

# *Defender*

*“I am set for the defense of the gospel”*

*Volume XXXIII*

*2004*



January

April

July

October

February

May

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# Defender



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Volume XXXIII

January 2004

Number 1

Web Site: <http://www.bellviewcoc.com> E-mail: [bellview@bellviewcoc.com](mailto:bellview@bellviewcoc.com)

## Giving: Blessing or Burden?

*David B. Jones*

Perhaps the two most sensitive areas one encounters as he works with people are the subjects of children and money. While these two subjects are sensitive, they need to be addressed because parents will give account for both on the day of judgment. Both of these areas are problems for the majority of the people at one time or another. It is probable more people will be lost in hell due to the love of money than any other one sin. Of the parables taught by our Lord, about fifty percent of them concerned money and our use of it.

Jesus taught us it is more blessed to give than to receive: “I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35). Those are the words of the apostle Paul as he spoke to the Ephesian elders at Miletus. The majority of the world and many in the church have it in reverse! Jesus promised we would have what we needed if we put Him first: “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Mat. 6:33). His promises should keep us from being selfish people: “Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again” (Luke 6:38). Still some view giving as a burden, rather than, a blessing. Some accuse the preacher of desiring a raise when he preaches on giving. Some do not want others to know what they give. It is the business of the elders to be aware of

what people give so they can help them give scripturally, if they are not already doing so. Some are so burdened by giving, they give with a selfish heart. These people should understand God views giving as a grace and as a proof of the sincerity of our love (2 Cor. 8:7-8). The subject of giving needs to be highlighted from time to time to remind us what God expects.

### **Instructions Regulating Our Giving**

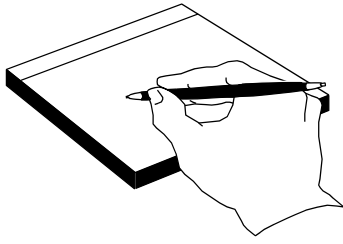
The Bible instructs us that our giving is personal. Notice what Paul tells the Corinthian brethren: “Upon the first *day* of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as *God* hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come” (1 Cor. 16:2). Each Christian is required to give each first day of the week as he has prospered. Giving is part of our worship and our worship is a personal matter. Paul reminds us, “So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God” (Rom. 14:12).

The Bible also instructs us that our giving is to be planned. Paul also writes, “Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, *so let him give*; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver” (2 Cor. 9:7).

God’s people should plan for what they are going to give each week. Household bills should be kept in light of our giving. The time to decide how much we are to give is not on Sunday morning just before the plate is passed. We should sit and ponder and plan our bills around our contribution. Many make bills to the point they cut their contribution to pay their bills. They make lame duck excuses for this, but for the

*(Continued on Page 3)*

# Notes From The Editor



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## Letter Response

This continues my response to several emails which I received about an article I wrote in November 2000 issue of *Defender* concerning the singing group “Acappella.” I have been taking this avenue to respond to these emails instead of trying to respond to each one individually, also I believe that the response may help others also. This is the third article dealing with these matters thus I would encourage each one to make sure they read the previous two articles (October and November 2003 issues). One other note, instead of placing “sic” all through their quotes, I will simply state to begin with that all of them are exact quotes, mistakes and all.

A major theme of each of the emails dealt with the subject of authority: if we need authority for everything we do and how to determine if we have authority for a specific action. One stated: “Your main point about Biblical authority...I AGREE WITH” (ellipsis in original). Another said, “I agree with you that we need God’s guidance to do anything.” Yet, many of the emails indicate that we do not have to have authority for everything we do. They do this by discussing certain things and trying to indicate that we do not have authority for that action, yet no one considers that action sinful. A few examples of this will suffice. One person’s entire email consisted of this: “I don’t see anywhere in the Bible where it allows us to use computers.” Another wrote, “Let me ask you a simple question: do you use a fork when you are eating? Do you use it with your hand? In that case, I would like to know where do you find the authority to hold a fork with your hand to eat something.” Someone else wrote, “Do you realize that, by your definition of sinful, every time you get behind the wheel of your car, you are sinning? Cars are never mentioned in the Bible, nor are

we authorized by God to drive them. Chewing gum is also therefore a sin. Coca-cola? Sin. Taking photographs? Sin. Using the computer upon which you typed this reactionary article? Sin.”

The problem we see in this is the view of ascertaining authority. They seem to believe that the only way the Bible authorizes is by direct statements. Notice in the previous quote, “Cars are never mentioned in the Bible.” Also, consider this question: “Do you believe that, to do anything, we need to find a written message from God in our Bibles?” Their view of authorization is that the Bible must specifically mention something for it to be authorized, thus since cars, computers, forks, etc., are not specifically mentioned in the Bible, they must be sinful. They deny the conclusion that those actions are sinful, thus they must come to the conclusion that we do not have to have authority for everything which we do.

The Scriptures affirm that we need authority for all our actions. Paul wrote, “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him” (Col. 3:17). When Paul, by inspiration of God, says “whatsoever ye do,” that statement is a universal statement which includes everything. To emphasize this he states, “in word or deed.” These phrases show us that everything we do, we must do by the authority of our Lord Jesus (which is the emphasis of “in the name of”). There are other ways of establishing this principle.

The chief priest and elders came to Jesus and asked Him, “by what authority doest thou these things? And who gave thee this authority?” (Mat. 21:23). Jesus responds with a question to them asking: “The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men?” (Mat. 21:25). This question shows that in the area of authority there are only two sources of authority: God (heaven) or men. For us to have authority from God, we must be able to find authority in the Bible—God’s Word. If there is no authority in the Bible for an action, then that action must only have the authority of men. Regarding worship, Jesus shows what God’s attitude is toward those who only have authority from men when He says, “But in vain they do worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men” (Mat. 15:9). Therefore we should all realize that we must have authority from heaven (God) as found in God’s Word for all our actions.

When we consider *faith* and all its ramifications, we see that we must have authority from God for all our actions. Paul said, “For we walk by faith, not by

sight” (2 Cor. 5:7). *Walk* deals with our manner of life or what we do in our life. For man to be acceptable or pleasing to God, he must walk by faith. “But without faith *it is impossible to please him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Heb. 11:6). If to please or be acceptable to God one must have faith and his manner of life must be by faith, then it is important to know how faith comes. Again the Bible informs us as to the origin of faith: “So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). The Word of God enlightens man as to how to live his life to be pleasing to God. We might ask if the Scriptures only tell man how to live in certain areas of his life, or in every area of his life? The obvious answer is that the Bible tells man how to live in every aspect of his life. Therefore, every aspect of our life must have authority from God or else it is sinful.

The next aspect of this study will be to see **how** the Bible authorizes. The Bible authorizes in the same way any language authorizes. Contrary to the ideas presented above that the Bible only authorizes by direct statements, that is only one of three ways the Bible authorizes. God’s Word authorizes by: direct statements, examples, and implications. In our next installment of this study and response, we will look directly at these three ways in which God authorizes. *MH*

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(Continued from Page 1)

most part, they are just trying to justify their selfish lifestyles. When new purchases are made, they should not take our contribution from God. Christmas time sees the contribution drop in many places because people over spend and so the Lord is robbed to pay our desires.

Instructions are given showing our giving is to be periodic. Paul taught our giving is to be on the first day of the week (1 Cor. 16:1-2). It is strange indeed, denominations never miss taking the contribution each and every week, but somehow find a way to try and justify taking the Lord’s Supper on a monthly, quarterly, or semi-annually basis. The wording in Acts 20:7 regarding taking the Lord’s Supper is exactly the same as is written in 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 regarding giving.

### **Restrictions Regarding Our Giving**

God has also placed some restrictions on our giving. First, our giving is to be proportionate to our prospering. When we stop and honestly count our many

blessings, we realize we truly prosper every day. Often people ask and desire to know a figure of how much they are required to give. The person who wants to know how much he **has** to give to go to heaven has a heart problem. Every child of God should be desiring to give the most he can give. How much did God give? How much did Christ give? How do we expect to please Them if we desire to give the **least** we can give? They gave the most They could give. Taking these matters into consideration, ought to help us give as we have been prospered.

Second, our giving is regulated by the proper perspective. We should have the proper attitude and outlook toward our giving. We are to give cheerfully: “Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, *so let him give*; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver” (2 Cor. 9:7). We should not begrudge the opportunity to give, but look upon it as a blessing to be able to do so. Our perspective on giving should not be to “get back at the elders or preacher.” When decisions are made which go contrary to our thinking, we cannot withhold our contribution to make a statement to the leaders of the congregation. In so doing, we sin and separate ourselves from God. We must remember we give to the Lord and not to men. Elders will give account to God for how they spent the money, but we will give account as to how we contributed to the work of the church.

### **Complications as a Result of Not Giving**

There are certain complications we encounter because some will not give as they should. First, the suffering of the Lord’s work should be considered. Missions efforts are often halted or hindered because of insufficient funds. What a shame it is to have to pull support from those willing to do mission work simply because we want our money and do not want to contribute it as we ought. It will truly be sad on judgment day to be condemned by God because we allowed men and women to go to hell, without having an opportunity to hear the Gospel, due to our selfishness and immaturity.

Second, our soul’s separation from God should be considered. Our salvation depends on our keeping the commandments. We do not *earn* salvation simply because we keep commandments, but we cannot get to heaven without keeping them either (just as the rich, young ruler)!! There are some ignorant brethren ridiculing sound brethren and calling them *legalists* because they emphasize keeping law to go to heaven. These same brethren would also condemn our Lord!! Giving is a part of our worship and God requires all His

children to properly worship Him (John 4:24).

Third, think of the strain on those who actually give. It has been stated as a general rule of thumb, 90% of the giving is done by 10% of the people. This has also been applied to the work in a local church. Sadly, this figure may not be far from the truth. The church is the spiritual body of Christ. Each member of that body is important just as each member of our physical bodies is important. Each member ought to give as he has prospered and the whole body will do well. When some do not, others have to pick up the slack if the body is to function. Many times the body dies because the members do not do their part.

Fourth, the lack of giving places the shepherds in a difficult position. The Bible plainly teaches elders have the rule in a local congregation (Heb. 13:17; 1 The. 5:12). They are going to give account for their oversight of the members. They must admonish (mildly rebuke) us when we fall short. Good and godly elders will approach members and exhort them to give scripturally. This places them in a difficult position seeing how sensitive an area this is. If members would just give, the elders would not have to confront this problem. Often members do not appreciate the elders for the care and concern they show in this matter, although, they are actually helping them go to heaven.

One area which needs to be considered is the fact

when one places membership in a local church, he has a responsibility to give each week. Elders plan the work of a local church taking into consideration how many members are there and about how much the contribution has been and will be in the near future. When members are out of town, they need to remember they still have that responsibility to give at the local church so the local church can meet its obligations. Members who will be out of town can either leave their contribution or make it up when they return.

Fifth, those who do not give scripturally are actually stealing from God. God expects His people to give as they have prospered and when they do not they actually rob God: "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings" (Mal. 3:8). God set the example by sending His son to die for us, and we should not begrudge giving to Him (John 3:16). He gave the best He had, and we are to do the same.

Giving (rather the lack of it) will probably cause more people to go to hell than any other single sin. When we consider what God has done for us and continues to do, why is it such a problem to give to Him? We pray it is not a problem for you, and if it is, we pray you will search your heart and obey the Word of God while you have time.

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*Editor's Note: This is a series of six articles. The first article ran in the October 2003 issue. Because of space limitations, we did not have the opportunity to insert this second article in the November issue. I would encourage you to make sure you go back and read the first article.*

## Qualities Of Leadership (No. 2)

*Clifford Newell, Jr.*

### **A Spiritual Heart**

The challenges facing the church are both thrilling and frightening. They are thrilling because of the vastness of the fields of opportunity and the almost unlimited resources which can be used in the spread of the gospel. They are frightening because of the tremendous responsibility imposed by millions of souls living today without the knowledge of God necessary for their salvation. This aspect is rendered even more frightening by the realization that people are being born faster than they are being reached with the gospel; actually, the church is losing ground in its effort to preach Christ to the world.

It is obvious that the vision and evangelism of the church must be greatly accelerated if the challenge of today's world is met. In order to accomplish this, the

anchor of materialism must be cast off and spiritual attitudes must dominate and motivate the church. Listen to the beatitudes: "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward

in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you” (Mat. 5:3-12). The key to the solution is leaders who are spiritually minded.

Of course the church needs leaders, but the pressing need is for more spiritual leadership. The church needs leaders who are moved to tears and action by the mission needs existing today, men who will put the “go” back in the great commission (Mark 16:15). Men are needed who are big enough to lead us into the equality of all men before God. As Peter stated: “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 10:34-35). We need leaders of such spiritual insight that they will neither hesitate nor fear to purge the church of corruption (1 Cor. 5:5-6). Leaders are needed who will be examples as well as teachers of spiritual attitudes with regard to our treatment of one another, reverence for God and things divine, purity in personal life and habits and an everlasting love for the souls of men (Mat. 18:1-35).

Far too often the church is content to seek out the best it can find of business leadership and satisfy itself that this is the important quality. This attitude has done much to promote materialism in the thinking and action of congregations. Sometimes those selected as elders are men of questionable personal character selected solely because they are good business men or liberal

givers.

Business judgment and liberal giving are fine characteristics, but it certainly does not qualify one for spiritual leadership. The task of evangelizing the world laid before the church of the first century was a great faith—task. Conditions rendered it quite ridiculous from a cold business outlook. This is not to advocate a lack of planning in church work, quite the contrary, but planning with the partnership and promise of Jesus in mind: “Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world” (Mat. 28:20).

Sound business judgment and worldly wisdom have their place, but they do not take on nearly far enough to qualify him for spiritual leadership in the church of the Lord. When exercised to extremes they war against spiritual attitudes and reduce the church to nothing more than a material business effort. As we well know this will not reach or convert the **lost!**

We do not desire to be pessimistic, but it is obvious the church is lagging in its God—given task. The cause can be summed up in one word: Worldliness (materialistic attitudes). The remedy is about as easy to pinpoint. Spiritual attitudes can be instilled within the church by spiritual leaders. The congregation as a whole will not rise above its leadership in this respect. May God help us develop leaders with spiritual hearts.

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## The Eyes of the Lord

*Tom Wacaster*

Second Chronicles is perhaps one of the most neglected of the inspired writings among otherwise good Bible students. I must admit that my yearly trek through the genealogies in 1 and 2 Chronicles takes some patience. Much of what we read in the Chronicles are a repeat of the material in 1 and 2 Kings with but little difference. It is interesting, therefore, that on my journey through the Chronicles this year that my eyes happened to light upon a little phrase that I have read a number of times, though only in passing. But first, some background information. It was the thirty-sixth year of the reign of Asa, king of the Southern Kingdom of Judah. Asa was instrumental in maintaining pure worship before God. He removed his own mother from being queen because she had made an idol unto false gods (1 Chr. 15:16). In addition, he brought into the house of God the things that his father Abijah had restored to the temple. When the sixteenth chapter

opens, we learn that Baasha, king of the Northern Kingdom, rose up against Judah. Rather than depend upon God for protection, Asa turned to Benhadad, the king of Syria, and sought an alliance with that idolatrous nation. The union was successful and Benhadad retreated from his aggression. Asa may have won the battle, but he lost what might have otherwise been a blessing from God in the final overthrow and defeat of Syria itself. Hanani the prophet was sent to Asa: “Because thou hast relied on the king of Syria, and not relied on the Lord thy God, therefore is the host of the king of Syria escaped out of thine hand” (2 Chr. 16:7). Hanani then makes this interesting statement: “For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him. Herein thou hast done foolishly: therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars” (16:9). Please note these lessons from this

record.

First, God has searching eyes. Here it is said that He is looking for those “whose heart is perfect toward him.” Jeremiah was once instructed to “run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth; and I will pardon it” (Jer. 5:1). Those must have been trying times when a righteous man was hard to find. Wickedness was rampant. Both the Northern and Southern Kingdoms were, for the most part, corrupt. How easy it would have been for God to simply turn His back. Instead, God was searching. Like the prodigal son whose father must have never ceased to look, our Father in heaven keeps searching for one more soul that is “perfect toward him.”

Second, God has far reaching eyes. His eyes are said to run “to and fro throughout the whole earth.” There is no hamlet, no small village, no isolated corner of this globe that can escape the penetrating look of the eyes of God. “Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do” (Heb. 4:13). One wonders by the timing of Hanani’s statement from God whether or not Asa may have attempted to make this *league* with Benhadad in secret. Men may perpetrate and perform their crimes in the dark of night where they think they can escape detection. Law makers and politicians may receive a bribe “under the table” in an effort to conceal their wicked deeds. However our God sees all, and all will answer to the Almighty for their ungodly deeds.

Third, God has urgent eyes. It is said that His eyes *run*. Time is of the essence. “The king’s business required haste” (1 Sam. 21:8). We must preach the Word, “be instant in season, out of season” (2 Tim. 4:2). What

it is that makes the search so urgent? It is the limited time constraint that faces you and me. Life is but a vapor. There is no certainty of tomorrow. God knows this. And I, for one, am happy that He does not linger in searching for those of perfect heart.

Fourth, God has revealing eyes. He was to “to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him” (2 Chr. 16:9). I, for one, am glad that God is a revealing God and that He wants to make Himself known. How grateful we should be that not only has He made “one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth,” but that God’s desire is that we “should seek God, if haply they might feel after him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us” (Acts 17:26-27). Some years ago it was declared that “God is dead.” No, God is not dead. He is alive, and He has made Himself known. For those who miss Him, the fault is solely theirs for God is looking for them, and He is ready and willing to show Himself to those who earnestly seek after Him (Heb. 11:6).

Fifth, God has demanding eyes. While His love is unconditional, His blessings are for a limited few. He is strong in behalf of “them whose heart is perfect toward him” (2 Chr. 16:9). The context of those words helps me understand what God means by a “heart that is perfect toward him.” Asa failed to trust God. He doubted the power of God to fulfill the promises given. While Asa may have proven himself noteworthy by seeking to eradicate idolatry and return to true worship of Jehovah, he failed in this one area. He failed to seek God’s advice, and then to follow it when it came to him. God demands that we bow in submission in every single aspect and area of our life. Failure to do so will be catastrophic.

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## Inspiration of Scripture

*Jesse Whitlock*

Is the Bible the work of man, or is it God’s inspired Word? Is it the product of human wisdom only,

or did its authors speak as they were moved by the Holy Spirit? (2 Pet. 1:20-21).

The atheists, agnostics, materialists, and modernists assert the Bible is simply the work of mere man, that it was written merely by human wisdom. Taking their assumption to the limit, they would have to insist that, unless man has somehow degenerated in ability and declined in wisdom, today he should be able to produce a book equal to the Bible, yea, superior to the Bible! The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (i.e., Mormonism), has made such a feeble attempt, and failed miserably (1 Pet. 4:11)!

According to the unproved and unprovable theory of evolution, man should be better prepared to write such a volume today than when the Bible was actually written. Back then, there were no printing presses, they were without our institutions of “higher learning,” no telegraph, no telephone, no television, and **no computers!** Man’s wisdom was a drop in the proverbial bucket then, as compared to the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century! Yet, the heroes of the Bible grappled with every problem and situation that confronts man today, i.e., the creation of the world to eternal life beyond the grave. We can learn from them and their lives (Rom. 15:4).

Let us challenge the atheists, agnostics, materialists, modernists, evolutionists, and humanists today to simply produce a book better than the Bible! Let them

look among their own ranks to the very best and the most highly educated they are capable of putting forth. Let them select as many authors as they want (I would think forty would be enough)! Let this group consult the great libraries of our time, let them get on the Internet and glean from all the sciences; i.e., biology, geology, zoology, and any-ology at all! Let them have free access to the greatest quotes of oratory and history of mankind. When they have done all their research and have gleaned the best of human intelligence the world has to offer, let them put this in book form and then offer it to the world as a substitute for the Word of God! Do they have the confidence and courage to make such an attempt? If not, what excuse will they offer? Could it be the case that man has fallen from his noble estate of wisdom of almost 20 centuries ago? **Or, is it the case that the bible came from a source that is higher than man of any century can possibly hope to attain** (2 Tim. 3:16-17)?

“For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe” (1 Cor. 1:21).

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**MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR**

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# Defender



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## The Holy Spirit of God

*Clifford Newell, Jr.*

Ignorance of the subject of the Holy Spirit has led to much confusion and, therefore, many errors abound. Howard Winters observed:

There are very few, if any, religious errors that do not have at their fountainhead a misunderstanding, a misinterpretation, or a misapplication of the Holy Spirit and His work. From modernism to denominational conservatism the story is the same—all have a misconception of the function of the Holy Spirit, and from this misconception their false and erroneous theories and doctrines have sprung (*The Holy Spirit His Indwelling And Work* 7).

The study of Divinity is the most complex of all biblical studies, for it involves a study of God: His personality, attributes, character, works, and will. The fact is there is one Deity; Jehovah, God, is His name (Deu. 6:4). God is manifested to man in the personalities of Father, Word, and Holy Spirit.

That the Holy Spirit, the third member of the Godhead, dwells in Christians is a matter of fact (Acts 2:38; 3:19; Rom. 8:9-11; 1 Cor. 6:19-20). He, the Holy Spirit, dwells in the church (1 Cor. 3:16-17). To deny these passages that teach the Spirit's indwelling would say that Christians are Spiritless beings and the church of Christ is a Spiritless body. Thus, we must deduce that the Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit indwells Christians.

The fact of the indwelling Spirit of God does not tell us the method, manner, or how He indwells and that is where the difference exists. There are two ways in which the Holy Spirit could indwell the Christian. First, He could dwell in them immediately or directly; and, second, He could dwell in the Christian through a medium. Friends, the presence or the

absence of the Holy Spirit in a Christian is not the real issue.

In 1994, Mac Deaver began teaching that the Holy Spirit **operates** directly upon the heart of the Christian (Deaver-Moffitt Debate 101). Crucial to this position is the meaning of direct/immediate influence. Brother Deaver states, “directly/immediately means, the human spirit is joined to or united with the actual person of the Holy Spirit so that the Holy Spirit affects the human spirit immediately” (102).

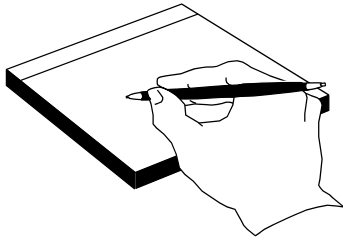
Brethren, in this study, we are concerned about what the Holy Spirit **does** and not what He **can do!** We are affirming that the Scriptures teach that, in conviction and conversion of sinners and in leading those converted in their Christian duties, the Holy Spirit operates or exercises an influence upon the human heart or mind only through the written or spoken Word of God today. Further, it is denied that the Holy Spirit has ever operated (without a medium) immediately upon the heart of anyone for his particular, peculiar benefit in order to change one's nature or to force his involuntary obedience.

### **Mac Deaver's Teaching Regarding Indwelling**

Mac states, “Joel said God would ‘pour out my spirit’ (Joel 2:28)” (Deaver-Fox Debate 127). The case is, however, that when Peter quoted Joel 2, he helps us to understand the intent of Joel's statement. Peter, by inspiration, said, “But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my

*(Continued on Page 3)*

# Notes From The Editor



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## Mac Deaver

This issue of *Defender* is dealing with the new doctrine brother Mac Deaver is now teaching. Because of that I am going to wait till the next issue to continue answering the emails I had received about my article from November 2000 concerning "Acappella."

On December 11, 2003, the Tri-Cities School of Preaching and Christian Development held a forum on the Holy Spirit and the Deaver Doctrine (the doctrine which is now associated with his name because he is the major advocate of this doctrine). You may receive a copy of these lectures on DVD or Video Tape from James E. Green (931-486-1364). The three men who spoke are the ones who wrote articles for this issue of *Defender*. These three men graciously agreed to put their lessons in condensed form for publishing.

Prior to 1994, brother Mac Deaver held to the personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit, but he believed that the only way the Spirit worked upon the heart of a person (whether non-Christian or Christian) was through the Word, and also held that if someone believed in the direct operation of the Spirit on the human heart, that he could not have fellowship with that person (see quote on page 3). As he prepared for his debate with Marion Fox, he changed his position and now holds that the Spirit works directly upon the heart of a Christian (not truly Calvinism but Wesleyanism). In his debate with Fox, he advocated a supra literary work of the Holy Spirit upon the Christian. From that point, this view has progressed to a belief that when one is baptized, he receives Holy Spirit baptism.

Among the things which brother Deaver holds is that the Spirit directly helps us in overcoming sin (1 Cor. 6). If this is the case, then if I sin, why can I not blame the Holy Spirit for failing to give me enough

help to overcome that sin in my life? This would also be true at the judgment, that I could inform God that it was the Spirit's fault that I sinned, not mine. People have sought to escape personal responsibility since the beginning of time (cf., Gen. 3:12). With this doctrine, the Christian has escaped personal responsibility; he can now blame God (cf., 2 Cor. 5:10; Rev. 20:12).

Brother Deaver has also argued that wisdom is given to him directly from the Holy Spirit in answer to prayer (Jam. 1:5). Likewise, he has stated that he has not made this a fellowship issue (he has continued to fellowship those who hold a personal indwelling but working only through the Word and those who hold a representative indwelling). Please consider for a moment, in the Deaver-Lockwood debate, he said that those who do not accept his position are at best weakening churches and at worse killing churches. We are made to wonder, with the direct wisdom brother Deaver claims to possess, how he with direct wisdom from God continues to fellowship those who are doing this to the Lord's church?

Brother Mac is now teaching that when one is baptized, he is receiving Holy Spirit baptism. If someone had told him in 1994 that he would be teaching this, he would have vehemently denied such. Their doctrine is evolving. Bob Berard realized the implications of this doctrine (one must understand he is being baptized with Holy Spirit baptism for his baptism to be valid), so he was rebaptized (according to Mac). In doing so, he

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\* \* \* \* \*

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implies that we are not Christians (but that would also mean Mac is not one either). I wonder how long it will be till Mac also follows Berard's lead and is rebaptized?

We love brother Deaver. We wish him the best. He has meant a great deal to the brotherhood through the years. Sadly, he has now taken a position that is false doctrine, and we can no longer fellowship him. It is our fervent prayer that he will repent of this false doctrine and return to the truth. *MH*

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*(Continued from Page 1)*

Spirit upon all flesh" (Acts 2:16-17). Our understanding of Joel must reflect that, whatever was to be poured out, it would come from the Spirit. Good people, this is not a literal/personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit! We are told that the preposition *apo tou pneumatos* literally means "of or from the Spirit." Brethren, this is not by accident. Inspiration set forth by or through Luke what Joel meant when Peter applied this verse on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The force is that it is impossible for this verse to mean a literal indwelling of the Holy Spirit Himself!

### **The Implications Of Deaver's Indwelling**

Mac teaches that the Holy Spirit literally indwells the Christian. He then adds that according to James 1:5, God directly gives him wisdom and this wisdom would be perfect wisdom since it comes from God, therefore he has perfect wisdom. How is wisdom provided? Mac stated, "How my view of the Spirit's providing wisdom today would differ from the spiritual gift of wisdom, I would simply say that the difference is one of degree" (letter to Gary Summers, Jan. 2, 2003).

