of the CD is only \$55 in which you receive all 15 books (less than \$5 per book), plus postage/handling fee of \$1.25. If you purchased a previous version of our CD, then check with us for an upgrade at a significant reduction in price upon the return of the CD. Take advantage of this great offer. Order from Bellview Church of Christ.

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Verbal Inspiration or Piecemeal Redaction?

Darrell Broking

The Bible is the verbal plenary inspired Word of God. *Verbal* means "expressed in speech"; *plenary* means "full" or "complete." *Inspiration* as used in 2 Timothy 3:16 is from a Greek word meaning "God breathed." In order to understand the process of inspiration, one must first understand that the Holy Spirit is a person of Godhood. This is absolutely essential to understanding the act of inspiration itself. The Holy Spirit, a divine Person, worked with inspired men as their infallible teacher (John 14:26; Luke 12:12). As their teacher, the Holy Spirit insured that inspired men either taught or wrote infallible and inerrant information. Therefore, when inspiration is discussed one should understand that inspiration was "God's means of accurately communicating his will to mortal man" (Turner 7). Inspired men were "directly under divine influence" (Geisler and Nix 34). The Bible is the product of inspiration, and as such it is the very Word of God!

That the Bible is verbally inspired is seen in Peter's words:

We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost (2 Pet. 1:19-21).

Scripture is not the product of the inspired writers' private interpretations. If the Holy Spirit simply inspired the writers' thoughts, then the writers of the

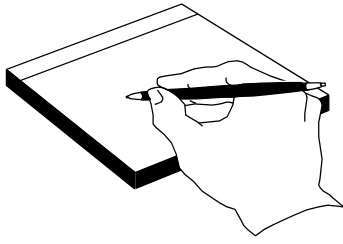
Bible would have written their interpretations of those thoughts. Peter clearly impresses upon our minds the fact that prophecy did not come from man's interpretation but by the Holy Ghost. Paul confirms this truth, and is very specific in that he said, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim. 3:16). In another place Paul wrote, "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God" (1 Cor. 2:12). The kind of knowledge received and distributed by inspired men is absolute, infallible, and it is adaptable to man as he is.¹

It is sometimes thought that the Holy Spirit used inspired men to write the Bible like a typist uses a keyboard. However, upon examination of the Bible it is evident that the books of the Bible retain the style of the writers themselves. John is the only writer of the New Testament to refer to the second person of Godhood as the Word (John 1:1, 14; 1 John 1:1; Rev. 19:13). Luke, the physician, uses terms that are characteristic of a physician. For example, in Luke's record, Peter's mother-in-law was suffering from a "high fever" (Luke 4:38). Other inspired writers referencing this account just mention a "fever." Remember that the Holy Spirit came to these men as their infallible teacher. Accordingly, the *Mechanical Dictation* theory of inspiration is not a biblical view of inspiration.

Were inspired men ever directed by the Holy Spirit to use "source" material in their writings? Daniel 4 appears to be a record written by Nebuchadnezzar and used by Daniel in his scroll. If this method were used, then the Holy Spirit instructed Daniel to obtain the

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Notes From The Editor



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The Church

God established three divine institutions: the home, the government, and the church. While the first two listed come before the church in matter of time, the church was purposed before the creation of this world. Inspiration, by Paul's hand, wrote, "And to make all *men* see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly *places* might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. 3:9-11). Some incorrectly say that this passage teaches that the church is to make known God's wisdom (that is taught in other passages), that is not what Paul is saying here. Paul is saying that the wisdom of God is the church. God, before the creation, in His wisdom, planned the church and that the Logos (the Word) would be incarnated and die upon the cross to the salvation of those who would obey Him and that the church would house those saved. Thus, when we consider the church, we are considering the very wisdom of God.

This church is known by differing terms. Some of those terms are: church of God (1 Cor. 1:2; Acts 20:28), kingdom of God (John 3:3, 5), kingdom of Christ (John 18:36; Col. 1:13), kingdom of heaven (Mat. 16:19), body of Christ (Eph. 4:12), the bride of Christ (Eph. 5), church of the firstborn (Heb. 12:23), and certainly we would also recognize church of Christ (Rom. 16:16). All these terms refer to that one divine institution which was in the mind of God before creation. Since this divine institution belongs to Christ, any term/phrase which signifies that the church (or any of its other terms) belongs to Him is certainly a term

which would be acceptable to God. However, terms/phrases which have nothing to do with Christ or call an institution by someone else's name cannot be acceptable to God.

Christ is the one who built the church. As we considered previously, God planned the church prior to the creation, He then began working everything together for the perfect time to send His Son. "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made [born] of a woman, made [born] under the law" (Gal. 4:4). He came for the purpose of shedding His blood as a propitiation for our sins (1 John 2:2). Even though He was put to death by wicked hands (Acts 2:23), the pangs of death could not hold Him. The hadean realm could not prevent Him from establishing that divine institution which is God's eternal purpose. He was raised from the dead proving Himself to be the Son of (Son of indicates one who has the nature of) God (Rom. 1:4). Upon this bedrock that He is the Son of God (God manifest in the flesh; Mat. 1:23; 1 Tim. 3:16) he built His church. "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Mat. 16:18).

The Scriptures reveal there is but one church. In the previous passage Jesus said "I will build my church." It is very revealing that our Lord used the singular and not the plural: church, not churches. He came with the intention of building that one divine institution which God planned before creation. He never came with an intention of setting up several differing institutions all with conflicting doctrines and practices. He established one and only one. Paul states, "*There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling*" (Eph. 4:4). Previously he had identified what that one body is by saying that God gave Christ to be the "head over all *things* to the church, which is his body" (Eph. 1:22-23). Since there is only one body and that body is the church, then there is only one church. Jesus taught that marriage was to be a monogamous relationship (one man and one woman married for life). With this in mind, we then consider that Paul also likens the relationship of Christ to the church with the marriage relationship. The church is the bride of Christ (Eph. 5:22-33). If it is sinful for one man to have more than one wife, the it would be wrong for Jesus to have many brides (churches)—He only has one. However, when we look around we see many *churches*. How are we to understand such in light of God's Word? Christ built

(established, set up) just one church. All the other *churches* were not built by Christ and are in competition with the one He set up. Ultimately, they are the servants of Satan to prevent man from hearing the Truth and obeying it. One would have the right to ask which one of the many which we see was set up by Christ? The answer to that question is found in examining the identifying marks which God revealed in the Bible concerning that one church. This would include such things as the terms of entrance, the five items prescribed for man through which we worship God, the organization of the local congregations, the time and place of origin, along with many other such doctrines.

