

# In Hope Of Eternal Life

Bobby Liddell, Editor

1989 Bellview Lectures

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Fourteenth Annual  
Bellview Lectures

Pensacola, Florida

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In Hope Of Eternal Life  
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# DEDICATION



William S. Cline

To brother William S. Cline, beloved brother in Christ, faithful and effective gospel preacher, this book, containing the lectures delivered in the Fourteenth Annual Bellview Lectures, May 10-14, 1989, Pensacola, Florida, is lovingly and gratefully dedicated.

This dedication is a testimony of the deep appreciation and abiding love which the Bellview Church of Christ has for brother Cline and for his selfless and untiring work for the cause of Christ here and throughout the world. Only eternity shall tell the far-reaching scope of his influence for good. Bellview has experienced great growth because of the preaching and work of brother Cline, and the example of his lovely and tireless wife, Jean, and loving and faithful children, Cathy, Mary, William R., and Becky, all of whom have been a great blessing to the Bellview church. During his fifteen years as a minister at Bellview, Bill began and edited a monthly publication, DEFENDER, which is now in its eighteenth year. He also was the founder and first director of the Bellview Preacher Training School, and in

conjunction with the school, began the annual Bellview Lectures. He now serves as editor of the FIRM FOUNDATION, and is co-owner of the FIRM FOUNDATION PUBLISHING HOUSE.

In addition to his heavy schedule of speaking in gospel meetings and lectureships in numerous states, Bill has also been very active in mission efforts, especially in the Far East. He was instrumental in brother Ira Y. Rice, Jr., and his work being under the oversight of the Bellview elders. He also serves as a board member and treasurer of the Four Seas College of Bible and Missions, Singapore, and has made numerous trips to the Far East to preach and teach.

He is a great preacher of outstanding ability and unyielding devotion. With a pure and tender heart, genuine love, and unfailing desire to bring glory to God and not to himself, he is a great encourager of good men and a great opponent of evil. To faithful preachers, he is a true friend. Throughout the nation and the world, brother Cline is known, admired and loved by those who love and stand for the truth. Greater honor, by far, is due to such a staunch soldier of the cross; but may this dedication and recognition be representative of the high esteem with which we hold brother Cline. May God bless him with happiness and prosperity, length of life, doors of opportunity and eternal reward is our prayer.

Elders,  
Bellview Church of Christ

# PREFACE

What greater subject could be the theme than that of *In Hope Of Eternal Life*? For man's eternal life, the God of the Universe purposed and Christ, His only begotten Son and our Lord, died. The scheme of redemption; that is, God's plan that, in Christ, man might have spiritual life now and eternally as opposed to death in sin and service to Satan, runs an a golden thread throughout the Bible.

Far too little preaching and teaching has been done in the church concerning eternal life and related subjects. In many places, a generation has grown up without a knowledge of such basic studies. Men need to be instructed in such areas that they might be called out of sin to obedience of the faith; thus, living as new creatures in Christ, to be fortified in faith and rejoice in hope. The world needs to hear plain and powerful preaching about Heaven and Hell; about God and Satan; about the beauties of eternal life and the horrors of everlasting punishment; and how one should live that he might know the blessings of God, have hope of eternal life and escape the fiery abyss of Hell. That is the purpose of this volume.

To the Bellview elders, Hairston Brantley, Bill Gallaher and Fred Stancliff, who oversee the Bellview Lectures, and to all the members of the Bellview church who give so generously and work so diligently to make the Lectureship a success year after year, we express our deep appreciation. Through them, this book is sent forth with the hope that much good may be accomplished in the lives of those who read it as they are drawn to God and lead to the only one who can give true hope.

The faithful brethren who prepared manuscripts for this book are especially to be commended. They were chosen because of their Christian character and for their boldly speaking the truth in love. Busy men already, they gave the many hours of time required to study and research their topics in order to prepare and deliver lessons of outstanding value. Readers would do well to carefully study each and every one of the twenty-six chapters. In them will be found comfort, direction, warning, and reason for hope, real hope, for eternal life.

As the beloved apostle Paul, who by inspiration penned these words, let us so live in Christ that we might live: "In hope of eternal

life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began”  
(Tit. 1:2). To Christ, our hope, be the glory.

Bobby Liddell, Director

March 22, 1989

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# IN HOPE OF ETERNAL LIFE

*Foy L. Smith*

In writing to Titus, the apostle Paul reaffirmed the fact that he was a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ. He states that truth is after godliness, and that the true believer cherishes the hope of eternal life. He further affirms that this promise of eternal life was in the mind of God “before the world began.” He emphasizes the importance of preaching and the part it plays in attaining this eternal life. It is sad but true that preaching is played down by most religionists today, including some of our own “theologians.” It is not true that preaching deserves to be played down, but true that this is the attitude so many have toward it. But we are still told that “it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe” (1 Cor. 1:21). There is too much foolish preaching in the world today and not enough of “the foolishness of preaching.” There is an ocean of difference between these two statements. I would rather be “a fool for Christ’s sake” than to just be a fool any day in the week! (1 Cor. 4:10). The statements in this introduction are based upon the apostle’s affirmations in Titus 1:1-3. He says that the true believer can live all through this life with this to lead him onward: “In hope of eternal life” (v. 2). What an incentive! What an encouragement! Regardless of how rough the going gets, the Christian still sees that blessed hope, always leading him onward and upward.

The Christian has this hope. The sinner has only the promise of eternal death if he pursues his wicked ways unto the end. What an incentive for us all to live right. The Christian has hope; the sinner has no hope. Webster defines hope as, “desire with expectation of obtaining what is desired, trust, reliance; a land of hope.” These are good definitions. We do not hope for the impossible. We hope for that which we may obtain. I do not hope for a million dollars. I would like to have it to give it to great causes I now have in mind, but I do not expect to ever have a million dollars so I do not hope for it. It is beyond my reach so no hope is involved on my part. Now there are some things I do hope

for because they are obtainable. God has promised them and that is enough for me. I believe I can have them. Canaan was a “land of hope” to the children in Pharaoh’s terrible bondage. Only a few of the original ones who left Egypt entered into that land but it was no fault on the part of the Father who gave them the land. It was because of their own disobedience (1 Cor. 10:1-12). America is a land of hope to countless millions and comparatively speaking very few of them will ever set foot on this land. We who enjoy it as natural born citizens often fail to appreciate it as we should. True, our beloved land has a lot of big problems, but I will take it any day in the week over any other land on earth! In spite of all its faults it is still a land of hope. I constantly hope for our America to purge herself so she will be a better land.

Every day is a day of hope for so many—hoping for new cars, jobs, promotions, hoping for food and shelter, hoping for a multiplicity of things. With many, their hope is not a true hope for these things never come to pass. It is a real experience to take a concordance and run references on the word “hope.” As the result of doing this very thing, I have divided this lesson into three major divisions. Let us now pursue these divisions as logically and plainly as we possibly can. Take away hope and there will be no eternal life for a single one of us.

### **HOPE IS A GREAT BIBLE DOCTRINE**

It is my purpose now to call upon a number of great Bible characters to learn what they had to say about hope. These characters were as human as we are. They had their trials and they had their happinesses. Some of their greatest joys came as the result of their passing through so many trials and troubles. When we listen to them we are listening to their experiences, approved by the Holy Spirit and recorded for our benefit. We could call upon so many Old Testament characters, but I have five in mind. Let us learn what they had to say about this great subject, hope.

*Listen to David:* “Thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother’s breasts” (Psa. 22:9). This is taking hope back a long way. Someone asked an old preacher once, “When shall I begin teaching my six months old baby?” He exclaimed, “Mercy, madam, you have lost six months already!” And according to today’s experts he was not altogether wrong. They say the mother should begin teaching her baby while it is in the formative stages inside her body. Is it amiss to believe that shaping and molding of the baby’s life can be effectively done in the fetus stage,

and the development stage within the mother's womb? Just don't sell the idea short. It certainly is worth the try. If mothers to be can ruin the lives of their babies while they carry them by smoking, taking dope, and drinking intoxicants; if they can bring them into the world all but destroyed before they have a chance, then who is to say their lives cannot be molded for good by careful attention and even teaching during these months? Far-fetched? Why not try it, mothers? I know a young mother who talked gently to her baby, sang nursery rhymes, told it about Jesus, and manifested a loving, caring attitude all during the months before the birth. You should see that baby now! David's mother had hope for her baby—yes, even from her breasts. And this statement just may allow more than one interpretation.

The Psalmist said again, "Happy is he...whose hope is in the Lord his God" (Psa. 146:5). Who are the happiest people in the world? Why, Christians, of course. Sin doesn't bring happiness. It knows only how to make one miserable and wretched. Listen to David again: "Uphold me according unto thy word that I may live: and let me not be ashamed of my hope" (Psa. 119:116). This sounds like Paul who declared that he was not ashamed of the gospel of Christ (Rom. 1: 16). Truly, the right hope "maketh not ashamed" (Rom. 5:5). It had this effect upon Paul who said, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ" (Rom. 1: 16). Now a final word from David: "In thee, O Lord, do I hope" (Psa. 38:15). Truly, David was a man of hope.

*Listen to Job:* "My days...are spent without hope" (Job 7:6). Learn of his many trials and heartbreaks by reading this great book and we can understand to a degree why he would say this. He felt for a while that there was no hope left for him. He had lost his children, his crops, his wealth, his friends, and finally his wife. He felt for a while that all hope was gone. But listen to this after he got hold of himself—with the Lord's help, of course: "Be secure, because there is hope" (Job 11:18). Oh, yes, He cares and there is always hope out there for us if we will but lay hold on it.

*Listen to Jeremiah:* Now he oscillated some as we all do from time to time; sometimes back and forth. But he came out a winner in the end. He said once, "In vain is salvation hoped for" (Jer. 3:23). I prefer to take what he said a bit later, and this shows his torment at times: "There is hope in thine end" (Jer. 31:17). He seemed to have always come through

even after almost giving up in despair because of the sins of God's children. He was known as the "weeping prophet," and no doubt he shed many tears over God's wayward children. He learned, sometimes the hard way, that the star of hope never goes all the way down.

*Listen to Ezekiel:* In Ezekiel 37:1-14, the prophet is carried by the spirit of the Lord and set down in "the midst of the valley which was full of bones." Let me paraphrase: the bones were very dry, and the question was asked if they could live? Ezekiel was told to prophesy and breath would enter the bones and they would live. God said He would bring flesh upon them and put breath in them and they would live and know that He was the Lord. Ezekiel prophesied as commanded and there was a shaking of the bones coming together, and from the four winds breath came into them, and they had flesh covering the bones and now breath in them; thus, they lived. These bones represented the house of Israel—people discouraged—people without hope. In this demonstration, God was saying "I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel...I shall place you in your own land" (vv. 12-14). However figurative and perhaps poetic, I can see in Israel's resurrection, so to speak, and their going on toward the land that had been promised them, a figure of our bones coming together in the final resurrection, the changing of the earthly into the heavenly, and our journeying right on into the Heavenly Canaan, the promised land for all the faithful. Ezekiel's powerful picture gave people hope in that day and it extends hope to us today.

*Listen to Ezra:* He powerfully said, "There is hope in Israel!" (10:2). And, dear reader, do not despair too much. Be concerned but don't ever give up, even in these most trying times. As surely as there is a God in heaven, there is hope for spiritual Israel, the church (Gal. 6-16). Evil forces have tried to kill the church in times past, and the efforts being made today by so many to kill the church will not succeed. We have been hurt and we will be hurt further, but we shall come through. We will do our work and we will reach that glorious promised land that awaits the faithful. There is hope in Ezra's words for us today.

*Listen to Solomon:* "The righteous hath hope" (Pro. 14:32). What more can be said than what he said? We are righteous. We have done and are doing the commandments of God, and our hope will lead us

straight to the “pot of gold at the end of the rainbow!” This brings us to the second major division of this lesson:

### **HOPE—THE FRUIT OF THE GOSPEL**

With the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and the gospel which He brought, hope truly blossomed forth. Before Jesus came, the world was dark and hope was almost non-existent, but when He came the “sun of righteousness,” and the “star of hope” filled the sky. He is the “Son” and also the “Sun.” As the literal sun fills the earth with light and warmth, just so, Jesus bears this relationship to the world—He fills it with light, warmth, and beauty. Take Jesus away and put the world back where it was before He came, and the same hopeless situation would prevail as it did then. Mankind could hope back then but hope was not real ‘till Jesus came. Truly, Alexander Pope said long ago, “Hope springs eternal in the breast.” These words would have had no meaning had Jesus not come. Thales said, “Hope is the poor man’s bread.” He was right, but hope does not stop with the poor man; it holds up a light of encouragement to all men, poor, rich, or in between. Jesus is the “Bread of Life” (John 6:35). He is also our hope. Thus, in that sense hope is the Bread of life. We can go out and talk to the man behind the plow. We are told why he plows: “For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope, and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope” (1 Cor. 9:10). The farmer prays for rain—he prays for the sunshine, he prays for favorable weather while his crop is in the ground. He stakes his hopes for a great harvest in the cooperation of all elements necessary to a great harvest. He knows all the time however, that it is God who giveth the increase. He farms by hope and leaves the results up to the Lord. It is that kind of hope in a spiritual way that keeps us plowing straight ahead. We “keep on keeping on.”

*Paul strongly declared:* “We are saved by hope” (Rom. 8:24). We must now listen to Paul. We have listened to six Old Testament greats, now let us give heed to possibly, with no reflections upon any, the greatest apostle of all. We have heard him say that we are saved by hope. Here is another powerful word from his pen: “Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil” (Heb. 6:19). Even the greatest and most modern ship afloat today would not dare go to sea without an anchor. The once proud Queen Mary, now in dry dock down at Long Beach, California, not far

from our home here in Riverside, still has the great anchor which was always there to steady her in case of trouble in both war times and peace times. The anchor, though small in comparison to the size of the ship, was always there in time of trouble. And our Christian hope is always with us, in times of peace, happiness and prosperity, and also in times of trouble. The apostle says that our hope even “enters into the veil.” It puts our souls in touch with Him who resides beyond the veil, and our hope will lead us until we go beyond the veil and into heaven itself. Then and only then will the Christian need hope no longer.

In the coming of Christ and the giving of His saving gospel, hope became a reality. Salvation is very real in Christ (2 Tim. 2:10). While hope continues to lead the Christian to the very end of his life, there are times in this life when hope becomes reality, such as when we come to know our Lord through His Word and by our obedience to it (John 8:32; Heb. 5:8-9). We hope for salvation from our past sins if we are not saved; we obey from the heart the glorious gospel and are set free from our sins, thus we are, as the apostle said, saved by hope. The facts of the gospel are the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord. We cannot obey the facts—we obey the commands. We turn from our sins by repentance, and are buried in the likeness of Jesus’ burial, and are raised up in the likeness of His resurrection (1 Cor. 15:1-4; Rom. 6:3-4). New Testament baptism is that command that pictures the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. Sprinkling and pouring will not do it. Nothing less than a total burial of the body in water baptism will do it. No, water does not wash away our sins. The blood of Jesus does (1 John 1:7). But when the alien sinner has faith enough to do what Jesus says because Jesus said it, whether he can see any good in doing it or not, then as a reward for his faith, the blood is applied and his sins are washed away in the blood of Jesus. It is a simple and beautiful process, yet one hated by the world more than any other command of God. The gospel, and obedience to it, lifts the veil and lets us by faith take a look into what is to be (2 Cor. 3:13-16).