Mac stated, in the Deaver-Lockwood debate, that those who do not accept the literal/personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the saint are weakening churches at best and at worse are killing churches (video tape 4). Good people, if you do not agree with Mac, then what are you doing to the body of Christ, according to Mac's view? Friends, Mac has made this a **fellowship** issue for, if you are killing churches, there cannot be fellowship. If not, why not? Mac has written:

We cannot fellowship those who say that by means of the Spirit's indwelling men can and do receive direction/guidance that is other than (or in addition to) the direction the Spirit has given us in the Bible.... The Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit in some way indwells the Christian, but it also teaches that he guides/directs the Christian through the word (cf. Eph. 2:22; II Tim. 3:16-17).... Here we stand; and in opposition to any and all who deny this view... as long as we agree that the

Holy Spirit convicts, leads, directs, and edifies only through the word of God, whatever other differences there may be on the subject ought not to have the least effect on the question of our fellowship (Mac Deaver "For All To Know," *Biblical Notes Quarterly*, Nov-Dec 1993, p. 1).

Brethren, here some of us still stand! I agree with Mac (1993) and seek his good both here and in eternity.

### **Argument—Holy Spirit And Kingdom**

"And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there 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). "And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49). "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8). Peter puts this all together for us in Acts 2. Watch the conclusion: They (apostles) would not taste death until they saw two things—(1) the kingdom would come and (2) the power would come. Good people, the kingdom came on Pentecost when the power came. Thus, the application of Joel's prophecy began to be fulfilled that memorable day! It should be obvious to all honest seekers of truth that to make Joel 2 a literal indwelling completely corrupts Acts 2 and the kingdom. Further, note that in these passages they were to receive power which correctly interprets Joel 2.

### **Influence Of The Holy Spirit**

There is a void between any two spirits—between two human spirits: "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. 2:11); and between Divine and human spirits: "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. 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. 2:11-12).

The void is bridged by **words** or **communication**: Between two human spirits—it requires conversation, correspondence, or coded message; between Divine and human spirits—must be spoken and written words.

### **The Medium Used By The Holy Spirit**

He was sent to teach the apostles (John 14:16-17). He would guide them into all truth (John 16:13-15). He

operated on them through the medium of teaching (1 Cor. 2:13). The apostles taught what the Spirit instructed them to teach (1 Cor. 2:12-13).

The Spirit thus influences by speaking **words** (Heb. 3:7-8; Acts 1:16; 1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Sam. 23:2). It is the case that the medium used by the Holy Spirit is the Word of God. A prime example is the Parable of the Sower (Luke 8:4-15). In this parable, all results were produced by the Word, the seed of the kingdom of God. Notice the medium involved with each of these “hearers”:

(1) **Wayside Hearer**—“Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved” (Luke 8:12). Why did Satan not take away the Holy Spirit instead of the Word?

(2) **Shallow Hearer**—“They on the rock *are they*, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away” (Luke 8:13). What did they receive? Why did they “fall away”? The Word was given up.

(3) **Choked Hearer**—“And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of *this* life, and bring no fruit to perfection” (Luke 8:14). What was choked out: the Holy Spirit, or the Word?

(4) **Honest Hearer**—“But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep *it*, and bring forth fruit with patience” (Luke 8:15). How is fruit brought forth by them: by direct operation of the Holy Spirit, or by the hearing of and obedience to the Word? The Word completes the process. The life is in the seed (the Word) and not the soil. The seed must be in the soil in order to grow. Thus, it is a natural process, not miraculous, based entirely on God’s immutable laws.

### Conclusion

Dear reader, the issues raised in this study are real and vital. There can be no clear understanding of God’s redemptive plan without a clear understanding of the Holy Spirit and His work. In the final analysis, the Holy Spirit works in Christians through the truth!

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## The Work of the Holy Spirit and Sanctification

*Eddy Craft*

The work of the Holy Spirit has been a very controversial subject for a long time. Recently at the Tri Cities School of Preaching we had an open forum on the Holy Spirit as it related to the Mac Deaver doctrine. In this article I want to give an overview of my speech. I was dealing with **how** the Holy Spirit works in sanctification. I want to show that whatever the Bible says that the Holy Spirit does in sanctification, it says that the Word of God does. I remember in years past the older preachers would put up charts that would show what I want to show in this article.

The Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit **instructs**, but we are also told that the Word of God **instructs** (Neh. 9:30; 2 Tim. 3:16-17). This as in all cases will show that the Holy Spirit works only through the Word of God in sanctification. *[Editor’s Note: There are three possible explanations concerning these matters. (1) The Word accomplishes these through the medium of the Holy Spirit. I do not know of anyone who would believe this point. (2) Both the Word and the Spirit work directly upon the heart to accomplish these things. This is what brother Deaver and others hold. (3) The Spirit accomplishes these things through the medium of the Word of God. This is the position we*

*believe is correct. When one considers these points in connection with Paul’s words in Ephesian 6:17 that “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,” we conclude that the Spirit uses the instrument of the Word of God to accomplish these things.]*

The Holy Spirit **begets**, but how? The Bible teaches that the Word of God **begets** (John 3:5; 1 Cor. 4:15). It is the Holy Spirit that begets, but He does it through and by the Word of God.

The Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit’s work is to produce the **new birth**. The Word of God shows that the Bible accomplishes the same thing (John 3:5; 1 Pet. 1:23).

The work of the Holy Spirit in sanctification is to **quicken** or made alive. To quicken us is said to be the work of the Word of God (John 6:63; Psa. 119:50).

The work of the Holy Spirit is to **teach**. The work of the Word of God is to **teach** (John 14:26; 6:45).

The Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit’s work is to **convict**. The Word of God **convicts** (John 16:7-8; Tit. 1:9).

The Holy Spirit **comforts**, and the Word of God **comforts** (Acts 9:31; 1 The. 4:18).

The Holy Spirit **gives love**; the Word of God **gives**

love (Rom. 5:5; 1 John 2:5).

The Holy Spirit **saves**; the Word of God **saves** (1 Cor. 6:11; Acts 11:14).

The Holy Spirit **washes**; the Word of God **washes** (1 Cor. 6:11; Eph. 5:26).

The Holy Spirit **sanctifies**; the Word of God **sanctifies** (1 Pet. 1:2; John 17:17).

The Holy Spirit **makes free**; the Word of God **makes free** (Rom. 8:2; John 8:32).

The Holy Spirit **converts**; the Word of God **converts** (John 16:7-8; Psa. 19:7).

The Holy Spirit **strengthens**; the Word of God **strengthens** (Eph. 3:16; Deu. 11:8).

The Holy Spirit **dwells in us**; the Word of God **dwells in us** (Eph. 5:18-19; Col. 3:16).

The Holy Spirit **leads**; the Word of God **leads** (Rom. 8:14; Psa. 119:105).

The Holy Spirit **witnesses**; the Word of God **witnesses** (1 John 5:6-8; Heb. 10:15).

From the preceding we are able to see that the Holy Spirit works through the Word of God and the Word of God alone in sanctification. The late and beloved Gus Nichols made the following statement about the Holy Spirit and His Word.

Of course, the Holy Spirit “comforts” by his word, which he spoke through the apostles, which would comfort them as they were taught. He would show them how to live as teachers, and through them would show to others the way of life and salvation. Hence we read: “Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and **comfort of the scriptures** might have hope.” (Rom. 15:4.) Again Paul said, “Comfort one another with these words.” (1 Thess. 4:18.) So the words of the Holy Spirit comfort man. When the Holy Spirit dwells in men, he does not comfort them **directly**, in any miraculous way; but he comforts now just like he always has comforted—like he did the apostles and other people in apostolic days—through his word which he spoke through inspired men. He guided them “into all truth. (John 16:13.)” (Gus Nichols, *Lectures On The Holy Spirit*, Montgomery, AL: Southern Christian University, 1994, p. 65).

Notice as Brother Nichols further states:

Therefore the Holy Spirit has given us a “perfect” revelation. There is not a true religious idea on earth today which is not found in the seed, the word of God. If you want that idea perpetuated, just preach the word—and you will do all that God ever intended for you to do in reaching a world of

lost people with the word of the Holy Spirit. **The Holy Spirit does not reveal ideas and thoughts to people directly, nor guide them directly in some mysterious way, leaving them to wonder whether it is the spirit of the devil, or the Spirit of God that is doing the suggesting, and the leading, and such like** [emph. added]. The Holy Spirit has no suggestions to make, no instruction to give, **other than what he has given in the Bible.** (p. 73).

Let us note one final quote from our dear brother: There are **no new ideas** in the religious world which are true, which are from heaven. We have nothing that is true except what is revealed in the Bible. Paul said, “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.) **The Spirit does not have to detour around the scriptures to aid and assist us in any good work. Every good work has been authorized and has been directed by the Holy Spirit in the scriptures, his word** [emph. added]. (pp. 73-74).

We are so indebted to men like brother Nichols for their diligent study of the Word of God. Brother Nichols believed in a **personal indwelling** of the Holy Spirit, but he did not believe what Mac Deaver believes. It amazes me when brethren will act as if brother Nichols and Deaver believe the same thing. What brother Nichols believed and what Mac believes are far from being the same.

Everything said to be done by the Spirit is also said to be done by the Word. Does the Spirit accomplish these things? **Yes!** How does He do so? Through the Word of God! The Holy Spirit works through and only through the Word of God today. He does not operate separate and apart, above and beyond, or in conjunction with God’s Word in anyway in sanctification. To further see this point notice what the Scriptures have to say. Look at what Paul said to the young gospel preacher Timothy, “Now the **Spirit speaketh** expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils” (1 Tim. 4:1). Notice Paul did not say “now I speak expressly,” or “now I write expressly.” When Paul wrote to Timothy, he said it is the Spirit that is speaking! When one hears **what** the Bible is saying, he is listening to the Spirit.

We observe the same principle when John writes to the seven churches of Asia. At the end of each of the

letters that John wrote, he said, “He that hath an ear, let him hear **what the Spirit saith unto the churches**; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God” (Rev. 2:7). When the churches read what John wrote, they were listening to what the Spirit said, not what John said. Therefore, we learn that the Spirit speaks through the Word of God. In other words, we learn that the Spirit works on the heart of man through the Word of God. May we never forget the words of the apostle

Paul: “And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 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, throughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3:15-17). The Scriptures are able, available, and adequate. All we need is the Word of God.

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## Can a Man Be Taught Error, Obey Error—and Be a Christian?

*Wesley Simons*

### **The New Birth**

We have argued that one cannot be taught wrong and be right in the sight of God. We have shown that one who believes that he is saved prior to baptism could not have been baptized correctly (Mark 16:16). Therefore, he cannot be a member of the Lord’s church. We find those who *baptized* incorrectly years ago, then they discovered the truth and obeyed the same. In so doing, they gave up the error they once endorsed. This makes them a member of the Lord’s Church.

With the aforementioned being true, brother Mac Deaver has discovered that John 3:5 teaches that “born of the spirit” means Holy Spirit baptism. He told me this in a phone conversation on November 25, 2003. The verse reads: “Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and *of* the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

This means that brother Mac did not know the truth on the new birth until recently. I asked him if he had been “re-baptized.” He said, “No!” He stated that Bob Berard was “re-baptized” when he reached the aforementioned conclusion. It would be impossible for Mac to have been “born again” years ago because, according to him, he did not know the truth about Holy Spirit baptism.

John 3:5 says there are two things essential to entering the kingdom. One must be “born of water” and “of the Spirit” in order to enter the kingdom. Notice, both things are to happen before one enters the kingdom. If “born of the Spirit” means Holy Spirit baptism, then the world must receive the Holy Spirit prior to entering the kingdom. Jesus says this cannot be done. “*Even* the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him:

but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you” (John 14:17). Therefore, Mac is in a hopeless dilemma.

This also means that all persons who have not been baptized with the Holy Spirit are persons who are lost. I have not been baptized with the Holy Spirit. Therefore, I am lost. However, Mac views me as a citizen of the kingdom. What a mess! False doctrine always entraps its teacher. Error can never be consistent. Will Mac *obey* his newly found “new birth”? If not, why not? If he does not believe it enough to obey it, then why does he try to teach it to me or anyone else?

We make the point, and rightly so, that Holy Spirit baptism was a promise. One cannot obey a promise. However, one must be “born of the water” and the “Spirit” in order to enter the kingdom. Envision this, a preacher standing before an audience of sincere people telling them that God commands them to be baptized in water and to be baptized with the Holy Spirit in order to enter the kingdom. How could they respond to that message? One cannot obey a promise! Holy Spirit baptism was a promise to the apostles and possibly the household of Cornelius.

Brother Deaver has another problem. The apostle Paul tells us there is only one baptism: “One Lord, one faith, one baptism” (Eph. 4:5). Mac has two baptisms! How shall he reconcile his false doctrine with what the Bible says on this subject? When I debated Jerry Hayes, he affirmed that water baptism and Holy Spirit baptism added up to just one baptism. Will Mac follow this course? Does he need our help in math? One plus one is two. All Jerry had to sustain his Holy Spirit baptism was a false claim and that is all that Mac has. Jerry had a major power failure. There was no power in

his Holy Spirit baptism and so it is with Mac's.

In 1994, when brother Deaver started to evolve his false doctrine on the Holy Spirit, if we would have told him that he would eventually promote Holy Spirit baptism, he would have accused us of being unfair and misrepresenting him. However, he now affirms such to be the case. Where will this false doctrine continue to lead Mac? It continues to evolve into more and more ungodliness!

Years ago, at the Memphis School of Preaching, Roy Hearn said, "Men, the 'born of' in John 3:5 does not mean baptism. It means 'A bringing forth of, or from' that is what a birth is. So, one is brought forth of water which has reference to water baptism. He is also brought forth of the Spirit. This is the Spirit bringing us forth by His convicting, leading, and guiding us to where we need to be" (Paraphrased). He further stated, "Some false teacher will come along one day and say if 'born of the water' means water baptism, then 'born of the spirit' means Holy Spirit baptism" (Paraphrased). Little did I know that Mac would be one of those false teachers. I am sorry brother Hearn's statements are fulfilled in the life of Mac Deaver and his followers. However, given Mac's newly found doctrine, brother Hearn was not a Christian because he had not been

baptized with the Holy Spirit, but neither has Mac.

### Conclusion

Until brother Mac Deaver takes his own doctrine seriously, why should we? If he will not obey what he is teaching, then he must deem it to be of little value to the souls of men. I say in love, I deem it to be of absolutely no value, because it is false doctrine. Mac has said a lot about the Holy Spirit, but he is denying the very Spirit which he claims indwells him:

Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers *did*, so *do* ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers (Acts 7:51-52).

Why? Because he has altered God's plan of salvation!!!

One on the greatest spiritual blessings in my life, before he went astray, was Mac Deaver. He is a man of great talent. We need him back. Pray for his repentance (Yes, Mac we believe in the power of prayer). I love Mac. I am a better preacher because he came into my life. I am a Mac Deaver lover. However, I love God more. Mac made me choose between him and God. I have made my choice. It saddens me to write these words.

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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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Web Site: <http://www.bellviewcoc.com> E-mail: [bellview@bellviewcoc.com](mailto:bellview@bellviewcoc.com)

## Mac and Roy Deaver's Wisdom

*Wesley Simons*

Brother Mac Deaver tells us that we are killing churches by teaching the things that we are on the Holy Spirit. If we are not killing them, at least we are making them weak, so he declares. He thinks that what we promote to be true kills praying for wisdom and other things. On the other hand, he claims a special wisdom: “How my view of the Spirit’s providing wisdom today would differ from the spiritual gift of wisdom, I would simply say that the difference is one of degree” (Letter to Gary Summers, Jan. 2, 2003). Brother Deaver believes that we have given up on praying for wisdom because we do not believe that the Holy Spirit works upon the heart of man in conjunction with the Word.

We believe that we are to pray for wisdom. God’s method for supplying such is not revealed in the Bible. We believe that He can supply wisdom in many ways. Providentially, He can bring me into contact with one who can help me. There is no proof that the Spirit directly affects the heart of man separate and apart from the Word of God. Mac’s “in conjunction with” argument demands separate action on the part of the Holy Spirit upon the heart. If Mac has the proof, let him produce it. So far, he has failed in his efforts!

The best way to see the workings of the Holy Spirit in the life of those who claim a special relationship with the Holy Spirit is to test the fruit they produce. We do this all the time with those who call our radio program. We also make this statement: “Those who claim to have a special relationship with the Holy Spirit are the most confused.” Mac claims that through the personal indwelling of the Holy

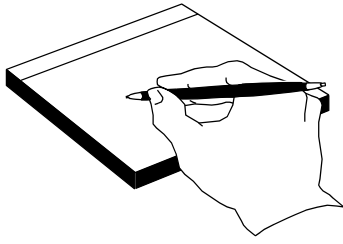
Spirit he acquires the fruit of the Spirit, wisdom, strength, comfort, etc. He is not talking about that which can be achieved by the Bible influencing the heart, but the Holy Spirit working directly upon the heart in conjunction with the Word. If Mac and Roy have a special handle on truth as a result of such, then it ought to show in their teachings. We would assume that Roy and Mac have prayed for wisdom from the day that they were converted.

We want to look at their wisdom through the years. If it is the case that Mac has always had wisdom given to him to the degree that he claims, why did he not teach me what he is now teaching? Was he not praying for wisdom back then? I have probably had 30 or 40 classes or more under him. Not one time did he teach me his newly found doctrine. He told me it was because he did not believe it back then. What happened to this great wisdom that he receives directly from the Holy Spirit upon his heart in conjunction with the Word? What a power failure! All Mac has is a claim. I came out of the Church of God. One reason I came out was because all they had was a claim. Foy Wallace used to say, “As goes the demonstration, so goes the proposition.” How true that is. Mac said in the Deaver-Lockwood debate, “There was a time in my life when I thought He [Holy Spirit—WS] did nothing except to serve as an earnest and a seal, Ephesians 1:13-14. I wasn’t trying to over react to Neo-Pentecostalism. I guess I was caught up in it, not understanding the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the fruit of the Spirit” (Mac Deaver in the Deaver-Moffitt Debate, Tape one, Mac’s first

*(Continued on Page 3)*



# Notes From The Editor



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## Bible Authority

In the previous article responding to those individuals who emailed me about an article dealing with Acappella, I made mention that the Bible authorizes in three ways. These three ways are the manner or means by which any language authorizes (or obligates) one to do something: direct statements, implication, example. God uses these three ways regarding authorization for man to act. Remember that we must have authority from God for everything we do (Mat. 21:23-27; Col. 3:17).

All people generally recognize **direct statements**. However, there is more to it than what most think. There are, in fact, many different types of direct statements. While it is not our intent to do a detailed study of these, it is important to at least touch on this. God saw fit to convey to man His will using the Greek language. The different types of direct statements in the New Testament is going to be based upon the Greek language and not the English. Yet, we see the truthfulness of this even in English. In the Greek there are eleven different kinds of direct statements. (Often this category is mislabeled as commands. Commands are only one of the eleven types of direct statements). These direct statements are based upon the mood of a sentence in the Greek and upon the basis of their nature. The Greek has four moods (indicative, subjunctive, imperative, and optative). *Mood* is the relationship of the action of the verb to the realm of reality. Roy Deaver shows the different aspects of this when he wrote:

A statement in the **indicative** mood may be: (1) declarative, as in Mark 16:16; or (2) interrogative, as in Romans 6:1. A statement in the **subjunctive** mood may be (1) hortatory, as in Hebrews 6:1; (2) conditional, as in Colossians 3:1 (there are several different kinds of

conditions); (3) prohibitory, (4) deliberative, or (5) final. A statement in the **imperative** mood may be: (1) mandatory (command), as in Acts 16:31; (2) mandatory-permissive, as in Acts 2:38 (Repent ye...and let each one of you be baptized.."); or (3) prohibitory. A statement in the **optative** mood indicates a wish, or wishing, as in Romans 6:2 ("God forbid," literally: May it not be so!). This statement in the optative mood authorizes me to teach that we are not to teach that we are to continue in sin that grace may abound (60-61).

The second area of authorization is **implication**. An important question concerning this point deals with the definition of *implication*. Those things implied are those things which are demanded by explicit statements. Sanford says, "Implication, a relation that holds between two statements which the truth of the first ensures the truth of the second" (352). George Beals puts it this way: "The implicit teachings of the Bible are those statements which must be true due to the truth of the explicit teachings in the Bible" (75). Roy Deaver states, "When an action, fact, or teaching is absolutely **demanded** by the Biblical information at hand—without being specifically stated—then that action, that fact, or that teaching is a matter of **implication**" (58). I realize that some use *imply* or its derivatives in a loose manner (also realize that the dictionary gives the common usage of a word, not its true meaning), but we are using it in the formal sense as defined here.

To illustrate this principle, consider a simple geometric shape. If we are given the following explicit statements about this geometric shape: it is a square which has one side which is 3 inches in length. While we are only explicitly told these few facts, yet there are several other facts which are implied by those statements. We now know that it has 4 sides, that each one of the other sides is 3 inches in length, the perimeter is 12 inches, the area is 9 square inches, that it has 4 right angles, and the total of the angles is 360 degrees. While only given a couple of explicit statements, all these other facts are absolutely demanded (implied) by those explicit statements.

A couple of biblical illustrations are in order here. In the process of becoming a Christian, the Bible explicitly states that one must repent of his sins (Luke 13:3, 5; 24:46-47; Acts 2:38; 17:30). We know that Saul of Tarsus (the apostle Paul) became a Christian (Acts 22:16). Therefore, I know that Saul of Tarsus repented in the process of becoming a Christian, even though the Bible does not explicitly state such. Second,

the Bible explicitly states that we are to come together in worship to God (1 Cor. 11:20, 33). We also have the explicit statement that the church at Troas “came together to break bread” (Acts 20:7). Implied in these explicit statements is a place to come together. It is impossible to “come together” without a place; a place is absolutely demanded by the explicit statements. Therefore, the Bible authorizes a *place* for the church to come together. (While the actual place in which they come together falls under the area of expediency and Christian liberty, the place is still authorized.)

The third way the Bible authorizes is by **example**. There are many activities recorded for us in the New Testament. These activities are “accounts of action” of the Lord’s church at that time. Some of these accounts of action constitute an **example** which must be followed. David Brown explained what constitutes an example when he wrote, “An account of an action constitutes an example (pattern) that we must follow when we find the church with general apostolic approval and teaching (authority) practicing whatever it may be that is right within itself and essential to Christianity” (108-09). The partaking of the Lord’s Supper is something which is essential to Christianity (Mat. 26; Mark 14; 1 Cor. 11; et al.). In Acts 20:7 we find the church at Troas coming together upon the first day of the week to fulfill this obligation God placed upon all men. Since this is an action which is essential to Christianity and it had apostolic approval (Paul preached to them), thus it is an example which must be followed today. Thus, the church meets upon the first day of the week (which is Sunday, and it comes every week) to partake of the Lord’s Supper. (It would be sinful to partake of the Lord’s Supper upon any other day than the first day of the week because there is no authority: direct statement, example, or implication, authorizing the church to do so.)

In future articles, we will deal with some applications of these principles and see how expediency works in relation to authority. We will also consider the difference between generic authority and specific authority. In our study of these things we will see the answer to many of the questions which the emails defending the singing group Acappella have presented. *MH*

#### **Works Cited:**

- Beals, George F. *How Implication Binds and Silence Forbids*. Ann Arbor, MI: PC Publications, 1998.
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- Deaver, Roy C. *Ascertaining Bible Authority*. Austin, TX: Firm

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*(Continued from Page 1)*

negative). Does that sound like a man with special wisdom? Faithful Christians know better. All he has is a claim.

Furthermore, Mac told me that the fruit of the Spirit is essential to salvation. He also stated, that these cannot be acquired without the personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit working in conjunction with the Word. His “Direct Argument” is the very mechanism by which such is attained, according to him. If such were the case, then all people that deny such would be people who teach false doctrine. I am one who denies such, but Mac claims that he is still in fellowship with me. If he is right, then I am teaching against that which is essential to salvation. Where is his wisdom and consistency? He affirms that a false teacher can be saved. What wisdom! It cannot be from God!

Mac also teaches that “born of the Spirit” in John 3:5 is Holy Spirit baptism. This proves that he is void of wisdom on this point (Mat. 28:18-20; Mark 16:16; Eph. 4:5)! He has changed his view on what it takes to become a Christian, yet he claims he is a Christian based on what he did when he did not believe the *truth* on the subject. What kind of wisdom is that?

As mentioned before, at one time Mac believed that the Holy Spirit did nothing. Did he not pray for wisdom back then? Why did the Holy Spirit not give him wisdom so that false view could be eliminated? How come all of a sudden he has all of this great help? All he has is a claim. When Mac prays for wisdom and I pray for wisdom, what has he got that supersedes what I have? Just a claim, that is all! Mac also believes in such error as biblical ethical deceit which means that under certain circumstances one does not have to be totally honest. On and on, we could go! Where is this great wisdom of which he speaks?

Brother Roy wrote a commentary on Romans and in it he affirms the gap theory. Weak-kneed preachers invented the gap theory in days gone by because some believed that the geological columns had been proven to be true. Roy buys into this false theory. Where is his proof for the gap theory? There is none! What is wrong with accepting the Bible account of creation (Gen 1-2)? I know of those who will no longer sell his book because of his false theory. Where is this great wisdom

that Mac and Roy claim as a result of the personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit? What blunders!

### Conclusion

If Mac and Roy have wisdom in these areas, then God forbid that we ever receive such. I have listed just a few of the many things that I could have listed. Mac claims that this whole issue of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is not a test of fellowship. [*Editor's note: Brother Deaver believes that his direct work of the Holy Spirit is synonymous with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. We do not believe that the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is a test of fellowship, but we do believe that Mac Deaver's doctrine on the direct work of the Spirit*

*upon the heart of a Christian is a matter of fellowship.*] If the aforementioned is true, then why has he caused all the trouble he has in the Lord's church. Where is wisdom in that? Does he not love the church enough to let his opinions go? I had rather be the Roman soldier that pierced the side of Christ than to be one that splits the Lord's church. Brother Mac is tearing up the body of Christ. Pray that Mac, Roy, and all those that hold to this ungodly doctrine of the direct work of the Holy Spirit upon the Christian's heart will repent. Until and unless they do, they have lost God's fellowship as well as the fellowship of all those that love truth!

*2691 Highway 91; Elizabethton, TN 37643*

## Qualities Of Leadership (No. 3)

*Clifford Newell, Jr.*

### A Humble Heart

Jesus, the great Shepherd, humbled Himself. He left heaven and came to live as a servant among men. As an example of humble service He washed the feet of His disciples and even included the one who would betray Him that very night. Finally, He stooped in humble submission to the base insult of the crucifixion "despising the shame" He had to endure. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phi. 2:5-8).

Luke records this incident: "And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest. And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye *shall not be* so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve" (Luke 22:24-26). The apostles were being groomed for leadership in the kingdom of God, and the vital importance of the quality of humility was emphasized over and over. It is no less important among leaders in the kingdom today.