Realizing we have such a divine institution as the church, we should immediately recognize its importance. We should never denigrate it but hold it in high esteem. We must never try to change or alter the church as God established it. We should also realize that when Christ returns the second time to judge the world, He will save His church. "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body" (Eph. 5:23). *MH*

(Continued from Page 1)

document and record it into his work. Other possible examples of inspired men using source material are Joshua 10:13; Acts 17:28; Jude 14; and Luke 1:1-4 (Geisler and Nix 56). In each respective case the record is inspired because the Holy Spirit was instructing these inspired writers and developing the end product. Let it be understood that examples like those noted above are a very rare exception and not the rule. Furthermore, each of the aforementioned examples can be explained without assuming that the Spirit instructed each of the above writers to use a particular source. The Holy Spirit is the ultimate source! It is dangerous and damning to assume that the Bible is the result of piecemeal editing and endless alleged sources.

David said, "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word *was* in my tongue" (2 Sam. 23:2). The Lord put His words into Jeremiah's mouth (Jer. 1:9). "The word of the LORD came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest" (Eze. 1:3). Time and time again inspired men expressed the fact that they were merely serving as the voice of the Lord. But alas, the day dawned when men decided that they were smarter than the concept of a supreme, sovereign God. Over a century ago it was observed that "It has become the fashion in certain quarters, on every imaginable pretext, to call in ques-

tion the credibility of the Bible. It seems to be the taste of the age to invent hazy difficulties and dim objections to its statements. Inspiration, under a miserable attempt to explain it, is openly explained away" (Burgon 7). Biased opinions of yesterday's elite were scattered like seed into the wind. Today, the crop of modernism is being reaped. Calling the credibility of the Bible and its inspiration into question is no longer the "taste of the age," but rather it is the main course of alleged scholarship.

Anti-inspirationalists refuse to accept the overwhelming evidence for the Bible's inspiration. Was Jesus simply a Jew with a good working knowledge of the Old Testament and so live as to mold His life around its prophecies concerning the coming of the Christ? If so, how did He mold His life around Micah 5:2? The Septuagint was written about 250-150 B.C. proving that all of the prophecies about Christ were written long before the first century. Therefore, the probability of one man fulfilling just 48 of the more than 300 hundred prophecies about Christ is 1 in 10 to the 157th power. Some of these prophecies include Genesis 3:15, Isaiah 7:14 and Zechariah 12:10. The probability of one man fulfilling just 8 of these prophecies is 1 in 10 to the 17th power, or 100,000,000,000,000,000. 10 to the 17th power silver dollars would cover the state of Texas 2 feet deep. The chance of one man fulfilling eight of these prophecies would be the same as marking one of those silver dollars, mixing it into the pile, and sending a blindfolded man into Texas to find the marked dollar (Stoner and Newman 106-112)! The only way this can be explained is that God inspired the Bible; therefore, the biblical record is infallible! This is the case because "holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. 1:21).

Sadly, today, some learned brethren and Bible professors feel the pressures of alleged scholarship. Maybe the desire is to rub shoulders with the elite of alleged scholarship? Maybe they desire to be recognized as "scholars" of the biblical text? Maybe the impetus is to be accepted by the juries of the processional journals, and to be published? Maybe the cause is simply ignorance of biblical truth? While it is impossible to look into one's heart and ascertain exactly why he does what he does, it is possible to look at his fruit. The very idea that Matthew and Luke copied from Mark, Q, and other sources, while under the direction of the Holy Spirit is an ungodly compromise! It is the meshing together of a naturalistic, anti-inspirational

theory with the biblical doctrine of inspiration. It is an unscriptural compromise, which is as appalling to those who love the truth as Theistic Evolution. Biblical writers were not on the same level as newspaper reporters and research investigators. The Bible is the verbal, plenary, inspired Word of God.

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End Note

¹God's Word as it is, is adaptable to man as he is. Men do not need direct help from the Holy Spirit to understand the Bible. Men need to read and study the Bible to understand its soul-saving message (Eph. 3:4; 2 Tim. 2:15). Those who claim that the Holy Spirit must help alien sinners and/or Christians to understand the Bible, claim more that the Bible teaches (2 Tim. 3:17).

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Introductory Matters: In the July issue of *Defender* we began looking at some questions an Independent Baptist sent me (and several others). He had sent 23 questions in an email to me and to which I responded. These are the answers that I wrote to his questions. I encourage you to go back and read the introductory information from the July issue. This is the second installment of these questions and answers with his questions numbered and indented (otherwise without any editing) and my answers immediately following. I pray that this will be a profitable study to others.

Questions about The Church of Christ

Michael Hatcher

12. In Acts 10:47 Peter says "*Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?*" The verse says that they have the Holy Ghost but they have not been baptized, how can an unsaved person have the Holy Ghost?

You must consider the purpose of their receiving the Holy Spirit and what the Holy Spirit did in this instance. As you read Acts 10, you see the Holy Spirit being poured out on the Gentiles in fulfillment of Joel 2:28-32. In connection with Joel's prophecy of the Holy Spirit being poured out, there would also be salvation being available (v. 32). As one considers the Gentiles and the Holy Spirit being poured out on them in Acts 10, the purpose of it is seen beginning with the response the Jews made regarding this event—it produced amazement. Why were they amazed? Acts 11 shows us that the Jews did not consider the Gentiles worthy of having the gospel preached to them (as is seen in the Jews contending with Peter when he returned from Cornelius' house). How were the Jews to be convinced that the Gentiles were also to have the gospel preached to them? The answer is the Holy Spirit being poured out upon the Gentiles. Peter, in relaying the events to the Jews, was able to ask the Jews: "Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as *he did* unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?" (11:17). This

proved to the Jews that the gospel was to go to the Gentiles as well as the Jews. "When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life" (11:18). This is the purpose of the Holy Spirit being poured out on the Gentiles in Acts 10, it was not to save them or show they were saved. Notice also the situation concerning Cornelius and what he was told by God. The angel told him to send for Peter who would tell him what he needed to do (10:6). Why did God tell him this if he did not need to do anything? As Peter rehearses the events with the Jews, he says that Cornelius was to send for him because he would "tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved" (11:14). Why did he not say that he would be saved by the Holy Spirit coming upon them? They would be saved by doing what Peter told him to do. What did Peter tell them to do? He commanded them to be baptized (10:48), which is what they had to do to be saved.