### **THE CHRISTIAN HAS HOPE**

The Christian is the only one who does have hope beyond this life. Oh, others talk about future life but their hope cannot be real for it has no foundation on which to rest “for other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 3:11). Build on Confu-

cius—no hope. Build on “Rev” Moon—no hope! Build on Buddha—no hope! Build on CROSSROADS—no hope! Build on Jesus Christ—hope, hope, hope! Yes, the one who truly follows Jesus and no other has blessed hope—hope in this life which will be wonderful reality in the life that is to be. It is faith that gives the Christian his hope. Truly, we “walk by faith, and not by sight” (2 Cor. 5:7). As Christians, we “hope for that we see not” (Rom. 8:25). The older we get, the more we yearn for that eternal city, but we are told that we must “with patience wait for it” (v. 25). Patience does not always come easy. The easiest thing is to be impatient. The little boy wanted something very much. His mother put him off by saying, “You will just have to wait.” “But, I can’t wait!” “Then, don’t wait,” said his mother. “But, I don’t know how not to wait!” Often we think we just cannot wait, but the Psalmist learned that he had to “wait patiently for him” (Psa. 37:7). We, like the lad, may not know how “not to wait,” but in Him we learn to keep on waiting. When one breaks an arm, he must learn how to be patient. Nature doesn’t always work as fast as we want it to. When we suffer financial reverses we don’t want to wait for recovery in a financial way. But we have to. We have seen loved ones come to their final bed in this life and they yearned to go on to be with the Lord, but they had to be patient—they had to “wait upon the Lord.” The Lord doesn’t always get in as big a hurry as we do.

Yes, as Christians we must have hope. We hope for Heaven. It is out there somewhere in God’s great canopy. “Heaven is high above the earth” (Psa. 103:11). Our blessed Lord “was taken up...and a cloud received him out of their sight” (Acts 1:9). We cannot see heaven with our physical eyes though we can look into the physical heavens. But heaven is up there, and we “hope for that we see not.” Our hope has a strong foundation on our faith. Abraham “against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations” (Rom. 4:18). How could he father a son at his age? He believed he could and would because God said He would. “He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God” (Rom. 4:20).

As Christians, we hope for many things, and remember that hope is based on expectation. We do not hope for that which we know we cannot have, at least not a true hope. We may yearn and long, foolishly, but we do not really hope. In that sense it’s like “fool’s gold.” It’s just not there

for us. But the better things, the things prepared for us by the Lord, are there and we can hope for them. As Christians, there are numbers of things for which we hope. Let us pay our attention to some of them:

*We hope for His Word.* David did. Now listen to him: "I have hoped in thy word" (Psa. 119:74). David hoped with far less evidence than the evidence we have now. Yet, his hope was strong. David hoped in and for His Word, we hope in His Word. The Word has been truly revealed since David's day; we have it as a fact and what a strong hope we can have in it! Men have always done their best to destroy God's Word, but their best has not been enough and never will be. Doesn't the unbeliever know that if he should be able to destroy the Word of God, in doing so he would at the same time destroy himself? It would be like shutting up the heavens so that rain would never fall again, or cutting off the oxygen from the patient whose very life depends upon it. It would be like the foolish one who would climb out on a limb and then turn and cut it off between himself and the main body of the tree. Yet, this is exactly what the unbeliever seeks to do. He does not know that even his poor, miserable existence in a physical way depends upon the accuracy and veracity of the Word of God.

Indeed, the world is full of stupid people! Oh, thank God, we have the Word! It is the Word of Life...in it we bask, by it we are saved, and from it we derive strength to go on in those terrible times that we all face sooner or later. Yes, we hope in it, and we hope for its spread through the world.

*Next, we hope in His mercy.* "The eye of the Lord is upon them... that hope in his mercy" (Psa. 33:18). Where would we be were it not for the mercy of the Lord? We would be lost beyond any hope of recovery. We cannot live good enough, without His divine mercy, to be saved. His mercy has to be a bridge spanning across many of our weaknesses, else there is no hope for us. Listen to Paul to Titus; "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us" (Tit. 3:5).

Have you stopped to think where we would all be if it were not for the mercy of God? In His great mercy, He is so good to us. After we do the best we can, mercy has to take over and carry us on through. I personally am like John Bunyan, who said: "In my case it must be a great mercy or no mercy, for a small mercy will not suffice." The older

I get, the more I find myself depending on the mercy of a loving Father. “As a father pitieth his children so the Lord pitieth them that fear him” (Psa. 103:13). Many times in rearing our children, we found our hearts breaking with them. In their disappointments, their rejections, and their frustrations, we found ourselves hurting too. Surely, our Heavenly Father is no less concerned about us. Truly, we hope in his mercy.

*We hope for the final resurrection:* This is the grand hope that just seems to reach out and embody all other hopes. This is truly the grand finale. David sang: “Therefore my heart is glad...my flesh also shall rest in hope” (Psa. 16:9). Centuries later, on Pentecost Day, Peter used this prophecy when he said: “Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope” (Acts 2:26). Of course, all Bible students know that David was not talking of himself in the psalms when he talked about his “flesh resting in hope.” He was talking about the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The body of Jesus would come up out of the tomb and that it did (Mark 16:9). As the result of the resurrection of Jesus, the flesh of David would also come up in the final resurrection and be changed along with others into the likeness of Jesus Christ. The day will surely come when the “mortal must put on immortality, and the earthly will become heavenly. It was Jesus who made the final resurrection possible. Just as the grave could not contain His body, the grave will not contain our bodies in that glorious “coming forth” day. James Russell Lowell said a fitting epitaph on his gravestone would be, “Here lies that part of James Russell Lowell that hindered him from doing well.” This is remarkably so of all of us. Our flesh hinders us every way we turn. But in the resurrection, we shall throw off the flesh and be hindered no more. We now come to the hope that is the final conclusion, yet the beginning of all our hopes:

*“In hope of eternal life.”* Paul affirms again in this reading that he was an apostle of Jesus Christ, and as such along with all the faithful lived “in hope of eternal life” (Tit. 1:2). He stated that this eternal life comes from God and was foreordained before the world began (v. 2). This is the grand prize of all prizes—eternal life! This in what it is all about. Without this, we live for nothing. In fact, we do not really live if we do not have this assurance. Jesus taught His followers that even though in this life we may lose our families, our lands, our earthly possessions—many of the things the average person counts valuable

most of all, we need not fret, for in the world to come we will have “eternal life” (Mark 10:30).

In the heart of Indianapolis, there is a statue of Benjamin Harrison, one of our presidents. On the base of the statue are these words: “Great lights do not go out—they go on.” And so they do. Jesus taught us not to fear the ones who can kill us but cannot kill our souls. Our souls live on forever and ever (Mat. 10:28-29). Only God can destroy us both body and soul. But that complete destruction he will never bring to pass. If we are not righteous our souls will be banished into the darkness of despair forever and forever (Rev. 14:11). Life does not stop at death. It is only interfered with by death for a little while, then it picks up and goes on. Think of the possibilities of eternal life! It truly staggers the imagination. To live on and on and on—on through ceaseless ages with the Lord and all the ransomed! Truly, heaven is worth whatever it costs to go there. In his gospel Mark says that this life is not after the earthly sort—it in “eternal life” (Mark 10:30).

Hope belongs to this life only as we have learned already in this lesson. It does not belong to the life that is to be. If we do not have the resurrection hope in this life “we are of all men most miserable” (1 Cor. 15:19). Where dear friend, is your hope? Do not deal lightly with that part of your nature that will live eternally somewhere—in the deep abyss of darkness and despair in hell, or in a life that is above and free and eternal. You can lose things and replace them, but not so with your soul. “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Mat. 16:26).

David was so depressed and despondent on one occasion, he sighed: “No man cared for my soul” (Psa. 142:4). But David was wrong—dead wrong. There are those who care for your soul and for mine. We are not alone in this world unless we choose it that way. When the long days are “weary” and the long nights “dreary,” someone cares. “Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you” (1 Pet. 5:7).

“In hope of eternal life!” Friends, don’t miss it. Don’t mess it up. Determine to go to heaven when you leave this world. Think of the Lamb of God on the throne and think of the reunions! O what joy ‘twill be to be there! Thomas Carlyle wrote of his father James Carlyle’s death: “And now, beloved father, farewell for the last time in this world of

shadows. In the world of realities may the great Father again bring us together in perfect holiness and perfect love. Amen!”

And, AMEN!

# HOW BEAUTIFUL HEAVEN MUST BE!

*H. A. (Buster) Dobbs*

At the close of the apocalypse, the beloved apostle records for us a vision of the glories of heaven, and the church victorious. He paints for us a beautiful, and compelling picture of the joys of the “fair haven of rest for the weary.”

Bible writers often remind us of the value of thinking about heaven.

If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things that are above, not on things that are upon the earth. For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also with him be manifested in glory (Col. 3:1-4).

Some say that it is unworthy to ponder the promise God has given. They call it “pie in the sky,” and sneer at those who sing this wayside hymn, “Yonder over the rolling river, where the shining mansions rise, soon will be our home forever, and the smile of the blessed Giver gladdens all our longing eyes.”

Critics, and scoffers ridicule the contemplation of a future reward. The scornful boldly declare that to think of heaven weakens our interest in improving earth, and causes us to neglect the needy.

However, the sacred Scripture emphasizes the reward that awaits the righteous, and encourages us to have our thoughts wooed away from the vain things of this life, and fixed on the throne of God.

The gloryland is promised only to those who, in supreme love of God, carefully keep the rules of the Bible. We can have no promise of entry into the city that lies foursquare unless we have obeyed the requirements of Messiah to believe and be baptized (Mark 16:16). We will not be permitted to walk the golden streets of the eternal city unless we have worshipped God, and served our fellowman. We shall never eat of the tree of life, whose fruit always hangs ripe, and whose leaves were for the healing of the nations, unless we have visited the fatherless and widows in their affliction.

To sing of heaven is a powerful incentive to do right by our fellow citizens. The thought of a future reward gives us strength for our day, and lifts our burdens, and gives us release from toil, and brings showers of blessings. To catch a glimpse of the hilltop of glory causes us to renew our strength, and to “mount up with wings as eagles,” and to run and not be weary, and to walk and not faint. Be not deceived, thoughts of home and heaven give us the desire to feed the hungry, and the power to comfort the defenseless.

### **A NEW HEAVEN AND A NEW EARTH**

“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away; and the sea is no more” (Rev. 21:1).

The new earth is not the old earth renovated, as is the case with Isaiah’s new heaven and new earth (Isa. 65:17), because the first heaven and the first earth are passed away. They no longer exist! The Holy Spirit tells us that the present heaven and earth will “pass away” with a great noise, the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth shall be burned up (2 Pet. 3:8-13). The earth, and all it contains, and its atmosphere, which is how the word “heaven” is sometime used in scripture, are to be melted into ashes, and gases.

Someone has observed that this is not annihilation. Well, if it is not annihilation, it nevertheless renders it useless. If you burn up a sheet of paper, it may not be annihilated, but you sure can’t use it. I wonder how anyone came to know that it is not annihilation. The living God, who made the present system out of nothing, certainly has the power and knowledge to send it back into nothingness, if He should so desire. “The Lord blew upon them, and they were scattered.”

However that may be, the Bible is clear in telling us that even the elements that compose the earth are to be dissolved. The basic pieces, and particles are to be burned up. The lesson Peter presses upon us from this consideration is that we ought not to live for silver, and gold, and money, and cars, and houses, and televisions. Why? Because these things are to be burned up, and dissolved. Even the diamond is combustible!

The Revelation says, “and the sea is no more.” Of course it is not! The earth, the sea, the sky are all to be dissolved in the great fire, and in the fervent heat. John was struck by the absence of the sea. The frothy sea

symbolizes separation, restlessness, mystery, violence, and filth. “And the sea is no more.”

Material things are to be swept away. The grand future is to be a spiritual estate. There will be no need for physical elements because spirit man, no longer flesh and blood, will stand before the great spirit, who is God, and therefore who “hath not flesh and bones,” such as we now have.

When God speaks to us in His Word about a realm that is altogether spiritual, he must use accommodative language. And He must do so because, in our human limitation, we are incapable of even beginning to apprehend that which is pure spirit. We have nothing to compare it to, and therefore we cannot understand it.

When heaven is described as pure gold, with pearly gates, and jeweled foundations, earthly things are used in order to communicate a bare hint of the beauty of that spirit world, where all things will be made new.

We can be absolutely certain that, in our spirit self, we will thrill to the joys of heaven even more than a mortal would delight in the midst of transparent gold, sparkling diamonds, dazzling jasper, smooth pearls, and a translucent robe and a golden diadem set with precious stones.

“But, according to his promise, we look for a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (2 Pet. 3:13). We look for it. We yearn for it. We pray for it. And the seer, by inspiration of the Spirit, tells us that when Jesus appears a second time, apart from sin, unto salvation, it will also appear.

In the book of Revelation there is a logical progression. It begins by showing us the great throne in heaven, and reminding us that all true power rests in God. The book demonstrates the illimitable love of God by showing us “a lamb standing, as though it had been slain.” The human condition is then set forth. Corrupt government, and false religion make life on earth a misery. Sin seems to rule. The spirits of the righteous groan within themselves, longing to put off the tabernacle of flesh, and to put on robes of righteousness. The whole creation groans, crying out of its own destruction. Finally, when the cup of the world’s iniquity is full, the sharp sickle is put forth, and the vintage of this world is reaped. There is a final judgment. The ungodly are banished. The

redeemed are approved. And, then, the grand consummation is given in the closing two chapters of the Bible.

### THE HOLY CITY

And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of the throne saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his peoples, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God: and he shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more: the first things are passed away (Rev. 21:2-4).

Under the ancient order, Jerusalem was the dwelling place of God. He lived in the temple, within the veil, in the holy of holies. He was upon the mercy seat. The sacred cube represented heaven itself, the true abode of deity.

Wherein God, being minded to show more abundantly unto the heirs of the promise the immutability of his counsel, interposed with an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may have a strong encouragement, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us: which we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and stedfast and entering into that which is within the veil; whither as a forerunner Jesus entered for us, having become a high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek (Heb. 6:17-20).

The redeemed of earth come “unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem” (Heb. 12:22). This obviously connotes the dwelling place of the great I AM.

And now, at the end of the age, John, by prophetic impulse, sees the New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven, “made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.”

The New Jerusalem, the holy city, and the bride are all one and the same. Throughout the New Testament the church is called the bride of Christ, the wife of the lamb (Cf., Eph. 5:22-32).

She comes down out of heaven. Some say that the church is on earth, and therefore cannot come down out of heaven. But they misread the Scriptures. The church is also called the house of God (See 1 Tim. 3:15). The house of God is the family of God. Paul talks of Him “from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named” (Eph. 3:15). God does not have two families—one in heaven, and another one on earth. He

has but one family. Part of that family is in heaven, and part of it is on earth. Jesus is certainly a part of the church, seeing that He is the head of it, because it is His body (Eph. 1:22-23). Where, think ye, is Jesus?