Good elders and good preachers will be truly humble. Theirs will not be the false humility that cries: "Look at me. Proud am I my wants to see; proud of my humility" (Charles Moore).

Humility serves; it does not merely direct and command. Elders rule by example rather than con-

straint as Peter declared: "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight *thereof*, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over *God's* heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away" (1 Pet. 5:1-4). Preachers must first "take heed unto thyself" (1 Tim. 4:16). There is a vast difference between merely assigning or commanding work and actually leading others in its accomplishment. There may not be feet to wash, but there are the hungry to feed, sick to tend, burdened to assist, bereaved to comfort, weak to encourage, and a hundred menial tasks to perform. The faithful servant and under-shepherd of Christ will be personally involved in these humble acts of service. It will not always be sufficient to see that these things are done or to hire them done. The arrogant may finance or command, but only the humble will serve.

Humility in leadership eliminates a self-willed attitude. There will be too much respect and concern for others for this divisive quality to exist. The elder who is determined to have his way in matters of personal judgment is not humble. This characteristic frequently leads to a one-man negative rule. For example: There are three elders and two of these strongly favor a certain program of work while the third does not. He reluctantly agrees: "You go ahead if you want to, but remember that I am against it." To prevent

bad feelings and a divided eldership the program is dropped, and a self-willed elder has wielded a one-man rule because he did not have the humility to say, "If that is the thinking of the majority, my personal opinion will not count. Let's get busy. I am 100% behind it from here on." In other words, he will treat and support the subject as if it was his idea. Elders must resolve the difference or table it so further discussion can take place. Once a decision has been made, humility will call for unity among the eldership which will influence

the members!

Humble elders will not ride roughshod over the thinking of the congregation, but will always give this thinking great consideration in all decisions. The Lord's church is also led by example and teaching, not by dictatorial methods.

It must be understood that humility does not imply a lack of courage. This thought will be developed in a future article.

*25 Risto Rd; Bristol, VA 24201-2040*

## "But They Got Upset And Left!"

*David Hoff*

We are always glad to have visitors attend services with us. Hopefully they have come to learn more about our wonderful God and the good news of salvation. Some may be present out of curiosity. Perhaps they have heard about the church of Christ and just want to know what we are like. Of course, it goes without saying that not everyone comes with the desire to devote themselves to the Lord Jesus Christ. Sadly, some may come only hoping to entangle us in a religious debate to no profit. With authority from Jesus, the apostle Paul commanded that we abstain from such wasteful pursuits (1 Tim. 6:3-5; 2 Tim. 2:14).

Occasionally, someone will attend services and it appears the person is really interested in learning more about the Bible. The person may even come back regularly and ask questions in the classes. Then it happens. Something is said in one of the classes or sermons that greatly upsets the visitor. He may get up and storm out vowing never to come back again. Invariably, this also upsets some members of the congregation. How should Christ's followers react when this happens?

First, it should be remembered that each Christian is under obligation to "speaking the truth in love" (Eph. 4:15). Notice this requires teaching or preaching only the Truth! Teachers and preachers should try to be as diplomatic as possible to avoid giving unnecessary offense to anyone. The teacher should be teaching out of love for the Lord, love for the brethren, and love for lost souls. Clearly, this means one should never knowingly offend.

Still, even without trying, it is oh so easy to give offense. James put it this way: "My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation. For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect

man, and able also to bridle the whole body" (Jam. 3:1-2). Yes, we should strive to be sensitive to the feelings of others. After all, our mission is to save souls (Luke 19:10). One who teaches should never derive delight from upsetting people. The teacher's goal should not be to ridicule the religious practices of others since that would be counter-productive. When Jesus sent forth the twelve, He reminded them to be "wise as serpents, and harmless as doves" (Mat. 10:16).

I do not think anyone relishes the unpleasant feelings that accompany a visitor becoming upset and leaving a service or class. There is usually a strong desire to calm the person and have them discuss the problem. This is good. However, if we are not careful, we may be tempted to compromise the doctrine of Christ to avoid offending visitors. Remember, Paul said his goal was to please God even if that meant upsetting people he once pleased (Gal. 1:10). It is not loving to keep back the truth from souls simply because we think it may agitate their minds. It is only the truth that can save them from sin (John 8:31-32). Withholding the whole gospel compromises the Truth and amounts to telling lies. Such is unloving for it will send souls to hell (Gal. 1:6-9).

So, what should we do when people are disturbed by the Truth? Certainly, we have no desire to apologize for the Truth, do we? Those who love a lie will remain lost in their error (2 The. 2:10-12). Only those who are seeking for and love the Truth will come to the light (2 The. 2:13; cf., John 3:19-21). Recall the warning Jesus gave to His disciples, "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you" (Mat. 7:6).

How did Jesus react when people got upset by His  
*(Continued on Page 7)*

# MEMPHIS SCHOOL OF PREACHING 37<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL LECTURESHIP

3950 Forest Hill Irene Road; Memphis, TN 38125

March 28 - April 1, 2004

*“Sin And Salvation”*

## SUNDAY, MARCH 28

9:30-10:20 AM Is the World Really Lost Without the Gospel?  
Billy Bland  
10:30-11:30 AM What Is Sin? Barry Grider  
6:00- 7:00 PM Heaven: Eternal Home of the Saved Paul Sain  
7:00- 7:45 PM The Savior’s Invitation Curtis A. Cates

## MONDAY, MARCH 29

8:30- 8:50 AM CHAPEL (Forest Hill Auditorium)  
His Name Is Jesus Paul Meacham  
9:00- 9:50 AM Forgiveness Bobby Liddell  
10:00-10:50 AM What Does it Really Mean to Be Saved? David Sain  
Class 1: The Sin of a Self-Centered Life (Women’s Class) Corinne Elkins  
Class 2: The Works of the Flesh and the Fruit of The Spirit Tom Larkin  
11:00-11:50 Am Ye must Be Born Again Perry Cotham  
Class 1: The Sin of Perverted Worship Mark Reynolds  
Class 2: Without Shedding of Blood, There Is No Remission Terry Mabery  
11:50- 1:10 PM LUNCH  
1:10- 2:00 PM Calvinism and Neo-Calvinism Dud McClish  
Class 1: Sins of a Prayerless Life (Women’s Class) Annette Cates  
Class 2: What Is Repentance? Dale Hubbert  
2:10- 3:00 PM The Sin of Fear Ronnie Hayes  
Class 1: Sins Against the Home Toney Smith  
Class 2: Salvation Is by Grace, But Not by Grace Only Victor Eskew  
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 The Origin of Sin Wendell Winkler

## TUESDAY, MARCH 30

8:30- 8:50 AM CHAPEL (Forest Hill Auditorium)  
Except Ye Be Converted Randy Chambers  
9:00- 9:50 AM Cases of Conversion Flavil Nichols  
10:00-10:50 AM Sin Keeps the Church from Growing Johnie Scaggs  
Class 1: The Sin of an Adulterous Marriage (Women’s Class) Dorothy Mosher  
Class 2: Sins Against the Church John Moore  
11:00-11:50 AM The Seed Line of Salvation Keith A. Mosher, Sr.  
Class 1: The Angels That Sinned Andy Cates  
Class 2: Does the Body Sin While the Spirit Does Not? Kenneth Gossett  
11:50- 1:10 PM LUNCH  
1:10- 2:00 PM The Work of the Holy Spirit and Salvation David Brown  
Class 1: Sin’s Deceitful Appeal (Women’s Class) Jane McWhorter  
Class 2: An Analysis of “The Sinner’s Prayer” Jason Roberts  
2:10- 3:00 PM PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS AND SUPPORTERS SEMINAR  
2:10- 3:00 PM The Common Salvation Harrell Davidson  
Class 1: Sins of Indifference and Neglect Stacy Grant  
Class 2: The Cost of Salvation David Watson  
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 The Second Coming, Resurrection, and Judgment Winford Claiborne

## WEDNESDAY, MARCH 31

8:30- 8:50 AM CHAPEL (Forest Hill Auditorium)  
Sin Separates Barry Kennedy  
9:00- 9:50 AM The Sin of Sodom John Barcus  
10:00-10:50 AM Hell: Place of Eternal Punishment for Sin Mark Bass  
Class 1: Saved at Home—Lost at School (Women’s Class) Irene Taylor  
Class 2: Salvation of Man Demands the All-sufficient Word Gary Summers  
11:00-11:50 AM With Whom Do the Saved Have Fellowship? Kent Bailey  
Class 1: The Hope of Salvation Jerri Manasco  
Class 2: The Futility of Man-made Attempts To Escape Sin Paul Vaughn  
11:50- 1:10 PM LUNCH  
1:10- 2:00 PM Is There a Sin God Will Not or Cannot Forgive? Gary McDade  
Class 1: How Should a Christian Look at Sin? (Women’s Class) Lavonne McClish  
Class 2: The Sin of Worldliness David B. Jones  
2:10- 3:00 PM Confession of Sin Michael Hatcher  
Class 1: He That Believeth and Is Baptized Shall Be Saved Lester Kamp  
Class 2: Satan’s Steps for Sinful Compromise Jerry Martin  
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 Will God Always Bless America? George Bailey

## THURSDAY, APRIL 1

8:30- 8:50 AM CHAPEL (Forest Hill Auditorium)  
The Joy of Salvation Phillip Brannon  
9:00- 9:50 AM What must Brethren Do When a Brother Sins? Wayne Coats  
10:00-10:50 AM Cases of Non-Conversion B. J. Clarke  
Class 1: The Great Physician (Women’s Class) Vada Rice  
Class 2: Refuting the Error of “Once Saved, Always Saved” Dan Cates  
11:00-11:50 AM Must One Be a Faithful Member of the Church of Christ in Order to Be Saved? Charles Box  
Class 1: Encouraging and Training Men to Preach the Gospel Rick Brumback  
Class 2: Is the Law Sin? Kenneth E. Ratcliff  
11:50- 1:10 PM LUNCH  
1:10- 2:00 PM Salvation Is by Faith, But Not by Faith Only Gary Colley  
Class 1: Sin Brings Sorrow, Pain, and Death (Women’s Class) Celicia Grider  
Class 2: Can One Today Be Saved like the Thief On the Cross? Gene Bench  
2:10- 3:00 PM What Does it Really Mean to Be Lost? Clifford Newell  
Class 1: Partial Obedience Is Disobedience Steve Wiggins  
Class 2: Does Man Have a Sinful Nature? Tim Kidwell  
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 Sin Is Man’s Greatest Problem: Salvation Is Man’s Greatest Need 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

(Continued from Page 5)  
teaching? Since He is our perfect example (1 John 2:6), let us consider how He dealt with similar situations. In Matthew 15 we read that the scribes and Pharisees came to the Lord asking Him, “Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread” (Mat. 15:2). These religious leaders revered the tradition of the elders and considered it on par with the law of God. They thought the followers of Jesus were sinning! However, Jesus turned the tables and put the matter right where it belonged—back on their shoulders. He indicted them for transgressing the commandments of God by their tradition. When He was done reproving them for their erroneous practice, some of the disciples came and said to Him: “Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying?” (Mat. 15:12). What did Jesus do? Did He run after them and apologize for upsetting them? Indeed not! Instead, He told the disciples: “Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch” (Mat. 15:13-14).

Even when Jesus’ teaching upset **many** of His **disciples**, He did not apologize for the Truth (John 6:58-61, 66). He simply asked, “Will ye also go away?” (John 6:67). Peter realized the folly of forsaking his Lord because he replied, “Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God” (John 6:68-69).

Just as Peter confessed his belief that Jesus is the Son of God, so we also must make our confession (1 Tim. 6:12). We are to hold fast our confession (Heb. 4:14). *Confession* literally means “to speak the same thing” (Greek *homologeō*). When we confess our faith, we are agreeing with God about the truth of Christ’s deity. For our souls to be saved, we must agree with God’s Word. Long ago Jesus declared, “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day” (John 12:48). If we do not agree with Jesus that people who reject His Word are lost, we will be lost come Judgment Day. Let our confession not be in vain (Heb. 10:23).

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**MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR**

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# Defender



*“I am set for the defense of the gospel”*

Volume XXXIII

April 2004

Number 4

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

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## And the Lord Said Unto...Joseph

*Tim Smith*

With this installment we deviate a bit from our theme, but only because I felt it necessary to do proper justice to the remarkable life of so great a man as our chosen subject. The theme has been to examine the specific things God said to various characters, but in this study we shall look at the life of the man in the context of God's expectations for him. As we go through these things let us do so always with the goal of imitating the good we see and avoiding any evil.

### **Who Was Joseph?**

Joseph was the eleventh of the twelve sons of Jacob. Rachel, his mother, had long desired seed unto her husband, and after many years had passed: “God remembered Rachel, and God hearkened to her, and opened her womb. And she conceived, and bare a son; and said, God hath taken away my reproach: And she called his name Joseph; and said, The LORD shall add to me another son” (Gen. 30:22-24). “He was born in Padan-aram about six years before the return of Jacob to Canaan (25; cp. Xxxi. 41), when Jacob was 90 or 91 years old” (*Davis Dictionary of the Bible*). In so many ways we see foreshadowed in this peculiar character the Christ who was to come. So numerous are the lessons that have been taught and sermons that have been brought on this great man and his life through the years and many are the points we could take from his life now, but here are a few of the ones I believe will help us as we endeavor to live faithful Christian lives.

### **Joseph Overcomes Jealousy— His Brethren Hate Him**

Joseph contended with the dangerous sin of jealousy—not his own, but the jealousy of his brethren.

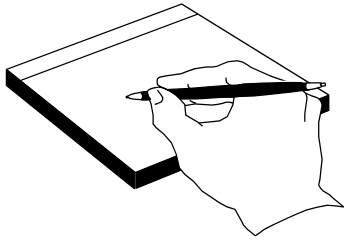
As is always the case, when jealousy is allowed to take root in a man it leads to envy and all manner of other sin—including hatred. Perhaps simply because he was the baby of an old man, or because he was the son by the beloved and chosen wife (Rachel) Joseph found favor in his father's eyes—favor not enjoyed by his ten male siblings:

These *are* the generations of Jacob. Joseph, *being* seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren; and the lad *was* with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives: and Joseph brought unto his father their evil report. Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he *was* the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of *many* colours. And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him (Gen. 37:2-4).

They came to so despise this innocent youth that even maintaining the normal and natural sibling relationship grew to be impossible for them. Today, we find that many in the liberal circles (a nice way to say “unfaithful”) are so jealous of the ones who can stand in front of a mirror at the end of a day and look themselves in the eye with a clean conscience because they have followed the will of the Lord and have not compromised that they assail, threaten, attack, ridicule, and pick them apart every time they get the chance. Why? Perhaps they envy the faithful that feeling of satisfaction in knowing that, though they (the faithful) did not win the great masses, they did in fact win something far greater: the approval of

*(Continued on Page 3)*

# Notes From The Editor



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## Generic And Specific Authority

In our continuing study of biblical authority, we have considered the fact that we must have authority for all that we do (Col. 3:17). Then we noted how the Bible authorizes: Direct statements, Examples, and Implication. We often read articles concerning our need to have authority for all that we do, but possibly we have not done a good job dealing with the aspect of generic and specific authority. Yet, this is something which we must understand if we are going to understand the subject of authority.

In dealing with something which is generic in nature, we are dealing with something which embraces many different things or a wide variety of things. Webster defines *generic* as “relating to or characteristic of a whole group or class: general.” Something *specific* is limited to one particular trait as opposed to a category. Among Webster’s definitions are: “constituting or falling into a specifiable category...restricted to a particular individual, situation, relation, or effect...a characteristic quality or trait.” Two other words which we need to be familiar with are: coordinates and subordinates. Webster says of *coordinate*: “equal in rank, quality, or significance,” while *subordinate* is defined as, “placed in or occupying a lower class, rank, or position...submissive to or controlled by authority.”

Often when God authorizes a particular action, He gives a generic command while at other times He specifies the action He desires. One of the best ways to grasp an understanding of this subject is to see some examples. When Jesus gave the “great commission” to His apostles, He told them to *go*. “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). The direct statement

(thus giving us divine authority) to *go* is a generic statement. *Go* relates to the characteristics of a whole group or class. What we mean by this is that there are several different ways in which to *go*. We observe Paul taking a boat (Acts 18:18, 21), walking (Acts 20:13). Both of these are subordinates of *go*, but certainly not the only ones. We begin learning from this that when God authorizes a generic action, then all those subordinate actions are likewise authorized in carrying out or fulfilling God’s commands. Since God gave the general authority to *go* any way of going is authorized whether we accomplish it by boat, walking, riding on an animal, or today by car or airplane—all ways are authorized by God. We then use our best human judgment as to accomplish God’s commands. This is a matter of expediency—the best way to carry out God’s laws. It might not be expedient for me to travel from Florida to California by walking that distance to preach the gospel while it might be expedient for me to fly in an airplane. While both avenues of travel (going) are authorized by God, it then becomes a matter of human judgment as to which way I desire to accomplish it and to expedite the fulfilling of God’s command. In this example the different ways of travel mentioned (boat, walking, riding on a animal, car, or airplane) are all coordinates; that is, they are of equal rank, while they are subordinate to the command to *go*.

Sometimes when God authorizes an action, instead of giving a generic command, He instead gives a specific command. God determined to destroy the world by a flood, “But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD” (Gen. 6:8). To spare Noah and his family from the coming world-wide flood, God authorized Noah to build an ark. To build this ark, God authorized a specific type of wood: gopher wood. “Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch” (Gen. 6:14). If God had given the generic authority to build an ark out of wood, then any subordinate of wood (type of wood) would be authorized. In that case, Noah could have used oak, pine, maple, gopher, redwood, or any other type of wood. However, in this case, God specified a type of wood: gopher (which is a subordinate of the general classification of wood). Other types of wood (coordinates) are not authorized by God and would have been sinful for Noah to use to build the ark.

Notice how these principles are used relating to the singing group “Acappella” and in one of my responses. When Jesus instituted the Lord’s Supper, He authorized a specific form of food: unleaven bread and fruit of the



vine. (There might be a variety of ways in which to term these things along with differing ways to categorize them. Instead of simply using food, one might call it edibles or some other term. Then one might use the subordinates of solid food and liquid food. You still have the same teaching regarding the Lord's Supper.) God did not simply authorize food for the Supper, but he used a subordinate of food. Other types of food (things which would be coordinate) are thus not authorized by God and are sinful to use. This prompted my illustration concerning steak, potatoes, and coke on the Lord's Supper.

Regarding the subject which prompted the letters: there is a general category of music. Subordinate to that general classification of music, there is vocal and non-vocal music. These two subordinates are coordinates with each other. However there are things which are subordinate to each of these. When God authorized the type of music He desired for us to use in worshipping Him (psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs), He did not give the general authority of making music, instead He used a subordinate of music. He commanded *singing*, which is a subordinate of vocal music. (Actually, vocal music can be divided into the subordinates of communicable and non-communicable, and then singing is a subordinate of the communicable, vocal, music.) Any other type of music does not have the authority from God and is thus sinful to use. (I deal in more detail concerning this subject in that November 2000 issue of *Defender* and would encourage the readers to reread that article.) In next months article, we will answer some of the specific quibbles brought up in response to that November 2000 article on "Acappella." *MH*

**Work Cited:**

*Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*. 10<sup>th</sup> ed. 1996.

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(Continued from Page 1)

God. Of course, I could be wrong in so assessing their motives, and I do not charge anyone specifically with being that way, I only raise the possibility to help in the self-examination process to which we each should regularly submit ourselves. While we naturally wish to meet with the success we are due, we should never seek that success at the expense of others. Their jealousy and hatred led them to do their own brother bodily harm and break the heart of their aged father. Have you ever wondered what might have happened had the portion of his brethren who wished to kill him carried the argument?

## Joseph—the Dreamer

As a young man he was given dreams by the Lord: And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told *it* his brethren: and they hated him yet the more. And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed: For, behold, we *were* binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf. And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words. And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me. And he told *it* to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What *is* this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth? And his brethren envied him; but his father observed the saying. And his brethren went to feed their father's flock in Shechem. And Israel said unto Joseph, Do not thy brethren feed *the flock* in Shechem? come, and I will send thee unto them. And he said to him, Here *am I*. And he said to him, Go, I pray thee, see whether it be well with thy brethren, and well with the flocks; and bring me word again. So he sent him out of the vale of Hebron, and he came to Shechem (Gen. 37:5-14).

These dreams were fulfilled

And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck; And he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee: and he made him *ruler* over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I *am* Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt (Gen. 41:42-44).

While we do not receive from the Lord direct messages in any form today (cf., 1 Cor. 13:8-10; Eph. 4; etc.), we do have a message from God: the New Testament. Are we as attentive to it as was Joseph to his dreams? Are we as willing and able to tell others of that Divine Message as he was of his? We have the most powerful message in the world—far more powerful than his—and yet all too often we are timid in our approach to the world with it. It should be remembered also that, while he had to depend upon the verbalization of his dream or the interpretation, we have a written record

that can be read, understood, and examined by all. What have we to fear? Joseph was thrown into a pit because of his willingness to tell his message; no one is waiting to throw us into a pit (although if we do not tell it properly, God will put us in hell someday). Just as Joseph's message from the dreams always came true exactly as God indicated, so everything our New Testament says is absolutely true. Suppose Joseph had applied some of the new hermeneutics of our day to the interpretation of his dreams; I believe we would have learned of him (if at all) for an entirely different set of circumstances than the ones that have come down to us. Joseph was not at liberty to alter the dream interpretation and neither are we at liberty to alter the text of Holy Writ. He gave his audience exactly what God gave him and so must we. His messages, while sometimes *positive*, were not always so. When he had a contrary word to deliver, he did so with the same confidence, reverence, and fidelity as when he had a pleasant word.

### **Faithful When the Way Was Rough**

As we look at the life of this admirable man we see that he was faithful to God even when it was very difficult:

And Joseph was brought down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him of the hands of the Ishmeelites, which had brought him down thither. And the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. And his master saw that the LORD *was* with him, and that the LORD made all that he did to prosper in his hand. And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him: and he made him overseer over his house, and all *that* he had he put into his hand. And it came to pass from the time *that* he had made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the LORD was upon all that he had in the house, and in the field. And he left all that he had in Joseph's hand; and he knew not ought he had, save the bread which he did eat. And Joseph was *a goodly person*, and well favoured (Gen. 39:1-6).

And Joseph's master took him, and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners *were* bound: and he was there in the prison. But the LORD was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison. And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that *were* in the prison; and whatsoever they did there, he was

the doer *of it*. The keeper of the prison looked not to any thing *that was* under his hand; because the LORD was with him, and *that* which he did, the LORD made *it* to prosper (Gen. 39:20-23).

As we look back on him with the thousands of years and the subsequent unfolding of history in our minds, we must be careful to remember that he did not have the benefit of such. When he was thrown into the pit, he did not know how the story would end. When he was thrown into jail, he did not know how the story would end. How many men do you think would be signing up at the various sound Gospel Preaching Training Schools today if the applicants believed they would end up in jail for so doing? How many parents would encourage their sons to preach? Their daughters to marry preachers? We have few enough as it is. How many times have we seen a man (well taught and trained) preach the truth just so long as things went well with him and then, when pressure was applied by some compromising elder or weak member, he caved in? Joseph certainly did not. When that wanton woman pursued him, he held his ground. When he was in jail, he held his ground. He did not blame God for his troubles. He did not use the tight circumstances to *justify* a compromise. He did what we should do: he remained faithful even though fidelity was not the easiest course! The fact is that circumstances do not alter commitments; our duty to be true to the One Who died for us remains the same in good times or bad.

### **“And he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out”**

He resisted temptation:

And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me. But he refused, and said unto his master's wife, Behold, my master wotteth not what *is* with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand; *There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?* And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, *or* to be with her. And it came to pass about this time, that *Joseph* went into the house to do his business; and *there was* none of the men of the house there within. And she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me: and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out. And it came to pass, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand, and was fled forth (Gen. 39:7-13).

It takes no effort to resist a temptation that is not present; it is only when we are tempted that true strength is required. Men today need to remember that God wants us to do the right thing every time under every circumstance and with no exceptions. He understands (because His Son faced them) what it is to be tempted, but He also with every temptation brings a way of escape (cf., 1 Cor. 10:13). Too often men view temptations as occasions to sin; we should view them as occasions to overcome! Just because the devil wraps something up in a pretty package, puts a bow on top of it, and writes your name on the tag, that is no cause for you to open the package. Think about what you do, consider what Jesus would have you to do, and then act appropriately.

### **Faithful Through Sudden Success**

Joseph went from prisoner to prince in a matter of minutes (in one way of looking at things), and, despite his meteoric rise to prominence, he did not allow himself to forget who he was, Who he served, and before Whom he would be judged (cf., Gen. 41:14-46). I have found through the years of observing things that some of the most devoted people in the Lord's kingdom are those who have very little of this world's wealth. I do not know whether that is just a coincidence, or whether there is a connection between hand-to-mouth living and a fervent prayer life, but I rather think there is a connection in many cases. Joseph was a convict—illegally so, but a convict nonetheless. A few minutes later the most powerful political leader in the land (and arguably in the world at that time) was offering him a position in which he would be second only to the Pharaoh. How would such wealth affect us today? I would imagine that his living conditions, his food, his clothes, his associates—indeed, all of life—drastically improved with the promotion. Did it go to his head? No. Did he get *uppity*? No. He continued to do exactly what he had always done—he served His God faithfully. So you get a promotion, you still serve the same God Who was there for you when you were sick. So you get a raise—you are still heading toward a judgment before God's Son. We never become too important to serve God. We are never **truly** too busy to labor in His vineyard. We are bound by Calvary to a life of faithfulness in prosperity or in poverty, and, like Joseph, we need to remember that.

### **He Loved His Brethren Despite Their Treachery**

He manifested brotherly love: “And Joseph made haste; for his bowels did yearn upon his brother: and he

sought *where* to weep; and he entered into *his* chamber, and wept there” (Gen. 43:30). “And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck” (Gen. 45:14). In this exhibition of brotherly love Joseph returned good for evil:

And they sent a messenger unto Joseph, saying, Thy father did command before he died, saying, So shall ye say unto Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin; for they did unto thee evil: and now, we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father. And Joseph wept when they spake unto him. And his brethren also went and fell down before his face; and they said, Behold, we *be* thy servants. And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for *am* I in the place of God? But as for you, ye thought evil against me; *but* God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as *it is* this day, to save much people alive. Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them (Gen. 50:16-21).