13. What role does the Holy Spirit play in salvation? Does the Holy Spirit have a direct role in salvation?

The Holy Spirit plays the same role today as He always has regarding the salvation process. He is the Revealer of God's Will to man. He does this by means of words. These words were first spoken by the apostles (and holy prophets) by the inspiration of the Spirit; then they were written down (again by the inspiration of the Spirit). We now have those written

words to study so that, when we read them, the Holy Spirit is convicting us of sin, converting us to Christ, and sanctifying us.

If by *direct* role you mean that the Holy Spirit acts directly upon the sinner's heart, doing something for that sinner without any medium, then no, the Spirit does not have a direct role in salvation. However, if by *direct* role you mean that He acted directly in the salvation process, then yes—by revealing the Will of the Father.

Now, let me establish by the Scriptures what I have stated above (the only way the Spirit leads men today, whether in conviction, conversion, or sanctification, is by means of the Word of God). Again, this is not a discussion as to the fact that the Spirit saves us, but the way or manner in which He saves us. Jesus promised to send the Spirit to the apostles (John 14-16) for the purpose of convicting the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:8-11). How was the Spirit going to convict the world: directly or indirectly (through a medium)? When the Spirit came to the apostles (Acts 2:1-4), the Spirit was guiding them into all truth (John 14:25-26; 16:12-13). The Spirit then used words (the medium) to convict the Jews of their sin and show them how to be in a right state with God. Notice when the apostles began to speak (Acts 2:4) to the people “the wonderful works of God” (11), Peter said, “hearken to my words... hear these words” (14, 22). “Now **when they heard this**, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (37). The Spirit had used the words (given to the apostles and their speaking it to the Jews) to convict them of sin. They had the desire to be saved. The Spirit by inspiration informs them how to be saved by Peter's response in verse 38. Then notice: “And with many other **words** did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly **received his word** were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls” (40-41). Here the

Spirit saved them by means of the Word spoken by the apostles.

Paul teaches that the Spirit revealed the mystery of Christ to the apostles and holy prophets (Eph. 3:1-5). One of those to whom the Spirit revealed that mystery was Paul. He said he wrote that mystery so, when the Ephesians (and we today) read what he wrote by inspiration of the Spirit, they would understand the knowledge which the Spirit was revealing. There are other passages which show that the Spirit uses the medium of the Word of God to convict, convert, and sanctify man; however these are sufficient.

To affirm that the Spirit saves (convicts, converts, or sanctifies) in some way other than through the Word of God, one must find some passage which shows that He does so in another way (not simply the fact that He does it). There is no record of such. Additionally, we have the specific statement that the sword of the Spirit is the Word of God (Eph. 6:17): the way the Spirit works is through the Word.

One additional thought is that if we need the Spirit to work directly (separate and apart from) the Word of God, then the Word of God is not sufficient in that area. The Scriptures affirm that they are sufficient to lead a man to heaven (convict, convert, and sanctify). Study 2 Timothy 3:16-17; John 20:30-31; 2 Peter 1:3-4; and 1 John 2:1.

One last thought is that, when we stand before God in judgment to be judged in righteousness by Jesus Christ (Acts 17:31), we will be judged by what we have done in this life (2 Cor. 5:10; Rev. 20:12). If we are saved (convicted of sin, converted, and sanctified) by a direct operation of the Spirit upon our heart, then, when we stand before God in that judgment, we would have the right to say that we are not being judged by what we have done but by what Spirit has done directly to our hearts. If we are lost, it is not because of what we individually did (as per the Scriptures) but because the Spirit did not do His work in saving us (in a direct manner).

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“STUDIES IN MARK”

SUNDAY NOVEMBER 10

9:00 AM	Lester Kamp	The Gospel Account of Mark—An Introduction
10:00 AM	Dub McClish	Baptism and Salvation
12:00 PM	LUNCH BREAK	
2:00 PM	Lynn Blair	Jesus Teaches on Divorce Receives Children, Warns of Wealth (10:1-31)
3:00 PM	Bryan Braswell	Jesus Teaches in Parables and Rebukes the Storm (4:1-41)
4:00 PM	Joseph Meador	Difficult Passages: Why did Jesus forbid announcement of His identity and/or His miracles (1:32; 3:12; 5:43; 7:36; 8:30; et al)? Why could the apostles not cast out demons on one occasion (3:14-15; 9:18, 28-29)? What constituted blasphemy against the Holy Spirit and is it possible to do so today (3:28-30)? Did Jesus intentionally withhold Truth from some by speaking in parables and if so why (4:10-12, 33-34)?
5:00 PM	DINNER BREAK	
7:00 PM	Gary Summers	Jesus Heals Preaches, and Calls Levi (2:1-28)
8:00 PM	David B. Watson	Jesus Delivered to Pilate, Crucified Buried (15:1-17)

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 11

9:00 AM	Jerry Murrell	Jesus Is Transfigured Identifies Elijah, Heals a Possessed Boy (9:1-50)
10:00 AM	Michael Shepherd	Jesus Answers Questions from Enemies Warns About Scribes (12:1-44)
11:00 AM	Don Tarbet	Answering False Doctrines: Were/Are all to be baptized in the Holy Spirit (1:8)? Is it permissible to violate God's law in cases of dire need (2:25-26)? Did Jesus desire to conceal His mighty works and His Sonship constitute denial by Him of His Deity (1:32; 3:12; 5:43; 7:36; 8:30; et al)? Since nothing one eats or drinks defiles is drinking alcoholic beverages permitted (7:15)?
12:00 PM	LUNCH BREAK	
2:00 PM	Randy Mabe	Jesus Performs More Miracles, Teaches, Is Called The Christ (8:1-38)
3:00 PM	DISCUSSION FORUM	
	David P. Brown	Is Baptism in the Holy Spirit a Part of God's Plan of Salvation for All Men (1:8)?
3:45 PM	David P. Brown	Questions from the floor on Discussion Forum topic
5:00 PM	DINNER BREAK	
7:00 PM	Kenneth Gossett	Jesus' Baptism, Temptations, Early Preaching, and Miracles (1:1-45)
8:00 PM	Marvin Weir	Jesus Foretells His Death and Resurrection Heals Bartimaeus (10:32-52)