The New Jerusalem, the holy city, the bride of Christ, the church, comes down out of heaven to be united with the blood bought of earth. Where else can she come from? Jesus comes again, bringing His heavenly family with Him, and we, the family on earth, joined by the children of God in the unseen world (See 1 Cor. 15:50-52), meet Him in the sky, and “so” (that is, “in the sky”) “shall we ever be with the Lord” (1 The. 4:17).

“We know that, if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him; for we shall see him even as he is” (1 John 3:2). When He comes again, we shall be like Him. And, being like Him, we shall be capable of a communion with God that no mortal can ever know. “And God himself shall be with them, and be their God.”

In the New Jerusalem there shall be the absence of everything that afflicts, and torments, and chaffs. No more tears! God shall wipe away every tear. “No tears, no tears, no tears up there, sorrow and pain will all have flown; no tears, no tears, no tears up there, no tears in heaven will be known.” No more weeping; no more sighing; no more emptiness. Thank God!

And there will be no graves on the hillsides of glory. No more separation. We will never again sit by the bedside of the dearest to us, and see the filmy, closing eyes; we shall never again hear the terrible death-rattle; we shall never more feel the horrible vacancy, and know the feeling of awful lamentation, when one close to our heart flies far away beyond our reach, and the warmth of our love. One of the great desolations of the world that now is, and the atmosphere that surrounds it, is the specter of the slow funeral procession, and the casket, and the wailing, and the mourning, and the anguish, and the unspeakable sadness.

But in the heavenly city, when the bride is given to the bridegroom, there shall be no more weeping. Christ hath abolished death!

No more crying! No more pain! No shock! No sudden change! No more of the blank misgiving that human hearts suffer when some great sorrow, like a mighty river, overwhelms, and drowns. The unexpected twisting, and turning, and reversals, and setbacks shall be no more. The

sea is passed away! No more pain! No more suffering! No more agony! No more distress! No more misery! No more unutterable groaning'

“And he that sitteth on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he saith, Write: for these words are faithful and true” (Rev. 21:5).

### THE DWELLERS

And he said unto me, They are come to pass. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit these things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But for the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, their part shall be in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death (Rev. 21:6-8).

Who is to live in the heavenly Jerusalem? He who drinks of the water of life shall enter them In John chapter four, Jesus speaks of the “water of life,” meaning, of course, His teaching. “He who drinks of this water, shall never thirst again.” If we receive His teaching, If we obey His commands, if we bow in loving submission to His will, we shall never thirst. And, more important, we shall be dwellers in the eternal city.

The Saviour of the world, and the judge of mankind, said, “He that believeth and is immersed shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned” (Mark 16:16).

He who overcomes is to live in that beautiful city. In Revelation chapters two and three, over and over again the Lord promises, “He that overcometh, unto him will I give.” Give what? To eat of the tree of life; to be unhurt by the second death; to eat of the hidden manna, and to receive a white raiment; to have authority over the nations; to be arrayed in a translucent robe; to be a pillar in the temple of God; to wear a laurel wreath and a golden crown, and to sit down with the Christ in His throne.

Excluded from that heavenly realm will be all the unforgiven sinners of earth. Those who have preened, and exalted, themselves; those who have sought to do their own sensual will, and seek their own pleasure; those who have lived under unbridled passions; the fearful, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, fornicators, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, shall be shut out of that grand city, and thrown into a lake of fire. The Word of God was spoken to them. But they thrust it from themselves, and judged themselves to be unworthy of eternal life (See Acts 13:46).

Won't it be wonderful there? "Joyously singing with heartbells all ringing, O won't it be wonderful there?" No sin, no cursing, no wickedness, no rebellion, no treachery, no deceit, shall enter that beautiful city of heaven. All that offend shall be cast into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.

The people who walk the golden street of that eternal city will be pure and holy. There will in no wise enter there any thing that defiles, or that is false.

### THE CITY

In its general appearance, the New Jerusalem in bright and splendid (Rev. 21:11). The walls of the city are great and high, and made of jasper, and the city is like unto gold so pure that it appears as crystal (Rev. 21:12, 18). The twelve gates of the city are each one composed of a single pearl (Rev. 21:12-13, 21). The foundations of the city are twelve precious stones, corresponding to the apostles of the Lamb. The city lies foursquare, and is colossal! Three hundred and seventy-five miles high, and wide, and long.

No temple is there, because it is all temple, and therefore the beautified of earth, now made fully perfect are pillars in its temple (Rev. 3:12).

It glows with the light of His presence. "And the city hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine upon it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the lamp thereof is the Lamb" (Rev. 21:23).

No sun! No moon! No stars! For the glory of God is the light thereof. No need for artificial light, for the Lamb is its lamp. To walk in heavenly sunlight is to walk in the light of the glory of God. God is light.

The gates of the city are never shut. The saints in glory go in and out of the city of God, which is in the new heaven and new earth. They have full access to the universe.

And the gates thereof shall in no wise be shut by day (for there shall be no night there): and they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it: and there shall in no wise enter into it anything unclean, or he that maketh an abomination and a lie: but only they that are written in the Lamb's book of life (Rev. 21:25-27).

And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, and in the midst of the street thereof. And on this side of the river and on that was the tree of life, bearing twelve manner of fruits, yielding its fruit every month:

and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no curse any more: and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be therein: and his servants shall serve him; and they shall see his face; and his name shall be on their foreheads. And there shall be night no more; and they need no light of lamp, neither light of sun; for the Lord God shall give them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever (Rev. 22:1-5).

# THERE IS A GOD IN HEAVEN

*Stanley Ryan*

The great message in the book of Daniel is, “There is a God in heaven” (Dan. 2:28). This message shows the superiority of the God of Israel over the idol gods of heathen nations. It also proves the providential guidance and intervention of God, “God rules in the kingdoms of men” (Dan. 4:17, 25, 34). God is called “the God of heaven” (Dan. 2:19, 37). The king pronounces unto Daniel “your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets” (Dan. 2:47). He is also called “the high God” (Dan. 4:2). Daniel refers to Him as “the most High” (Dan. 4:17, 25, 32; 5:18, 21). Daniel is called the “servant of the Living God” (Dan. 6:20, 26). God is glorified and respected as this message is realized (Dan. 3:29; 4:37; 6:26).

## **GOD’S DOMINION**

His dominion, rule, authority and sovereignty exist in Heaven and upon the earth. His dominion is “from generation to generation” (Dan. 4:3). His dominion is an “everlasting dominion” (Dan. 4:34). His dominion “shall be even to the end” (Dan. 6:26). The Psalmist says, “Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations” (Psa. 145:13). Peter says, “To whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever” (1 Pet. 4:11; 5:11). Jude says, “to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever” (Jude 25). The dominion of God is therefore eternal, perpetual and universal.

## **GOD IS KING**

God has always been in control as king (Dan. 4:3). God was king over Israel before they desired a king like the other nations. God said to Samuel, “They have rejected me [God] that I should not reign [be king, A.S.V.] over them” (1 Sam. 8:7). Samuel said to Israel, “The Lord your God was your king” (1 Sam. 12:12). However, Israel failed to recognize and submit to God as king. God had created them (Isa. 43:15), sustained them, fought for them (Deu. 3:22), and gave His law to guide them in righteousness (Deu. 4:2). God allowed them to have

a king like the other nations for a period of time, then “took him away” (Hos. 13:11).

### **GOD IS ON THE THRONE**

God has always been on the throne (a symbol of authority). David says, “The Lord is in His holy temple, the Lord’s throne is in heaven” (Psa. 11:4). David knew God’s throne was not limited to the earth or to Jerusalem. The Psalmist also says, “Thy throne O God is forever and ever” (Psa. 45:6). God’s throne is not limited to one thousand years as the premillennialists contend. God’s throne is from old to everlasting (Psa. 93:2), it will not be established at Christ’s second coming. God’s throne is over all people (Psa. 103:19), not just over the Jews (Dan. 4:25). God’s Word affirms that Heaven is God’s throne and the earth His footstool (Isa. 66:1). Jesus affirms that Heaven is God’s throne (Mat. 5:34; Rev. 3:21).

Some are so materialistic that they see God’s throne as a wooden chair, a physical seat, a piece of furniture. Saul had been anointed king and ruled over Israel. David had ruled over Israel before Solomon made his throne (chair). Second Chronicles 9:17-19 says, “The king made a great throne of ivory and overlaid it with pure gold.” God had delegated authority allowing Israel to have a physical king over the physical affairs of the government of Israel. God rebuked Saul for attempting to ignore and alter His Word (1 Sam. 15:11, 22-23). David understood the throne as delegated authority from God and the throne as a symbol of that authority. David was anointed to be king (1 Sam. 16:12-13), but he looked to God as his superior. Solomon understood that God had given him delegated authority and prayed to God for wisdom (1 Kin. 3:9-14; 2:12; 1 Chr. 29-23; 28:5). God rules in Heaven and also in the kingdoms of men.

God removed the physical king (Hos. 13:11). None of the seed of David ruled as king from the Babylonian captivity until the ascension of Christ to the throne of God in Heaven (Dan. 7:13-14; Acts 2:36; 7:56; Col. 1:13; Heb. 12:28; Rev. 1:9). The reign of Christ from Heaven is the fulfillment of the prophets who said that no man would prosper upon the throne of David ruling in Judah (Jerusalem) any more (Jer. 22:30). These verses completely destroy the premillennial idea of a physical reign of Christ in Jerusalem for only one thousand years. Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36). Jesus also said that the kingdom is “within you” (Luke 17:21). The kingdom is

entered by the new birth (John 3:3-5). God's kingdom is the spiritual reign of the Lord in Heaven and upon the earth over the hearts of men and women. Jesus has all authority in Heaven and earth (Mat. 28:18-19) today as king. He will reign until death is destroyed in the universal resurrection on the last day (1 Cor. 15:23-27; John 5:28-29; 1 The. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:50-58). Then Jesus will deliver up the kingdom to the Father (1 Cor. 15:24) and will be subject to God (1 Cor. 15:28).

### **THERE IS ONE GOD**

There is one God in contrast to many idols. Isaiah writes concerning God, "I am the Lord and there is none else, there is no God beside me" (Isa. 45:5). Moses wrote, "Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord" (Deu. 6:4). Paul wrote, "We know that an idol is nothing in the world and that there is none other God but one" (1 Cor. 8:4, 6). There has always been only one God and there shall always be only one God (Isa. 43:10; Mark 12:29; 1 Cor. 8:6; Deu. 33:27; 1 Tim. 1:17). Even though the Godhead is presented in the Scriptures as consisting of three persons, there is only one God or Godhead (Acts 17:29; Rom. 1:20; Col. 2:9). God is manifested in three persons.

1. God, the Father (John 6:27, 46; Mat. 6:9; 2 Cor. 11:31; 2 John 5:7).
2. God, the Son (John 10:30-38; Isa. 9:6; John 20:28 Rom. 9:5).
3. God, the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3,4; Rom. 8:9-11; Mat. 3:16; 28:19).

The Godhead is one in its nature, attributes, characteristics and actions. God desires that His servants be one (John 17:20-21; 1 Cor. 1:10; Phi. 1:27).

### **GOD IS ALIVE**

Daniel is described as the servant of the "living God" (Dan. 6:20) in contrast to dead idols of wood or stone. Christ said that the "living" God sent Him (John 6:57). Peter confessed that Christ is the Son of the "living God" (Mat. 16:16). The apostle Paul encouraged people to turn from dead works (Heb. 9:14), and idols (1 The. 1:9), to serve the "living God." We are to trust in the "living God" (1 Tim. 4:10). God describes himself as the "I AM," without beginning or end. The one who is alive and gives life (Acts 17:25). It is unreasonable for a living man to worship a dead god (idol).

## **GOD IS A SPIRIT**

Jesus explained to the Samaritan woman that God is not limited to mountains, temples, flesh (Luke 24:39), time or a geographic location (John 4:21-24). Stephen said “The most high dwelleth not in temples made with hands...heaven is my throne and the earth my footstool” (Acts 7:48-49). Solomon said, “behold the heaven and the heaven of heavens can not contain thee, how much less this house I have built” (1 Kin. 8:27). Jeremiah says, “do not I fill the heavens and the earth” (Jer. 23:24). David proclaims there is nowhere that we can go to hide or escape from God (Psa. 139:7-10). Jesus also emphasizes that man “must worship him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). We must pour out our hearts in fervent praise through authorized acts which enable us to commune with God. God rejects unauthorized worship (Mat. 15:9). As a Spirit, God is immortal and is the source of immortality (1 Tim. 1:17; 6:16). While part of man dies (body) (Jam. 2:26), nothing about God dies.

## **GOD IS OUR FATHER (CREATOR)**

Hebrews 12:9 says that God is the Father of our spirits. Zechariah 12:1 says that God “formed the spirit of man within him.” When God made Adam, He “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul” (Gen. 2:7). Isaiah 64:8 says, “But now, O Lord, thou art my Father, we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we are the work of thy hand.” God said in Ezekiel 18:4, “Behold all souls are mine.” Hosea 1:10 says, “Ye are the sons of the living God.” Psalm 82:6 says, “all of you are children of the most High.”

When a person sins, God ceases to be his Father. He becomes a child of the devil (a sinner). John 8:44 says, “ye are of your father the devil.” Paul refers to sinners as “children of disobedience” (Eph. 5:6). John says, “He that committeth sin is of the devil...whosoever doth not righteousness is not of God” (1 John 3:8-10).

When a person turns from sin and obeys the gospel of Christ (Rom. 1:16), he is born again (John 3:3-5) and is translated into the kingdom of God’s dear Son (Col. 1:13). Paul says, “For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Gal. 3:26-27).

## **GOD IS ALL POWERFUL**

God created the heavens and the earth (Gen. 1:1). Hebrews 11:3 says, “The worlds were framed by the word of God.” Paul says, “The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead” (Rom. 1:20). The Psalmist says, “The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth His handiwork” (Psa. 19:1). Psalm 33:6 says, “By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.” Hebrews 1:3 says “He upholds all things by the word of His power.” Not only did God have power to create but also to sustain His creation. Though God has all power He chooses to limit Himself in that He will not do that which is contrary to His nature or His purpose. For example, He will not lie (Heb. 6:18), nor will he save one who refuses to obey the gospel (Rom. 1:16; 2 The. 1:8-9).

## **GOD IS OMNIPRESENT (EVERYWHERE)**

God is not limited to a place; He is everywhere. God is present everywhere (Psa. 139:7-12; Isa. 57:15; Jer. 23:23-24; 1 Kin. 8:27; Acts 17:27-28). Adam and Eve tried to hide from God but could not (Gen. 3:8). Jonah tried to flee from God but could not (Jon. 1:3). This should be a comfort to the righteous and a warning to the wicked. We cannot escape from God.