For the purpose of saving print space I have not included the entire story in the text of this message, but the story is important all the same. These (minus Benjamin) are the brothers who would have killed him; these are the brothers who threw him into a pit and sold him into slavery; these are the brothers who broke his beloved father's heart with a lie. Yet despite all of that, Joseph still loved them. They hurt him deeply, but his love was undiminished. Our love for the church must be as broad as His love for us. Sometimes members of the church may treat us in a way that we perceive to be wrong, and sometimes they may well treat us in a way that is (biblically) wrong, but always we must love them and seek their salvation. If we have that kind of love we will act properly toward the church. When we see a brother or sister straying from the way, we will give them a gift the likes of which no other could give—we will call them back to the truth. It is not truly *loving* to look away from another's sin problem without making an effort to pull them out of the mire. We never rejoice in the fall of another, we never take pride in the loss of another, but we should be on the lookout for those who need to be encouraged, edified, and called back. Often when we attempt to do this someone will chant: “Judge not, lest ye be judged,” as though they were the only ones who knew that verse to be in the Bible. Seldom do they chant: “Judge righteous judgment.” Seldom do we hear, when we oppose the “heretic-of-the-year” (whoever he may be), “Now I

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# Great New Testament Questions

June 12 - 16, 2004

## Saturday, June 12

- 7:00 PM "Where Is He That Is Born King of the Jews?" Keith Mosher  
7:45 PM "By What Authority Doest Thou These Things?" David Brown

## Sunday, June 13

- 9:00 AM "This Is an Hard Saying; Who Can Hear It?" Lee Davis  
10:00 AM "To Whom Shall We Go?" Greg Lewis  
*Lunch Break*  
2:00 PM "What Is Truth?" Eddie Whitten  
3:00 PM "For What Son Is He Whom the Father Chasteneth Not?" Gary Summers  
*Dinner Break*  
7:00 PM "What Is Your Life?" Lynn Parker  
7:45 PM "Is Christ Divided?" Michael Shepherd

## Monday, June 14

- 9:00 AM "Which Is the Great Commandment In the Law?" Loy Hardesty  
10:00 AM "But Why Dost Thou Judge Thy Brother?" Tom Wacaster  
11:00 AM "Why Sleep Ye?" Dave Watson  
*Lunch Break*  
1:30 PM "Why Stand Ye Here All the Day Idle?" Larry Powers  
2:30 PM "Is it Lawful for a Man to Put Away His Wife for Every Cause?" Kent Bailey  
3:30 PM Open Forum  
*Dinner Break*  
7:00 PM "How Shall We Escape, If We Neglect So Great Salvation?" Gary Colley  
7:45 PM "What Think Ye of Christ? Whose Son Is He?" Bobby Liddell

## Tuesday, June 15

- 9:00 AM "O Death, Where Is Thy Sting?" Michael McDaniel  
10:00 AM "How Shall this Be, Seeing I Know Not a Man?" Curtis Cates  
11:00 AM "Suppose Ye That I Am Come to Give Peace on Earth?" Jerry Murrell  
*Lunch Break*  
1:30 PM "Carest Thou Not That We Perish?" Terry Hightower  
2:30 PM "What Fellowship Hath Righteousness With Unrighteousness?" Tim Smith  
3:30 PM Open Forum  
*Dinner Break*  
7:00 PM "Why Call Ye Me, Lord, Lord, and Do Not the Things I Say?" Charles Orr  
7:45 PM "What must I Do to Be Saved?" Harrell Davidson

## Wednesday, June 16

- 9:00 AM "Lord, Wilt Thou at this Time Restore Again the Kingdom to Israel?" Clifford Newell  
10:00 AM "Who Is the Greatest in the Kingdom Of Heaven?" David Jones  
11:00 AM "Shall We Continue in Sin, That Grace May Abound?" Jerry Brewer  
*Lunch Break*  
1:30 PM "Wilt Thou Know...Faith Without Works Is Dead?" Guss Eoff  
2:30 PM "Who Are My Brethren?" B. J. Clarke  
3:30 PM Open Forum  
*Dinner Break*  
7:00 PM "Who Shall Be Able to Stand?" Tommy Hicks  
7:45 PM "Am I Therefore Become Your Enemy, Because I Tell You the Truth?" 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. For all other meals, a list of restaurants and a map will be available at the registration table in the foyer.

### 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, VIDEO TAPES, AND DVD

All lectures will be recorded on cassette audio tapes, video tapes,

and DVDs. They may be purchased during the *Bellview Lectures* or by mail order afterwards. (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, *Great New Testament Questions* 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, 2004, or afterwards at the regular price of \$12. It will contain 41 chapters and approximately 500 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.

(Continued from Page 5)

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). While I am opposed to imposing a hypocritical judgment on another, and while I am opposed to endeavoring to judge the motives or heart of another, I am most in support of the practice of examining the teaching of a man and drawing the logical conclusion as to the soundness thereof (cf., 1 The. 5:21-22). It is not unloving to bring a man to a point of understanding concerning his error and direct him to the truth of the matter. It should be noted that Joseph never said: “Oh, well, who can say who was right or wrong in the matter of my enslavement; you did a good thing.” He pointed out that God had used their evil for the greater good, but there is a vast difference between that and affirming the sinful actions of his brethren. He loved them, and he acted properly toward them. May we be like-minded.

#### **He Never Forgot to Give the Glory to God!**

He was wholly dependent upon God: “And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, *It is not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace*” (Gen. 41:16). “So now *it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt*” (Gen. 45:8). While men are quick to pass the blame, they are not so quick to defer

glory. Joseph was. He could have (presumably) absorbed the praise and appropriated the glory unto himself, but he rightly turned it to God. Are we like Joseph in this regard? If we point a finger of blame elsewhere when things go awry, do we give the glory for successes to its rightful owner—God? The strongest among us takes his strength from the same God as the weakest; the most intelligent is using a brain supplied by the same God as supplied the least intelligent; the wealthiest has but hoarded a larger portion of the property of the God who owns it all than others. None are self-made—others contribute to whatever we are. Joseph, of all people, might have had occasion to boast, but he did not. He deferred to the One from Whom all blessings come. May we imitate him in this.

#### **Some Closing Thoughts**

We have not even touched the hem of the garment concerning the life of this great Patriarch, and I would suggest that you procure a good concordance and study up on his life. An interesting lesson you might enjoy is found in the book *McGarvey's Sermons* and deals with the Providence of God in the life of Joseph. Other works have comparable good studies. The stories in the Old Testament have so much strength and encouragement to offer us (cf., Rom. 15:4). In addition to these articles, try to spend some time with the Patriarchs and prophets and learn the lessons God has preserved therein. May God bless you as you study and obey His Word.

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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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## Attitudes of Christians Towards the Issue of Dress

*Jason Roberts*

Realizing the gravity of modest apparel, this article invites the honest Bible student to maintain an open heart and an open Bible (Acts 17:11). It is the purpose of this article to examine the attitude that shepherds, preachers, parents, and members of the local congregation should manifest when approaching this vital Bible subject.

### **Concerned Shepherds**

God, in His infinite wisdom, has given elders the serious task of shepherding the local flock which is among them (1 Pet. 5:2). This peculiar responsibility which elders have is not to be treated lightly, but approached with the sobering reminder that each one of the souls entrusted to their care is infinitely worth more than the whole world (Mat. 16:26). When elders stand before God on that great and final day, before the precious souls over whom they watched (or were supposed to have watched) ever reach the hands of God, those souls will first pass through the hands of those elders. Every elder and every person who aspires to become an elder, needs to realize the seriousness of this above statement. How many elders can presently say and will be able to say on the day of judgment that they “are pure from the blood of all men” (Acts 20:26)?

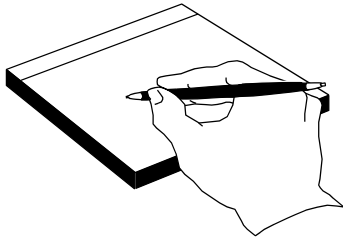
In what ways should elders demonstrate their concern as it relates to the issue of modest apparel. First, **shepherds need to be concerned enough to request the local preacher to preach on modest apparel.** One of the weighty responsibilities that elders have is to make sure their sheep are being fed a proper diet of God’s Word (1 Pet. 5:2; Acts 20:28). Since the issue of modest apparel is part of God’s

Word, it becomes a necessary part of the sheep’s diet. When sheep are not being fed a proper **diet** they will soon lose their **direction**. Sheep that lose their **direction** soon become **delinquent**. And **sheep that become delinquent** jeopardize their eternal **destiny!** All of this can be safeguarded when elders become gravely concerned about making sure the local preacher preaches the whole “counsel of God” (Acts 20:27).

Second, **shepherds need to state clearly where they stand on the issue of modest apparel.** This can be done a number of ways. One, when the local preacher finishes his sermon on the issue, an elder, representing the eldership, should support the preacher from the pulpit by making some public remarks regarding the sermon. There is no greater feeling than for a preacher to have an elder speak to the congregation immediately following a sensitive sermon of this caliber—voicing the eldership’s approval to the things he preached. The first time I preached on the issue of modest apparel, an elder did this very thing. I felt as if a tremendous burden had been relieved as a result. Thank God for elders who back their preachers! Also, shepherds can clearly state where they stand and what they expect of the local congregation regarding modesty by writing an article for their bulletin. By doing so, no one in the congregation can say that they were not aware of how their shepherds feel about the subject. Some members are just unaware of where their elders stand on this issue. Elders need to have the courage to inform the sheep about what God’s Word expects of them. Contrary to what

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# Notes From The Editor



**Michael  
Hatcher**

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## Bible Authority

In these articles, I have shown the need for Bible authority for all that we do (Col. 3:17) and that the Bible authorizes in three ways: (1) Direct Statements, (2) Examples, and (3) Implications. Relating to the way in which the Bible authorizes, we then noticed that in that authorization there is generic authority and specific authority. Using these principles, let us now turn to some of the questions which these individuals asked me (quotes will be exact without the use of *sic*).

One of the most popular questions dealt with the use of the computer and my authority for using one. As one wrote, "I don't see anywhere in the Bible where it allows us to use computers." Another trying to offset what I had written said, "Using the computer upon which you typed this reactionary article? Sin." Certainly computers are not specifically mentioned in the Bible. Computers are used for various tasks. One of which I use my computer for is to study God's Word. We are authorized to study the Bible (2 Tim. 2:15). I have a Bible program on the computer containing almost 1000 resources, and I have over 2000 files in Adobe Acrobat format dealing with God's Word. Through the use of the computer, I study the Bible which is authorized. However, it is a general authorization and the specifics of **how** we go about studying the Bible falls under that general authorization giving me the right to use the computer to accomplish the task. I also find authorization for a computer in the general authority to teach others the truth (Mat. 28:19). I have used the computer to accomplish that task given me (and others) by God. Also, God have authorized man to engage in rest/recreation/entertainment (Mark 6:31). Yet, that is a general authorization which allows one to determine how he wishes to accomplish this, giving authority for the use of the

computer in doing so. Likewise, we have authority for keeping up with events (Luke 13:1-5), thus to use the computer (as I do) for obtaining current events is authorized by God (as it would the local newspaper). Therefore, I have authority for using a computer in several different areas which God has authorized in a general way, even though it is never specifically mentioned in the Bible.

One asked the question about eating with a fork. "Do you use a fork when you are eating? Do you use it with your hand? In that case, I would like to know where do you find the authority to hold a fork with your hand to eat something. Does the Bible specifically allow you to do that?" This individual does not understand that something can be authorized by the Bible, yet not specifically mentioned. The Bible does authorize us to eat (John 6), yet it does not specify how we are to eat. Thus, under that general authorization, we may use knives and forks to eat.

Then one asked about driving a car by writing, "Do you realize that, by your definition of sinful, every time you get behind the wheel of your car, you are sinning? Cars are never mentioned in the Bible, nor are we authorized by God to drive them." This statement is simply not accurate in its representation of my "definition of sinful." The Bible authorizes us to *go* and we observe Jesus traveling in different ways. In addition to our Lord traveling to different places in different ways, we also see others doing the same. All those different ways are authorized by the general command to *go*. Thus, when I get behind the wheel of my car, I am not sinning but have authority from God in the general command to *go*. Since it is a general command, any method of going is also authorized by God whether it be by ship, by walking, by riding on an animal, by plan, or by automobile. Since God made this a general command, it is left up to us as to how we determine what is the best way to go (this involves Christian liberty and expediency).

Christian liberty is the right to act based upon what God has authorized in a general way. For example, God has authorized us to *go*. Since there are differing ways of *going*, the manner we go is within the realm of Christian liberty. However, for something to be within the realm of Christian liberty, it must be something which has authority from God. It would be a violation of Bible authority (thus sinful) to condemn a manner of *going* (one's Christian liberty) since the Bible authorizes such action. Expediency is the best way of accomplishing what God has authorized. While

I have authority to walk from one location to another, it might not be the best way of accomplishing it. The best way of (the expedient way) might be to drive a car or to ride in an airplane.

When God specifies what He wants, then we have no right to change that under the guise of Christian liberty or expediency. When Christ authorized unleavened bread and fruit of the vine for the communion service, then that is what must be used. We have no right to use potatoes and coke under the auspices of liberty or expediency (even though both fall under the general category of food). When we come to religious songs (psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs), God authorized singing (and such singing that teaches and admonishes, Col. 3:16; or is speaking, Eph. 5:19). We do not have the liberty to change that which God has authorized to another general category of music (whether it be with mechanical instrument, or making the voice sound like instruments).

While this is area was not dealt with in the comments and questions submitted to me regarding the article on Acappella, it is a question that is often raised in dealing with this subject, thus I wanted to deal with it here. We are often asked concerning the “church building,” “pews,” “air conditioning in the building,” and such like other questions. Does the church have Bible authority for buying property and building a building on that property. God authorizes the church to come together in one place to worship Him (1 Cor. 11:17ff). For individuals to come together, there must be a place to come together. The place is therefore authorized by God. However, the place is a general authorization, therefore expediency and Christian liberty are involved in deciding on the place. Since it is a general authorization, the place might be under a tree out in the open, it might be by a riverside (Acts 16:13ff), it could be a rented place, it could be in the third story of a building (Acts 20:7ff), or it could be buying land and building a building on that land. In this situation, the elders of the local congregation would make the decision as to what is the most expedient manner to carrying out God’s command to come together in worship to Him. That building, and its contents, fall under that area of Christian liberty and expediency, but they are authorized by God. *MH*

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(Continued from Page 1)  
some believe, elders have just as much authority to set

a dress policy for worship as they do in scheduling what time the saints are going to meet for worship. You show me a congregation where the elders do not take a stand on modest apparel and I will show you a congregation where people will be wearing some of the most ungodly things imaginable to worship.

Third, **shepherds need to be concerned enough to confront the sheep who are dressed immodestly.** This should not have to be done if the preacher is getting his message across. Unfortunately, some sheep tend to be stubborn at times and will persist in their rebellion regardless of what the preacher says. At this point, as difficult as it is, there needs to be loving confrontation given from the elders (Gal. 6:1-2). Those who love the Lord and love their shepherds will have no problem with their confronting them regarding these matters. Those who despise authority will get angry and probably leave. Let them go! Their rebellious attitude is not needed at the local congregation, lest it filter into the hearts of others.

### **Convicted Preachers**

Preachers who are more concerned about pleasing the masses than they are about pleasing God are abusing the sacred privilege of preaching the gospel (Gal. 1:10). In so doing, they render themselves ineffective servants in the eyes of God. Many preachers will preach the truth regarding Acts 2:38, but will neglect the same truth regarding 1 Timothy 2:9. Is there any difference in the Lord’s mandate for one to be baptized for the remission of his sins, and the Lord’s mandate for one to dress modestly (Mark 16:16; 1 Pet. 3:3)? Preachers need to be convicted about preaching not what is popular to man, but rather what is pleasing to God. Why then is there a lack of conviction in the minds of some preachers regarding these matters? Anytime an issue is neglected by a preacher, whether it is from the pen or the pulpit, you can be sure that the underlying cause is fear. The fear of what others are going to say or do. When God called and commissioned the mighty prophet Ezekiel to speak to the rebellious children of Israel, He said, “And thou, son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though briers and thorns *be* with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions: be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they *be* a rebellious house. And thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear: for they *are* most rebellious” (Eze. 2:6-7).



After preaching the truth on modest apparel, the preacher may be the subject of Sunday morning's lunch conversation among some of the disgruntled members. But if the conversation in heaven between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is pleasing, then this is all that matters. Furthermore, the preacher may receive a bad look or simply be ignored from a member who would normally shake his hand and tell him what a great sermon that was. However, if the God of heaven looks favorably upon the message, then again this is what really matters. The Bible says that evil doers hate the light (John 3:19). It was true then; it is still true today. When the light of the gospel is shown lovingly and firmly upon those who are in sin, sometimes it will invoke a negative reaction from the hearer.

Preachers who are not convicted to herald the totality of God's inspired Word will be tragically convicted in their sins by God on the day of judgment and will have an eternity of regret for so doing.

### **Controlling Parents**

Parents, and fathers in particular, have been given the tremendous responsibility in rearing their children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). To a large measure, the eternal destiny of their children is in their hands. They can be either a force for good or a force for evil when it comes to the issue of modest apparel. God declared that he was going to bring judgment to the house of Eli because he restrained not his sons. Consequently, his sons were vile or wicked (1 Sam. 3:12-13). The Holy Spirit, through the apostle Paul, commended Lois and Eunice for translating their faith into Timothy, and for making sure that he knew the holy Scriptures which were able to make him wise unto salvation (2 Tim. 3:15). Parents have the choice of being like Eli, and thereby refuse to control what their children will wear, or they can be like Lois and Eunice and teach them from their childhood the sacred principles of decency and modesty. If a mother and father allow their daughter to wear skimpy outfits when she is little, then she will think nothing of wearing the same when she matures into her teenage years. Incidentally, the time to be training our sons and daughters regarding what the Bible says about modest apparel is not when they become teenagers but when they are small.

Fathers need to shoulder their responsibilities in being the spiritual leader in their homes. Mothers need

to set a godly example of propriety and modesty before their children because, "As is the mother, so is her daughter" (Eze. 16:44). Both mom and dad need to have the parental backbone to tell their children that they are not going to dress in a way that is unbecoming of a child of God.

### **Cautious Members**

Individual members of the local congregation need to be extremely cautious in how they approach the issue of modest apparel. They need to avoid the extreme of setting their own standard as to what is modest and what is not. Additionally, they need to avoid the sin of looking disdainfully at someone who attends the worship service who may be immodestly attired. Why? First, this may be the first time that individual has visited the church of Christ and he or she may know nothing about the issue of modest apparel. You can be sure that it will be the last time he or she visits our services if some judgmental, Pharisaical member is assigned as a door-greeter for that month! Second, the clothing that individual is wearing may be the best that he or she has. James addressed the serious nature of this matter when he discussed the two men who came to the assembly dressed differently. One man was dressed in fine apparel and apparently was wealthy. The other was dressed in tattered rags and was no doubt poor. You can almost see and hear some of the members immediately approaching and saying to the man dressed in fine apparel, "Welcome to the Church of Christ. We're so glad you are here today. Sit over with us. How about leading our opening prayer for us. What are you doing for lunch?" The man who is dressed poorly is neglected and becomes the subject of someone's conversation until the service begins. After all, what can that person offer us here at this church? For those of us who do not think that there will be souls lost over this sin, you need to read carefully James 3, specifically verses nine and ten! Some of our brethren who are guilty of the above-mentioned sin, are at the building every time the doors are opened. They are some of the hardest working members of the church, but they are going to miss heaven if they do not repent of this sin.

God is serious about the issue of modest apparel. May we, in view of eternity, address it with the same degree of seriousness.

*2909 Penbrook Drive; Valdosta, GA 31605*

# Great New Testament Questions

June 12 - 16, 2004

## Saturday, June 12

- 7:00 PM "Where Is He That Is Born King of the Jews?" Keith Mosher  
7:45 PM "By What Authority Doest Thou These Things?" David Brown

## Sunday, June 13

- 9:00 AM "This Is an Hard Saying; Who Can Hear It?" Lee Davis  
10:00 AM "To Whom Shall We Go?" Greg Lewis  
*Lunch Break*  
2:00 PM "What Is Truth?" Eddie Whitten  
3:00 PM "For What Son Is He Whom the Father Chasteneth Not?" Gary Summers  
*Dinner Break*  
7:00 PM "What Is Your Life?" Lynn Parker  
7:45 PM "Is Christ Divided?" Michael Shepherd

## Monday, June 14

- 9:00 AM "Which Is the Great Commandment In the Law?" Loy Hardesty  
10:00 AM "But Why Dost Thou Judge Thy Brother?" Tom Wacaster  
11:00 AM "Why Sleep Ye?" Dave Watson  
*Lunch Break*  
1:30 PM "Why Stand Ye Here All the Day Idle?" Larry Powers  
2:30 PM "Is it Lawful for a Man to Put Away His Wife for Every Cause?" Kent Bailey  
3:30 PM Open Forum  
*Dinner Break*  
7:00 PM "How Shall We Escape, If We Neglect So Great Salvation?" Gary Colley  
7:45 PM "What Think Ye of Christ? Whose Son Is He?" Bobby Liddell

## Tuesday, June 15

- 9:00 AM "O Death, Where Is Thy Sting?" Michael McDaniel  
10:00 AM "How Shall this Be, Seeing I Know Not a Man?" Curtis Cates  
11:00 AM "Suppose Ye That I Am Come to Give Peace on Earth?" Jerry Murrell  
*Lunch Break*  
1:30 PM "Carest Thou Not That We Perish?" Terry Hightower  
2:30 PM "What Fellowship Hath Righteousness With Unrighteousness?" Tim Smith  
3:30 PM Open Forum  
*Dinner Break*  
7:00 PM "Why Call Ye Me, Lord, Lord, and Do Not the Things I Say?" Charles Orr  
7:45 PM "What must I Do to Be Saved?" Harrell Davidson

## Wednesday, June 16

- 9:00 AM "Lord, Wilt Thou at this Time Restore Again the Kingdom to Israel?" Clifford Newell  
10:00 AM "Who Is the Greatest in the Kingdom Of Heaven?" David Jones  
11:00 AM "Shall We Continue in Sin, That Grace May Abound?" Jerry Brewer  
*Lunch Break*  
1:30 PM "Wilt Thou Know...Faith Without Works Is Dead?" Guss Eoff  
2:30 PM "Who Are My Brethren?" B. J. Clarke  
3:30 PM Open Forum  
*Dinner Break*  
7:00 PM "Who Shall Be Able to Stand?" Tommy Hicks  
7:45 PM "Am I Therefore Become Your Enemy, Because I Tell You the Truth?" 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. For all other meals, a list of restaurants and a map will be available at the registration table in the foyer.

### 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, VIDEO TAPES, AND DVD

All lectures will be recorded on cassette audio tapes, video tapes,

and DVDs. They may be purchased during the *Bellview Lectures* or by mail order afterwards. (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, *Great New Testament Questions* 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, 2004, or afterwards at the regular price of \$12. It will contain 41 chapters and approximately 500 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.

# Qualities Of Leadership (No. 4)

*Clifford Newell, Jr.*

## **A Virtuous Heart**

Virtue is force, strength, power, moral courage, and determination. The cause of Christ and His church can never be served successfully by leaders who do not possess virtuous hearts.

An aggressive program of work, especially mission work, will almost always be attacked by a minority of dissenters who are weak in faith but strong in verbiage. Faint hearted leaders will tend to cut back the program of work in order to still the voices of such criticism. This sometimes continues until nothing remains but a dead, *house-keeping* church. The church in Sardis (Rev. 3:1-6) may well have enjoyed the peace of many do-nothing churches—after all, a cemetery is a peaceful place.

Real strength and courage are required to press forward confidently in the work of the Lord, and virtuous leaders are as essential as in the days of Moses. Woe unto elders who are so afraid to lead that the church dies under their oversight!

Church discipline is a responsibility of every congregation, but is not likely to exist in a congregation where there are no virtuous leaders to provide the teaching and example so sorely needed. Only the Lord knows how many churches (and elderships) are courting division and apostasy rather than face the unpleasant task of confronting sin and dealing with it properly. How many souls will be lost because they were not disciplined when such could have restored them to Christ? How greatly we need virtuous leaders! How the church could be strengthened by obeying the command: “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” (2 The. 3:6).

Sin has been cloaked in a mantle of respectability by much of society. In this manner the devil tries to infiltrate the church. Virtuous leadership is required to stand against the tide of “everyone is doing it” and prevent the church from floundering on the shoals of worldliness.

Strong faithful leadership can move a church forward in the work of the Lord and lift it above carnality and petty attitude and bickering. When a congregation has weak leadership, it remains continu-

ally bogged down by innumerable small problems which are constantly discussed but seldom solved. These chronic ills not only reflect weak leadership, they destroy any possibility of an effective program of work and corrupt the attitudes of members of the church.

This writer is privileged to be working with a congregation of God’s people, both as an elder and as a minister. We, the elders, have experienced and observed that in most congregations they have become like a factory, i.e., they teach people, baptize them, and let them go out the back door. Somehow we have got to find the virtue to close the back door. This can be seen when one observes bulletins where on a regular basis someone is being baptized for the remission of sins and begins worshipping God, but the number seldom if ever increases.

May those who serve/function in this leadership capacity have a virtuous heart!

## **An Understanding Heart**

In impressing the qualities of Jesus which so perfectly fit Him as our great high priest, the Hebrews writer emphasized His understanding heart. “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. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb. 4:15-16).

The quality of understanding is most necessary in leaders in the church. Good elders will be approachable by those with problems; their understanding will inspire confidence and invite such approach. They will not appear as stern judges but as kind, wise, sympathetic, understanding leaders.

Elders should pray so fervently for wisdom. For example: Here is a member who has fallen into a grave error through human weakness. What approach by the elders will restore this one and still protect the church, and what approach will drive him away completely? He is at a low point in life. Above all, he may need understanding and help. He certainly needs someone who can view his weakness. It is very difficult not to use oneself as a standard when dealing with the weaknesses of others. It is difficult to see each person

as an individual in a unique setting and possessing completely personal strong and weak characteristics. One alcoholic can easily sympathize with another, but it is much more difficult for the one who has never tasted alcohol to be in the least understanding toward the struggles of the alcoholic.

Why did Jesus deal so gently with the woman guilty of the terrible sin of adultery? "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more" (John 8:11). Obviously, He knew both the heart of the woman and the circumstances of her sin. Though He condemned all sin in the strongest terms, His heart was touched by the plight of the sinner. One does not have to approve an action to be sympathetic and understanding toward the individual who performed it.

Elders and the congregation must be a unit and function together as a unit. It must never be *their* (the elders) program and *their* responsibility. This attitude is wrong on the part of members but can be produced by negligence on the part of elders. They sometimes become too remote from the thinking, feelings, desires, and abilities of the other members. When this happens, eventually they find themselves with almost the entire load to pull and as a result, a failing program on their

hands. When elders begin to lose rapport with the membership of the church, their influence and leadership will suffer. In such a situation a feeling of strife between elders and members can easily develop.

Here are some suggestions toward the development of an understanding heart. These are general in nature, and good elders will find many additional ways to establish a proper relationship with the congregation.

- Get closer to the members. Visit in their homes; really get to know them.
- Work diligently to develop a keen appreciation for the abilities of the one talent man as well as the five talent man.
- Do not judge everyone by one standard of strength and weakness. Be understanding of the individual.
- Work with all the members in planning congregational programs of work and in carrying out these programs.
- Pray fervently for a wise and understanding heart.