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 12

9:00 AM	Michael Hatcher	The Twelve Sent Forth John Is Beheaded (6:1-29)
10:00 AM	Ted Clarke	Answering False Doctrines: Are baby blessings' authorized in our worship assemblies (10:13-16)? Did Jesus deny that He was good" (10:18)? Does Jesus teaching on exercising authority apply to elderships (10:42-44)? Does Jesus cleansing the temple apply to selling such things as tapes and books on church property (11:15-17)?
11:00 AM	Garland Elkins	Answering False Doctrines: Are there "signs" by which we can know the time of Jesus return (13:14-27)? Does the "travail" and "tribulation" refer to a "rapture" period (13:8, 19, 24)? Does the <i>Son of man coming in clouds with great power and glory</i> refer to the Second Coming (13:24-26)? Does the promise that "these signs shall accompany them that believe" apply to all believers until the end of time (1:17)?
12:00 PM	LUNCH BREAK	
2:00 PM	Robert Taylor, Jr.	Difficult Passages: To what does <i>the coming of the Son of man</i> refer (13:26)? How

many times was Jesus anointed at Bethany (14:3-9; cf. Mat 26:6-13; Luke 7:36-50; John 11:2; 12:1-3)? Did Simon or Jesus bear His cross (15:21; John 19:17)? Who are "them that believe" (16:17-18)?

3:00 PM	DISCUSSION FORUM	
	B. J. Clarke	Does Mark 16:9-20 Belong In the Bible?
3:45 PM	B. J. Clarke	Questions from the floor on Discussion Forum topic
5:00 PM	DINNER BREAK	
7:00 PM	Ronnie Hayes	Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand and Walks on the Water (6:30-56)
8:00 PM	Curtis A Gates	The Destruction of Jerusalem and Jesus Second Coming (13:1-37)

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 13

9:00 AM	Jesse Whitlock	Jesus Triumphant Enters Jerusalem, Cleanses the Temple (11:1-33)
10:00 AM	Gene Burgett	Judas Falls, Jesus Identifies Him and Institutes His Supper (14:1-31)
11:00 AM	Jason Roberts	Jesus Prayers Arrest, First Trial, and Peters Denial (14:32-72)
12:00 PM	LUNCH BREAK	
2:00 PM	Tom Bright	Difficult Passages: When Jesus "blessed" before breaking the bread what did He do (6:41; 14:22 cp 8:6-7; 14:23; Luke 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:23-25)? Why was the vision of the blind man not restored completely at Jesus' first touch (8:22-25)? How many blind men did Jesus heal at Jericho and were at the entrance or the exit of the city (10:46-52; Mat. 20:29-34; Luke 18:35-41)? On how many animals did Jesus ride into Jerusalem (11:17; Mat. 21:1-7; Luke 19:29-34; Zec. 9:9)?
3:00 PM	DISCUSSION FORUM	
	Bobby Liddell	The Kingdom of God Versus the Community Church Movement (1:14-15; 9:1; 14:25; et al.)
3:45 PM	Bobby Liddell	Questions from the floor on Discussion Forum topic
5:00 PM	DINNER BREAK	
7:00 PM	Tracy Dugger	Demon Possession in the Scriptures
8:00 PM	Tom Wacaster	Answering False Doctrines: Was Jesus not powerful enough to heal the blind man at the first attempt (8:22-25)? If one has sufficient faith today can he work miracles (9:23; 11:23)? Should we not oppose and expose the errors of those who are doing some "good works" (9:38-41)? Will some be saved outside the Lords church (9:38-40)?

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 14

9:00 AM	Dave Rogers	Jesus Heals the Gerasene, the Woman and Raises Jairus's Daughter (5:1-43)
10:00 AM	James Rogers	Difficult Passages: Why did the demons want to inhabit pigs and what became of the demons when the pigs drowned (5:11-13)? Why did Jesus require faith on the part of some but not all whom He healed (5:34, 38-42; 6:5-6; 10:52; et al.)? Why could Jesus do no signs among His acquaintances (6:5)? What role did anointing with oil play in healing the sick (6:13; cf. Jam 15:14-15)?
11:00 AM	Richard Massey	Jesus Rebukes the Jews Goes to Phoenicia Heals a Deaf mute (7 1-37)
12:00 PM	LUNCH BREAK	
2:00 PM	Tim Ayers	Jesus Does More Miracles Preaches Appoints Apostles (3:1-35)
3:00 PM	DISCUSSION FORUM	
	Tim Ayers	The Dangers Involved in Pornography (7:20-23)
3:45 PM	Tim Ayers	Questions from the floor on Discussion Forum topic
5:00 PM	DINNER BREAK	
7:00 PM	H. D. Simmons	Jesus Arises, Appears to Various Ones Issues the Commission (16:1-20)
8:00 PM	Darrell Conley	The Gospel Account of Mark—A Summary

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Do We Know or Are We Just Uncaring?

Lynn Blair

It is scary what some people do not know about the Bible. Even more scary is what some that profess to be members of the Lord's church do not know about the Bible.

For instance, I fear many times that I am using the same Scriptures so often that everybody will grow weary of them. Not that they are not still powerful and needed, but that everybody will know those same Scriptures already. Ah, but then I am asked a question by somebody that hears that teaching every week. Did I not cover that in last week's lesson? Have you not been listening? I do not ask these questions out loud, but sometimes I wonder. The truth is that our people do not always catch everything that is said. We (you **and** me) need repetition. The apostle Peter wished to stir up the brethren's pure mind by way of **remembrance** (2 Pet. 3:1). We should strive to do the same. We cannot be ready to give an answer (1 Pet. 3:15) if we do not remember.

If we expect to remember something, we need to become more familiar with it. It is that way with hobbies, jobs, or anything else. It is certainly that way with a knowledge of the Scriptures. The person that does not study at home will not have a good working knowledge of the Scriptures. The person who does not study at home will also not be pleasing to God (Acts 17:11; 2 Tim. 2:15). No matter how good, interesting, and full of Scripture the sermon may be, it is still the duty of the listener to check and see if those things are so (Acts 17:11).