## **GOD IS OMNISCIENT (ALL-KNOWING)**

God knows all things (1 Sam. 2:3; Psa. 147:5; 139:1-6). God knows the number and name of the stars (Psa. 147:4; Job 38:31-32). God knows every sparrow and the number of hairs on our head, if one has any (Mat. 6:26; 10:29; Luke 12:6). God knows the life and works of every person (Ecc. 12:14; Heb. 4:13; Psa. 33:13-15; 34:16-22). God knows the past, present and the future. God knows each of us.

## **GOD IS GOOD**

God is the sum total of all that is right and true. Psalm 73:1 says, “truly God is good.” Psalm 86:5 says, “for thou, Lord art good.” Psalm 145:9 says, “The Lord is good to all.” Exodus 34:6 says, God is “abundant in goodness and truth.” God is the source of all our blessings (Jam. 1:17).

## **GOD IS LOVE**

The apostle John says, “He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love” (1 John 4:8). We are to strive to comprehend the love of God,

To comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height; and to know the love of Christ which passeth all knowledge, that ye might be filled with a the fullness of God (Eph. 3:18-19).

God’s love is wide in that it is universal. God’s love is long in that it reaches to the end of time. God’s love is deep in that it can reach to the pits of sin to save. God’s love is high in that it elevates the faithful to Heaven (1 Pet. 1:4). God loves everyone; however, He does not approve of everyone (sinners). God has a special love for the righteous (Psa. 146:8; Pro. 15:9; John 14:21). He commends His love to sinners (Rom. 5:8). Christian love endures all things and never fails (1 Cor. 13:7-8).

## **GOD IS JEALOUS**

God wants His people to be completely devoted to Him (Deu. 5:8-10; 32:21). Man cannot divide his heart or allegiance and acceptably serve God (Mat. 6:24; 10:37; 4:10).

## **GOD IS IMPARTIAL**

God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34-35). Paul wrote, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28). When each individual stands before God to be judged, each will be judged by his own life (works), whether good or bad (2 Cor. 5:10; Rev. 20:12-13). God is impartial in righteousness and justice (Deu. 32:4). He extends mercy and grace to all (Eph. 2:8-9; Tit. 2:11-12; 3:3-5). He is a consuming fire to the wicked (Heb. 12:29). Vengeance belongs to God to satisfy the injustice suffered by the innocent (Rom. 12:19; 2 The. 1:6-9). God is just and justice demands that evil be punished and that goodness be rewarded (Neh. 9:33; Heb. 12:9-11; Rev. 22:17-19).

## **GOD HATES SIN**

God cannot tolerate sin. Proverbs 8:13: “The fear of the Lord is to hate evil.” He hates every evil way. Solomon says, “These six things doth the Lord hate, yea seven are an abomination unto him” (Pro. 6:16-19). Those that love God will love what God loves and will hate what

God hates (sin). Sin separates man from God (Isa. 59:1-2) and brings God's judgment upon the impenitent who die in disobedience (Rom. 1:18; Acts 17:30-31; Eph. 5:6; Col. 3:6; 2 The. 1:7-9).

### WE CAN KNOW GOD

God has revealed Himself in nature. Psalm 19:1 says, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handiwork." The Hebrews writer states: "Every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God" (Heb. 3:4). "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," Moses wrote in Genesis 1:1. Paul states that the invisible things are understood through the things that are made (Rom. 1:20). God has given abundant evidence of His skill, wisdom, design and power in nature. (See full discussion in "The Revelation of God in Nature," *Reason and Revelation* by Bert Thompson and Wayne Jackson, Apologetics Press, May 1982, vol. 2, N5, pp. 17-24).

God has revealed Himself through Christ. John wrote, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him" (John 1:18). The Greek term (*exegeomi*) "declared" means to unfold in teaching, to declare by making known (W. E. Vines, *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, p. 282). Jesus Christ is the "image of the invisible God" (Col. 1:15; 2 Cor. 4:4), the very "image of his person" (Heb. 1:3), who exists in the "form" (Morphe—denoting the very essence of a thing [Vines, p. 123]), of God (Phi. 2:6). In view of this, we can understand Jesus' statement. "If ye had known me ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him...he that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:7, 9). At another time Jesus said, "Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him" (Mat. 11:27). Men can know God through Jesus Christ, as revealed in the New Testament. It is insufficient to know God in nature without also knowing God through Christ and surrendering to His will (the written Word). John says, "And hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (1 John 2:3-4). To know God is to obey God. Titus rebukes those who claim to know God but continue to walk in disobedience (Tit. 1:16). Jesus prayed, "And this is life eternal, that they should know thee, the only true God, and him whom thou didst

send, even Jesus Christ” (John 17:3). The present tense form of “know” (*ginosko*) reveals that knowing is an activity continuously pursued toward the goal of eternal life. It is clear that knowing the Lord is inclusive of submission to His divine will (Heb. 5:9).

### **GOD HEARS AND ANSWERS PRAYERS**

God is concerned about man and invites our prayers. He promises, “Ask and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you” (Mat. 7:7). Christ said, “If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?” (Mat. 7:11). First Peter 3:12 says, “For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous and his ears are opened unto their prayers.” Hebrews 4:16 says, “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” As children of God (Gal. 3:26-27), God hears our prayers when we pray in faith (Heb. 11:6; Mark 11:23-24; Jam. 1:6). He hears our prayers when we pray in the name of Jesus (John 14:13; 15:16; Col. 3:17). Our prayers are heard when we confess and renounce sin (1 John 1:8-10; 3:22; Jam. 5:16, 19-20; Psa. 66:18-20; Pro. 28:9; Isa. 59:1-2). We are to pray with a forgiving heart (Mat. 6:12-15; 18:21-36; Mark 11:25,26; 2 Cor. 2:7; Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13). God answers prayers in four different ways.

1. God may give what we ask and more. Solomon prayed for “an understanding heart...to discern between good and bad” (1 Kin. 3:9). God blessed him with wisdom, riches, honour (1 Kin. 3:13).
2. God gives what we request. Hannah prayed for a son and God gave a son, Samuel (1 Sam. 1:20).
3. God may give a substitute. Paul prayed three times for the thorn in the flesh to be removed (2 Cor. 12:7), but God answered, “my grace is sufficient for thee.”
4. God may refuse our request and say no. Jesus prayed “Father, let this cup pass from me” (Mat. 26:39). But He concluded the prayer by saying, “Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.” When God answers by saying “No,” let us be spiritual and recognize that God’s refusal is because He only gives good gifts to His children.

A person willingly living in sin should understand that God will not hear his prayer. Isaiah 59:2 says, “Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.” Proverbs 28:9 says, “He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayers shall be an abomination.” Peter says, “The face of the Lord is against them that do evil” (1 Pet. 3:12). John states, “We know that God heareth not sinners, but if any man be a worshipper of God and doeth his will, him he heareth (John 9:31). All sinners need to believe in Christ (John 8:24), repent of sins (Luke 13:3), confess Christ (Mat. 10:32), and be baptized into Christ (Mark 16:16). The new birth (John 3:3-5) enables us to pray to God as our Father in Christ’s name.

### **GOD IS HOLY**

Isaiah says, “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts” (Isa. 6:3). Exodus 15:11 says that God is “glorious in holiness.” The Psalmist says that God sits upon the throne of His holiness (Psa. 47:8). God is holy in all His works (Psa. 145:17). Holiness is from a Hebrew word meaning to cut or separate. God is thus separated from sin and sinful man (Isa. 59:1-2). He is exalted by His holiness above man. He is superior to man, yet wants man to imitate His holiness. The Hebrews writer says, “Ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.” Hebrews 12:14 says that without holiness, no man shall see God.

### **GOD IS RIGHTEOUS AND JUST**

Deuteronomy 32:4 says that God is “a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.” The Psalmist says, “Thy righteousness is like the great mountains” (Psa. 36:6). To say that God is righteous is to declare that all His actions are right and that God adheres to law. He is not partial nor does He show favoritism but always does that which is right.

To say that God is just is to declare that He gives to all, the good and the evil, according to their lives. Deuteronomy 32:4 says, “Just and right is he.” He helps (Psa. 46:1), answers (Psa. 91:15), revives (Psa. 138:7), redeems (Psa. 34:22), and gives the righteous many blessings (Psa. 1:1-6). He exalts the poor (Psa. 72:12-14), protects the widows (Isa. 1:17), sustains the oppressed (Psa. 9:9), relieves the afflicted (Psa. 82:3), defends the orphan (Psa. 146:9), comforts the weary (Mat. 11:28), forgives the penitent (Psa. 32:5).

God judges the world in righteousness and truth (Psa. 96:13). Nehemiah 9:33 says, "Howbeit, thou art just in all that is brought upon us; for thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly." God's warnings are not for a sinner's destruction, but for his correction (Gal. 6:1; Jam. 5:19-20), that he might turn and be saved (Heb. 12:11; 1 Cor. 5:5). However, if the wicked will not repent they can expect the full fury of God's wrath at the end of the age (2 The. 1:7-9).

### **GOD IN HEAVEN**

Heaven is a real "place" for Christ said, "I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:3). Heaven is a spiritual place that is described to us in terms we can understand as having foundations, a wall, gates, a street, a throne, a river of the water of life, the tree of life, God is the light, there is no light, all sorrow is past, the gates never close, the streets are of pure gold, like clear glass (Rev. 21:1-27).

There is a "heaven of heavens" (Psa. 115:16). Heaven is "high above the earth" (Psa. 103:11). Heaven is "above" (Jer. 31:37). Heaven is "over" us (Hag. 1: 10). There is a "descent" out of heaven (Rev. 21:10). We ascend into heaven (Psa. 139:8). Christ was "received up" into heaven (Mark 16:19). Stephen looked "steadfastly up into heaven" (Acts 7:55).

Believers in God have the hope of life now and in the world to come. In Psalm 16:9, David said, "My flesh shall rest in hope." Psalm 71:5 says, "Thou art my hope, O Lord, God; thou art my trust from my youth." Jeremiah says, "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is" (Jer. 17:7). Paul says, "In hope of eternal life, which God, that can not lie promised before the world began" (Tit. 1:2). Peter says, in 1 Peter 1:3, that God has "Begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." The Christian believes that life does not cease at death, but that man has an immortal soul that lives on after this world ends. Life in the world is short, life in the world to come never ends. Christians enjoy the spiritual blessings of God now in the church (Eph. 1:3; 2-6; 3:16; Heb. 12:22-23; Gal. 5:22-25), and patiently await the multiplied blessings of the world to come (Mark 10:30).

### **GOD'S PROVIDENCE**

God's guiding hand leads His people through this world of difficulty and trials. God's concern for man and that which He created is

evident through His watchfulness, forethought and guidance in the life of individuals, nations and in human redemption.

Providence is defined as the act of providing, exercising foresight, or preparing—God, conceived of as guiding men through His providence, loving care, or intervention (*Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*, p. 680). The doctrine of divine providence, therefore, has reference to that preservation, care and government which God exercises over all things that He has created in order that they accomplish the ends for which they were created (*International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, p. 2482).

God's providence can be seen as God called Abraham, protected, blessed and prospered him in the land of Canaan (Gen. 12:1-3; Neh. 9:7-8). Abraham trusted in God's providence in offering Isaac (Gen. 22:1-14; Heb. 11:17-19).

Joseph exemplifies the providence of God. He was sold by his brothers as a slave yet was uplifted in Egypt by God's providence to preserve Jacob's family—"God did send me before you to preserve life" (Gen. 45:5-7). Joseph said, "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" (Gen. 50:20). Stephen said of Joseph, "God was with him, and delivered him out of all his affliction and gave him favor and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt" (Acts 7:9-10).

Mordecai reminded Esther of God's providence in her life. "And who knoweth whither thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this" (Est. 4:14). God used ordinary channels to sustain His people and punish the wicked (Est. 9:1-32).

Today, we have the assurance that God's providence will continue with His people. The Hebrews writer says of God, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper" (Heb. 13:5-6). Solomon promises, "Acknowledge him and he shall direct thy paths" (Pro. 3:6). Jesus promised that if we would seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, God would provide the necessities of life (Mat. 6:33).

God's providence can be seen as He worked through the kingdoms of men. Kings, governors, presidents, all heads of governments are enthroned and empowered by God (Rom. 13:1-6). "He removeth kings and setteth up kings" (Dan. 2:21). Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar that

God “hath given thee a kingdom” and that he would know “that the most High ruleth in the kingdoms of men...he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand” (Dan. 2:38; 4:25, 35). The Psalmist says, “But God is the Judge: He putteth down one, and lifteth up another” (Psa. 75:7; 66:7). God used Assyria to punish disobedient Israel (Isa. 10:5,6; Hab. 1:5-6). He used Babylon to punish Judah (2 Chr. 36:20-21). He used Cyrus, Darius and Artaxerxes, kings of Persia to decree the restoration of Israel to Canaan to rebuild the temple, restore worship, and the walls of Jerusalem (Ezra 1:1; 6:14; 7:27; Neh. 1:8).

God’s providence in redemption can be seen in Peter’s words concerning the fulfillment of the prophecies about Jesus Christ, “the determined counsel and foreknowledge of God,” and the “things which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled” (Acts 2:23; 3:18). Paul speaks of God’s providence that resulted in our obedience to the gospel:

In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: that we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ (Eph. 1: 11-12).

How can we trace God’s providence in our lives? Errett has well said,

God’s plans are so far-reaching, and so inscrutable to us, that no adequate interpretation of His providences in many instances, is possible to us. Our horizon is too limited, our powers too feeble, to allow us to comprehend the ways of Him who worketh all things according to His infinitely wise will. While, therefore, there are general providences that we may understand and rejoice in; and special providences that we may so far safely interpret as to find in them occasions of thanksgiving and lessons of trust, there are also mysterious providences which confound our wisdom, and which therefore, it is presumptuous to attempt to interpret. It is the part of true faith and piety to be silent before God when these appear, in holy trust that the “judge of all the earth will do right” (*Evenings With The Bible*, vol. 2, p. 367).

God has revealed Himself in the Scriptures. God spake revealing Himself to Adam and Eve (Gen. 1:28ff; 3:9ff). He spoke to Noah and revealed His will to him (Gen. 6:13ff). God spoke and appeared to Abram (Gen. 12:7; 17:1) and to Jacob (Gen. 35:9ff). God appeared in symbolic forms: a burning bush, a pillar of cloud, a smoking, quaking

mountain and in visions to instruct, reveal, encourage and commission men to do His will (Heb. 1:1-2).

God empowered chosen men to speak by inspiration (2 Pet. 1:21; 2 Cor. 2:12-13). The Word of God instructed, rebuked, and informed men in doing the will of God (2 Tim. 3:16-17). God's Word is a means of knowing God's will, feelings, attitudes, desires and plans. We can know who God is and we can understand His love, grace, mercy, justice, judgment, holiness, etc. We can know God and know God's will in our lives (Ecc. 12:13-14).

The Scriptures reveal God's mighty acts: the creation, the flood, the exodus, the conquest of Canaan, the captivity of the Jews, the return to Palestine, the virgin birth of Jesus Christ, the crucifixion, resurrection and ascension of Jesus to Heaven, the establishment of the church, the persecution and growth of Christianity. These historical events make God's existence and power known as surely as the evidence in the heavens (Psa. 19:1).