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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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## “Witnessing and Testifying”

*Danny L. Box*

As we look all across the brotherhood, we see example after example of brethren who “follow a multitude to *do evil*” (Exo. 23:2). Preachers and congregations who were once sound in the faith are now involved in some of the very things that they use to condemn in days gone by. The slogan which has for years been the trademark of a popular hamburger chain, “Have it your way,” is the way many people today want their religion. Many practices, doctrines, and ideas which have been common for years among the denominational world, are now being adopted by members and congregations of the Lord’s church. Adopting these practices, results in congregations being divided, the truth no longer being taught, and God not being glorified. *Witnessing* and *testifying* as practiced by the religious world constitutes two things which have found their way into the church of today.

### Definition of Terms

The *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* defines *witness* as, “one who can give **firsthand** account of something seen, heard or experienced; one who furnishes **firsthand** evidence.” The same source defines *testify* as, “to make a statement based on **personal** knowledge in support of an asserted fact; to bear witness; to make a declaration of truth or fact.” *Black’s Law Dictionary* defines *witness* as “one who, being present, **personally** sees, hears or perceives a thing; a beholder, spectator, or eyewitness; one who testifies to what he sees or otherwise observed.” Therefore, by the given definition, one must have been present, having been an eyewitness when a certain event took place and then

be able to tell about what was seen, heard, or perceived, to be a true witness.

### **Witnessing and Testifying as Practiced by the World**

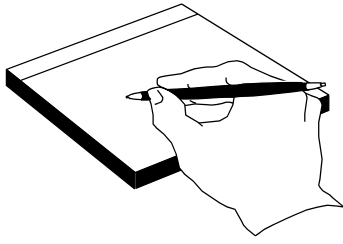
When the religious world addresses the issue of witnessing and testifying they are usually talking about some miraculous event that has happened in their life that enables them to tell others about the Lord. Many in the denominational world believes that witnessing is Spirit directed testimony about what the Lord has done directly to change their life, causing them to turn their life around, and by testifying of this to others, they also might accept Christ as their personal Savior. Others believe that the Holy Spirit directly opens the hearts of men, and they are just waiting for someone to come and *witness* to them about Jesus Christ and lead them to salvation. If the Holy Spirit directly opens the hearts of men, why do they need someone to *witness* to them? Why do they not know what needs to be done if the Spirit has already opened up their hearts?

Some in the denominational world view witnessing as a spiritual gift, and that all *Christians* do not have this spiritual gift bestowed upon them. However, if *witnessing* is telling some one about the truth of the Lord, is not witnessing really just evangelizing, and is not evangelizing, teaching, and are not all Christians to be teachers of the Word (Mat. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16)?

We also read of some in the religious world who advocate that they are able to *witness* for the Lord,

*(Continued on Page 3)*

# Notes From The Editor



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Hatcher**

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## Singing

Having seen that we must have authority for all that we do, I want to come back to the subject of singing. There is really no question as to whether or not we have authority for singing in worship to God today. We have direct statements in Ephesians 5:19, Colossians 3:16, and James 5:13, and we have an example in Acts 16:25. However, when we discuss mechanical instruments of music in worship to God today, we find biblical authority lacking.

In this article we want to look at some of the passages which speak of singing in detail. In Philippi Paul and Silas were falsely accused, arrested, beaten, and imprisoned. While in prison, Luke records, “And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them” (Acts 16:25). Here we have two Christians engaged in worship although it is not in a *worship service* (a formal assembly of the saints where we come together in worship to God). They were singing praises to God. There is no mention of any instruments of music on this occasion, and while I realize that they did not have the opportunity, there are none included. We find authority for individual Christians singing praises to God outside of a worship service.

Paul in correcting many of the errors of the Corinthian church writes, “What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also” (1 Cor. 14:15). We find this in the general context (chapters 11-16) of a worship service (where they have come together to engage in all five avenues of worship). He is going to sing (no mention of instruments) with a proper attitude of heart (*spirit*) and giving understanding to others as he sings. Here we find authority for singing in our *corporate* worship to

God.

In writing to the Ephesian brethren, Paul writes, “Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Eph. 5:19). There are several things which we need to note about this passage. Paul mentions *speaking*, which comes from a word dealing with the pronunciation of the words or the actual saying of the words as opposed to the meaning of the words. Instruments are contrary to this word as is the making of our voices sound like instruments. *To yourselves* is a reflexive pronoun and is reciprocal in nature. The meaning of this is that we are doing it together, you are doing it while I am doing it, or we are all engaged in doing the activity—singing. (The reciprocal nature of the command also shows the error of having one sing to another such as choirs or choruses). The type of songs we are dealing with is also mentioned: psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Then we are to sing with sincerity (“making melody in your heart”). Because of the reciprocal pronoun, we know that there is a plurality of individuals involved. There is also good evidence that this is discussing our worship assemblies, but whether this is specifically speaking of our worship assemblies, it certainly applies.

In a parallel passage to Ephesians 5:19, Paul writes, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (Col. 3:16). Again the type of songs we are concerned with in worship to God is psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. In these songs we are to teach and admonish. As we speak words (Eph. 5:19), those words are to teach and admonish. Instruments cannot perform this action (nor does making our voices sound like them, humming, whistling, etc.). *One another* is the same reflexive pronoun which is reciprocal in nature as is the *to yourselves* of Ephesians 5:19.

From these two parallel passages we learn that each Christian is to engage in the singing of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Since it is reciprocal, this is more than simply individual action as there is more than one individual involved in the singing—thus corporate action. In that singing we are to be speaking words and those words teach and admonish or give understanding to others. I would also note that if the Greek *psallo* includes mechanical instruments of music, then each individual must play an instrument along with his singing. (This is seen when one examines the

imperative of being filled with the Spirit in Ephesians 5:18. There are five present participles—speaking, singing, making melody, giving thanks, and submitting—resulting from and evidencing the imperative. Each one of the five items is demanded of each person.)

We also need to notice the statement James makes: “Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms” (Jam. 5:13). In this passage we notice that we have individual action, not corporate action. This does not deal with a worship service, but when an individual is by himself, he has the authority to sing psalms.

Let us notice some conclusions from these passages. We have authority from God for singing of religious songs (psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs) when one is by himself, when one is with others, and in corporate worship services. We also observe that it was singing which was authorized, never mechanical instruments of music. We also note that the singing involved the speaking of words which teach, admonish, and give understanding to others, never making our voices sound like mechanical instruments of music, whistling, humming, or such like. If we are going to act according to God’s authority and not man’s we must not use mechanical instruments of music, or such things as making our voices sound like them (as do many groups presently do, i.e., Acappella), but sing. This is what God has authorized and this is where the faithful will stay. MH

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(Continued from Page 1)

and *testify* about His works because the Spirit speaks to them directly, and tells them what to say to others about the Lord. Now I firmly believe that the Spirit does speak to us today, and gives us a knowledge of the truth, and with that knowledge we can teach the world about the Lord. However, I hasten to add that the Spirit speaks to us **only** through the Word, and not directly, as many in the religious world (and some in the church) advocate, and it is through a knowledge of the Word that we have the ability to teach others about the Lord. I would like to ask those who advocate that they can be a *witness*, if the Spirit is speaking to man and telling him what to say, why is there so much religious confusion and division in the world? Why would the Spirit of God tell the Baptist to *testify* one thing, and the Nazarenes another, and the Pentecostals even still another? We know that God is not the “*author* of confusion”

(1 Cor. 14:33), and He wants “Let all things be done decently and in order” (1 Cor. 14:40). We also know that God hates division and wants us to “be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (1 Cor. 1:10; 2 Cor. 13:11; 1 Pet. 3:8). So why do we see people today claiming to be *witnesses* who are *testifying* about everything in the world except the truth of God’s Word?

### Can We Witness Today?

Based on our definition of witness as given at the start of this study, the answer to the question, “Can we witness today?” is an empathic **no!** Remember now, we said that a witness is one who can give first hand account of something seen, heard, or experienced. There is no one alive today who actually walked with the Lord, saw Him performing those powerful miracles, nor heard His wonderful proclamation of the Gospel. Our joy and wonder of such blessings today is had only through studying, believing, and accepting the **inspired record** of such things.

The late brother Joe Gilmore, in a lecture delivered at the Bellview Lectures in 1995, answers the question, “Can anyone witness today?” far better than I can. He stated at that time:

A witness is one who has seen and can testify of something. There are no witnesses today! One must hear and see Jesus after His resurrection to qualify as a witness. The apostles were chosen by the Lord to be His witnesses (Luke 24:48; Acts 1:8). Men today are not witnesses. Christians preach the testimony of the witnesses. The apostles were the witnesses. We today preach the faith that was once delivered to the saints (Jude 3) (262).

Brother Robert Taylor, in a tract he wrote on “Witnessing” gives further proof that we cannot be witnesses today:

Are we witnesses today? The writer of this tract is not and neither are you, the reader! Can we tell the world that we have seen and heard the Lord with our own eyes and ears? NO! God has not made us into inspired witnesses incapable of erring, when we teach His will. What then can we do? We can teach people what those real witnesses wrote in the Bible and the absolute testimony they gave. We can teach people the Bible answer to the question “What must I do to be saved?” We can turn people’s attention to the great cases of conversion that are spelled out in such beauty and simplicity within the book of Acts (n.p.).

As prescribed by Holy Writ, to be a witness one must have been with the Lord from His baptism by John in the Jordan, and must have seen Him after His resurrection from the dead (Luke 24:46-48; Acts 1:22). As the apostles, the true witnesses of the Lord, went everywhere giving “witness of the resurrection of the

Lord” (Acts 4:33), multitudes believed their testimony and were baptized (Acts 5:14).

### **What Can We Do Today?**

Even though, in the literal sense, we cannot witness to the world, we as Christians still have a very serious responsibility. It is our responsibility, as a “chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people” (1 Pet. 2:9), to deliver the saving Gospel to the lost and dying of this world. We can do this in the following ways:

1. We can warn the wicked of his wicked ways (Eze. 3:18-19).
2. We can go and teach all nations (Mat. 28:19; Mark 16:15).
3. We are to be ready to give an answer to every man (1 Pet. 3:15).
4. We are to preach the Word, and the Word only (2 Tim. 4:2; Gal. 1:6-9).
5. We are to reprove, rebuke, and exhort with the Word (2 Tim. 4:2).
6. We are to earnestly contend for the faith (Jude 3).
7. We are to defend the Gospel (Phi. 1:17).
8. We are to be gentle, patient, and meek while teaching (2 Tim. 2:24-26).
9. We are to speak as the oracles of God and not shun to declare the whole counsel of God (1 Pet. 4:11; Acts 20:27).
10. We are to use seasoned speech (Gal. 4:5-6).
11. We must be an example of the believers

(1 Tim 4:12-19).

12. We must keep the faith (2 Tim. 4:7; Rev. 2:10).
13. We must live soberly, righteously, and godly (Tit. 2:12).
14. We must not conform to the world (Rom. 12:2; 1 John 2:15-17).
15. We must be ready to communicate the gospel to others (1 Tim. 6:18-20).

If we “take heed unto” ourselves and do all these things that we have listed, and all of those things commanded by God, then we will both save ourselves and those that hear us (1 Tim. 4:16).

### **Conclusion**

The consequences of what we do may determine the eternal destiny of our family, friends, or acquaintances. Jesus was not ashamed to suffer and die for us, let us not be ashamed to share His soul saving message to the lost. Let us boldly stand up and proclaim the testimony that we have received from those faithful witnesses of the Lord, letting the world know that Jesus Christ is **Lord of Lords** and **King of Kings**, and will save all those who obey Him!

*Deceased*

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- Gilmore, Joe. “Jehovah’s Witnesses Versus Christ’s Doctrine.” *The Doctrine of Christ Versus the Doctrines of Men*. Ed. Michael Hatcher. Pensacola, FL: Austin McGary and Co., 1995.
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## **Qualities Of Leadership (No. 5)**

*Clifford Newell, Jr.*

### **An Optimistic Heart**

Through nineteen hundred years the promise of Jesus still lives: “Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen” (Mat. 28:20).

The amazing apostle Paul wrote from his prison cell in Rome: “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Phi. 4:13).

Jesus came to the storm-tossed disciples: He came walking through the wind and the waves surrounding them. Peter started to Him walking upon the water, “But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith,

wherefore didst thou doubt?” (Mat. 14:30-31).

Chapter eight of Romans contains great encouragement for the Christian. Among the wonderful statements recorded there are these: “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” (8:28). “What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?” (8:31).

A person of faith cannot be other than optimistic. There is a world to conquer for Christ and no possibility of ultimate defeat for the faithful. The matchless challenges before the church today should be viewed with the utmost optimism by leaders in the church. After all, the strength of the omnipotent Christ and the might of heaven are on the side of the church. Where is room for pessimism and doubt?



Optimism is a direct product of faith while pessimism and fear are children of doubt. Why does a world full of opportunities stretch untouched before the church today? Have we, like Peter, looked at the winds and become afraid? Are we afraid the Lord has forgotten His promise to be with us? Are we afraid He cannot cope with the modern world: depressions, wars, strikes, storms, sickness, emergencies? Can we no longer trust God?

A congregation can be stifled by a pessimistic eldership. Elders who confront each new challenge with frown, shaking head, and mutterings of "I do not see how we can possibly do it," or "We are just too overloaded already," have sold their birthright. It is worse than tragic that congregations have become dead *house-keeping* bodies, young preachers have been discouraged into quitting, converts to Christ have

returned disillusioned to the world, and fields "white unto harvest" have remained untouched because of faithless pessimism in leadership.

On the other hand, a congregation can be led to unbelievable accomplishments by elders of faith and optimism. We are seeing great programs of work and great accomplishments today, and back of these are faithful, optimistic, enthusiastic elders. Thank God for such! May their tribe increase; so many more are needed. A good elder will be greatly optimistic in his leadership. Believing in God, he cannot be otherwise.

There is no low ceiling in what can be accomplished. As individuals and congregations, we cannot out-do or out-give God. Our accomplishments in Christ can increase just as far as our faith will permit; there is no other ceiling.

*25 Risto Rd; Bristol, VA 24201-2040*

## What Has You Bound?

### Mark 2:3

*Burt Jones*

This man who was sick of the palsy was in an immobile state. Palsy is a term that was applied to a number of diseases at the time of Jesus. It was used to describe the condition of any person who was unable to command movement in an area of his body. This man apparently fell in this category.

In palsy of this type, the muscles, tissues, blood vessels, nerves, and every other physical attribute necessary for movement are present. But, for some reason, flesh rebels against command. Your body wants to move but it cannot. "I want a better life for my family, but I cannot seem to move." "I want to change my manner of life, but I cannot. I am stuck in this condition."

Men and women feel anger at being bound. They feel as if everyone else is moving and free. They appear to have all of the physical, mental, and emotional attributes necessary for change and growth. They can still think, still feel. They all have talents and skills. But, their human spirit does not respond to command.

Stress turns into pressure, and pressure into rage, and that constant rage brings weariness. You become numb, unable to act or even to believe for change. Every day seems as though it is the day before. It does not matter if you live in a ghetto or a penthouse, if you are not receptive in mind and spirit, you will feel as if you are in a jail cell (Gen. 45:5; Mat. 8:6; Acts 16:8).

Stress, anger, and prejudice are not linked to any one race or level of income. They infect nearly every person. And if they become severe enough they bring a person to a state of weariness, grief, immobility. Such a person is sick of inner palsy. Maybe they are stuck in terrible childhood memories, teenage issues, adult problems.

Some among us cannot hold a job, or maintain relationships, hold onto finances, or keep their word. The soul with this type palsy knows something is wrong with him, but seems unable to do anything about it.

If you have everyone around withdrawing from you (Psa. 41:7; Mat. 27:46), you can become quickly depleted unless you have as your companion the Great Physician. Whatever your palsied state, Jesus calls you through his glorious Gospel to an abundant life of service to others.

The Bible records that when the family of David was taken captive at Ziklag, being greatly distressed, he encouraged himself in the Lord his God (1 Sam. 30:60). Jude speaks of our "building up" ourselves on our most holy faith. How, by praying as a faithful Christian and looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life (Jude 20-21).

What has **you** bound?

*P.O. Box 531; Marietta, OH 45750*

# Great New Testament Questions

June 12 - 16, 2004

## Saturday, June 12

- 7:00 PM "Where Is He That Is Born King of the Jews?" Keith Mosher  
7:45 PM "By What Authority Doest Thou These Things?" David Brown

## Sunday, June 13

- 9:00 AM "This Is an Hard Saying; Who Can Hear It?" Lee Davis  
10:00 AM "To Whom Shall We Go?" Greg Lewis  
*Lunch Break*  
2:00 PM "What Is Truth?" Eddie Whitten  
3:00 PM "For What Son Is He Whom the Father Chasteneth Not?" Gary Summers  
*Dinner Break*  
7:00 PM "What Is Your Life?" Lynn Parker  
7:45 PM "Is Christ Divided?" Michael Shepherd

## Monday, June 14

- 9:00 AM "Which Is the Great Commandment In the Law?" Loy Hardesty  
10:00 AM "But Why Dost Thou Judge Thy Brother?" Tom Wacaster  
11:00 AM "Why Sleep Ye?" Dave Watson  
*Lunch Break*  
1:30 PM "Why Stand Ye Here All the Day Idle?" Larry Powers  
2:30 PM "Is it Lawful for a Man to Put Away His Wife for Every Cause?" Kent Bailey  
3:30 PM Open Forum  
*Dinner Break*  
7:00 PM "How Shall We Escape, If We Neglect So Great Salvation?" Gary Colley  
7:45 PM "What Think Ye of Christ? Whose Son Is He?" Bobby Liddell

## Tuesday, June 15

- 9:00 AM "O Death, Where Is Thy Sting?" Michael McDaniel  
10:00 AM "How Shall this Be, Seeing I Know Not a Man?" Curtis Cates  
11:00 AM "Suppose Ye That I Am Come to Give Peace on Earth?" Jerry Murrell  
*Lunch Break*  
1:30 PM "Carest Thou Not That We Perish?" Terry Hightower  
2:30 PM "What Fellowship Hath Righteousness With Unrighteousness?" Tim Smith  
3:30 PM Open Forum  
*Dinner Break*  
7:00 PM "Why Call Ye Me, Lord, Lord, and Do Not the Things I Say?" Charles Orr  
7:45 PM "What must I Do to Be Saved?" Harrell Davidson

## Wednesday, June 16

- 9:00 AM "Lord, Wilt Thou at this Time Restore Again the Kingdom to Israel?" Clifford Newell  
10:00 AM "Who Is the Greatest in the Kingdom Of Heaven?" David Jones  
11:00 AM "Shall We Continue in Sin, That Grace May Abound?" Jerry Brewer  
*Lunch Break*  
1:30 PM "Wilt Thou Know...Faith Without Works Is Dead?" Guss Eoff  
2:30 PM "Who Are My Brethren?" B. J. Clarke  
3:30 PM Open Forum  
*Dinner Break*  
7:00 PM "Who Shall Be Able to Stand?" Tommy Hicks  
7:45 PM "Am I Therefore Become Your Enemy, Because I Tell You the Truth?" 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. For all other meals, a list of restaurants and a map will be available at the registration table in the foyer.

### 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, VIDEO TAPES, AND DVD

All lectures will be recorded on cassette audio tapes, video tapes,

and DVDs. They may be purchased during the *Bellview Lectures* or by mail order afterwards. (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, *Great New Testament Questions* 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, 2004, or afterwards at the regular price of \$12. It will contain 41 chapters and approximately 500 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.

# This and That

Brother Mac Deaver is at it again. He brought out a special issue of *Biblical Notes Quarterly*. Brother Deaver claims to have wisdom given directly into his heart by God. Yet, he begins by saying that we thought he would not be able to respond since he had laid his publication to rest. However, the majority of people I know expected him to respond by bringing out another issue of his publication. I wonder where his God-given wisdom was in making this statement. Why mention such a point as this? In debating the Pentecostals, we have for years pointed out that the proof is in the demonstration. The same is true with the Deaver doctrine. Yet, his demonstration is woefully lacking.

Brother Deaver also informs us that he has never made the Holy Spirit issue a matter of fellowship. We again are made to wonder why he would make such a statement (where was the wisdom which came directly from the Holy Spirit?) when he is on record as saying, "We cannot fellowship those who say that by means of the Spirit's indwelling men can and do receive direction/guidance that is other than (or in addition to) the direction the Spirit has given us in the Bible." This, which he said he could not fellowship, is now the

position he holds. At one time he would not fellowship the position he now holds, yet claims that he has never made it a fellowship issue.

Brother Malcolm Hill is also at it again. He says he will be glad to meet any of the men who wrote in the February 2004 issue of *The Gospel Journal* on their consistency regarding fellowship (*The Love Letter*, no date, page 4). Yet, brother Hill continues to fellowship the false teacher, Mac Deaver. A few years ago (see *Defender*, September 2001, January 2002, and July 2002), when he was challenged to debate his consistency on fellowship, brother Hill was as silent as a tomb, yet he writes and speaks constantly (his hobby-horse) of everyone else's consistency. MH

If you are not able to attend the 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Bellview Lectures in person, then be sure and listen to them on the internet. Go to [www.oabs.org](http://www.oabs.org) and you can view the lectures live (there will be a link to this site on our web page). While we would rather you be here, if you cannot be, make sure you view them online.

## Updated CD

The 1988-2004 books, all *Defender* issues of 1970, 1972-2003, along with numerous other books, tracts, and studies 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 \$65 plus postage/handling fee of \$1.25 (total is \$66.25) in which you receive all the lectureship books (less than \$5 per book) and other material. 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 previous CD. 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.

**MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR**

**Write For Your  
Free Bible Correspondence  
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4850 Saufley Field Road  
Pensacola, FL 32526**

# Defender



*“I am set for the defense of the gospel”*

Volume XXXIII

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Number 7

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## Recommended Reading: *Great New Testament Questions*

Gary W. Summers

This past week the 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Bellview Lectures were conducted in Pensacola, Florida. Last year they produced *Great Old Testament Questions*; this current companion volume completes the series, although only a few of the 3,297 questions asked in the King James Version of the Bible could be examined. The forty dealt with here include some of the most important questions ever asked.

Some deal with the nature and mission of Jesus and His kingdom, such as: “How Shall This Be, Seeing I Know Not A Man?” (Luke 1:30). Curtis Cates, director of the Memphis School of Preaching, considers the significance of the virgin birth of Christ and arguments that are used against this historical fact. One of these charges is that the entire account was “**simply pagan and/or Jewish legend and myth**” (151). He highlights the differences between the biblical event and the virgin myths that characterized pagan theology. This discussion is followed by eight points which show the necessity of the virgin birth. Serious students of the Word will want to study and use this material.

Other questions relating to Jesus are: “Where Is He That Is Born King of the Jews?” (Mat. 3:2) and “Son, Why Hast Thou Thus Dealt With Us?” (Luke 2:48). One of the more threatening questions asked of Jesus was: “By What Authority Doest Thou These Things?” (Mat. 21:23). David Brown, editor of *Contending For The Faith*, made an excellent oral presentation, as well as providing pertinent information in the book. He relates the question about Jesus’ authority to the fact that today men likewise (even those who profess to follow Christ) reject His authority.

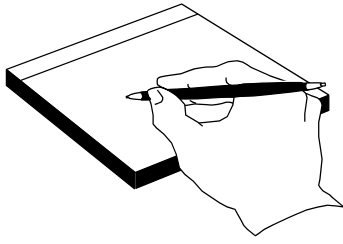
Religious denominations do not appeal to the Scripture for authority—but to “**prayer books, creeds, manuals, catechisms, religious councils, conferences, presbyteries, synods, and the like**” (91). He then demonstrates the connection between authority and love, which is a link that many brethren, elders, and churches have forgotten.

“This is a Hard Saying; Who Can Hear It?” (John 6:60) also treats the subject of biblical authority as it relates to the interpretation of the Scriptures (hermeneutics). It includes a significant statement made by Rubel Shelly to the writer (Lee Davis) in the Los Angeles Airport earlier this year (225).

Other chapters relating specifically to our Lord involve His Deity. One is a question asked of Him by His disciples: “To Whom Shall We Go?” (John 6:68), which recognizes that only Jesus can save us from our sins, and the other one He asked of His critics: “What Think Ye Of Christ? Whose Son Is He?” (Mat. 22:42), which explains how Christ can be David’s son and Lord at the same time. The disciples ask a question of Jesus after His resurrection just prior to His ascension into Heaven, which prompts a discussion of the nature of the kingdom: “Lord, Wilt Thou At This Time Restore Again The Kingdom To Israel?” (Acts 1:6).

Closely related to topics about Jesus are those that relate to faith, two of which are: “Why Are Ye Fearful, O Ye of Little Faith?” (Mat. 8:26) and “Carest Thou Not That We Perish?” (Mark 4:38). Terry Hightower, who is well-known in Florida—as well as for his directing of the Shenandoah lectures  
(Continued on Page 3)

# Notes From The Editor



**Michael  
Hatcher**

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## 2004 Bellview Lectureship

The Bellview congregation just completed their twenty-ninth lectureship (June 12-16). The theme of this year's lectureship was *Great New Testament Questions*. This is a companion lectureship (and book) with last year's lectureship, *Great Old Testament Questions*. While the total attendance was slightly down from last year (I think mainly due to severe thunderstorms on Monday of the lectures), the lectures were well attended. We always appreciate our visitors and enjoy the fellowship with them during this week.

The quality of the lessons was exceptional. Each one of the speakers simply did an outstanding job with their lesson. They were all very well prepared and delivered their subject in a wonderful way. The Truth was proclaimed and defended by those who spoke and error was defeated at every turn. The caliber of the lessons exceeded my expectations (which were already high). We appreciate so much each of these faithful men coming to Pensacola and delivering these lessons. I know that each one put much time and effort into their sermon.

While brother Keith Mosher was scheduled to begin the lectures on Saturday evening (he had the first question recorded in the New Testament, "Where is He that is born king of the Jews"), he was not able to attend due to his wife's health problems (I delivered a message on this subject Monday afternoon), thus Clifford Newell began the lectures by speaking on the nature of the kingdom (the church) and that it is a spiritual kingdom with a spiritual purpose. Several of the speakers referred back to that which was established during this lesson. David Brown then spoke on the subject of authority and that we must have authority for all that we do religiously. To be pleasing to God (whether in our own personal lives or for individual

congregation), we must remain on the mountain top of authority. These two lessons presented a great start for the remaining lessons.

Sunday morning, Lee Davis presented a lesson dealing with some hard sayings from the Bible and that they are hard because people do not want to do them. Then Greg Lewis answered the question as to Whom shall we go and that the only place we can go is to the Lord. That afternoon, Eddie Whitten answered the question, "What is Truth?" and then Gary Summers dealt with the question of chastisement by our earthly fathers and our heavenly Father. That evening Lynn Parker helped us to realize what our life truly is and then Michael Shepherd showed the unity that we have in Christ.