Why are we not converting more? Could it be because we are not studying the Scriptures ourselves and therefore not teaching anyone else? Could it be that we are not living an example in which we would be comfortable trying to talk to someone about their soul? **If** we know the truth and live it in our everyday lives, then why are we not teaching more??? Good question!

207 Church St; Valley View, TX 76272

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The 1988-2002 books, *Defender* issues of 1989-2001, and the *Hatcher/Schweitzer Exchange* (an exchange of letters between Michael Hatcher and a Lutheran "pastor," Keith Schweitzer, on the subject of Total Hereditary Depravity and other matters) are available on computer disk in Adobe Acrobat Reader (PDF) format (making it useful for both Intel and Macintosh computers). The Acrobat Reader is also provided on the CD. The CD is completely indexed allowing searches of all the books at the same time (you can find every occurrence of a word or phrase such as "baptism for the remission of sins" in every book at the same time). The cost of the CD is only \$55 in which you receive all 15 books (less than \$5 per book), plus postage/handling fee of \$1.25. If you purchased a previous version of our CD, then check with us for an upgrade at a significant reduction in price upon the return of the CD. Take advantage of this great offer. Order from Bellview Church of Christ.

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Synoptic Problem

Darrell Broking

Introduction

Higher criticism is peaking as a threat against today's youth. One can hardly do any kind of higher learning, at either a private institution operated by "Christians," or at a state school, without various levels of indoctrination in destructive criticism. Many churches of Christ are lagging in their ability to properly train their children in the area of destructive criticism, and how to answer this dangerous teaching. It is past time for Bible class teachers, elders, and preachers to take a stand against the ugly doctrine of higher criticism. Is there really a problem with destructive criticism in the church? What is the synoptic problem? Are the two and four source theories helpful to the cause of Christ? Is it acceptable to teach the two and four source theories, as long as the teacher believes that the Holy Spirit used the alleged sources as part of the inspiration process? These important questions deserve an honest answer.

Identifying a Problem

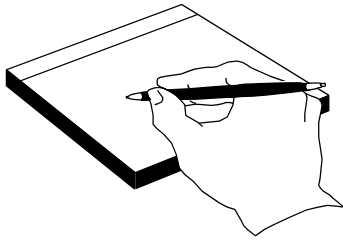
During gospel meetings I try to discuss the errors of destructive criticism, especially those relating to the two source and four source theories of the synoptics, and the influence destructive criticism is having on today's youth. Recently, while conducting a gospel meeting for a small church in the Appalachians, I presented some material on the dangers of destructive criticism. After the meeting a sister told me that her son was attending a small state college in Virginia, and that he had been taught the things that I had just preached against. A few years ago while knocking doors in a remote and isolated area in North Carolina, I was excited when one woman said that she would like to

study the Bible with me. To begin our study I had to convince this woman that the Bible is the very Word of God, not the product of a long drawn out editing process. Apparently, this woman had attended a state college where she learned that the Bible is the least reliable of all ancient books. Not long ago I was teaching a teen Bible class at the church where I preach. One of the young women in the class at that time was majoring in journalism at one of the local colleges. On one occasion she raised her hand and asked me what I knew about the gospel of Thomas.¹ Apparently, during a class session one of her instructors was discussing the "Q" theory, and the place of the gospel of Thomas.

When a problem like destructive criticism shows up in isolated regions of the country, one can be assured that society is being saturated with it. No wonder the church is losing so many of its youth. Last semester I took a course on the historical Jesus. The course was really a study of gospel criticism. The professor began his first lecture by telling the class that he was about to teach material that is taught to all seminary students, and believed by the majority of today's preachers across denominational lines. The professor then told the class that several of the professors from a local Christian Church seminary were attending his class as a refresher course. Rest assured that the majority of the so-called Christian Universities serving churches of Christ are teaching destructive criticism in their Bible classes. There are preachers in the church of Christ that preach every Sunday,

(Continued on Page 3)

Notes From The Editor



**Michael
Hatcher**

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Evangelism

God instituted three great institutions: government, the home, and the church. Concerning that great institution the church, it was purposed prior to the creation of the world (Eph. 3:8-12). God had an eternal plan to save sinful mankind by Christ and those saved would be added to the Lord's church (Eph. 1:4-5; 1 Pet. 1:18-20; Acts 2:41, 47). The Old Testament prophets foretold of the coming of the Messiah and His church. Then "when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law" (Gal. 4:4). During His life, Christ promised to build His church and even death and the hades realm could not prevent its establishment (Mat. 16:18). After Jesus was put to death (as planned and prophesied by God), He ascended up to heaven and we see the establishment of that church of Christ (Acts 2).

Prior to ascending back into heaven, Jesus gave (as some have called it) the "marching orders of the church." We generally call it the great commission and is recorded for us in Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-16, Luke 24:46-47, John 20:21-23, and Acts 1:8. In this commission, Jesus instructs His apostles to go into all the world preaching the gospel to every creature. He also informs them what it takes to be saved, have the remission of one's sins, or become a Christian (believe, repent, be baptized). While Christ specifically spoke this commission to the apostles, He also told them to instruct everyone to do all that He had commanded them (Mat. 28:20). One of the commands, in fact the one He had just given them, was to go preach the gospel to the world. Thus, they would be teaching every Christian that they individually have the obligation (responsibility) to preach to the lost.

Jesus gave us the proper example of seeking the lost as He passed through Jericho. Zacchaeus had a

desire to see Jesus, so he ran and climbed into a Sycamore tree. Jesus stopped and told him that He was going to go to his house. While Jesus is there, Zacchaeus repents and promises to restore anything taken unjustly. Jesus makes the statement, "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). Jesus gives a purpose statement concerning His coming: seek and save the lost. Since Jesus is our perfect example, then should our purpose also be to seek and save the lost?

After receiving such a great commission, the apostles took that responsibility seriously. They were constantly teaching God's Word to any they would come across. "And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ" (Acts 5:42). Likewise, the early church took this obligation as an essential part of their Christian living. When the persecution arose after Stephen's martyr, Christians were scattered from Jerusalem, but "they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word" (Acts 8:4). Within approximately thirty years after the Lord gives this commission to the apostles; Paul could write that every person had heard the Word of God. "But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world" (Rom. 10:18). "If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and *be* not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, *and* which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister" (Col. 1:23). The key to accomplishing this great task was that every Christian considered it his personal duty to teach others. They, therefore, went out looking for opportunities and making opportunities to preach the gospel to others.