God has revealed Himself to man in order to save us from our sins (John 3:16; Luke 19:10; Ecc. 12:13-14). Without knowledge of God and His will, men are prone to immorality, violence and sensual behaviour (Rom. 1). However, a knowledge of God and His will calls for a better, nobler, finer spiritual life (Gal. 5:22-24), of happiness, peace and joy.

There is a God in heaven who cares about us and has revealed Himself to us providing the hope of eternal life.

### **TO KNOW GOD REFUTES ERROR**

1. To know God refutes atheism, which claims to know that God does not exist. "There is a God in heaven" (Dan. 2:28; Psa. 46:10; Gal. 4:9).
2. To know God refutes polytheism, which claims to believe or to know that a plurality of "gods" exist. "There is no God beside me" (Isa. 45:5; 1 Cor. 8:4-5).
3. To know God refutes agnosticism, which claims that the evidence does not prove that God does or does not exist. Therefore, no man can really know that God exists. "Be still and know that I am God" (Psa. 46:10; 83:18; 100:3).
4. To know God refutes deism, which claims to believe in God based upon evidence of nature alone, yet rejects all supernatural revelation (inspiration of the Bible), "All scripture is given by

the inspiration of God” (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 1 Cor. 2:10-13; 2 Pet. 1:21).

5. To know God refutes humanism, which exalts man and what he can do and encourages the worship of man himself rather than God. “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve” (Mat. 4:10).
6. To know God refutes evolution, which assumes that matter has always existed, that life spontaneously originated from dead matter and gradually arose from lower to higher life forms and that present processes are true guides to the past (uniformitarianism). Genesis 1:1 says, “In the beginning God created [brought into existence] the heavens and the earth.”
7. To know God refutes denominationalism, which promotes religious division. God demands unity (1 Cor. 1:10; John 17:17-21). Christ has only one body, the church (Eph. 4:4; Col. 1:18). The church must uphold the doctrine of Christ and refute the traditions of men (1 Tim. 3:15; Acts 2:42; 2 John 1:9-10; Mat. 15:9).

There is a God in Heaven that enables us to live in hope of eternal life. We must believe in God and that God wants to reward us (Heb. 11:6). We must come to God through Christ (John 6:44-45). We must recognize God as the source of our blessings (Jam. 1:17). We must be willing to deny ourselves and humble ourselves before God (Jam. 4:6-10).

# THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD AND THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

*Roger Jackson*

There is much that we can know about the Holy Spirit. Even though some things are shrouded in mystery, such as His part in answering prayer and providence, this does not mean that we should discard the subject as if it were impossible to learn what we need to know. It shall be the objective of this study to teach some things in particular that we can know about the Spirit, realizing that books have been written covering the subject without exhausting it.

We can know that the Holy Spirit is Divine. In Acts 5:3-4, Peter remarked to Ananias that he had lied to the Holy Ghost (v. 3). Then he explained that he had lied to God (v. 4). Therefore, the Holy Spirit is God, or Divine. He is also a person. When He is spoken of using gender, the masculine is always employed (John 16:13). Both Christ and the Spirit are addressed in the neuter gender in the KJV. In Matthew 1:20, the reason is that the pronoun agrees with its antecedent, which in this case is an adjective, thus neuter. In 1 Peter 1:11, Robertson states the translation is in error. When spoken of in relationship to the Godhead, the Holy Spirit is always named last, hence the designation “third Person of the Godhead” (Mat. 28:19). He is the Revelator (1 Cor. 2:9-13). Paul tells us that He (God) used Him to convey His message to man IN WORDS. The Bible is verbally inspired. When the Holy Spirit communicated with men He always did so in a distinct manner. First Timothy 4:1, “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly” or in “specified terms” (Vine, p. 63). He did not communicate in hunches or groanings. The Spirit also intercedes for us in prayer (Rom. 8:26-27). The groanings are those of the prayer and not the Spirit as grammatically indicated.

There are some things that we can know that the Spirit does, and by the same token there are some things that people claim the Spirit does that we can know He does not do.

The Spirit does not overpower the will of men. God made man a free moral agent and has never bypassed that design. When a person

suggests that some action of his was the irresistible influence of the Spirit, and that he was powerless to avoid it, I know immediately that the “spirit” leading him in not holy. Far from being evidence that one is being miraculously led by the Spirit, when a person is out of control of himself, the Bible says this is evidence that he is NOT led thusly (1 Cor. 14:32).

The Spirit does not save men by a direct operation on a sinner’s heart. The Bible says the gospel does this (Rom. 1: 16). One of the major obstacles to unity early in the Restoration Movement was the doctrine of experimental religion. When Walter Scott started preaching the five stop plan of salvation, the first opposition came from the experimental religionists because obedience from the heart to this plan eliminated the experience they all taught the saved must have. This was the biggest problem Stone had with the union of the forces and he complained loudly about it. It was a tenet of Calvinism still hanging on to the brethren and is very much alive today.

The Spirit does not guide or lead a person directly, without the Word, in his daily life. In spite of this, I hear sectarian preachers talking about God telling them something. It is marvelously strange that what God “tells them” always is in conflict with what He has already told them in the Bible. If they can’t get it out of the Bible, they just say God told them. One preacher at a funeral said that upon hearing of the demise of the deceased, he started asking God what he should say and God told him. I wanted so much to ask him what God’s voice sounded like. God has spoken to none of them in this manner, and if He did the Bible would be rendered useless.

The Spirit does not contradict Himself. He is called the Spirit of truth in John 16:13, and the first characteristic of truth is consistency. Inspired men never contradicted themselves in teaching and that means that if there were inspired men today, the last thing they would do is contradict the Bible or speak of it disparagingly (1 Cor. 14:37). Women preachers are a biblical paradox. So many say they preach because God called them to do so, the Spirit operates to make them do it, and we cannot forbid them to do what God says they must do and what they cannot help but do. However, the Spirit strictly forbids it in 1 Timothy 2:11-12. How can we explain the Spirit’s leading one to violate what He has prohibited?

The Spirit does not enable the miraculous. As goes the proposition so goes the demonstration (1 Cor. 2:4). In forty years of debating the Pentecostals, not one bit of power has ever been demonstrated.

With these few particulars before us we are ready to discover the place that God has assigned to the Spirit in His plan for the church and what His function has been and is therein today.

### IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

In Genesis 1:1-3, we are first introduced to the Spirit in His role as Organizer of the world. The record states that, "The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." Then in Genesis 6:3, we learn that He had been striving with man and that such efforts were nearing an end. How had He been accomplishing such a thing? In the New Testament there is a divine commentary on the matter.

For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit. By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is eight souls were saved by water (1 Pet. 3:18-20).

How was the preaching done? It was done by the Spirit, not personally by Jesus during the three-day interval after His death. When was the preaching done? It was done during a special period of long-suffering—the 120 years of Genesis 6. It wait done in the days of Noah, when the longsuffering took place and while the ark was in preparation. The souls were not in prison when the preaching was done, but are now. Noah was an inspired preacher (2 Pet. 2:5). These passages dearly have reference to the inspired preaching of Noah.

The result was that the hearers rejected the inspired message and were lost. In precisely the same manner, men today may (1) resist the Spirit by resisting what the Bible teaches (Acts 7:51), (2) grieve the Spirit by a persistent life of resistance (Eph. 4:30),(3) and, finally, they may harden their hearts to the extent that their consciences perish and the Word no longer has any effect on them (1 The. 6:19; 1 Tim. 4:2).

It is declared in Nehemiah 9:20, that God pleaded with His people to return to Him and live righteously through a long line of oral prophets. This was spoken near the end of that era, which extends from the time of Samuel to the last words of Malachi. So far as regards the

time extending up, to the destruction of Jerusalem in the seventh century B.C., Nehemiah records that: “Yet many years didst thou forbear them, and testifiedst against them by thy spirit in thy prophets.” (Neh. 9:30). This is how God influenced and led men in the Old Testament era. It is also one of the first verses that testify to the inspiration of the Old Testament. In the New Testament we are told that, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God.” This refers to the Old Testament Scriptures. Through the years, and by the time of the writing of the KJV, the term “scriptures” came to inherently mean inspired or sacred writings, although the root meaning was simply anything written. Therefore, the KJV rendering is better than the ASV, “Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable” because the former implies sacred writings and the latter casts doubt on some “scripture” with regard to its inspiration. In 2 Peter 1:20-21, we are assured that these inspired Scriptures were not a product of private origin. It does not state that we cannot interpret them privately and must have a heirarchical order to do so, but that their origin is divine.

Holy men of God spoke as they were carried along by the Spirit. Moreover, this inspiration of the Spirit was verbal. David said, “The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue” (2 Sam. 23:2). The Spirit did not give David the ideas and let him express them in his own words or by his own understanding. That would reduce inspiration to an uninspired commentary. Neither David nor any other prophet fully understood all that they prophesied, which would preclude idea inspiration. First Peter 1:10-12 states that they searched out the meaning of the things they spoke and could not find it. How then could they have been merely explaining God’s message in their own words?

### **JOEL’S PROPHECY IS THE TRANSITIONAL POINT**

And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. And I will shew wonders In the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come (Joel 2:28-31).

The oral prophets had spoken of a time and place where a new order would come under the government of the Messiah (Isa. 9:7; 53:1-12;

et al.). This would involve the Spirit in a leading role in that kingdom. Joel gives explicit details regarding the manifestations that will unmistakably mark the time of its fulfillment. We are not left in the dark to make unreasonable calculations and far out assumptions. On the Day of Pentecost, in about A.D. 33, Peter, by inspiration gives an inspired commentary on the passage. Regarding the manifestations evident about them, he remarked, "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass" (Acts 2:16-17). It is important that we understand that Peter is not saying that everything Joel predicted came to pass on that day. Pentecostals argue that if Joel predicted the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and Joel named "daughters" as recipients of that power, then women received the baptism on Pentecost just like the men did. However, the text states that those who spoke were MEN (Acts 2:13), and those who spoke, spoke by the power of the Holy Spirit. To offset this error it need only be pointed out that Joel's prophecy BEGAN to be fulfilled on that day because it involves a succession of events and no dreams or visions were recorded. They were later, but not on Pentecost.

Jesus had Joel's prophecy in mind when He stated, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken (Mat. 24:29)." Jesus is applying this part of Joel to the destruction of Jerusalem and not Pentecost. The period of time in which the signs and wonders would be manifested is therefore delineated as extending from the day of Pentecost in A.D. 33, to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. The time that the Spirit would work miraculously to confirm the Word (Mark 16:17-20; Heb. 2:1-4) would be a period of approximately forty years. Micah 7:15 bears this out in these words: "According to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt will I show unto him marvelous things." If this is counted from the beginning of the ministry of Christ (which it is since it has His work in view) the period of forty years is manifestly correct. Now we turn to the part that the Spirit played in this particular period.

Both John the Immerser and Jesus spoke of a time when SOME men would be baptized in the Holy Spirit and others would be baptized in fire (Mat. 3:11-12; Luke 3:12-16). Were all of the believers promised this phenomenon, or was it limited? In Luke 3, it is common for advo-

cates of this theory to argue that the things spoken were addressed to “them all” not just the Apostles, and therefore a of them who were addressed were promised the baptism of the Spirit. The text names soldiers, Pharisees, publicans and a mixed multitude. Where is any record of these receiving ouch a manifestation? When a thing is spoken to a crowd does that mean everyone in the crowd will receive the thing promised? If it is unconditional, they might, but this promise was not unconditional lost unconverted publicans, soldiers and Pharisees received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. There were two things “promised”: (1) the baptism with the Holy Spirit, and, (2) the baptism with fire. The first represented some among the obedient (not an) who would receive the baptism with the Holy Ghost and others (the disobedient) who would be baptized with fire (an expression always indicating punishment—cf., Mat. 3:11-12). We proceed to take the first of these two divisions (the obedient) and trace the promise made to them. When we do so we find that the promise is further limited. In John 14:26; 15:27 and 16:13-16, the baptism of the Holy Spirit is limited to the Apostles. One of the manifestations was inspiration. But not every Apostle wrote a book in the Bible. This does not mean that they were not inspired. It only means that not all of them had writings included in the canon of Scripture. Not everything that inspired men wrote was included as evidenced by Paul’s statement in 1 Corinthians 5, in which he referred to a letter written to the Corinthians which we do not have. Was that letter inspired? We believe so. Why was it not included? I do not know. I know it neither contradicted what was included nor contained information not in the others that in essential to our salvation. By the same token there were inspired men whose inspiration was not given upon the basis of John 14-16. All apostles were inspired, but not all inspired men were apostles. There was Mark, Luke and perhaps Jude and James. Cornelius was baptized in the Holy Spirit and yet he never wrote an inspired book. Was he inspired? The text says he and his household spoke at the prompting of the Spirit, thus what they said was inspired (Acts 10:44-46). If they had written it down, it would have been inspired writings, but it would not have contradicted anything else written by inspiration or added anything essential to our salvation, else God would not have committed the oversight of its exclusion from the Bible. Cornelius cannot be cited as an example to prove that the doctrine of the reception of the Holy Spirit’s

baptism by the apostles only is fallacious because that is not the argument that is made. The argument is that the promise contained in John 14-16, is to the apostles exclusively. The Pentecostals use those passages to prove they are baptized in the Holy Ghost, therefore they must demonstrate **WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THOSE PASSAGES**, and inspiration is included in them. This has led many Pentecostals to teach that there are two baptisms of the Holy Spirit; one on the Apostles (which they do not have and therefore they are not obligated to do all that the Apostles did), and a second on Cornelius whose manifestation is tongues exclusively, which they say they have, and are therefore under no obligation to demonstrate anything except miraculous tongues. Those who challenge the Pentecostals must be aware of this distinction; however, the vast majority of Pentecostals still claim all that the apostles had and therefore are under obligation to demonstrate that they can do all that the passages applying to the apostles' baptism with the Holy Spirit assign to them.

In tracing the fulfillment of this promise, a very important distinction must be made. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is an "infilling" of the Spirit, but not every person who was filled with the Spirit was baptized in or with the Spirit. If modern Pentecostals can make the connection, they will put the defender of the truth at a decided disadvantage. They will proceed to show that everyone in the church of the first century was filled/baptized in the Spirit and that we are commanded to be filled with the Spirit today; therefore, we are commanded to be baptized in the Spirit today. Seldom do they stop to realize that this makes the baptism of the Spirit essential, which they deny, and changes the teaching regarding Him from a promise to a command. One cannot obey a promise.

It is easy to show that when the Bible says someone was "filled with the Spirit" he was not necessarily baptized in the Spirit because Luke 1:15, 41 and 67 record that John was filled with the Holy Spirit and so was Elizabeth and Zechariah. However, later at John 7:38-39 (a passage Pentecostals admit refers to the baptism of the Spirit), Jesus said the baptism of the Spirit had not come. In Acts 2:1-4, in the record of the coming of the baptism of the Spirit, but in 4:31, the church and the apostles were "filled with the Spirit." Were they baptized in the Spirit twice? No one, to my knowledge, so teaches that after the baptism of the Holy Spirit one would ever need it a second time.