Monday morning we began with a great study by Loy Hardesty on our love for God and some of the abuses by individuals who claim a love for Him. Then Tom Wacaster did a splendid job explaining proper and improper judging. Dave Watson dealt with why certain people slept on the job instead of acting. Larry Powers looked at the subject of people who should be working, yet standing idle all the day. After that, I considered the question which had been assigned to Keith Mosher on Jesus being the King of the Jews. That evening Gary Colley preached on the great salvation, then Bobby Liddell spoke the question Jesus asked about Himself and Whose Son He is. It concluded a great day of study and prepared us for Tuesday.

We began on Tuesday looking at a very interesting and often asked subject regarding the state of the dead presented by Michael McDaniel. Curtis Cates showed the various aspects and importance of the virgin birth. Next we considered the fact that, at least in some respects, did not come to bring peace but a sword and that His followers will also be divided from those in the world. That afternoon, Terry Hightower studied with us the concern God has for His children and how we can cast our cares upon Him. Then we heard Tim Smith discuss the important question of fellowship and that the righteous cannot fellowship those who are not righteous. The evening lessons first dealt with obedience as Charles Orr preached about those who call Jesus Lord, but they do not do what He says. Then Harrell Davidson presented a great lesson on what one must do to be saved. It was truly a marvelous way to close out the day.

The last day of the lectures began with a study of marriage, divorce, and remarriage presented by Kent Bailey. Then David Jones presented the object lesson

Jesus used of putting a child in the midst of the disciples to show who was greatest in the kingdom and how we are to be like a little child. Next, Jerry Brewer discussed the question as to whether we should continue in sin so grace might abound and how that idea is contrary to the New Testament teaching on grace. That afternoon Guss Eoff lead us in a study of faith and works and how that both are necessary, then B. J. Clarke discussed the important question of who are our brethren, showing the spiritual aspect that only those who are Christians are our brethren. We concluded our lectureship with a lesson on who will be able to stand in the judgment preached by Tommy Hicks and then Ronnie Hayes ended the lectureship with are we your enemy when we tell you the truth and that the person who tells you the truth is, in reality, your best friend. All the lessons were wonderful and certainly presented a well-rounded study of God's Word.

We are thankful to Online Academy of Biblical Studies for once again allowing us to put the lectures live on the internet for all to see. The lessons have also been encoded and they are on the OABS web site ([www.oabs.org](http://www.oabs.org)). Anyone may go to that web site and view all the lessons delivered (go to the "events archive" section and scroll down to the lectureship section), or you may go to our web site where we have a link to each one of the lessons.

Expressions of thanks go to the elders of the Bellview congregation for their support and oversight of this wonderful lectureship. The good that it will do will never be known this side of eternity. Also thanks are expressed to all those members of the Bellview congregation who worked so diligently in making this lectureship the success that it was.

Be making plans now to attend the Thirtieth Annual Bellview Lectureship June 11-15, 2005. It is a lectureship you will not want to miss. It is that important. The theme: *The Blight Of Liberalism.* MH

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(Continued from page 1)

for a number of years in San Antonio, Texas—brings to light some interesting facts related to this latter question. He points out that the author of an oft-quoted book, *When Bad Things Happen To Good People*, is actually an agnostic (131-32). He also takes exception to a quote by G. Gordon Liddy regarding the object of his faith (133). He also offers a thorough analysis of the situation regarding the Lord's disciples and the storm.

Three challenges to the Christian's faith are made

in "How Shall We Escape, If We Neglect So Great Salvation?" (Heb. 2:3), "Who Shall Be Able To Stand?" (Rev. 6:17), and "For What Son Is He Whom The Father Chasteneth Not?" (Heb. 12:7).

Also important are two questions that all of society ought to be asking: "What Is Truth?" (John 18:36) and "Am I Therefore Become Your Enemy Because I Tell You The Truth?" (Gal. 4:16). The former of these involves the definition and design of Truth, as well as its delineation, which includes some material on hermeneutics and homiletics. The latter emphasizes the Christian's "Dilemma of Responsibility."

The subject of salvation also receives considerable attention with five related chapters, the most direct being "What Must I Do To Be Saved?" (Acts 16: 30), which considers the full context of the question. "What Shall A Man Give In Exchange For His Soul?" (Mat. 16:26) stresses the idea that all else in comparison to salvation is greatly inferior. Something that some Christians wonder about—especially due to errors being taught on the subject of grace—is, "Shall We Continue In Sin That Grace May Abound?" (Rom. 6:1). Both *grace* and *faith* are defined and explained, and there is a section titled "Changes Wrought By The Gospel," followed by baptism's role.

"Lord, Are There Few That Be Saved?" (Luke 13:23), besides taking issue with a recent song by Brooks and Dunn ("Red Dirt Road") (194), gives the reader a look at why the answer to this question is, "Yes," which is contrary to the thinking of most Americans. "O Death, Where Is Thy Sting?" (1 Cor. 15:55) is an uplifting chapter that exploits one of the marvelous benefits of being a Christian. It first contains the true story of a woman who tried to escape death—to no avail (362-63)—and then goes on to discuss what the sting is and how Christians bypass it. There are two helpful charts on "Where Are The Dead?" (368-69).

Some "great questions" focus our attention on *fellowship*. B. J. Clarke, director of the Power Lectures, as well as the publication of the same name, works with the question Jesus asked the multitude, "Who Are My Brethren?" (Mat. 12:48). After examining the context, he then outlines the answers others have provided, including Merrill C. Tenney (denominational theologian), William Barclay (commentator), Promise Keepers, Max Lucado (popular author) and Rubel Shelly (current leader of apostasy). None of these hold the biblical view of fellowship (25-37).

"Is Christ Divided?" (1 Cor. 1:13) discusses not only the context of 1 Corinthians 1 but also that of

Ephesians 4. “What Fellowship Hath Righteousness With Unrighteousness?” (2 Cor. 6:14) spends time defining what is unrighteous. The writer draws a conclusion from the text that many elders and congregations have had trouble seeing: “If one is not teaching the truth, we have no right to have him teach, preach, or pray for us” (387). The Bible is so explicit on matters like these that it is sad that such a conclusion must be spelled out—but it does. Many are either glibly or ignorantly fellowshiping those who have (in the past) or who do (currently) deny some of the fundamental teachings of the Scriptures.

The fifth chapter on *fellowship* is “But Why Dost Thou Judge Thy Brother?” (Rom. 14:10). Although a full treatment is provided of the context (Rom. 14), some other matters are also considered, such as the nature and definition of *judging*. Pornography, current “intellectualism,” and even the philosophy of some religious universities are cited. One of these even prides itself on being irreligious (330-31). In some respects we must “judge” our brothers; attention is given concerning the ways we refrain from doing so. A related topic is “Suppose Ye That I Am Come To Give Peace On Earth?” (Luke 12:51).

Several chapters deal with Christian attributes or conduct, such as “Who Is The Greatest In The Kingdom of Heaven?” (Mat. 18:1) and “Why Stand Ye Here All The Day Idle?” (Mat. 20:6), which contains a lengthy list of ways by which the church is designated in the New Testament (77). “Which Is The Great Commandment In The Law?” (Mat. 22:36) shows that love of God involves loving Christ, which also means loving the body of Christ. Included are some samples of writings of those (purporting to be brethren) who obviously do not have any love for the body of Christ (104-105).

Jesus asked (and it needs to be repeated in every generation): “Why Call Ye Me, Lord, Lord, And Do Not The Things Which I Say?” (Luke 6:46). The writer presents answers with respect to the Lord’s world, His Word, His work, and His worship. David Watson, associate editor of *The Gospel Journal*, provides comprehensive coverage of “Why Sleep Ye?” (Luke 22:46). Besides the consideration of the context, he points out that our country, our Congress, our courts, our colleges, and our congregations are asleep. This chapter alone is worth the price of the book.

Other related chapters are “Are Ye Not Then Partial in Yourselves?” (Jam. 2:4), “Wilt Thou Know... Faith Without Works Is Dead?” (Jam. 2:20), “Who Is A Wise Man Endued With Knowledge Among You?” (Jam. 3:13), and “What Is Your Life?” (Jam. 4:14), which includes the helpful idea of numbering all the excuses that brethren have for non-attendance—so that only the number be given instead of the explanation.

One chapter deals with divorce—“Is It Lawful For A Man To Put Away His Wife For Every Cause?” (Mat. 19:3). There are many errors being taught on this subject today, and the writer does an excellent job in setting forth the truth plainly. Brethren have frequently taken two different positions on the indwelling of the Holy Spirit; both of those views are presented by different writers (288-305). Other chapters include: “Understandest Thou What Thou Readest?” (Acts 8:30), “Wherefore Then Servest The Law?” (Gal. 3:19), and “If God Be For Us, Who Can Be Against Us?” (Rom. 8: 31).

The 502 pages briefly reviewed above can be ordered from the Bellview Church of Christ, 4850 Saufley Field Road, Pensacola, FL 32526. The cost is only \$12, plus postage.

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# Can a Christian Still Be an Evolutionist?

*Brad Harrub*

If one were to believe everything that the scientific community has offered regarding man's origins, we would find that very few theories include acts by a supernatural Creator. In fact, scientists are quick to point out that the Universe took billions of years to form, and thus it would be absurd to believe that it was created in just six days. For instance, consider what Thomas Hayden recently wrote when he added another "certainty" of life, besides taxes and death. His effort to shore up the ever-faltering theory of evolution was the cover story of the July 29, 2002 issue of *U.S. News & World Report*. In explaining "how evolution works, and why it matters more than ever," Hayden stated: "It's an everyday phenomenon, a fundamental fact of biology as real as hunger and as unavoidable as death" (2002, 133-134:43).

Sadly, this type of grandstanding and propagandizing in the media occurs all too often, and people by the millions accept it as the "final word" on the subject—without any real knowledge as to what the evidence truly reveals. Even within the church, Christians often subconsciously find themselves favoring science over the Bible. We have forgotten the Truth on the matter, which can be summed up simply with the first ten words which appear in the Bible: "In the beginning **God** created the heavens and the earth" (Gen. 1:1). If this is not true, then every word that follows should be called into question.

Because of the prevailing idea of an ancient Cosmos, many people have tried to find ways to fit evolution and its billions-of-years time frame into the biblical account of creation. In essence, they still espouse belief in God and the Bible, but they also pledge a great deal of allegiance to science and the evolutionary theory. As the old adage says, they want to "have their cake and eat it, too." Can both the Bible and evolutionary theory be true? People clinging to both the Bible and evolution are commonly known as "theistic evolutionists." "Theistic" comes from the Greek *theos*, which means "God." Thus, theistic evolutionists believe God does exist, but they also hold to the theory of evolution as true. They rationalize their beliefs by stating that "yes, God created the heavens and the earth," but then He used (or allowed) evolutionary processes to produce the Universe we see today.

Thus, "Bible believers" find themselves in the awkward position of compromising the opening chap-

ters of the Bible. If Genesis 1-11 is tossed aside as merely a mythological story, then we must toss out the entire Bible, because the one major theme that is taught throughout the Bible is redemption. Man's relationship with God started at the pinnacle of Creation week in the Garden, and degenerated from there. Christians need to be fully aware that theistic evolution teaches that man started out at the bottom and worked his way to the top (via the old amoeba-to-man story). Therefore, either man started at the top and fell, as the Bible indicates, or he started at the bottom and rose to the top, as evolution indicates. Both cannot be correct! The prophets long ago declared the fall of humans, and the resulting need for a Savior. Scripture indicates that this was the reason for Christ's death—to bring men back into a covenant relationship with God. If men truly did not fall as described in the Creation account, then why did Jesus Christ, the Son of God, come to this planet and suffer a cruel death on the cross? Additionally, consider the following:

Surely evolution will not have to reverse itself and concede that it reached its zenith with the birth of the Christ child a long, long time ago. Surely this colossal system will not have to concede that it is less able now to produce a greater than Jesus than it did produce two thousand years ago. If evolution is not now able to produce a greater than Jesus, then it seems the system has ceased to be evolution and has become devolution, at least in one sense? (Taylor, 1974). Today, this theory appears more like "devolution" than devolution.

As long as we are tossing aside Scripture, we might as well get out our scissors and cut out all references to the Creation, starting with the gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Jesus Christ Himself made reference to the Creation when He stated in Matthew 19:4 (cf., Mark 10:6): "Have ye not read, that he which made *them* at the beginning made them male and female." These words indicate that Adam and Eve had been on the Earth "from the beginning of creation" (Mark 10:6). Of course we also would have to throw out John, because the first few verses of chapter one review the beginning and Creation. Other Scriptures such as Acts 4:24, Acts 17:25, Romans 1:20, Colossians 1:16, 1 Timothy 2:13, Hebrews 1:2, 1 Peter 4:19, and Revelation 4:11 also would be called into question if the Creation account is merely a nice *story* and not historically accurate. As a matter of fact, the only books



that do not refer to the Creation in some form are the books of Jude, Philemon, and 2 and 3 John!

Additionally, if we do not accept that God created the Heavens and the Earth in six literal days, then we are making Jesus Christ—our Savior—a liar. Jesus stated: “But from the beginning of the creation, Male and female made he them” (Mark 10:6), affirming that Adam and Eve were on the Earth since the beginning of Creation. Paul affirmed in Romans 1:20-21 that the things God had made had been “perceived” even “since the Creation of the world.” According to evolutionists, man did not come into the picture until about 3-4 million years ago. It does not take a rocket scientist to figure out that if the Earth is supposedly 5-6 billion years old, then the last 3-4 million is not, by any stretch of the imagination, “from the beginning.” Rather, it is “from the end.” Therefore we are left with a choice: either Jesus Christ lied and the evolutionists are correct, or we can believe that the words Jesus Christ spoke are

true, and therefore evolution is 100% wrong. The belief in theistic evolution allows for the Savior to be called a liar!

Ah, but you say, “Adam was just a mythological creature. We know today that man originated from a Neanderthal-type creature.” However, if this is true, why did the inspired apostle Paul pen these words: “For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Cor. 15:22), and then in reference to Christ write, “So also it is written, The first man Adam became a living soul. The last Adam *became* a life-giving spirit” (1 Cor. 15:45)? If Adam and Eve are merely mythological, does this mean that this “last Adam,” Jesus Christ, was a mythological creature, as well?

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230 Landmark Drive; Montgomery, AL 36117

## Saints Or Sinners?

*Tyler Young*

“And may we remember that the only difference between a sinner and a saint is that one is forgiven, and the other one ain’t.” With those words the minister closed his prayer at the White House Prayer Breakfast. After the President opened the event with a speech in which he confessed sin, declared his penitence, and quoted Scripture, the denominational minister led the room full of clergymen in petitioning God. His clever rhyme was validated by the hearty “amens” of those present.

While it is surely a popular sentiment, we must ask the question: Is it true? Is the only difference between a sinner and a saint that the saint is forgiven? Most religionists and more than a few in the Lord’s church would answer in the affirmative. For example, one editor of a popular brotherhood paper asserted: “Christians aren’t better than anyone else—just forgiven.”

This concept is usually advocated to suggest that no one has a right to judge anyone else. That was clearly the intention of introducing it at the White House Prayer Breakfast, and for the same reason many of our brethren find the idea appealing. “Who are we to charge someone with advocating error, or to identify false teachers, or withdraw fellowship, when, after all, we’re all sinners?” To point the finger of judgment is to risk being labeled a hypocrite because, after all, “We’re all sinners.”

But are we? To suggest we are all sinners in the sense in which many do today is misleading because it fails to recognize a critical, biblical distinction between sinners and saints. Yes, in a general sense, all men are sinners in that “all have sinned” (Rom. 3:23). Paul included himself when he said, “while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8). Looking back on his heinous persecution of the church before his conversion, the great apostle called himself the “chief of sinners” (1 Tim. 1:15). No one is sinless; we all sin. In this sense we are sinners.

However, *sinner* is used in a more specific sense in Scripture of those who **persist** in sin. Luke distinguished the woman who anointed Jesus in the house of Simon the Pharisee by saying she was “a sinner” (Luke 7:37). Jesus required a higher standard than merely loving those who love us, “for sinners also love those that love them” (Luke 6:32). Peter said, “For the time *is come* for judgment to begin at the house of God: and if *it begin* first at us, what *shall be* the end of them that obey not the gospel of God?” (1 Pet. 4:17—ASV). Notice those who belong to God are here called *righteous*, in plain distinction to those who have not obeyed the gospel who are designated as *sinners*.

The difference between sinner and saint is that, while both have sinned, the saint is no longer **practicing** sin. It is an enormous and morally significant one,

and it is the reason the saint is forgiven but the sinner “ain’t.” There is joy in heaven “over one sinner that repenteth” (Luke 15:7), because when a sinner repents, he turns from sin and turns to God (Acts 26:20). **That is something a man who is still outside of Christ has not done.** In Romans 6 Paul stressed that the one who belongs to Christ does not “continue in sin”; he walks in “newness of life”; he does not let sin “reign” in his body, to “obey the lusts thereof”; he is no longer a “servant of sin”; but a “servant of righteousness.” The saint is “walking in the light,” which means when he sins, he repents of it (1 John 1:7-9). In this sense, then, he is not a sinner—he is not **continuing** in sin—and may be said to be doing as Zacharias and Elizabeth did, “walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless” (Luke 1:6).

Yes, all need grace because all have sinned. And no one is of any more worth as a human being than any other person. But faithful Christians **are** better than others in that they are living better lives than those who practice sin as a way of life. One brother wrote, “After all is said and done, the church remains a fellowship of sinners saved by grace more than it is a fellowship of saints.” He is wrong. The church is no more one than the other. To suggest the only difference is a gross

misrepresentation of what it means to be faithful to God and merely serves to undermine the crucial moral distinction between the church and the world. It is a notion designed to dismiss our obligation to be holy and reprove sin. It is used to try to shame into silence anyone who would dare to pass judgment on those who—unlike saints—are continuing to walk contrary to God’s truth.

We all need forgiveness. But to put all men on the same level with respect to sin fails to recognize who we are and what God calls us to be—no longer sinners, but saints. By the grace of God “one is forgiven, and the other one ain’t,” because one is fully striving to submit to God and the other *ain’t*. That is a much bigger difference than some would have us to believe.

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“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).

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## The Settlement of the Moulmein Property in Singapore

*Billy Bland*

Chairman of the Board Four Seas College of the Bible and Missions

Two articles recently appeared in the *Christian Chronicle* discussing the settlement of the property on Moulmein Road with Four Seas College of the Bible and Missions. Unfortunately, these articles as reported to the *Chronicle*, and consequently to the readers of the *Chronicle*, do not present the actual way the property was settled and they also imply dishonesty on the part of Ira Rice and the Four Seas College of the Bible and Missions (who was in trust of the property).

Under the heading “Indonesia jailings point to Asian church property concerns,” the *Chronicle* reports:

In the 1950s missionary Ira Rice established a church in Singapore and raised money to purchase property, which rose dramatically in value the next half century. The church on that property—the Moulmein congregation—didn’t receive the deed until November 2003 because of a lengthy legal battle with Rice, said missionary Dave Hogan. Rice contended that the church had fallen into apostasy, but some church members suspected that the legal action had more to do with dollars than doctrine. After Rice’s death in 2001, the matter was resolved. The property is now in the care of five trustees from the Moulmein church, Hogan said.

The implication in the article above, and the one that previously appeared in the *Christian Chronicle*, is that Ira Rice, Jr., raised the money for the property

and for personal reasons held such property refusing to turn it over to the church. The truth of the matter is that Ira, and other faithful brethren, did raise the money for the property on Moulmein Road for the purpose of a church building, **as well as a place to operate a school (the Four Seas College of the Bible)**. Because of doctrinal error of Dave Hogan, the board of **Four Seas College** dismissed Dave from the teaching staff of **Four Seas College**. Dave, however, was soon hired by the brethren at Moulmein Road, and, of course, this is where the trouble began. Later, Dave was disfellowshipped by the Lim Ah Pin Road Church of Christ in Singapore (a withdrawal which still stands to this day).

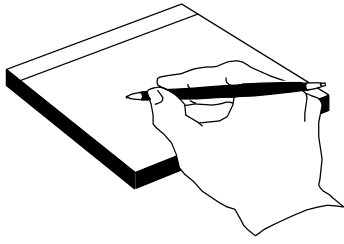
When **Four Seas**, which was meeting on the property at Punggol could no longer meet there due to the government’s taking possession of the land by the right of the Singaporean law of Imminent Domain, Ira and others wanted the college to meet in the building on the Moulmein property, **which building he (and others) had raised the money to build!** Keep in mind that neither he, nor others, ever asked the brethren at Moulmein to move out of the property, but simply share the property with **Four Seas College**.

These brethren refused! They simply wanted the property signed over to them, “lock, stock and barrel!” This Rice and the board wisely refused to do!

Regarding brother Rice’s plan to establish the church and a school, he wrote:

*(Continued on page 3)*

# Notes From The Editor



**Michael  
Hatcher**

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## Translations

Recently a man emailed me about a translation of the Bible: the New Century Version. He did not have any information about it, and it was not one which I was too familiar with. I had a copy of in my Bible program, so I looked at a few verses to see the type of translation it was. Among other things which I stated in my response is: “To say the least, I was not impressed except in a negative way. The very few passages I looked at were not well translated and it was obvious that this is not a real translation but a paraphrase of God’s Word.”

Ultimately, the translation of the Bible which one uses is a personal choice. No one has the right to dictate to others what version he should use in his study. Nor does one automatically become a liberal (false teacher) simply based on the version of the Bible he uses.

Through the years we have generally recognized that the King James Version and the American Standard Version are sound, reliable translations (i.e., they are true to the text of the Bible). However, some *translations* were so far off-base that they have been rejected by most if not all, for example: *Reader’s Digest Bible*, *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*, *Today’s English Version* (better known as “Good News for Modern Man”), etc.

I recently heard of another *translation* which will be making its way to the bookshelves. It is titled *Good as New* and done for the “One” organization “to produce what the group calls a ‘new, fresh and adventurous’ translation” (WorldNetDaily). WorldNetDaily gave a few examples of how they deal with some passages. Notice the disrespect of our Lord in Mark 1:10-11: “As he was climbing up the bank again, the sun shone through a gap in the clouds. At the same time a pigeon flew down and perched on him. Jesus took this

as a sign that God’s spirit was with him. A voice from overhead was heard saying, ‘That’s my boy! You’re doing fine!’” Some of the names are changed: for example John the Baptist is called John the Dipper, Peter is called Rocky. One of the most ungodly things in this *translation* is its promotion of fornication. Notice how this new version deals with this subject in 1 Corinthians 7. “Some of you think the best way to cope with sex is for men and women to keep right away from each other. That is more likely to lead to sexual offenses. My advice is for everyone to have a regular partner....If you have strong needs, get yourself a partner. Better than being frustrated” (vv. 1-2, 8-9). This promotes fornication of any kind (simply get yourself a partner) and totally eliminates the marriage relationship from consideration. Surely, we need not comment upon such trash as this, and prayerfully everyone would reject such a travesty as this.

While not as egregious as the previous *translation*, many today promote the *New International Version*. It is nothing more than a paraphrase of God’s Word (just better done than *The Living Bible Paraphrased*). It does not seek to translate from the original languages but its intent is to tell you what the recipients understood the writers’ to be saying. However, their doctrinal bias made its way into their interpretive paraphrase. Some examples are certainly in order. This version teaches the doctrine of salvation by faith only. “For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: ‘The righteous will live by faith’” (Rom. 1:17). The phrase “by faith from first to last” is saying that all that is necessary is faith, or that faith completes the picture, there is nothing else. In truth, not one word is properly translated from the original. Another passage where their false doctrine makes it way into the text reads: “However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness” (Rom. 4:5). His faith is not credited as righteousness, but for or unto righteousness (same Greek word, *eis*, translated “for” in Acts 2:38). Closely kin to the forgoing is: “For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved” (Rom. 10:10). In Romans Paul uses *justified* for those who are saved, thus we have a *double* salvation taking place—they are saved (*justified*) when they believe and they are saved when they confess (again the Greek is the same as “for” in Acts 2:38, looking forward to justification and salvation).

This interpretive paraphrase teaches the Calvinist doctrine of Total Hereditary Depravity—that man is born totally evil and sinful and without any capability of doing anything which pleases God. It teaches this by *translating* the Greek word for “flesh” (*sarx*) as “sinful nature” numerous times (Rom. 7:5, 18, 25; 8:3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 12, 13; Rom. 13:14; 1 Cor. 5:5; Gal. 5:13, 16, 17, 19, 24; Gal. 6:8; Eph. 2:3; 2 Pet. 2:10). It also teaches pentecostalism in passages such as Acts 16:14, 1 Corinthians 1:6; 2:1, 14, 1 Cor. 13:10, and Ephesians 4:13. Then it teaches premillennialism in Matthew 19:28, Acts 3:21, Ephesians 1:10, and 2 Peter 3:10.

Why would someone want to use an interpretive paraphrase such as this which writes false doctrines into its text? While there are troublesome spots with all translations, there is a very great difference in a troublesome translation (a mistake in the translation) and simply writing false doctrine into the text of the Bible. If a person believes what the New International Version has in its text (as set forth in this article), that individual will be lost eternally in a devil’s hell. Let us stay with those reliable translations of God’s Word. *MH*

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(Continued from page 1)

That the college grew out of my initial work of planting the church in no wise negates that it was in our original plans. In our very first brochure re: the Far East work, printed as far back as 1954 (the year BEFORE my family and I first left for Singapore), among other things, I wrote, “By converting people of all the many nations represented in Singapore, and training as many of them as possible to preach the word, we thus can be able in a few short years to get the gospel going out of Singapore, as a sort of radiating center, into practically EVERY NATION THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE FAR-EASTERN AREA.... This clearly presents the most logical way to get the job done.” (Letter, “To Whom It May Concern,” Sep. 21, 1989, Ira Y. Rice, Jr., Emphasis in original).

There is plenty more documentation that proves brother Rice intended the property to be used for the church as well as a school to train people in the Word of God. Consequently, brother Rice raised money for the property to be used as a church building and a place for the school. However, some of the Moulmein

brethren did not want the school to meet there. Additionally, as previously noted, they wanted brother Rice simply to “sign over” the property to them.

Finally, after years of discussions with no progress being made, brother Rice and Four Seas College gave several offers: (1) Sell the property and divide the money with the church at Moulmein after they paid off their indebtedness to Four Seas and other brethren; or (2) Four Seas could buy out Moulmein’s half; or (3) they could buy out the half interest of Four Seas College.

They refused all of these options. Finally, the government said that the matter must be settled, or they would simply take possession of the property. Upon such statement from the government of Singapore, Moulmein finally decided to pay a sum agreed upon by Four Seas and the matter was settled.

It was not the case that the government finally decided in favor of Moulmein Road, as implied in previous statements that appeared in the *Chronicle*. Neither was it the case that Rice was more concerned with dollars than doctrine (the withdrawal of fellowship from Dave Hogan by the Lim Ah Pin congregation attests to this fact). It was the case that brother Rice and others would not sign over (give away) the property for which many faithful brethren had sacrificially contributed and worked so hard to obtain.