Paul is another great example of teaching others. God recorded three missionary journeys of Paul for us to read about. While the first one began by the Holy Spirit separating Paul and Barnabas for this work, they did not loose their free moral agency. They still had the choice to go or not. Because of their great desire to save others, they went. Paul speaks of his desire to save the Jews particularly when he writes, "For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh" (Rom. 9:3).

Brethren, we need to focus our lives to evangelizing the world. No one else is going to preach the gospel to the lost for us. Paul said, "We persuade men" (2 Cor. 5:11). We are the ones who must do it. God will not do it, angels will not, Jesus will not, the Spirit will

not, denominations will not (they will teach damning error hindering the gospel). If we do not do it, it will not get done. Conservative congregations have seen the need to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3). While not disparaging our need to do this, we must likewise get out and preach to the lost. Paul is a great example of doing both of these important works. He was a great defender of the faith against all attacks, yet he constantly proclaimed God’s message to all he could. Let us re-energize and re-focus on our need to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.

MH

(Continued from Page 1)

and at the same time they do not believe that the New Testament is the inerrant, inspired Word of God.

What is the Synoptic Problem?

Nineteenth century critics began analyzing the synoptic gospels and noticed that they are similar in many regards. The synoptics present similar outlines of Jesus’ ministry, they contain many of the same stories, and they even use the same wording in some places. There are also many peculiarities between the synoptics. Matthew and Luke record accounts of Jesus’ birth, but Mark does not. The birth narratives in Matthew and Luke differ in many regards. As these kinds of things were analyzed, critics began to ask: “What is the literary relationship among the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke?” (Tatum 40). These nineteenth century enlightened ones were too smart to believe in the Bible doctrine of inspiration, so what they really began to ask is, where did the gospel writers get their material? Did they copy from each other, and from other sources? They were no longer satisfied with the understanding that the Holy Spirit is the source behind the entire Bible. In 1863, H. J. Holtzmann presented his “two-document hypothesis” to explain the literary relationship between Matthew, Mark, and Luke. As this theory evolved, it asserted that since Mark is brief it was written before Matthew and Luke. The authors of Matthew and Luke copied from Mark and added the birth narratives, various teachings within the accounts, and then the resurrection accounts.² It also alleges that Matthew and Luke copied from another source, which is now lost and can only be inferred through literary analysis of the synoptics. This hypothetical source is called “Q” for Quelle, or source in German.³

A British scholar, B. H. Streeter, developed the four-document theory in 1924, to answer some of the problems liberal scholarship saw within the two-document theory. It is alleged that Mark and Q do not account for all of the material contained in Matthew and Luke. When Matthew deviates from Mark and Q, then it is alleged that he copied from another proto-gospel identified by liberal scholarship by the letter “M.” Likewise, when Luke deviates from Mark and Q, then it is alleged that the writer or writers of Luke copied from another proto-gospel identified by the letter “L.” Hence, the basis of the synoptic gospels is: “Mark, Q, M, and L” (Tatum 43).

Liberal scholarship also alleges that copying and editing a signs gospel, which was lost in antiquity, produced John. It is amazing that thousands of fragments of copies of the New Testament have been preserved and are available for study today, but no one has a copy of the infamous “Q,” “M,” “L,” or the “Signs” proto-gospels! The early Church Fathers, the Apologists, and others who should have known of the existence of these alleged sources, are silent about these “pericope collections.” In fact, many of the early saints died defending the inspired Word of God.⁴ It is incredible to believe that early Christian martyrs died defending copies of collections of sayings, that may or may not contain Jesus’ own words. Who can believe such a thing?

Are the Two and Four-Document Theories Helpful to the Cause of Christ?

A brother once wrote the following about the creation process:

But this primordial Luminiferous Ether was, in all probability, not adapted to the wants of man and other living species, it was absorbed, or otherwise destroyed; and darkness was an immediate and necessary consequence. But as soon as it was reproduced, on the first day, the whole hemisphere of the Earth next to the Sun was instantly illuminated. This was probably done after the Sun had crossed the meridian of Paradise; and hence the evening occurred before morning (Milligan 27-28).

Why would brother Milligan hold such a view? Robert Milligan was born on July 25, 1814, in Tyrone, Scotland. John Irvine baptized him into Christ in March 1838, at Cane Ridge, Kentucky. After college Milligan began to work as an educator. For a time he taught at Bethany, served as an elder in the Bethany congregation, and co-edited Campbell’s *Millennial Harbinger*.

When Bacon College was moved from Georgetown, Kentucky, to Harrodsburg, Kentucky, and

became Kentucky University in September of 1859, Milligan went to work as the school's president (McGarvey's College of the Bible was part of Kentucky University). Darwin's theory of natural selection was revealed to the world in *The Origins of Species* on November 24, 1859, about two months after Milligan assumed his position as President of Kentucky University. Darwin's theory was accepted with great enthusiasm. Many brethren felt compelled to mesh "natural selection" with the Genesis record; it was the scholarly thing to do! The gap theory appealed to many of these brethren as the middle ground between atheistic evolution and biblical creationism. As Darwin's work was reshaping minds and gaining prominence and prestige, Milligan was working on his book, *The Scheme Of Redemption*.

Like the errors of evolution, destructive criticism has a history of leading Christians into damnable error. During the last part of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, J. W. McGarvey led the fight against destructive criticism through his featured column in the *Christian Standard*. McGarvey groomed Hall Laurie Calhoun to take up the gauntlet against the destructive critics after McGarvey laid it down. Things did not go according to McGarvey's plan. In 1917 destructive critics took over the College of the Bible. Hall Calhoun was driven from the deanship and faculty of the College.⁵ McGarvey's beloved College of the Bible at that time lost its identity as the bastion of conservative orthodoxy in the fellowship of the Christian Church. If anything should be learned from past events, like the digression of College of the Bible, it is that when destructive criticism gets its foot into the door of institutions of higher education, little will be done to stop it. Churches are destroyed and good brethren are shaken from the faith. Just look at the "Christian Colleges" of our day and see if this is not so.