What about Luke 11: 13? “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?” Does this teach us to pray for the baptism of the Holy Spirit today? We cannot take a passage that has application to the miraculous age and misappropriate it to our time. The fallacy of such a thing is clearly demonstrable by merely challenging those who believe otherwise to just pray and let us see what happens. Luke 11:13 is a “Pentecost pointer.” The context deals with the coming of the kingdom for which the disciples were taught to pray (v. 2). The power of the baptism of the Spirit was attached to that advent (Mark 9:1). To pray for the coming of the kingdom was to pray for the attendant baptism of the Holy Spirit. If all of the disciples could have the baptism of the Holy Spirit by praying for it, why didn’t Phillip tell the poor Samaritans so instead of sending to Jerusalem for the Apostles? Why didn’t the Apostles just send word that all they needed to do was to pray, and save them a trip? When they arrived they (the Apostles) prayed, and not that the Samaritans would receive the baptism of the Spirit, but a gift the Spirit bestowed. This explains Acts 2:38b and how that gift was received. It did not come at baptism, but by the impartation of the hands of the Apostles. It would do advocates of the reception of the Holy Ghost today (directly) a lot of good if they would read these words very carefully; “And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles’ hands the Holy Ghost was given.” How? By baptism? No—by the laying on of the Apostles’ hands. To what can it refer except Acts 2:38? Otherwise, we need to have it explained in what other way does the Bible state that the Samaritans received the Holy Ghost? The text says they had not received Him PERIOD (v. 16). Now when a man says this in not so, but they had received the Acts 2:38 promise upon baptism, he has missed the mark.

Ephesians 4:11-13, makes it quite clear that these things were for a limited time. Since it took the laying on of the Apostles’ hands to impart the Holy Spirit’s miraculous gifts, it stands to reason from that promise that these gifts are gone because the means of their being imparted is gone. This passage furnishes us biblical proof beyond all controversy that such is the case. It teaches that God gave Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers for the purpose of bringing the faith to a state of perfection (completion). The purpose of this

completion was that the work of the ministry and edification could go forth. For how long were these miraculous manifestations to last? “TILL” (preposition of time) we all come in the unity of the faith—the system of faith (Jude 3). With what results? (1) That we will no longer be children. (2) That we will no longer be swayed by “every wind of doctrine.” (3) That we may speak the truth in love. (4) That we may grow up. If these things do not come until the end of time and the unity of the faith does not occur until the next life, it will never be, because faith will end in sight, in heaven, and there will never be unity of faith. If this transpires only in heaven, there will be false doctrine in heaven because the showing of the distinction between true and false doctrine is one thing the completion is to be used for.

### **WHAT DOES THIS LEAVE FOR THE CHURCH TODAY?**

In Acts 2:38, the promise of the “gift of the Holy Ghost” is made. There are those who teach that this gift is the Holy Spirit and not a gift He gives. Others teach it is the Holy Spirit Himself given in a non-miraculous measure. There is no such thing ever mentioned in the Bible. The gift of the Holy Spirit here is miraculous and imparted, not at baptism, but by the laying on of the Apostles’ hands, and Acts 8:16-18, plainly says so. Four other arguments are just as conclusive: (1) The Greek DORA “gift” when used regarding the Spirit in other places, clearly means the miraculous, but Acts 2:38, we are assured, is the single exception (Acts 8:20; 10:45; 11:17; Eph. 3:7; 4:7—BUT 2:38 is non-miraculous?). (2) “RECEIVE,” as connected with the Holy Spirit, is miraculous in every place used unless Acts 2:38 in the sole exception (John 7:39; 20:21-23; Acts 8:15-17; 10:47; 19:6; Gal. 3:2—BUT Acts 2:38 is non-miraculous?). (3) Throughout the second chapter of Acts, every expression of the operation of the Spirit is miraculous. If you had been present and witnessed those events and were told that if you repented and were baptized you would receive this same Spirit or the gift **WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE EXPECTED?** And how would you explain the total lack of evidence experienced on your part if you had been Peter? (4) Are we to assume that these converts were to be sent out to tell the world about Pentecost and its manifestations, without a Bible, and to have them proclaim, “And I have received the gift of the Holy Spirit,” only to be able to answer the challenges by saying, “But my gift is the non-miraculous indwelling.” I tell you these men would

have been unarmed! How could they have confirmed the message they took with a non-miraculous indwelling?

Does the Spirit dwell in us today? I believe He does, through the Word of God. Such is taught in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Galatians 4:6, and Romans 8:9. We are commanded to be filled with the Spirit in Ephesians 5:19. Even that passage explains that this involves being filled with the Word. Colossians 3:16 is a commentary on the infilling of Ephesians 5:19. We let the Spirit dwell in us by letting the Word of Christ dwell in us richly. Does that mean that the more of the Word a person knows, the more of the Spirit he has in him? No! The indwelling is absolute, but the proper measure of the matter lies in the fruit of the Spirit which determines the extent to which we allow Him to dwell in us (Gal. 5:22-23). One might object that it is just as proper to assume that the word dwells in us through the Spirit as to assume the Spirit dwells in us through the Word. Actually the Word does dwell in me through the Spirit if by that it is meant that He places it in our hearts like he did Lydia (Acts 16:14). If, by that, one means He implants it separate and apart from the written message, the premise is false. The fruit of the Spirit shows the Spirit is in us because we are acting to produce that fruit by His direction through the written Word. When a congregation is dead and lukewarm, the Spirit is no more living in them than He did in Ephesus or Laodicea after they refused to repent (Rev. 2:3ff; 3:14-15).

### CONCLUSION

The church is heaven born, blood bought and Spirit filled. In defining the church, brother Guy N. Woods, in his work *Questions And Answers*, Vol 1. p. 204, states: "The church is a (a) a body, (b) of baptized believers, (c) called out from the world, (d) over which Christ reigns as head, (e) directed by the Holy Spirit through the word of truth."

There are two extremes that we must avoid regarding the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, which involves His work in the church today. We must not deny that He dwells in Christians. No matter who we are or what position we take we must all agree that He dwells in us, and we do as far as I know. The second extreme is to believe He indwells miraculously and leads and guides us separate and apart from the Word. Somewhere between these two lies the truth. As long as a man is in that area doctrinally, we have no fellowship problem. In our efforts to

prove our points of view may we all speak an the oracles (1 Pet. 4:11) and never take a position that violates simple, fundamental passages. May we leave the unknown to God and avoid extremism and speculation (Deu. 29:29). And may we all exalt the Word of God supremely and honor it deeply.

# THE ANGELS OF GOD IN HEAVEN

*Alton Hayes*

When the word “angel” is mentioned what thoughts do that one word conjure up in your mind? Many men have called their sweethearts, “Angel.” Proud papas look at their newborns as being “little angels.” Gnostic strove to worship angels. “Scholars” of the Middle Ages tried to determine how many angels could dance on the head of a pin. In recent years a well-known television evangelist wrote a book entitled *Angels, Angels, Angels*. In it, he expounded what he considered to be the truth on the subject. Is there any wonder, with such a motley history, some deny the very existence of angels?

Even though some are willing to deny the existence of angels, they cannot be denied by those who would honestly seek truth. Henry C. Thiessen gives four reasons for believing in angels:

First of all, the existence and ministry of angels are abundantly taught in the Scriptures. Our Lord has very much to say about angels, and we cannot dismiss His teaching with a haughty pretense to superior knowledge. Secondly, the evidence of demon possession and demon worship in heathen lands. Paul seems to regard the idolatry of the world as demon worship (I Cor. 10:20,21)...Thirdly, the practice of Spiritualism in so-called civilized countries...And finally, the work of Satan and the evil spirits in hindering the progress of grace in our own hearts and the work of God in the world (Eph. 6:12).<sup>1</sup>

By a simple look at the Scriptures nothing could be plainer—ANGELS EXIST!

With the word “angel” appearing 287 times in the King James Version of the Bible there can be no doubt this is a biblical subject. Inspiration first mentions angels in Genesis 3:24, “So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims.” From this point on throughout the pages of the Bible, angels are mentioned time and again. In the concluding words of Revelation we read, “And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had

heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the **angel** which shewed me these things” (Rev.22:8, emphasis mine AH).

As we further introduce our study, it is necessary to understand the terms we are using. To determine a definition of a word in current usage of the language, one looks to a modern dictionary. *Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary* defines “angel” as “a spiritual being superior to man in power and intelligence.”<sup>2</sup> (We shall notice that this definition will agree to a great extent with the usage of the Bible). The word for “angel” in the Hebrew language is the word *MALAK*. In the Greek, the word is *AGGELOS*. *Young’s Analytical Concordance to the Bible* gives the definition of both these words as, “messenger, agent.”<sup>3</sup> Vine writes concerning the word:

a messenger (from *angelo*, to deliver a message), sent whether by God or by man or by Satan, “is also used of a guardian or representative in Rev. 1:20, cp. Matt. 18:10; Acts 12:15 (where it is better understood as = ‘ghost’), but most frequently of an order of created beings, superior to man, Heb. 2:7; Pea. 8:5, belonging to Heaven, Matt, 24:36; Mark 12:25, and to God, Luke 12:8, and engaged in His service, Psa. 103:20. Angels are spirits, Heb. 1:14, i.e., they have not material bodies as men have; they are either human in form, or can assume the human form when necessary, cp. Luke 24:4, with ver. 23, Acts 10:3 with ver. 30.”<sup>4</sup>

Thayer concurs with these thoughts. In his first two definitions of the word *AGGELOS* he writes:

...a messenger, envoy, one who is sent. Mt. xi. 10; Lk. vii. 24,27; ix. 52; Mk. 1.2; Jas. ii. 25...2. In the Scriptures, both of the Old Test. and of the New, one of the host of heavenly spirits that, according alike to Jewish and Christian opinion, wait upon the monarch of the universe, and are sent by him to earth, now to execute his purposes....<sup>5</sup>

Studying the definitions of “angel” given by various authors one realizes immediately the words translated “angel” do not necessarily denote a heavenly being. The Hebrew term is used of the prophet Haggai, (Hag. 1:13, “the Lord’s messenger”); of the priests, (Mal. 2:7, “the messenger of the Lord”); and of the messenger who is to prepare the way of the Lord (Mal. 3:1).<sup>6</sup> This is not different from the Greek usage for in Luke 7:24, the word *AGGELOS* is used of “the messengers of John.” Our discussion will not center around these human messengers but; rather, the heavenly.

Before we note the major part of our discussion, allow us to offer an assurance. We want to take only that which is revealed by the inspiration of God. Much speculation has gone into books, articles and lectures relative to our topic. We do not want to add to this speculation. As Holy Writ teaches, “The secret things belong unto the Lord our God” (Deu. 29:29). Our desire is to keep from treading on the Lord’s territory. By sticking strictly with the revealed, we can do this and gain proper insight into a discussion of angels. Probably to most we are examining unfamiliar material. However, if we take only the revealed, our look should be a profitable one.

### COMMENCEMENT OF ANGELS

Where did angels come from? When did they have their beginning? Are angels eternal? These and other questions can have a proper answer only through Inspiration. In reality, all these questions can be summed up in a look at the commencement or origin of angels.

Angels did have a beginning. They did not exist from all eternity. The prophet Nehemiah wrote,

Thou, even thou, art Lord alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with **all their host**, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seam, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the **host of heaven** worshippeth thee (Neh. 9-6, emphasis mine AH).

This reading teaches that the same Lord who created heaven, earth, seas, and all things therein created the heavenly host. Because God created these heavenly beings, “the host of heaven worshippeth thee.”

The Psalmist wrote;

Praise ye the Lord. Praise ye the Lord from the heavens: praise him in the heights. Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts. Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light. Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens. Let them praise the name of the Lord: for he commanded, and they were created (Psa. 148:1-5).

Again Holy Writ speaks of praise to be offered the Lord. The Lord is due our praise because of His creative ability. Along with a listing of so many things in God’s creation are “his angels.” Therefore, the Lord’s name is to be praised “for he commanded, and they were created.”

Paul wrote of the Father who delivered us from the power of darkness and translated us into His Son's kingdom (Col. 1: 13). He then states,

For by him were **all things created**, that are **in heaven**, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: **all things were created by him**, and for him (Col. 1:16, emphasis mine AH).

Angels are certainly included in the creation described in this passage.

God created angels. The Scriptures affirm this point without doubt. However, someone may ask, "When did God create the angels?" God questioned Job:

Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof; when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy? (Job 38:4-7).

These "sons of God" shouted for joy when the foundations of the earth were laid. Was this Adam? It could not be, for Adam was not created until the sixth day. There is but one possible explanation for the question, "Who are 'the sons of God?'" They are angels. The angels rejoiced when God laid the foundation of the earth. Thus, angels existed at the time the foundations of the earth were laid.

Now that we see the angels existing at the laying of the foundations of the earth, does this information tell us when they were created? To answer simply, "No." Remember again we have proven from the Scriptures that angels did not exist from all eternity. So there was a point when God created angels, but God has not chosen to reveal that time. On this point Thiessen ponders:

The time of their creation is nowhere definitely indicated, but it is most probable that it occurred in connection with the creation of the heavens in Genesis 1:1. It may be that God created them immediately after He had created the heavens and before He created the earth; for according to Job 38:4-7, "the sons of God shouted for joy" when he laid the foundations of the earth.<sup>7</sup>

To be certain we can agree with Thiessen, "The time of their creation is nowhere definitely indicated." We do not know the time of their creation. It was not revealed.

## CHARACTER OF ANGELS

While beginning our discussion of the character of angels, be reminded we are not talking about some small group of beings. The Bible tells us they are numerous. In Daniel's vision of four beasts he states,

A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand of thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened (Dan. 7:10).

Those ministering and standing before the Ancient of days must have been angels. Announcing the birth of the Savior were "a multitude of the heavenly host" (Luke 2:13). Christ said of angels at His betrayal, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" (Mat. 26:53). The Hebrews writer speaks of the angelic host as "an innumerable company of angels" (Heb. 12:22). John described the number of angels around God's throne, "And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands" (Rev. 5:11).

Angels are sexless. Concerning this point Edward P. Myers has chosen to state, "Angels are unmarriageable."<sup>8</sup> Relative to the Sadducees' question of marriage and the resurrection Jesus said, "Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, **but are as the angels of God in heaven**" (Mat. 22:29-30, emphasis mine AH). It is interesting in Luke's account of this incident the unmarriageable state of the resurrection is said to be "equal unto the angels" (Luke 20:35-36). Angels do not die; therefore, they do not have a need to marry and procreate.

"Incorporeal" is a word used time and time again to describe the "form" of angels. *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* defines "incorporeal" as "not corporeal: having no material body or form."<sup>9</sup> Myers chooses to state, "Angels are invisible to the unaided human vision."<sup>10</sup> Two examples may be used to show this. In Numbers 22, Balak, king of the Moabites, wanted Balaam to curse the Israelites.

As Balaam went with the princes of Moab an angel first appeared to Balaam's ass. When the poor animal was enabled to see the angel she turned aside and went into a field (v. 23); following that she then crushed Balaam's foot against a wall (v. 25); and finally, when she could not escape the eight of the angel the ass fell under Balaam (v. 27). Up to this time, God had allowed only the ass to see the angel, but verse 31 states, "Then the Lord opened the eyes of Balsam, and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and he bowed down his head, and fell flat on his face." Without doubt God's messenger, the angel, was seen only when the Lord allowed him to be seen.