Brother Ira Y. Rice, Jr., is no longer here to defend his good name, but there are mounds of documentation, and many good brethren who are still alive today, to attest to the matters in Singapore. The reason the Moulmein Property issue is resolved is because the Moulmein church finally paid, at least a small amount of the value of what the property is worth, to the Four Seas College of the Bible.

With part of the funds the Four Seas College has established the “Ira and Vada Rice Scholarship Fund,” honoring the Rice family, which is designed to aid worthy students to come to Four Seas College to be trained in the Word of God.

Today, there are many graduates of Four Seas College preaching in various parts of the Far East and around the world. The great work at Four Seas College of the Bible and Missions continues to train men and women to be effective servants of the Lord. Any one wishing more information may contact the Lim Ah Pin congregation, the Jurong congregation, the Four Seas College of Bible and Missions in Singapore, and/or Billy Bland, P.O. Box 321, Coldwater, MS 38618.

# God's Definition of a Christian

## Acts 11:26

### *Franklin Camp*

There are various definitions given of a Christian. The only one that is worthwhile is God's definition. The only kind of Christian worthwhile is the one as defined by God. The reason for saying this is God's definition of a Christian is because of the meaning of *chrematizo*, translated "called." It is not a nickname, as claimed by some. "And it was in Antioch that the disciples first received the name Christian" (*Weymouth*). The Greek word rendered *called* implies a divine source. It is "to be divinely instructed, to receive a warning or revelation from God" (*Green's Greek-English Lexicon*). "To give a response to those consulting an oracle, to give a divine command or admonition, to teach from heaven; to be divinely commanded, admonished, instructed; to be the mouth-piece of divine revelations, to promulgate the commands of God" (*Thayer*).

The word is found nine times in the New Testament (Mat. 2:12; 2:22; Luke 2:26; Acts 10:22; Heb. 8:5; 11:7; 12:25; Rom. 7:3; Acts 11:26). In all of these instances it has reference to divine revelation, unless Acts 11:16 is an exception. The meaning of the word fits Isaiah 62:2: "Which the mouth of Jehovah shall name." Compare Romans 7:3: "She shall be called an adulteress." Who calls her an adulteress? Compare "defer not, for thine own sake, O my God, because thy city and thy people are called by thy name" (Dan. 9:19). In Israel, we have the root of *Elohim*, the Hebrew name for God, which supplies an explanation for the statement, "Thy people are called by thy name." Amos 9:12 and Acts 15:17 are equivalents. Thus the subject: "God's Definition of a Christian."

Why was not this name given at Pentecost? I may not know, but I can think of a reason. *Christian* is the sum of Christianity. Christianity is not Jewish, not peculiar to Jews. This is implied in the very fact that the term that most describes Christianity was not given until Gentiles were brought in. Thus, those who think of Christianity offering something yet for Jews in a special way have not properly understood Christianity.

**A Christian is one who heard the Gospel and believed it** (Acts 11:19-21). Why were there no Christians in Antioch prior to this time? There were not any that had heard the Gospel and believed before this. Only those that believed the Gospel became Christians.

There were no more Christians in Antioch than there were people that believed the Gospel. What was true in Antioch is true in any location.

**A Christian is one that is indebted to others** (Acts 11:20). Someone had to bring the Gospel to them. If those who came to Antioch had always stayed in Jerusalem, there would have been no church in Antioch. If those who came to Antioch had remained silent, there still would have been no church in Antioch. In every place where there is a congregation, the people that constitute that congregation are indebted to someone somewhere for bringing the Gospel to that community. The people in Antioch should have been, and no doubt were, grateful to those who brought the Gospel to them. We should never forget those who have made it possible for us to have the Gospel.

**A Christian is one that wants to teach the Gospel to others** (Acts 11:20). This is one of the characteristics of New Testament Christianity. Acts is not really just a book of conversions but a book on sharing redemption. Think who are the main characters. Though the principles of conversion are found in the book, this is because we see the church carrying the Gospel to the lost. We have seen what to do to be saved but not what it means to be saved. One that is not interested in teaching the Gospel to others is not a Christian as defined by God.

**A Christian is one that talks the Bible** (Acts 11:19). The word translated *preaching* in the KJV is translated *speaking* in the ASV. The idea is that they simply talked or their conversation was about the Word. We talk about each other, about politics, the weather, but how often do we talk about the Bible? Even Christians when together very seldom discuss the Bible.

**A Christian is one that is not concerned about who gets credit for good that is done** (Acts 11:19-20). The only name mentioned in this verse is Stephen's, and he was not among those that started the church in Antioch. Who started the church in Antioch? We do not know. No name is given. Yet, this is an outstanding congregation in Acts. Is not the very silence of the Bible as to the names of those that started the church in Antioch a rebuke to preeminence-loving brethren today? What the church needs more today than perhaps

anything else is people who will do the work and never care who gets the credit for it. Really, God got the credit for the beginning of the church in Antioch, and He is the only One we should be concerned about getting credit anyway. These men may never have written their names in the history books, but they wrote them in the Book of Life.

**A Christian is one that is not a quitter** (Acts 11:19). They knew the value of being a Christian. It was worth any price. Compare this with what little things will cause Christians to quit today. Then, you could not find anything that would cause them to quit; Now, just about anything will cause them to quit.

**A Christian is one with a supreme purpose** (Acts 11:23). “That with purpose of heart.” That is the meaning of Matthew 6:33: not that one never does anything but attend service but rather everything that he does contributes toward this end. This is the meaning of Paul’s statement in 1 Corinthians 2:2. Everything is related to this overriding motive. “*This one thing I do*” (Phi. 3:13), not that Paul just did one thing, but everything he did was ruled by this principle.

**A Christian is one where the grace of God in his life is visible** (Acts 11:23). Was there a question in Barnabas’ mind as to what effect Christianity had in the lives of the Gentiles? If so when he saw their lives he was convinced Paul could see the effect of God’s grace in the Macedonians (2 Cor. 8:1).

**A Christian is a good person** (Acts 11:24). Barnabas was among those named Christians at Antioch. A mean Christian is a contradiction of terms—there is no such thing. One cannot be a mean father, mother, son, or daughter and be a Christian. One cannot be mean to his brethren and be a Christian. Think of the spirit of the elder brother (Luke 15). Yet how many treat their brethren about like the elder brother treated his brother, and still claim to be Christians.

**A Christian is one that assembles** (Acts 11:26; Heb. 10:25; Acts 2:42). The Christians at Antioch assembled. The Christians in every place assemble.

**A Christian is one that accepts responsibility** (Acts 11:29). Note the words—every man—determined—according to his ability. They did not seek to do as little as they could but as much as they could. Many seem to think today that a Christian is one who does as little as he can. A Christian does not shirk responsibility.

**A Christian is one in the Lord’s church** (Acts 11:26). There were no Christians in Antioch that were not members of the church. There were no Christians in Antioch that were members of any other church. “I give in mine house and within my walls...a name” (Isa. 56:5). The church is God’s house (1 Tim. 3:15; Acts 2:42; Gal. 3:26-27). Are you a Christian defined by God?

*Deceased*

## Clean Blood

*Gary Summers*

The day is over; you are driving home. You tune in your radio. You hear a little blurb about a little village in India where some villagers have died suddenly, strangely, of a flu that has never been seen before. It is not influenza, but three or four fellows are dead, and it is kind of interesting.

They are sending some doctors over there to investigate it. You do not think much about it; but on Sunday, coming home from church, you hear another radio spot. Only they say it is not three villagers, it is 30,000 villagers in the back hill of this particular area of India, and it is on television that night. CNN runs a little blurb; people are heading there from the disease center in Atlanta because this disease strain has never been seen before.

By Monday morning when you get up, it is the lead story. For it is not just India; it is Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, and before you know it, you are hear-

ing this story everywhere. They have even coined a name for it now—“The Mystery Flu.” The President has made some comments that he and everyone are praying and hoping that all will go well over there. But everyone is wondering, “How are we going to contain it?” That is when the President of France makes an announcement that shocks Europe. He is closing their borders. No flights can land from India, Pakistan, or any of the countries where this thing has been seen.

That night you are watching a little bit of CNN before going to bed. Your jaw hits your chest when a weeping woman is translated from a French news program into English. There is a man lying in a hospital in Paris dying of “the Mystery Flu.” “It has come to Europe.” Panic strikes. As best they can tell, once you get it, you have it for a week, and you do not know it. Then you have four days of unbelievable symptoms. Then you die.

Britain closes its borders, but it is too late. Southampton, Liverpool, Northampton, and it is Tuesday morning when the President of the United States makes the following announcement: “Due to a National Security Risk, all flights to and from Europe and Asia have been canceled. If your loved ones are overseas, I’m sorry; they cannot come back until we find a cure for this thing.” Within four days our nation has been plunged into an unbelievable fear. People are selling little masks for your face. People are talking about what if it comes to this country, and preachers on Tuesday are saying, “It’s the scourge of God.”

It is Wednesday night, and you are at Bible study when somebody runs in from the parking lot and says, “Turn on a radio! Turn on a radio!” While the church listens to a transistor radio with a microphone stuck up to it, the announcement is made: “Two women are lying in a Long Island hospital dying from the Mystery Flu.” Within hours, it seems, this thing just sweeps across the country. People are working around the clock trying to find an antidote. Nothing is working. California, Oregon, Arizona, Florida, Massachusetts. It is as though it is just sweeping in from the borders.

Then, all of a sudden the news comes out. The code has been broken. A cure can be found. A vaccine can be made. It is going to take the blood of somebody who has not been infected, and so, sure enough, all through the Midwest, through all those channels of emergency broadcasting, everyone is asked to do one simple thing: “Go to your downtown hospital and have your blood type taken. That’s all we ask of you. When you hear the sirens go off in your neighborhood, please make your way quickly, quietly, and safely to the hospitals.”

Sure enough, when you and your family get down there late on that Friday night, there is a long line, and they have got nurses and doctors coming out and pricking fingers and taking blood and putting labels on it. Your wife and your kids are out there, and they take your blood type and say, “Wait here in the parking lot and if we call your name, you can be dismissed and go home.” You stand around scared with your neighbors, wondering what in the world is going on and if this is the end of the world.

Suddenly a young man comes running out of the hospital screaming. He is yelling a name and waving a clipboard. What? He yells it again! And your son tugs at your jacket and says, “Daddy, that’s me.” Before you know it, they have grabbed your boy. “Wait a minute, hold it!” And they say, “It’s okay; his blood is clean. His blood is pure. We want to make sure he doesn’t

have the disease. We think he has got the right type.” Five tense minutes later out come the doctors and nurses, crying and hugging one another—some are even laughing. It is the first time you have seen anybody laugh in a week, and an old doctor walks up to you and says, “Thank you, sir. Your son’s blood type is perfect. It’s clean, it is pure, and we can make the vaccine.”

As the word begins to spread all across that parking lot full of folks, people are screaming and praying and laughing and crying. But then the gray-haired doctor pulls you and your wife aside and says, “May we see you for a moment? We didn’t realize the donor would be a minor, and we need...we need you to sign a consent form.” You begin to sign and then you see that the number of pints of blood to be taken is empty, “H-h-h-how many pints?” And that is when the old doctor’s smile fades, and he says, “We had no idea it would be little child. We weren’t prepared. We need it all!” “But, but....” “You don’t understand. We are talking about the world here. Please sign. We—we need it all—we need it all!” “But can’t you give him a blood transfusion?” “If we had clean blood, we would. Can you sign.” In numb silence you do. Then they say, “Would you like to have a moment with him before we begin?”

Can you walk back? Can you walk back to that room where he sits on a table saying, “Daddy? Mommy? What’s going on?” Can you take his hand and say, “Son, your mommy and I love you, and we would never ever let anything happen to you that didn’t just have to be. Do you understand that?” And when that old doctor comes back in and says, “I’m sorry, we’ve—we’ve got to get started. People all over the world are dying.” Can you leave? Can you walk out while he is saying, “Dad? Mom? Why—why have you forsaken me?”

And then next week, when they have the ceremony to honor your son, some folks sleep through it, some folks do not come because it is their day to go to the lake, and some folks come with a plastic smile, just pretending to care. Would you want to jump up and say: “**My son died! Don’t you care?**” Is that what God is saying? “**My son died. Don’t you know how much I care?**”

“Father, seeing it from your eyes breaks our hearts. Maybe now we can begin to comprehend the great love you have for us. In Jesus’ name. Amen.” (John 3:16; Phi. 2:5-8; Isa. 53; Heb. 5:9-10; Luke 6:46; 1 John 2:3-5; 3:18; 5:2-3).

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# Haven't Times Changed?

*Tracy Dugger*

Do you know what was published in the *Chicago Times* and the *Chicago Tribune* on May 22, 1881? That was 115 years ago! What was printed was something you would not dare see today. Something that would create a cry throughout the land from infidels.

On that date in May an entire book was published. Not just any book, but one that had been anticipated since American and British scholars set out to produce it in 1870. There were advanced orders for almost two million copies. More than three million were sold in the first year. What was found in those two newspapers was the entire *Revised Version* of the New Testament

(essentially our American Standard Version of 1901).

Haven't Times Changes!!!? During that time religious fervor was high; truth was sought vigorously. America was interested in and enjoying the fruits of the Restoration Movement. We need some of this interest and zeal today!

Would it not be wonderful if the *Washington Post* or *USA Today* printed the entire New Testament from a reliable translation? There would no doubt be floods of letters to the editor and protests outside their offices. Yes, I am sad to say, times have changed!

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# Defender



*“I am set for the defense of the gospel”*

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## The Historicity of Christ

*Mike McDaniel*

Christianity depends on the historical existence of Christ. The historical Jesus began a religious movement which has shaken this world as has no other. Yet, some writers actually deny the historical existence of Jesus.

The cover of the December 1994 issue of *LIFE* magazine revealed an artist's rendering of Jesus with the question "Who Was He?" In a short article they stated:

To some, Jesus is the Son of God, born to a virgin... the anointed, the Christ. To others he is just a man who inspired, through his teachings and exemplary life, 'several faiths now incorporated into Christianity.' And to still others he's a myth, a novelistic invention of Paul, and then, the Gospel writers, who required a charismatic anchor for their nascent (early) churches. He is, they say, an idea.

In this issue of *LIFE* magazine they interviewed many eminent thinkers. One of them, Jon Murray, the President of American Atheists, stated, "There was no such person in the history of the world as Jesus Christ. There was no historical, living, breathing, sentient human being by that name. The Bible is a fictional, nonhistorical narrative. The myth is good for business."

In spite of this incredible assertion, most respectable scholars, and serious historians do not question the historicity of Jesus. As F. F. Bruce has written, "Some writers may toy with the fancy of a 'Christ-myth,' but they do not do so on the ground of historical evidence. The historicity of Christ is as axiomatic for an unbiased historian as the historicity of Julius Caesar."

There was a real historical person named Jesus of Nazareth who lived, had a tremendous influence upon the people, and died the death of crucifixion. To prove this, notice three lines of evidence.

In the first place, notice the New Testament as evidence of the historicity of Christ. The New Testament presents to us the historical Jesus. The Scriptures' representation of Christ cannot be rationalized away or dismissed with the wave of a hand.

The evidence for the New Testament is much greater than the evidence for classical writings. For example, at least 24,633 manuscripts and portions of the New Testaments have been documented. In all of ancient history, the second book in line after the New Testament in manuscript is *The Iliad* by Homer. Yet it has only 643 surviving manuscripts. Dr. Clark Pinnock in his book, *Set Forth Your Case*, concluded after extensive research:

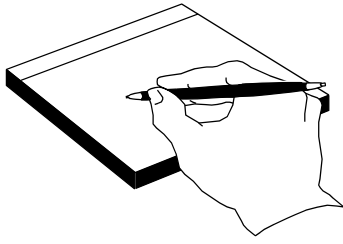
There exists no document from the ancient world, witnessed by so excellent a set of textural and historical testimonies and offering so superb an array of historical date on which an intelligent decision may be made. An honest person cannot dismiss a source of this kind. Skepticism regarding the historical credentials of Christianity is based upon an irrational bias (58).

The New Testament gives an accurate picture of Jesus Christ to us as Son of Man and Son of God.

In the second place, notice these Jewish writers as evidence of the historicity of Christ. Josephus, a Jewish historian, lived from around A.D. 37 to 100. He spoke of John the Baptist. He also wrote:

*(Continued on page 3)*

# Notes From The Editor



**Michael  
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## Decisions

In the long ago “Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD *be* God, follow him: but if Baal, *then* follow him. And the people answered him not a word” (1 Kin. 18:21). This call to make a decision was made on Mount Carmel when there was the contest between Elijah (representing God) and the prophets of Baal. Elijah has shown that Jehovah is God and Baal is nothing. This contest was the culmination of fifty-odd years of struggle in Israel between belief in God and idolatry, Jehovah and Baal. It was a contest involving that which was holy and good as opposed to that which was impure and sensual. At this time Israel was still undecided whom they should wholeheartedly follow. Elijah calls upon them to make a decision, they are to either decide to follow Jehovah or decide to follow Baal.

Man was created with the power of choosing and is thus called upon to make decisions. When God created Adam and Eve, He gave them a command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. On a constant basis, they had to make a decision as to whether or not to eat of the fruit. When Satan tempted Eve, she had a decision to make as to whether to eat the fruit or not eat it. When Cain and Abel offered sacrifices, they had to decide what to offer. The entire Bible is made up of people making choices or decisions as to what they will do or not do.

Joshua had called upon the Israelites of his day to make the decision to serve Jehovah. “And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that *were* on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD”

(Jos. 24:15). That decision is before each of us every day as well. When we reach that age of accountability, we commit sin in our life. We need to be reconciled to God by the blood of Jesus. Upon learning the truth, one must make a decision as to whether or not he will obey the Gospel to his soul’s salvation.

Once that decision is made to become a Christian, he has to make decisions regarding his life. While some decisions are more important in the long run than others, yet our life is filled with decisions. The sum total of those decisions (big and small) determine our success or failure in life, but, more importantly, where we will spend eternity.

As young people graduate from high school, they make a decision as to where they will go to college. They can decide to go someplace that offers a great scholastic advantage and will ensure that you receive a great job, or you can choose to attend where there is a faithful congregation of God’s people (the two are not necessarily exclusive). The question must be pondered as to what is the basis of the decision. Are they making their decision on the basis of what will get me ahead in this world, or what is best for my spirituality?

Possibly the most important decision that a person makes is whom they will marry. The world seeks to get us to make a decision based mainly upon one’s looks. However, we have a decision as to whom we will date and then whom we will marry. The question is, are we making our decision based upon whether or not this person will help us get to heaven?

Another major decision is the work we decide to do in this life and where that work will take us to live. Do we take a job simply based upon the money and advancement in this world that it will bring? We should be making our decision as to what we do in life based upon what is best for us spiritually. Will this job allow me to live in a place where my faith in God will be strengthened. Will it cause me to miss the services of the church?

When we have children, we make decisions regarding them which will often influence where they will spend eternity. When we make decisions regarding our life, it has an effect on our children and what they learn is important in life. When we sing about our love for God and then live as such that the most important thing is riches and this world’s goods; they have learned a lesson, but it is not the lesson which they should learn. When we proclaim that God comes first in our lives, then we get more excited and spend more time in teaching our children sports, then they have

learned a lesson from our life, but not the one we proclaim.

Often we hear of parents who make a decision as to where to attend worship based upon the number of children in attendance, the social activities for the children, etc. Yet, how many decide where they will worship (relating to their children) based on the questions as to where they will learn God's Word, where they will be rooted and grounded in the Faith, where their children will grow up to be strong Christians, instead of the social activities which a congregation might provide?

The decisions we make in our life determine our eternal destiny. However, they not only determine our eternal destiny, they make us what we are today and what we will be tomorrow. Not only do they determine what we are and where we will spend eternity, they will also have an effect upon other people because we all influence others by our lives. Let us make sure that we, in every decision we make, choose to serve Jehovah.

MH

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(Continued from page 1)

Ananias, the high priest, assembled the Sanhedrin of judges and brought before them the brother of Jesus, who was called the Christ, this brother's name was James, also some of his companions, and when he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law, he had them stoned (*Jewish Antiquities*, XX, 9.1).

In another passage he wrote:

Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew many after him both of the Jews and the Gentiles. He was Christ. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the chief men among us, had condemned him to the cross, those that had previously followed him did not forsake him, for he appeared to them alive on the third day. As the divine prophets had foretold these and many other wonderful things concerning him. And the tribe of Christians, so named after him, is not extinct at this day (*Jewish Antiquities*, XVHI, 3.1).

Some have questioned this passage as a possible interpolation. In defense of the passage it does appear in every copy of Josephus that has come down to us and was quoted twice by Eusebius as early as A.D. 315.

The Jewish Talmud is the civil law of the Jews consisting of the Mishna (text) and the Gemara (commentary). In the Talmud there are some occasional references to Jesus but most of them are vulgar and unquotable. They are deliberately intended to contra-

dict events in the Gospel accounts and attack the Lord's credibility. However, the fact that the Jewish rabbis from the close of the first century on down have attempted so many attacks upon Jesus helps us to prove the reality of His earthly life. In their attempts to deny His divinity, they prove His historicity!

In the third place, notice these Roman writers as evidence of the historicity of Christ. Tacitus was a famous Roman historian who lived from around A.D. 55 to 117. Around the turn of the century he wrote his *Annals* in which he discussed the burning of Rome in A.D. 64. At this time Nero had been accused of having burned the city.

To suppress the rumor, Nero falsely accused and punished, with the most acute tortures, persons who, already hated for their shameful deeds, were commonly called Christians. The founder of that name, Christus, has been put to death by the procurator, Pontius Pilate, in the reign of Tiberius; but the deadly superstition, though repressed for a time, broke out again, not only through the city (Rome) whither all things horrible and vile flow from all quarters, and are encouraged (*Annals* 15:4).

Suetonius, another Roman historian who lived from around A.D. 65 to 135, wrote in his *Life of Claudius*: "Because the Jews at Rome caused continuous disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus, and expelled them from the city." This passage undoubtedly confirms Acts 18:2 that Claudius commanded all Jews to leave Rome. This included Priscilla and Aquila and proves that there were Christians in Rome as early as Claudius. It is well known that the name "Chrestus" was sometimes used of the heathen people for our Savior.

A Roman by the name of Pliny who lived from around A.D. 62 to 114, wrote to Trajan, when Pliny was Governor of Bithynia, to ask what he should do about the Christians.

They affirmed that the sum of their guilt or error was to assemble on a fixed day before daybreak, and sung responsively a hymn to Christ as to God, and to bind themselves with an oath not to enter into any wickedness, or to commit thefts, robberies, or adulteries, or falsify their work or repudiate trusts committed to them: when these things were ended, it was their custom to depart and on coming together again, to take food, men and women together, yet innocently.

What is the value of these statements of famous Jewish and Roman writers? They are valuable because they help to show absolutely that Jesus of Nazareth was a historical figure. Such evidence is not necessary to one who accepts the New Testament as historically true. But since some who are not Christians will boldly

assert that Jesus never really lived among men, this additional evidence proves that Jesus did exist.

Jesus continues to live today. This additional evidence should give us even more reason to accept the Gospel and obey it. Why not surrender your will to his

in Gospel obedience today? “What will you do with Jesus my friend? Neutral you cannot be: Someday your heart will be asking, O friend, ‘what will he do with me?’”

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## What a Christian Owes the World

Gary W. Summers

If the question were asked, “What does a Christian owe to those in the world?” some might answer, “Nothing! I haven’t bought anything from them; I haven’t contracted any of their services. I owe them nothing.”

Not all debts are incurred, however, on a goods-for-cash basis. Sometimes, they arise because of the amount of general good that can be produced by what an individual or small group possesses. Four leprosy men, for example, went out to the Syrian camp and discovered that the enemy had fled. They rejoiced in the food and the spoils they found there (2 Kin. 7:3-8). Did these men owe all who were starving in Samaria anything? As lepers they were outcasts. They had no deal with the leaders of the city, such as, “If you provide for our needs, we will share with you any treasures that we find.”

Yet even they recognized an obligation: “We do not well: this day *is* a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace” (2 Kin. 7:9). It would be sinful to keep to oneself that which would profit so many.

The same would be true of a scientist or a research institute that made a dramatic breakthrough in cancer research. What would the public think if they learned that a cure for cancer, not involving radiation or chemotherapy, had been discovered—20 years ago?! All of those who watched a loved one die needlessly during that time would be absolutely livid with rage against the one who had withheld such a cure. All would look upon it as a matter of obligation to all society. “They owed that knowledge to the public,” we would say.

It is this kind of debt that a Christian owes to the world. Paul wrote: “I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise” (Rom. 1:14). What is it that the Christian owes to the world? In a word: **light**.

The world lies in darkness. Paul reminds the Ephesians: “For ye were sometimes darkness, but now *are ye* light in the Lord: walk as children of light” (Eph. 5:8). As he himself was commissioned by Jesus, he was told, “I will deliver you from the *Jewish* people, as well

as *from* the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, to open their eyes, *in order* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me” (Acts 26:17-18—NKJV).

Christians owe it to those in darkness to bring the light to them, as it was once brought to us. Light is that which enables man to see. It is that which makes available real spiritual food, not just physical nourishment which the lepers brought to Jerusalem. Light is much greater than a cure for cancer; it is a remedy for death and eternal suffering. The world needs light.

There is an irony about light for the world, however. Whereas starving people do not refuse food, and those dying of cancer would enthusiastically accept a guaranteed treatment, many balk at the light. “And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil” (John 3:19). It remains the case, however, that many seek redemption from their evil deeds.

**To offer light is to offer salvation.** All have chosen to sin (Rom. 3:10, 23). All stand in need of redemption. Not everyone suffers with cancer. Many do choose to contract it by putting themselves at risk with incessant smoking, but a few (who are never around smoke) can also be afflicted by it. But even so, cancer is not common to all, as sin is. If any had a cure for cancer (which distresses only some), we would agree he had an obligation to share his knowledge to save the few. How much more, then, must the light shine in the darkness which engulfs all mankind?

**To offer light is to offer Truth.** Jesus not only claimed to be the light of the world (John 8:12); He also claimed to be “the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). But as with light, many have also hated Truth. Paul wrote of “men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness” (Rom. 1:18) and “Who changed the truth of God into a lie” (Rom. 1:25). Such is irrational and would be equivalent to the inhabitants of Samaria

saying, "We don't believe the Syrians have left their camp. We think these lepers are lying. We're staying put." Actually, Israel did consider the idea that the Syrians were pulling some sort of trick on them (had they head of the Trojan Horse?). But they were clever enough to investigate to find out the truth of the matter. Sadly, some have eliminated even the possibility that Truth exists; others do not care if it does. These do "not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 The. 2:10).

**To offer light is to offer hope.** Those who are starving always have hope that food will become available. Those suffering through the agonies of cancer can always hope for remission or some new discovery. Those in moral and spiritual darkness have no hope as long as they remain where they are. Those who die in that condition will have no hope throughout eternity. Hell provides no end to its multiple miseries; it offers no relief or abatement of torment, as the rich

man learned (Luke 16:24-25). No sane, rational person on Earth would choose eternal damnation in hell if he could experience for a few moments the agony felt by the rich man. But daily many are making decisions that will result in eternal hopelessness.