The two and four-document hypothesis are helpful, if one wants to "rub elbows" with modern theological scholarship. For a Bible professor to be taken seriously by the wider community of contemporary scholarship, he must agree with the basic premises of modern critical theories. Unless he does he will not be published in their professional journals, nor will his books be accepted as scholarly works. Unless a professor loves the truth more than life itself, it is difficult for his ego not to be taken seriously by the scholarly community. In fact, a college professor's tenure is often predicated upon an agreed number of

published articles and books each year. Paul was right when he said, "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners" (1 Cor. 15:33).

Is it Acceptable to Teach The Two and Four Source Theories?

Some modern scholars justify teaching theories like the aforementioned, by saying that they believe that the Holy Spirit was behind the process. Where is the evidence that these alleged sources ever existed? Luke mentioned that others were writing about Jesus, but he also acknowledged his writing was different from theirs, in that Luke had a "perfect understanding of all things from the very first" (Luke 1:3). If the church is asked to believe that Matthew and Luke copied from Mark, Q, M, and L, then in effect the church is being asked to believe that the *perfect* is the product of the edited imperfect. Who can believe such a thing? Microevolution does not justify macroevolution anymore than Joshua 10:13, Acts 17:28, Jude 14, and Luke 1:1-4 justify the damnable error of the document theories of the synoptics. Teaching these theories is unacceptable, and should not be tolerated by those who know and love the truth.

Conclusion

The battle over the verbal, plenary, inspired Word of God has moved out of the "Christian Schools" into the church. No Christian can afford to be passive in the battle. The errors espoused by anti-inspirational theories are legion, and they are destroying another generation of Christians. Sadly, many churches of Christ lag in their ability to properly train young minds to take offensive and defensive stands against destructive criticism. Elders cannot deal with anti-inspirational theories within the local congregation, unless they understand them and know how they are taught. Unless Bible class teachers know how to answer the errors of destructive criticism, they cannot equip their students to stand in the battle. If the church does not do its job and train its youth, higher education will continue to shake the faith of the church's youth. Brethren beware!

Works Cited

Milligan, Robert. *Scheme Of Redemption*. Harrodsburg, KY: n.p., 1868. Rpt. St. Louis, MO: Christian Board of Pub., n.d..
Tatum, W. Barnes. *In Quest of Jesus*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1999.

Endnotes

¹Liberal scholarship alleges that the hypothetical Q document and the Gospel of Thomas are the earliest collections of Jesus' words.

²Destructive critics do not believe that Matthew, Mark, or Luke wrote the books using their names. They say that small units of Jesus' material, periscopes, were written down and collected into larger groups. These groups were then collated into "proto-gospels—works that told a story but not the whole story." Finally they say that the synoptic writers, who ever they were, revised the traditional material by making up stories to improve on the sparse material in the proto-gospels. See E. P. Sanders, *The Historical Figure of Jesus*. New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1993. pp. 57-77.

³The two and four source theories are too involved to present

all of their details in this article. For further reading from the destructive critics themselves, Tatum, *In Quest of Jesus*, is an excellent source.

⁴In order to understand the high regard the early church had for the New Testament see F. W. Mattox. *The Eternal Kingdom*. Delight, AR: Gospel Light Publishing House, 1961. pp. 55-106.

⁵For more information about Hall Calhoun and his fight against error see, Adron Doran and J. E. Choate. *The Christian Scholar*. Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate Co., 1985.

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Introductory Matters: In the July issue of *Defender* we began looking at some questions an Independent Baptist sent me (and several others). He had sent 23 questions in an email to me and to which I responded. These are the answers that I wrote to his questions. I encourage you to go back and read the introductory information from the July issue. This is the next installment of these questions and answers with his questions numbered and indented (otherwise without any editing) and my answers immediately following. I pray that this will be a profitable study to others.

Questions about The Church of Christ

Michael Hatcher

14. In I Peter 3:21 Peter says "*The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.*" How can baptism wash away my sins when Peter makes it clear that it does not put away the filth of the flesh? How can baptism save me if it is the answer of a good conscience toward God because just having a good conscience toward God will not save me?

You are trying to spiritualize "filth of the flesh" when there is no need to do so. Peter, by inspiration, says that baptism saves us. He would not then immediately contradict what he just wrote. Instead, he explains that baptism is not the same as taking a bath to remove the physical dirt from our bodies. Also, in Judaism there were ceremonial washings of the priest prior to their officiating in their priestly office; the apostle did not want anyone to think that baptism was simply that type of physical washing. In this way it is "not the putting away of the filth of the flesh." In the parenthetical statement he is discussing physical filth—not spiritual filth. Instead baptism does take away ("save us") from sin.

As to the phrase "answer of a good conscience toward God" the King James does not do a good job in translating this (specifically using "answer"). The American Standard does a better job in saying, "the interrogation of a good conscience toward God." Some others which I have found use: "appeal," "asking God,"

"question," or "witness." It is admittedly difficult, but there seems to be two possibilities; either way the meaning is basically the same (the two possibilities are more technical in nature). It can mean that it is the interrogation or questioning of (for) a good conscience; that is, the sinner asks how he can have a good conscience, and the answer is by being baptized. The other possibility is that one in a good conscience asks God what He would have him to do to be saved. Again the answer comes back that he must be baptized to be saved.

15. How often are we to take The Lord Supper? The Bible says the disciples broke bread on the first day of the week but it doesn't say they did it every week. The only commandment given by Jesus concerning this was "*This do in remembrance of me.*"

This very simply is a matter of authority and how we ascertain that authority. While you are correct that Jesus simply said to do it in remembrance of Him, God does not leave us to our own devices when it comes to worshiping Him (including the Lord's Supper). God authorizes in 3 ways: (1) direct statements, (2) implications, and (3) examples. When we look at the New Testament we find that God has authorized the partaking of the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week. The disciples came together on the first day of the week to partake of the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7). This example authorizes man to partake of that Supper on Sunday (the first day of the week). However, your question deals with whether or not that means "every week"? I know that this question has been asked often,

but I am still surprised by it. No one seems to have a problem understanding this principle when it comes to the collection in 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 (although some will go beyond what is authorized to take up a collection more often than what is authorized). The Israelites (and no one else) did not seem to have any difficulty understanding this when God said to remember the Sabbath (Exo. 20:8). Why did not God say to remember “every” Sabbath day? There was no need to add the word *every* to the command to remember the Sabbath. Why? Because the Sabbath day came every week. Let me ask you how often does the first day of the week come? It comes every week! (This is so obvious that it would be insulting to anyone if not for this question.) Thus, when we are given the example that the disciples came together upon the first day of the week to partake of the Lord’s Supper, then we know that, since the first day of the week comes every week, then they partook of the Lord’s Supper every first day of the week (Sunday). Not to do such would be a violation of what God has authorized man to do today.