Our second example is seen in 2 Kings 6. In this narrative the king of Syria sent a great host with horses and chariots to take the prophet Elisha. A servant of the prophet saw this great company and asked his master, "Alas, my master! how shall we do?" (v. 15). Elisha's response was, "Fear not! for they that be with us are more than they that be with them" (v. 16). What could Elisha mean by this statement? What men did he see? Elisha prayed for the Lord to open the eyes of his servant. Inspiration tells us, "And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha" (v. 17). As brother Rex Turner has written: "There can really be no doubt, those horses and chariots were angelic beings. Neither the angel that stopped Balaam's ass, nor the horses and chariots were seen by the unaided human eye."<sup>11</sup>

Angels, being God's messengers, take the form that God chooses for them. The Bible tells of angels appearing as men (Gen. 18:1-2; 19:1-2; 32:22-28; Jud. 13:9; Mark 16:5; Acts 1:10-11); a flame of fire (Exo. 3:2); and, as we have noted, horses and chariots (2 Kin. 6:14-17).

Angels possess supernatural knowledge, but they are not omniscient. Omniscience belongs to God only. Genesis 18:10 states, "And he said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son." This heavenly messenger knew of the birth of Isaac before the event. An angel of the Lord knew of the impending birth of John and Jesus (read Luke 1:11-37).

The angels knew of Christ's return and told the disciples. Luke records,

And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven (Acts 1:10-11).

From this look at only a few Scriptures, the super-human knowledge of angels cannot be denied; yet, as we have affirmed they are not omniscient. Concerning the Second Coming of Christ Matthew wrote, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, **not the angels of heaven**, but my Father only" (Mat. 24:36, emphasis mine AH). Angels know more than man, but not as much as God.

Omnipresence is another attribute that applies to God only; however, angels possess supernatural speed. Daniel 9 tells that Daniel "was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God for the holy mountain of my God" (v. 20). While he prayed Gabriel travelled to him before his prayer ended. He could travel from heaven to Daniel's presence before his supplication ended! But, remember he had to travel. God is omnipresent—all places at all times. Thus the Psalmist would say:

Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me (Psa. 139:7-10).

Supernatural power is possessed by angels, but they are not omnipotent. David said of God's angels, "Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word" (Psa. 103:20). Concerning the words "that excel in strength" the American Standard Version translates "that are mighty in strength." Second Thessalonians 1:7 tells that at the Second Coming the Lord will "be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels." David numbered the people and God punished the nation of Israel. Seventy thousand were killed by a pestilence (2 Sam. 24:15). An angel stretched out his hand to destroy Jerusalem, but the Lord

said, “It is enough: stay now thine hand” (2 Sam. 24:16-17). This angel had power enough to destroy seventy thousand, but he was not omnipotent. He had power to destroy Jerusalem, but he was not all-powerful. Matthew 28:2 records, “the angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.” Concerning the stone that sealed the tomb of Jesus, Thiessen quotes Strong saying the weight of the stone would be “more than four tons.”<sup>12</sup> An angel of the Lord freed the Apostles from prison (Acts 5:19). Peter was set free from prison and guided to the outside by an angel (Acts 12:6-11). An angel smote Herod “because he gave not God the glory” relative to his oration (Acts 12:21-23). In all these areas of power, the Omnipotent One governed His messengers.

### CLASSIFICATION OF ANGELS

Angels can be classified into two categories: “good angels” and “bad angels.” The Bible further breaks down these two greater classes. As we strive to examine both of these classes, we will also study the smaller divisions.

Most students of the Bible agree the groups of good angels can be classified as one of four different angels. The four are: the angels, the Cherubim, the Seraphim, and the Archangels. Let’s examine each one individually.

Our study has already shown the word “angel” simply means messenger. It has also been noted that these messengers may be heavenly or human. By a study of the context of the passage one determines whether the reference is to a human or heavenly messenger. Often, when “angel” is used, there are also some words or phrases used making it obvious heavenly messengers are under consideration. For example, Matthew refers to “the angels of heaven” (Mat. 24:36), Luke speaks of the “heavenly host” (Luke 2:13), and the Hebrews writer speaks of “an innumerable company of angels” (Heb. 12:22).

The first mention we have of angels is in Genesis 3:24. It is here the Cherubims are mentioned. More than sixty times the word “cherubim” is found in the King James Version of the Bible. After receiving the free-will offering to build the tabernacle, instructions were given for the construction. Two cherubims were to be placed on

top of the ark. Inspiration records, “And thou shalt make two **cherubims** of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy seat” (Exo. 25:18, emphasis mine AH). Hezekiah prayed to God, “O Lord God of Israel, which dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth: thou hast made heaven and earth” (2 Kin. 19:15). Again God is described between the cherubims by Psalm 80:1, “Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock, thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth.” Psalm 99:1 describes God’s position between the cherubims. The prophet Ezekiel had a vision of cherubims in chapter 10. Because of so much discussion in Holy Writ about the cherubims’ position with God, many believe they are the guardians of the throne of God.<sup>13</sup>

The third group of good angels we will examine are seraphim. Only twice is the word “seraphim” found in our Bible. The two times are in the same chapter of the Bible. “Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly” (Isa. 6:2). “Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar” (Isa. 6:6). One of the few facts we know that is taught by the Bible is the position of the seraphim in relation to the throne of God compared to the position of the cherubim. As we have noted God is said to be seated above cherubims (Psa. 80:1; 99:1). Seraphim are said to stand above the throne of God (Isa. 6:1-2).

Archangels compose the fourth group of good angels spoken of in the Bible. As is the case with seraphims, the word “archangel” is used only twice in the Bible. First Thessalonians 4:16 states, “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God. and the dead in Christ shall rise first.” Jude records, “Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, the Lord rebuke thee” (Jude 9). Many Bible students believe in several archangels. Thiessen wrote:

The Apocryphal Book of Enoch, Ch. 20:1-7, enumerates six “angels of power,” viz., Uriel, Raphael, Raguel, Michael, Zariel, and Gabriel. The variant reading in the margin adds Remiel as the seventh. And in Tobit 12:15 we read. “I am Raphael, one of the seven holy angels who offer up the prayers of the saints and enter in before the glory of the Holy One.” While we fully recognize the apocryphal character of these books, they, nevertheless, show what the ancients believed in this respect. It would seem that Gabriel might qualify as a second archangel.<sup>14</sup>

“Bad” or “evil” angels are also spoken of by Holy Writ. Under this general topic we want to notice angels that are bound in chains, angels that are free and Satan. As we did with “good” angels, we shall examine a few passages relative to “bad” angels.

Peter and Jude wrote of angels in chains. “For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment” (2 Pet. 2:4). The American Standard Version states these angels sinned and God cast them to “Tartarus.” Thus, they were cast down and will be held for the Judgment. Most Bible students agree on the point that Jude speaks of the same angels in verse 6, “And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.” Obviously these angels have not kept their first “estate,” (“principality”—ASV) and have left their “own,” (“Proper”—ASV) “habitation.” For this writer to detail the when’s and how’s of this departure is an impossibility. These things are not revealed, however, the revealed does tell of the casting down and bonds of this group of angels. This we can know without doubt.

The next group of angels under consideration are not bound as are the previous group we studied. These are free. They serve their leader, Satan. In Matthew 25, the Master taught of the Judgment. Verse forty-one states, “Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared **for the devil and his angels**” (emphasis mine AH). Revelation 12:7-9 also speaks of the Devil and his angels:

And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and this angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great

dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

The Psalmist also spoke of the angels, “He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, wrath, and indignation, and trouble, by sending **evil angels** among them” (Psa. 78:49, emphasis mine AH). Why are these angels free and the others bound? Again we must plead a lack of understanding due to the silence of the Scriptures.

It is this scribe’s opinion a third angel falling into the category of “evil” is Satan. Ezekiel 28:11-19 contains the following words which seem applicable of Satan:

Moreover the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord God; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God, every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee am thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence. and thou hast sinned. therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffic; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the might of all them that behold thee. All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more.

We realize the king of Tyrus in named, yet this language seems to be powerful enough to go beyond this earthly ruler. Many commentators agree with this interpretation of the passage. Isaiah 14:12-15 is another passage to consider relative to this point:

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the national For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my

throne above the stars of God. I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.

In this passage one can see the self-exalted nature that so typifies Satan. He would exalt himself only to be brought low. A combination and explanation of these passages appears to be the best discussion relative to the origin of Satan and his angels.

### CONDUCT OF ANGELS

By the heading “Conduct of Angels” we are addressing the activity or work of angels. The Bible catalogues numerous works in which angels engaged. Let’s notice a few.

Angels are said to be “ministering spirits.” The writer of Hebrews records, “And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire” (Heb. 1:7). In the same chapter we learn, “Are they not all **ministering spirits**, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?” (v. 14, emphasis mine AH). Following His temptation, Matthew records how angels ministered to Christ, “Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him” (Mat. 4:11). In the Garden of Gethsemane, after Christ prayed for the removal of His cup of suffering, Luke wrote, “And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven strengthening him” (Luke 22:43). “The angel of the Lord” freed Peter from imprisonment (Acts 12:5-11). “The angel of God” told Paul that none would perish in the impending shipwreck (Acts 27:20-25). An obvious work of angels has been that of ministering to others.

Matthew records that angels have another work with God the Father. Jesus warned the disciples lest they despise “one of these little ones.” After this Matthew wrote of angels, “That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven” (Mat. 18:10).

These servants of God have made known certain aspects of Deity’s will. An angel appeared to Moses in the burning bush (Exo. 3:2; Acts 7:30). Numbers 22 tells of “the angel of the Lord” delivering a message to Balaam. The angel Gabriel appeared to Daniel (Dan. 8:15-16). He was to instruct Daniel in his vision. “An angel of God” told Cornelius to send for Peter (Acts 10:3-5).

One who has studied the Bible only minimally realizes angels have announced great events throughout the ages. Genesis 18 and 19 tell of angels announcing the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah to Abraham. “An angel of the Lord” announced John’s birth to Zacharias (Luke 1:11-20). Christ’s birth was likewise announced by an angel (Mat. 1:18-25). Two men “in shining garments” or angels announced the resurrection of Jesus (Luke 24:4; cf., Mat. 28:1-7). Two men “in white apparel” stood by the apostles and announced the return of Christ (Acts 1:10-11).

Angels have worked in the area of executing judgment of God upon certain men. Concerning the army of Sennacherib, 2 Kings 19:35-36 states:

And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh.

When the people praised Herod as a god, the Bible says, “And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave God not the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost” (Acts 12:23).

Another area we want to consider is the encouragement and protection of the righteous. The Sweet Singer of Israel recorded, “The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them” (Psa. 34:7). Daniel stated he was spared from the lions’ den by an angel, “My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions’ mouths, that they have not hurt me” (Dan. 6:22). Acts 5 records the fact of persecution against the apostles by Sadducees. “But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said, Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life” (Acts 5:19-20).

A final consideration of the work or duty of angels is to bear the souls of the righteous into Paradise. In the narrative of the rich man and Lazarus we read, “And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and **was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom**: the rich man also died, and was buried” (Luke 16:22). It appears from this passage

the angels bear the soul of the faithful servant of God to its rest awaiting the Judgment.

### CONDITION OF ANGELS

What shall be the final destiny of the angels? Will the final destiny differ with the “good” and “evil” angels? These are two questions we shall consider under this heading.

Of the good angels, it appears they will be companions of the saved in eternity. In Revelation 21, John spoke of angels at the gates of New Jerusalem (v. 12). Holy Writ also speaks of angels returning with Christ in His Second Advent. Paul wrote:

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God. and the dead in Christ shall rise first...And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming first 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 (1 The. 4:16; 2 The. 1:7-9).

Truly this will be one of the greatest times for all Christians when the angels come with Christ on this heavenly mission!

Concerning the destiny of the “evil” angels, little doubt can remain. Matthew wrote, “Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, **into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels**” (Mat. 25:41, emphasis mine AH). Thiessen wrote about their plight now,

Meanwhile they are kept in chains and under darkness unto the day of their judgments (II Pet, 2:4; Jude 6), like the convicted criminal who has been found guilty and is kept in prison awaiting the day when he shall be officially sentenced and taken to suffer the penalty for his offense.<sup>15</sup>

### CONFUSION CONCERNING ANGELS

Briefly, under this section, we shall notice some commonly held misconceptions about angels. We understand that these may be somewhat controversial, yet we desire only to allow the Scriptures to speak and guide us.

1. *Angels are beings, usually women, with wings and haloes.* As we noticed in a previous section, angels are incorporeal. They are also

invisible to the unaided human vision. Angels have taken on different forms as they carry out as their heavenly duties. However, we never read of a biblical description of an angel as we commonly hear them described female, wings, haloes. In fact, when gender is applied to angels they are described as men.

2. *Everyone has a guardian angel watching over him.* To answer this, we must say we cannot find Scripture to support such a thought.

3. *A good person dies and goes to be an angel.* Such is never taught by Inspiration. As we have noted earlier, angels are created beings.

4. *The Bible says that angels rejoice when an erring sinner returns to faithful service.* Two verses are misapplied from Luke 15:

I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine, just persons, which need no repentance...Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth (Luke 15:7, 10).

Note carefully the wording of verse 10, “there is joy in the presence of the angels of God.” This verse says the one in the presence of the angels of God in rejoicing. Who is in the angels’ presence? God, of course! Our Heavenly Father rejoices as we return home (see the Parable of the Prodigal Son).

5. *An angel tells man what to do today.* Many times this statement involves ones “conversion.” One says the angel confirmed his “conversion.” First, be reminded that angels are not charged with the preaching of the gospel (Mat. 28:18-20; 2 Cor. 4:7; 5:19-20). Remember the warning of Paul, “But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed” (Gal. 1:8).

## CONCLUSION

As we began our discussion we noted that we can be assured of truth only by following Holy Writ. Even though this topic may be difficult or unfamiliar to many of us, it is scriptural and worthy of our study. May we continue to study this topic and all other studies from the Bible to gain further insight and better serve the God of heaven.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Henry C. Thiessen, B.D., PH. D., D.D.; *Introductory Lectures In Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1976), p. 190.

<sup>2</sup>Henry Bosley Woolf, *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield Merriam, 1973), p. 44.

<sup>3</sup>Robert Young, LLD., *Analytical Concordance To The Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1977), p. 37.

<sup>4</sup>W. E. Vine, M.A., *An Expository Dictionary Of New Testament Words* (Old Tappan, NJ: Revell, 1966), p. 55.

<sup>5</sup>Joseph Henry Thayer, D.D., *Greek-English Lexicon Of The New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1974), p. 5.

<sup>6</sup>James Orr, M.A., D.D., *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1939), p. 132.

<sup>7</sup>Thiessen, p. 191.

<sup>8</sup>Edward P. Myers, *Angelology (A Study of Angels)* (West Monroe, LA: Howard, 1978), p. 11.

<sup>9</sup>Woolf, p. 582.