The Christian has an obligation to those in moral and spiritual darkness. Most will resist the light, and some will respond in a hostile fashion toward the light-bringer. "If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you" (John 15:20). Our willingness to present the Gospel to lost souls does not depend on its reception. If starving people refuse to eat, or if cancer patients refuse to lifesaving treatment, such rejection is not the fault of the person of good will. The price of salvation is too dear to keep silent about it. Truth must be spoken; hope must be extended. Eternal life is too great to be hidden. The Gospel must be preached. It is not just a good idea; it is an obligation.

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## Is the Church of Christ a Sect?

*Tom Wacaster*

*Sect* is used nine times in the New Testament. It is translated four times with the English word "sect," and five times with the word "heresies." W. E. Vine tells us that the word means, "a predilection either for a particular truth, or for a perversion of one, generally with the expectation of personal advantage; hence, a division and the formation of a party or sect in contrast to the uniting power of 'the truth,' held in toto; a sect is a division developed and brought to an issue." When Paul arrived in Rome, those who were "the chief of the Jews" met with him and said, "We neither received letters from Judaea concerning thee, nor did any of the brethren come hither and report or speak any harm of

thee. But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, it is known to us that everywhere it is spoken against" (Acts 28:21-22). It is important to note that Paul did not regard the church as a sect. When he stood before Felix, having been charged by the Jews as a troublemaker, Paul said, "But this I confess unto thee, that after the Way which they call a sect, so serve I the God of our fathers" (Acts 24:14).

Religious theologians would have us believe that the churches of Christ are just another *sect*, a denomination among denominations, and one of many *ways* by which a man can get to heaven. Unfortunately these

same *theologians* would suggest that the churches of Christ are not worthy to be classified with mainstream denominationalism because of so called “radical” beliefs to which we subscribe. They would have you believe that the church of Christ is nothing more than a heretical, pompous group of dogmatic knuckleheads incapable of understanding God’s love and mercy. One liberal theologian in speaking of the church of Christ has even suggested that he and his contemporaries are “crusading against the tyranny of ecclesiastical professionals within the Christian commonwealth, for we believe the system they espouse is cancerous to the one body of believers.” Still another writes, “It is true that Churches of Christ, like other sects, have reduced the Christian system to mere professional employment and sectarian ecclesiasticalism [sic].” It is really sad that such misrepresentation characterizes those who are bitterly opposed to the church of Christ. It is somewhat inconsistent for the religious leaders of our day to claim that “it makes little difference what church you belong to” while exempting the church of Christ from the so called *umbrella* of God’s grace.

One of the charges laid at the feet of those of us who seek a “thus saith the Lord” is the accusation that churches of Christ have been too judgmental in their refusal to fellowship denominations. This, according to some, makes us *sectarian*. Loyalty to the truth of God’s Word does not make someone sectarian. If the Bible forbids fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness (Eph. 5:11), then compliance to that God-given command is not heretical, nor is it a manifestation of a “sectarian spirit,” as some are claiming.

Another charge laid at our feet is that the churches of Christ are too arrogant in their claims of being the one true church. If the Bible plainly says there is one body (and it does—Eph. 4:4-5), am I sectarian because I preach that message? If the Bible plainly says that all spiritual blessings are in that one body (and it does—Eph. 1:3), am I sectarian because I practice and teach that truth? If the Bible plainly says that one must be baptized in order to enter into that one body (and it does—1 Cor. 12:13), am I sectarian because I obey and preach that truth? If it is *sectarian* to believe there is one body and that the body is the church, that one must conform to God’s will in order to be pleasing in His sight, that God authorizes only singing in worship music, and that men and women who promote denominationalism will be lost, then I plead guilty as charged. But before someone frowns on this self-

admitted declaration, let him examine the Scriptures and see that the Holy Spirit has clearly revealed that each of the afore mentioned, so-called *sectarian* beliefs are in compliance with God’s will. Contrary to what religious leaders may claim or even think, sectarianism is the result of departure from those things, not compliance to them. Hence, those who maintain loyalty to the truth are not sectarian.

Brother Darrell Conley wrote, “The church for which Jesus died is not a sect. It is the original. It is the whole of God’s saved people. Simply because men have invented counterfeit churches, does not make the church of Christ a counterfeit. The counterfeits are the sects.” Now before you write this author off as some sort of radical nut, let us reason together. Following the good confession of Simon Peter (Mat. 16:16), Jesus told Peter and the apostles, “upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it” (Mat. 16:18). Please take note of the phrase, “I will build my church.” Each word in that string of words is significant. Let us consider each of these.

First, Jesus said, “**I** will build my church.” Jesus is the builder. He paid the price for the church by shedding His precious blood on the cross. As the builder He has all authority to build it precisely the way He wants it built (Mat. 28:18). Our obligation is to examine the *blueprint*, the Word of God, so as to determine what the features of that church are, and then to make sure we do not deviate from that pattern. If it is important for a contractor to comply to a blueprint in building a house, what makes us think that we can even attempt to build the church of our Lord in this day and age and ignore the blueprint? Is it sectarian to read and study the blueprint that God has given, and appeal to that blueprint for authority in building God’s church today?

Second, Jesus said, “**I will build** my church.” At the time Jesus lived upon the earth, the church was yet future so far as its existence was concerned. It was only after Jesus died on the cross that the church came into existence. Most Bible students recognize that Acts 2 signifies the beginning of the church. Luke recorded Peter’s stirring words on that day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14-35). Not only did the apostle establish undeniable proof of the deity of Jesus, he convicted the multitudes of their sin, and set forth the terms of pardon. Once they complied to those terms of pardon they were “added” to the church (Acts 2:41, 47). Let this point sink into your hearts. A man does not *join* the church;

he is “added” to it by compliance to the commands of God. If it is sectarian to claim I have been added to the church Jesus built, then so be it.

Third, Jesus said, “I will build **my** church.” The emphasis here is upon possession and ownership. When someone says, “This is my house,” he is expressing ownership. When referring to ownership of a piece of property one says essentially the same thing whether he says, “This is Mr. Jones’ house,” or, “This is the house of Mr. Jones.” If the church belongs to Jesus, and it does, then it is proper and right to refer to that church as “Christ’s church” or “the church of Christ.” You have said essentially the same thing. Now, dear friend, is it sectarian to use precisely the same terminology that Paul used in referring to the Lord’s church and thus claim that I am a member of the “church of Christ” (Rom. 16:16)?

Fourth, Jesus said, I will build my **church**.” Notice the singular nature of that word. Jesus never promised to build 2,000 or 200, or even 2 churches. He said He would build His church. Is it sectarian, therefore, to claim to be a part of that one church He built and for which He died? What is the alternative? Would someone dare claim, upon compliance to the will of God, claim that he is not a member of the church for which

Jesus died? The law of the excluded middle demands that I am either a member of the church for which Jesus died, or I am not a member of that church. Why am I accused, therefore, of being sectarian when I claim I have been added to that one church for which our Savior died?

It is sad that the religious leaders of our age would suggest that what I have written, and the subject I have addressed, is not really that important. Before you buy into that deceptive lie, let me impress upon your mind the importance of this issue we are discussing. Since the church is the body of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23), and since Paul wrote, “For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, *being* himself the saviour of the body” (Eph. 5:23), I want to make sure I am in the correct church, i.e. Jesus’ body, so as to lay claim to that salvation. There is no salvation outside of Christ (Eph. 1:3; 2 Tim. 2:10). I must be a part of that church for which He died. The devil has built many a counterfeit church, but only the church of our Lord will enjoy the blessing of salvation. So you see, it is an important issue. In fact, it is so important an issue, that your very salvation depends upon what church of which you are a member.

Think about it!

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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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## Hurricane Ivan

*Michael Hatcher*

On September 15-16 of this year hurricane Ivan paid a visit to Pensacola (along with many other places). Pensacola suffered a great deal of damage as a result of Ivan. Most places in and around Pensacola were without electricity for a while, therefore many activities were suspended or cancelled due to the lack of electricity and the damage done by the hurricane. The elders decided that one of the works in which we are engaged that would be suspended for that time was *Defender*. Thus, there was no October 2004 issue published, and there are no plans to go back and put this issue out. With this issue of *Defender* it is our desire to be back on our normal monthly schedule of publication (we do not publish a December issue).

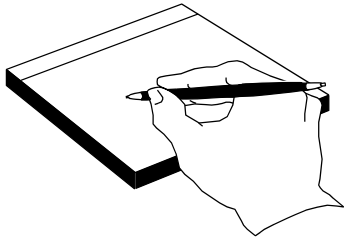
As was reported in *Beacon* (the weekly bulletin of the Bellview Church of Christ), there was some damage to the building here along with a great deal of clean-up that has been required. Most of the members of this congregation suffered some damage to their houses, and a few suffered extensive damage. Most of the members of this congregation escaped serious injury, thankfully. It was a very emotional time for everyone in this area and the devastation brought by Ivan will remain a lasting memory, no doubt, for all of us.

Jesus stated that the world would be able to see that we are His disciples by the love that we demonstrate one to another. He said, “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all *men* know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:34-35). The early church demonstrated this type of love one for another. “And

all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all *men*, as every man had need” (Acts 2:44-45). Later we observe, “Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, And laid *them* down at the apostles’ feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need” (Acts 4:34-35). There was a need that arose. Brethren took up collections and distribution was made to those brethren that were in need at the time (see also Acts 11:27-30).

The congregation here has been the recipient of the outpouring of love from a generous brotherhood. Immediately after the hurricane brethren took up collections and brought goods (food, water, along with other necessities) to us to distribute among ourselves and others in need. Since that time, brethren have taken up collections and sent financial help to the elders here to use as they deem appropriate. Additionally we had some brethren who took the time to come here and help in the cleanup around our building. All of these things have been done by a generous brotherhood. While some individuals seem to enjoy pointing out what is wrong with the church today (and there are some things wrong), yet there is much that is right as well. We are a part of a caring, loving brotherhood. There are no greater people on the face of this earth than our brethren. We love and appreciate each one of you so much. It is difficult to express the gratitude which is in our hearts, so all we can say is: **Thank you** from the bottom of our hearts!

# Notes From The Editor



**Michael  
Hatcher**

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## John 9:31

I was recently reading a discussion as to whether God hears a sinner's prayer. As is often the case in this type of discussion, the statement in John 9:31 was brought up: "Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth." As is normally the case someone mentioned that this statement was not made by an inspired man—which is true. In effect this is saying that since the man was not inspired, what he said was wrong, or you cannot use an uninspired man's statement to prove anything. However, we would wonder if an uninspired man can make a true statement. I do not believe anyone would accept such a position. Thus, we must look at the statement within its context and determine if it is true or not.

First, consider the context of the statement. This blind man had been miraculously healed by our Lord. He had been brought to the Pharisees who questioned him concerning his healing. Upon learning that Jesus had healed him, they claimed that Jesus was a sinner since He had healed him on the Sabbath day. This led to a confrontation between the Pharisees and this blind man. Upon the statement by the Pharisees that they knew that God had spoken to Moses, but as far as Christ is concerned, they "knew not from whence he is" (29). The blind man defended Jesus stating: "Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes. Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing" (30-33). The Pharisees did not respond to his statements but simply said that he was born in sin and they cast him

out (34). If the Pharisees could have found fault with what the blind man stated, they would have responded to his argument pointing out its error. They could not do such! The reason they could not is because what the blind man said was/is true.

Second, consider what the blind man stated. "Now we know." How does anyone come to know anything from a spiritual standpoint? Our knowledge only comes by the revelation of God (cf., 1 Cor. 2:9-10). Thus, when this blind man said, "Now we know" he was stating what had been revealed by God. Listen to what Solomon by inspiration wrote, "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination" (Pro. 28:9). The prophet Isaiah states, "Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear" (Isa. 59:1-2). Even though this former blind man was not inspired, he knew what the Scriptures teach and accurately represented those Scriptures to the Pharisees.

I want to consider one avenue of study to show the truthfulness of this statement—the tabernacle and the temple. Those physical structures were typifying the spiritual aspects of the New Testament system (Heb. 8-10). God gave specific instructions as to the making of these structures, and the Israelites were to follow the pattern God gave them (Exo. 25:40). The tabernacle proper was surrounded by the outer court, representative of the world. In that outer court were two things of importance: the brazen altar and the brazen laver. The brazen altar represented the cross where the Lamb of God shed His blood for man's sin (Gal. 1:4; Tit. 2:14; et al). The brazen laver represents baptism where we wash ourselves clean from our sins (Acts 22:16; Eph. 5:26; et al) and qualify us to enter into the tabernacle (Acts 2:41, 47; 1 Cor. 12:13).

The tabernacle proper was in the western part of the court. It was divided into two compartments separated by a veil. The first compartment was the holy place in which were three pieces of furniture—the table of shewbread which had twelve loaves of unleavened bread on it, the golden candlestick or lampstand, and the altar of incense or golden altar. Inside the veil was the most holy place or holy of holies. It contained the ark of the covenant, and on top of the ark was the mercy seat.

The most holy place represented heaven itself: the dwelling place of God. The holy place represented the

church of Christ. The three pieces of furniture in the holy place each typified something God placed in the church. The candlestick had a twofold application: (1) the Word of God which gives light to the church (Psa. 119:105; 2 Cor. 4:4; 2 Pet. 1:19; et al), (2) the light Christians are have before a darkened world (Mat. 5:13-16; Eph. 5:8; Rev. 2:5). The table of shewbread typified the Lord's Supper (Mat. 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; 1 Cor. 11:20-29). Before the veil was the golden altar which typifies the prayers of the saints. John wrote, "And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four *and* twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints" (Rev. 5:8). *Odours* is translated "incense" in the American Standard and New King James. Later John adds, "And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer *it* with the prayers of

all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, *which came* with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand" (Rev. 8:3-4).

God placed the altar in the holy place, not in the court! The altar represents prayers and the holy place represents the church. While the denominational world has always tried to take prayers out of the church and put them in the world (so one can say the "sinner's prayer" for his salvation), such is a violation of what God has established. Sadly, we have some who are now trying to take prayers out of the church and place it in the world with the qualification that the individual is praying to learn the truth or some such qualification. Brethren, there is absolutely no justification for taking prayers out of God's designated place. Prayer is a spiritual blessing for those who are members of the Lord's church and no one else.

*Michael Hatcher*

## What Is the "Rapture?"

*V. Glenn McCoy*

A young Christian mother recently came into my office with her two children and said, "Will you please explain to my children what the 'Rapture' is?" Her children had been exposed to the "Rapture" through some of their friends and they were left confused. Most of us have seen bumper stickers that refer to the "Rapture" by saying something to the effect: "In case of Rapture, this car will be empty." Those who have not been indoctrinated by the proponents of this doctrine scratch their heads in wonder as to what this could mean. Denominational programs on television present the "Rapture" as a doctrine that all should believe. Members of the Lord's church are not always prepared to discuss this subject with their religious neighbors. Although there are some variations in beliefs about the "Rapture," in this article, we will discuss the most commonly held views.

### **Not a Bible Subject**

Many are surprised to learn that the "Rapture" is not a biblical subject. The Scriptures say nothing about it. It is a concept that has been around for some time, but was highly promoted by Hal Lindsey in his book, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, first published in 1970. According to the proponents of the theory, at the end of the "church age" Jesus will raise the righteous dead and take them, along with the righteous who are living, to a special place, presumably like heaven, for seven years

where they will be given rewards and positions. They teach that those people who remain on the earth will not know where the saints have gone. They will realize they are gone, but will not be able to explain their disappearance. They will see the open graves that have been abandoned by the resurrected bodies, but they will have no explanation. While this "Rapture" is going on in heaven for seven years, the "great tribulation" supposedly takes place on the earth. This is to happen primarily during the last three and one-half years of the seven-year period. During that time there will be fear, anxiety, and death on a massive scale. Further, those who advocate the "Rapture" teach that at the end of the seven-year period the righteous will go to Jerusalem with Christ and reign with Him for a thousand years. Then, at the end of the thousand-year reign the wicked will be resurrected and condemned to eternal punishment.

### **What Is Wrong With the "Rapture?"**

Is there a Bible basis for the "Rapture" doctrine? No! Will there ever be such a thing as the "Rapture?" Absolutely not! Is there a conflict between "Rapture" teaching and the plain teaching of the Bible? Absolutely! Please notice some of the things wrong with the teaching of the "Rapture."

1. The "Rapture" requires too many comings of Jesus. They have Him coming the first time to take the

righteous away for seven years. They have Him coming again seven years later to go to Jerusalem to reign a thousand years. Then at the end of the thousand years they have Him raising the wicked and judging them. Jude 14-15 pictures Jesus coming to execute judgment on the ungodly. So, according to the “Rapture” proponents, another coming of the Lord is required for judgment upon the wicked.

How does all this fit with Bible teaching? The answer is, not at all. The Bible says that when Jesus comes he will execute judgment “upon all,” not some now and some later, but all at one time. His coming will not be in stages with years between the comings. “Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard *speeches* which ungodly sinners have spoken against him” (Jude 14-15).

2. The proponents of the “Rapture” say that only a part of humanity will see Jesus when He comes the second time. Only the righteous dead and the righteous living will see Him. The remainder of the living will not see Him for at least seven years. Those among the unrighteous dead will not see Him until the thousand-year reign is finished. This cannot possibly be correct because Revelation 1:7 states that when Jesus comes “Every eye shall see him, and they *also* which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him.”

3. The “Rapture” is in conflict with Matthew 25:31-46. Unlike the “Rapture” theory, Matthew 25 has “all the nations,” the wicked and the good being judged at the same time in the same judgment. The “Rapture” has some of the dead being raised while others are left in the grave. However, the Bible says that Jesus will come to judge all the living and dead, the wicked and the good, all in the same judgment. There will be a great separation. The wicked are placed on the left and the righteous on the right. Those on the left will be sentenced to punishment in hell, while those on the right will get to enjoy the bliss of heaven. There is no room in Matthew 25 for a “Rapture” period, or the “great tribulation,” or the thousand years between the resurrection of the righteous and the wicked.

Paul states in 2 Timothy 4:1: “I charge *thee* therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom.” Paul said that Jesus will judge those who are living and those who are dead at His coming. Matthew

25:31-46 tells us that the judgment will contain both the righteous and the wicked. Therefore, all the wicked who are dead as well as those who are living will be judged. At the same time, all the righteous who are living as well as those who are dead will be judged. In contrast, the “Rapture” has Jesus coming with no universal judgment, with only part of the dead being raised, while others are left in their graves.

4. The “Rapture” theory is in contradiction to the clear and positive teaching of the Lord in John 5:28-29: “Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.” While the “Rapture” has multiple judgments, the Bible says that all humanity will be judged at the same time, the good as well as the wicked.

5. The “Rapture” does not fit the Bible teaching of the “last day.” “This is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the **last day**. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the **last day**.... No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the **last day**” (John 6:39-40, 44). “Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the **last day**” (John 6:54). “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the **last day**” (John 12:48). Jesus taught in John 5:28-29 that the resurrection of both the good and evil will take place in the same hour. That resurrection and judgment will take place in the **last day**. The “Rapture” theory has not just days but a thousand years separating the resurrection and judgment of the good and evil.

6. The “Rapture” is in conflict with 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10:

Seeing *it is* a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in

that day.

In the above passage Paul spoke of two groups. The first group is composed of those who have been troubled and persecuted. These are the obedient. The other group is described as those who do not know God and have not obeyed the gospel. He also talks about two compensations. To the afflicted He will give rest, but to the disobedient He will bring punishment. The rest for the righteous and punishment for the disobedient will occur in “that day” when Jesus comes with His angels. The “Rapture” does not have the wicked receiving their punishment in “that day” as Paul declared, but a thousand years later! According to the “Rapture” doctrine, the righteous will be in the air and the wicked will still be on the earth.

7. The “Rapture” conflicts with 2 Peter 3:10-14:

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. *Seeing then that* all these things shall be dissolved, what manner *of persons* ought ye to be in *all* holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.

This passage refers to the Second Coming of Jesus. When that happens, the earth and all in it will be burned up. But, the “Rapture” demands a continuation of the earth **after** the Lord comes. They say the earth will continue seven more years until Jesus returns to Jerusalem, and then a thousand more years after that. They teach that the earth will be renovated to be the resting-place for those who are not among the fortunate 144,000 who will be in heaven. Compare this far-fetched theory with the Bible that clearly says the earth and all in it will be burned up at the Lord’s Second Coming.

## Two Primary Passages

There are two primary passages that the advocates for the “Rapture” use in an attempt to support this imaginative theory. Neither *Rapture* nor the teaching to verify it is to be found in either one. They both refer to the Second Coming of Christ with no reference whatsoever to a “Rapture.”

### 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17

The first passage “Rapture” advocates use to support their theory is 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17. One does not have to look very long to realize that this passage in no way verifies the “Rapture.” The proponents of the “Rapture” say that Jesus will come in secret, but this passage tells us that when Jesus comes it will not be in secret. “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God” (v. 16). The coming of Christ mentioned in this passage is the same as the one mentioned in Revelation 1:7: “Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they *also* which pierced him.” There is no secret coming discussed here. These Scriptures say that there will be a shout, the voice of the archangel, the trump of God, and every eye seeing Jesus when He comes again.

### 2 Corinthians 15:50-58

The second passage that the advocates of the “Rapture” use is 1 Corinthians 15:50-58. It is equally lacking in support for the theory. Verse 52 dispels the idea of a secret coming when it tells us that the sound of a trumpet will accompany the Lord. There is more in this passage that does not fit the “Rapture.” When Jesus comes, immortality will begin (v. 53). Death will be destroyed at His coming, “swallowed up in victory” (v. 54). In contrast, “Rapture” proponents say that life and death will continue on earth during the time the righteous are with Jesus. These passages do not verify the “Rapture,” but in fact, they repudiate this false doctrine.

The theory of the “Rapture” is false because it is not taught in the Bible. It came from the mind of men.

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# Where Is the Term “Christian”?

*Barry Hatcher*

A few days ago an Indonesian man came to my house and asked me questions for the National Census. It was interesting to me, that when the person asked me what my religion was according to the choices on his questionnaire, my religion was not one of the choices listed. He asked me, “Are you Protestant?” And I said, “No.” He then asked, “Are you Catholic?” Again, I said, “No.” I could see some concern come over his face, because he did not understand. He has probably asked that question to many people in Indonesia, who are not Muslim, and received an immediate reply, “I am Protestant” or “I am Catholic.” It became obvious that he was not prepared to hear my answer. He then asked me, “What religion are you?” I responded by saying, “I am a Christian.” He smiled and said politely, “Then you are a Protestant.” I said, “No, I am a Christian.” He then smiled and said, “You are a Catholic.” I chuckled a little and again stated, “No, I am a Christian.” He was so confused that he sat for a silent moment and simply looked at me. He did not know what to say.

I then asked him if the list included the term *Christian*, and he told me it did not. I mentioned to him I thought it was very strange that in the New Testament you cannot find the religious groups called “Catholic” and “Protestant” but one can find “Christian,” and yet “Catholic” and “Protestant” are the only words on the list and “Christian” was excluded. He smiled and said, “You know, you are right, it is strange that the term *Christian* is excluded.” Some people here have explained the reason *Christian* is not on the list is because there are so many kinds of *Christians* in Indonesia.

This experience brought to my mind a story I had read years ago, shortly after I started preaching. The story goes like this. A Christian man visits a city he had never visited before. He arrived on a Saturday afternoon. He knew he would be in that city for several days, therefore, he began to ask people he met while walking down the street where the nearest church of Christ building was located. He did this in order that he might worship there on Sunday. But, no one could tell him. He saw a policeman and decided to ask him about the church building. The brother reasoned, certainly a policeman would know where the church of Christ building was located. He approached the policeman and asked him the same question he had asked others. The

policeman said, “Let me think about this.” The concerned brother could see the policeman was in deep thought. After thinking for a moment, he began to talk out loud to himself. He said, “Let’s see, the Baptist Church building is over there on that corner of the street; the Methodist Church building is down that street; the Pentecostal Church building is two blocks behind the Baptist Church building; the Presbyterian building is about two kilometers from the center of town; the Episcopalians meet in a new building located over near the new McDonald’s; the Catholic Church is meeting in a house on 13<sup>th</sup> Street; the Lutherans are new in this city, and they are meeting in someone’s house; the Seventh Day Adventist group doesn’t meet here anymore, because they moved to the small city about 20 kilometers from here; the Jehovah’s Witnesses have a kingdom hall over on Bell Street near the only theatre in town; and the Nazarene Church meets in the local elementary school.” The policeman, after stating all of the things just mentioned, thought for a moment, and then looked with some surprise at this traveling brother in Christ and said, “You know? I don’t think Christ has a church in this city!”

It is a sad thing. However, when one reads the New Testament which is the text, the only guide book, the only authority which defines the term *Christian*, one will not find various kinds of *Christians*. According to the New Testament a *Christian* is a baptized believer, dedicated to following the Will of Christ in every area of life. The Lord Himself defined what a *Christian* is when He stated, “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). Considering this verse only, might not be enough for some, therefore, one might consider the statement by our Lord, “Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?” (Luke 6:46).

Too many people want the best of two worlds. They want to be considered a follower of Christ and be called a “Christian,” but, at the same time, they wish to practice certain things in the world not authorized by Christ. So, man has invented his own brand of *Christianity*. We might call this the religion of the “hyphenated-Christian.” That means a person might be a “Protestant-Christian” or a “Catholic-Christian.” And

under Protestantism there are “hyphenated-Christians” like “Baptist-Christians,” “Methodist-Christians,” “Presbyterian-Christians,” etc., etc.

When did the Lord plant these religions? Where in the Scriptures does one read about denominationalism in any positive and acceptable manner? Where in the New Testament can one find the authority to accept parts of God’s Will and reject other parts? Jesus, speaking about the religious leaders of his day, said, “This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with *their* lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men” (Mat. 15:8-9). Jesus was not popular for teaching the above truth. The disciples came to Him and informed Him in (Mat. 15:12) that the religious leaders He had condemned were offended. Jesus responded in a very interesting manner. He did not apologize for His condemnation of the religious leaders, but, instead, He made some interesting comments about them. He revealed His Father’s attitude about their type of religion by stating, “Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the

blind, both shall fall into the ditch” (Mat. 15:13-14).

Each of us must be careful not to allow someone to influence us away from the pure Word of God. The religious leaders of Jesus’ time were in fact *religious* but not in the way God wanted, and He rejected them. Today, people can do the same. People can be *religious*, they can follow a “religious group” but fail to please God. We know the ways of men are not the ways of God.

Does the true church of Christ exist in Indonesia? This question needs to be answered. It is obvious the government of Indonesia does not know that the Lord’s church exists in this country. If they do, they do not understand it.

*Copied*

*Editor’s Note: Brother Barry Hatcher is a faithful Gospel preacher and missionary in Indonesia. While this article was written concerning Indonesia, the same question can and should be asked about the United States. There are so many today who know nothing about the Lord’s church and only know about denominational hyphenated “Christianity.” We need to be sounding out the truth of God’s Word and the one church.*

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