16. Should there be special emphasis place on The New Testament? Explain.

Yes. The Bible begins with the creation with a special notice of the creation of man. Immediately, it begins to show the need for a Savior with the sin of Adam and Eve. The rest of the Old Testament is a development and preparation for the coming Savior. When we come to the giving of the Law of Moses, it was never given to all men—it was only given to the Jews. The Gentiles still lived under a law (sometimes called Moral Law, Patriarchal Law, law written on the heart, and maybe others). The purpose of the Old Testament thus was to bring us to the Savior. This is the exact point Paul makes in Galatians 3. In verses 24-

25 Paul says the law (that is the Law of Moses) was our *schoolmaster* (others use tutor, guardian, child-conductor, custodian, disciplinarian) for the purpose of bringing us to Christ. Then notice: “But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.” The Hebrews writer in showing that Christ has a greater priesthood than the priesthood of the Old Testament states, “For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law” (Heb. 7:12). Thus, we are not subject to the Old Testament law because we are under a new law revealed by Christ and recorded in the New Testament. Other passages show that the Old Testament (the Law of Moses) has been done away in Christ (Eph. 2:15; Col. 2:14; Heb. 8:13). Again, the Hebrews writer sums it up well when he states, “Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second” (Heb. 10:9).

Does a recognition of the fact that we are subject to the New Testament today and not the Old Testament mean that the Old Testament is useless, or that we should not study it, or (as some have falsely claimed that we believe) that we do not believe in the Old Testament? Absolutely not. The New Testament reveals at least four purposes of the Old Testament: (1) It defines and highlights sin (Rom. 3:20; 7:7, 13; Gal. 3:19); (2) It reveals man’s inability to sinlessly obey the Law of Moses and thus save himself (Gal. 3:10-13); (3) It prepares the way for Christ (Mat. 5:17; Luke 24:44); (4) It provides historical examples for man to learn about God’s dealings with man (Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:6, 11). Thus, while we are not subject to the laws of the Old Testament and must look to the New Testament for our authority for what we do today, the Old Testament (and a knowledge and understanding of it) is vital for our spiritual development.

It’s About That Time!

Lee Davis

It is hard to believe that there are only three more months until I leave for Singapore and begin teaching at Four Seas College. Since November of last year we have traveled thousands of miles and met with several churches in eight states about the work of the Lord in Singapore. This does not count the numerous contacts that have been made in other states. At this writing, we still have several more appointments with brethren and are fully confident that we will reach our goal.

Over the last several months, we have met some

good brethren that are very much interested in taking the gospel to the world. Words cannot be given that adequately describe the appreciation that we have for those that have decided to support the work. Also, as I tell everyone to which I speak, their praying for us is the most powerful thing they can do to advance the work of Christ. For we are persuaded that when a child of God prays correctly about World Evangelism, then that Christian will act as he prays. The faithful Christian will take the Word to all the world or he will help

send it to the entire world.

It is an exciting prospect to think of being able to train men to preach the gospel. Men from all over Southeast Asia come to Four Seas to receive an education in the Bible. The school offers an Associates of Arts Degree in Bible and a third year program for those who are academically qualified. I, along with brethren David Chew, Eddy Ee, and Kwan Tai Choom, will be the instructors at the school. Also, it will be wonderful to work with the local brethren in Singapore in preaching the gospel in their communities. I will primarily be working with the Jurong church, but will go wherever I am needed to extend the borders of the Kingdom.

If you would like to be a part in this work, get in touch with us. If you are an individual that thinks you cannot help just because you are “one person”—stop thinking this way! You can help the cause greatly by giving 10, 20, 50 dollars a month. You can help by telling your friends about the work and letting them have an opportunity to participate in this work. Yes, you can make a difference. If you can help us, send the monies to the Bellview Church of Christ, 4850 Sauflay Field Road, Pensacola, FL 32526. Please mark the check: “Lee Davis Mission Fund.” Thank you and please continue to pray for us.

(Editor's Note: Brother Rice began Four Seas College as part of his vision of converting the Far East. He remained president of the board till his untimely death. Brother Rice had talked to brother Davis about going as an instructor in the college prior to his death. Now, we are seeing the fruition of these plans. However, brother Davis needs financial support to go. While there are many congregations who are helping him, it would also be profitable for and he would appreciate help from individuals also. I dare say that there is hardly any family who is reading this that could not spare \$5.00 a month. In fact, very few of us would even miss that small amount (most of us will spend that amount and often much more on something without ever giving it a thought). Why not become a fellow-helper in this great work by agreeing to send just \$5.00 a month? You might want to send an entire year's worth at a time (\$60) so you will not have to send it on a month by month basis (plus you will save the postage). This is not to say that anyone should reduce their contributions to the local congregation (or that support from churches is not needed), but each individual has the right to spend his money where it pleases him, as long as he gives properly to the local church. Without reducing your contribution, please help brother Davis in the great work.)

Updated CD Study Aid

The 1988-2002 books, *Defender* issues of 1989-2001, and the *Hatcher/Schweitzer Exchange* (an exchange of letters between Michael Hatcher and a Lutheran “pastor,” Keith Schweitzer, on the subject of Total Hereditary Depravity and other matters) are available on computer disk in Adobe Acrobat Reader (PDF) format (making it useful for both Intel and Macintosh computers). The Acrobat Reader is also provided on the CD. The CD is completely indexed allowing searches of all the books at the same time (you can find every occurrence of a word or phrase such as “baptism for the remission of sins” in every book at the same time). The cost of the CD is only \$55 in which you receive all 15 books (less than \$5 per book), plus postage/handling fee of \$1.25. If you purchased a previous version of our CD, then check with us for an upgrade at a significant reduction in price upon the return of the CD. Take advantage of this great offer. Order from Bellview Church of Christ.

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