<sup>10</sup>Myers, p. 7.

<sup>11</sup>Rex A. Turner, *Sound Doctrine*, "Angelology" (Montgomery, AL: n.p., 1985), p. 4.

<sup>12</sup>Thiessen, p. 193.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 198.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 211.

# THE ORIGIN, PERSONALITY AND WORK OF SATAN

*Guss Eoff*

## INTRODUCTION

Is there really such a person as Satan? Many people today do not believe that Satan really exists. Some believe that Satan is nothing more than an old Jewish fable. Others think that Satan is just an influence.

I would like to consider a number of things in the light of God's word and maybe we can come to a better understanding about Satan.

## WHERE DID SATAN COME FROM?

There are many theories as to where Satan came from. So far as we know, the Bible does not give a clear and definite beginning of the evil one. Let's consider some ideas about Satan's origin.

## ALWAYS EXISTED

Some contend that Satan, as well as God, has always existed. They are both eternal. Of course there is nothing in the Bible that teaches this theory.

Deity is all powerful! Jehovah told Abram, "I am God Almighty" (Gen. 17: 1). There is nothing that God cannot do that is righteous and good. Even Job acknowledged, "I know that thou canst do all things" (Job 42:2). If Satan had been deity, he would have been all powerful. He could not be controlled. yet God told Satan, "Behold, all that he hath is in thy power, only upon himself put not forth thy hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of Jehovah" (Job 1:12). Again, Jehovah told Satan, "Behold, he is in thy hand, only spare his life" (Job 2:6). Also, Jesus told Peter that Satan had asked for him "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan asked to have you, that he might sift you an wheat" (Luke 22:31). If Satan was equal in Deity with God, God would not be able to cast him into hell (Mat. 25:41; Rev. 20:10). God is greater than Satan. John said, "Ye are of God, my little children, and have overcome them: "because greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4). Satan is not all powerful, so he could not be eternal with God.

## GOD CREATED SATAN

One theory is that God created Satan to be evil. God is pure and holy so He could not sin or even tempt men to sin. James said, “God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempteth no man” (Jam. 1:13). So God made Satan so he could cause man to be tempted to sin. How ridiculous! If God made an evil Devil, God would still be the source of evil. So if one uses another to cause one to sin, the one that used another is still guilty.

If Satan is not Deity, he must have been created. Paul said,

For in him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through him, and unto, him; and he is before all things, and in him all things consist (Col. 1:16-17).

This would, no doubt, include Satan. “It might be mentioned also at this point that all created things had their origin at some time during the creation week of Genesis 1. This Moses states in Exodus 20:11. “For in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is. This included the great host of angels. Incidentally, the angels

must have been created at the very beginning of the first day of creation, for Job 38:6,7 tells of their singing and of their shout of joy at the creation of the earth (John C. Whitcomb, Jr., *The Early Earth*, p. 43).

We know that Satan cannot be Deity; thus, he was created. Yet, when God created all things they were created good. “And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day” (Gen. 1:31). When God created things they were good! Just as man was good when God made him. But God placed in man the power of choice. Nothing was evil that God made. When God made the angels they were good. When God created Satan he was good, so he had to become evil after he was created.

Satan, like man had the power of choice. But when did Satan become evil? The Bible seems to teach that Satan was the very first person to sin. John said, “He that doeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. To this end was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8). The devil is the father of sin. He was the first one to sin. Jesus said,

Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and standeth not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a he, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father thereof (John 8:44).

If Satan become evil, he did so when he first sinned. Sin is a transgression of law. Sin is lawlessness (1 John 3:4). Sin is unrighteousness (1 John 5:17). But if there is no law there is no sin. Notice, “but where there is no law, neither is there transgression (Rom. 4:15). So Satan had to transgress God’s law.

### IS SATAN A FALLEN ANGEL?

There are many passages that seem to indicate that there was a rebellion in heaven and that angels sinned. Notice, “For if God spared not angels when they sinned, but cast them down to hell, and committed them to pits of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment” (2 Pet. 2:4). We realize that Peter is proving the judgment will take place, and he uses disobedient angels, the flood, and wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to prove it. If there was the flood and the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, there must have been sinful angels that were cast down.

Jude writes, “And angels that kept not their own principality, but left their proper habitation, he hath kept in everlasting bonds under darkness unto the judgment of the great day” (Jude 6).

Angels must have been subject to law, because they sinned (2 Pet. 2:4). Sin is a transgression of the law (1 John 3:4). If there was no law for the angels they could not sin (Rom. 4:16).

Angels left their proper habitation and kept not their own principality and were put in everlasting bonds under darkness unto the judgment day (Jude 6). Peter said they were cast down to hell when they sinned (2 Pet. 2:4).

Was Satan a wicked angel cast out of heaven because he left his proper habitation? Some believe that Revelation 12:7-9 has a twofold meaning.

And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels going forth to war with the dragon; and the dragon warred and his angels; and they prevailed not, neither was there place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast down, the old serpent, he that is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world; he was cast down to the earth, and his angels were cast down with him (Rev. 12:7-9).

There is no doubt that John sees a vision of a war in heaven between Michael and his angels and Satan and his angels. The result was that Satan was cast down to earth. This is symbolic language of the battle between Christ's church and the Devil and his angels. But some have believed it has a twofold meaning, and refers also to a war between forces of God and Satan when angels left their proper habitation.

What was that proper habitation? It may be that Paul's reference to qualifications of elders gives some insight as to the sin of Satan. The Apostle said: "Not a novice, lest being puffed up he fall into the condemnation of the devil" (1 Tim. 3:6).

Some have argued that the meaning of *Krima* (Judgment, condemnation) in verse six can only be used of a judgment into which the devil came because of his being puffed up. If this be correct, we have a specific reference to Satan's fall. Notice some translations that say this has reference to Satan's fall.

And fall into the condemnation as the devil (*New American Standard Bible*).

And come under the same condemnation as the devil (*The New Testament in Modern Speech*, Richard Francis Weymouth).

And fall under similar sentence as the devil (*The Berkeley Version of the New Testament*, Gerrit Verkuyl).

And incurs the doom passed on the devil (*The New Testament: A New Translation*, James Moffatt).

Lenski says:

Judgment, moreover, is never ascribed to the devil: God judges...The devil's judgment is specific: God's judgment on his pride. Into that very judgment which has long ago been pronounced upon the devil the conceited novice might easily fall in his pride (*The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles*, by R. C. Lenski, p. 589).

### SOME OBJECTIONS

There are some passages used that art thought to shed light on Satan's fall. Let's consider them briefly. One passage is found in Isaiah 14:12-14.

How art thou fallen from heaven, O day-star, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, that didst lay low the nations? And thou saidst in thy heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God, and I will sit upon the mount of congregation, in the uttermost parts of the north, I will second above the

heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High (Isa. 14:12-14).

The *King James Version* makes reference to “Lucifer” in Isaiah 14:12. In the *American Standard Version*, it refers to “O Day Star, son of the morning.” Now, who was Isaiah talking about? There is no doubt that this passage has first reference to the King of Babylon, King Nebuchadnezzar. It shows the king and his great accomplishments as an earthly power. Babylon, like the Day Star, was brilliant for a time, then faded quickly from the scene of world power. Just as the Day Star shines forth and is soon gone, so Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon was to own fade.

Now, why can’t this passage have a secondary meaning? Why can it not have reference also to the fall of Satan? Jerome and others of the early church “fathers” took this to refer to Satan also.

In Isaiah 7 we have reference to the Virgin birth of Jesus. I know of no one who but will accept this as a prophecy of Jesus’ birth. Yet, consider the passage, does it have a primary reference and a secondary?

Of what child does the prophet speak? This must first refer to a child, that before he was three years old, Pekah and Rezin, kings of Israel and Syria, had been executed as Isaiah predicted (Isa. 7:16). This type of double reference is common in the prophetic Scriptures. Different commentators have different ideas as to who the child was in the first and primary reference. There is no doubt that Jesus is referred to in the secondary reference. Though some commentators try to make Isaiah 7:14 refer to Christ alone, they must deal also with verses fifteen and sixteen.

### **COULD OTHER VERSES HAVE DOUBLE REFERENCE?**

But why can’t Isaiah 14:12-14 have a dual meaning? Why cannot this picture of Lucifer, the Day Star, the son of dawning have reference also to the fall of Satan? We have referred to 2 Peter 2:4 and Jude 6 that deal with angels that left their proper habitation and were cast down.

#### **EZEKIEL 28:12-14**

Son of man, take up a lamentation ova the king of Tyre, and say unto hint. Thus saith the Lord Jehovah. Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou wast in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, the topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the

emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of the pipes was in thee, in the day that thou wast created they were prepared. Thou wast the anointed cherub that covereth: and I set thee, so that thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till unrighteousness was found in thee. By the abundance of thy traffic they filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore have I cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I have destroyed thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Thy heart was lifted up because of thy beauty; thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I have cast thee to the ground. I have laid thee before kings, that they may behold thee (Eze. 28:12-17).

This passage has reference to the King of Tyre. God had allowed Tyre to become great. Jehovah had blessed her greatly. It may be because Hiram, king of Tyre willingly assisted Solomon in building the temple. Tyre became like the cherub in the holy of holies, she enjoyed communion with God in the garden of Eden. As the high priest was covered with the precious stones in the breast plate, so Tyre is viewed as being clothed with precious stones. This illustrates how God had allowed Tyre to prosper. This is not literal in its speaking. But we can see at least three pictures. Like Adam, things went well for Tyre, but then wickedness and arrogance entered and God cast her down. What three pictures can we see? When Adam sinned, he was cast out of Eden. When Tyre sinned, she was cast down. When Satan sinned, he was cast down.

In Luke 10:18 Jesus said, "I beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven." Some have said this has nothing at all to do with the origin of the devil, because Satan had been in existence for centuries when Christ made this statement. In context, Jesus is commenting on the successful work of His disciples against the work of Satan. Just as lightning falls from heaven, sharply and clearly, so did the evil designs of hell lose their effectiveness. My question is why cannot this be a dual passage? Why cannot Jesus be describing two events that He had seen? Just because Satan had been in existence for centuries before Jesus made the statement in Luke 10:18, is no proof at all. After all, was not Jesus with God in Deity before the Incarnation? The Apostle Paul said that He was in Philippians 2:6-11. Likewise, John said, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God" (John 1:1-2).

If angels fell, surely Jesus saw them fall. If Satan was a fallen angel, would not have Jesus witnessed the fall?

I would like to mention another time that Jesus says He saw the fall of Satan. In Revelation chapter twelve is described a war in heaven. I realize this is symbolic language. It is highly figurative. Even though Satan had been around a long time before the Revelation was written, was not Jesus with God in the beginning? It is true that this chapter pictures a great battle between evil and good, truth and error, God over Satan, and the ultimate destiny of the “old serpent.” But in that symbolic, figurative language I believe it is a dual passage. It not only teaches the final casting down of Satan, but also his being cast down out of heaven.

The great red dragon, no doubt, means Satan (Rev. 12:3). With his tail he draws the third part of the stars of heaven and casts them to the earth (Rev. 12:4). Michael and his angels were in this war with the dragon and his angels and there was no place for them any more in heaven, so they were cast down to earth (Rev. 12:7-9) I believe this chapter has reference to the defeat of Satan in Heaven as well as his defeat on earth and his ultimate destiny.

God has not told us exactly of Satan’s origin, so we cannot be positive. Many just say I don’t know, but I do know of his destiny. But we must admit that there are many passages that make it appear that Satan was a fallen angel. Time in this study will not allow us to discuss it further.

### THE PERSONALITY OF SATAN

Personality has to do with quality or state of being a person. It is the quality of relating to a particular person—that which constitutes distinction of a person.

Satan is referred to as “the prince of this world” (John 12:31—KJV). There is no doubt about his being a particular person. His quality is wholly evil. He is the enemy of all that is good and righteous. Many of his names, or the way he is referred to show his basic quality.

SATAN: “adversary; to lie in wait” (as an adversary).

DEVIL: “adversary” or “accuser” (*International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, Vol. 4, p. 2693).

Peter warned, “Be sober, be watchful: your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Pet. 5:8).

**MURDERER:**

Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and standeth not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father thereof (John 8:44).

Satan is a murderer and a liar, he seeks to destroy us. He uses all kinds of tricks and devices. "That no advantage may be gained over us by Satan: for we are not ignorant of his devices" (2 Cor. 2:11).

TEMPTER: Satan tempted Jesus in Matthew 4:3-11. Paul was concerned that the devil may have tempted the brethren in Thessalonica. "For this cause I also, when I could no longer forbear, sent that I might know your faith, lest by any means the tempter had tempted you, and our labor should be in vain" (1 The. 3:5).

DECEIVER: He deceives and blinds souls so they will not serve God. "And the great dragon was cast down, the old serpent, he that is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world; he was cast down to the earth, and his angels were cast down with him" (Rev. 12:9). "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should not dawn upon them" (2 Cor. 4:4).

ACCUSER: "The accuser of our brethren is cast down" (Rev. 12:10).

DISGUISER: "For even Satan fashioneth himself into an angel of light" (2 Cor. 11: 14).

SINNER: "He that doeth sin in of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning" (1 John 3:8).

There are other descriptive titles of Satan, but these should suffice to show that his personality is wholly evil and that he is an enemy of all that is of God. In the parable of the Tares, Jesus said that the devil was the enemy that soweth evil seed. "And the tares are the sons of the evil one; and the enemy that sowed them is the devil" (Mat. 13:38-39).

**THE WORK OF SATAN**

There can be no doubt that Satan hates God. The work of the evil one is to oppose the grace of God, and to do all that he can to influence man to turn from God and His grace. Man must choose to serve God or Satan, he cannot serve two masters (Mat. 6:24).

The Deceiver seeks to get man to follow him. Adam and Eve were deceived by Satan and sinned against God (Gen. 3:1-6). Hell is prepared for the devil and his angels (Mat. 25:41). Satan wants to take as many to hell with him as he can. He does not want to be in hell by himself.

The work of Satan is seen in a number of the titles given him. He works through his agents, those who are subject to him.

Thanks be to God that He gave His Son Jesus to free us from sin and to help us resist Satan. "Be subject therefore unto God; but resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (Jam. 4:7).

Christians have and can overcome the evil one. Notice that John says: "ye have overcome the evil one" (1 John 2:13). "Ye have overcome the evil one" (1 John 2:14).

Thank God, we can see the ultimate end of our ungodly enemy. "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where are also the beast and the false prophet; and they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever" (Rev. 20:10).

# THE LORD...FORMETH THE SPIRIT OF MAN WITHIN HIM (Zechariah 12:1)

*Gary L. Anderson*

## GENERAL OUTLINE:

Introduction.

- I. Origin/Nature of man's spirit (soul).
- II. Difference between the spirit of man and animals.
- III. Accountability of man's spirit.
- IV. Separation of man's spirit and his body (death).
- V. Eternal condition of man's spirit. Conclusion.

## INTRODUCTION

The study of man's spirit (soul) often raises more questions than there are answers. When one consults the great works done by biblical scholars on words found within the Holy Scriptures, he will find that many times words do have many meanings. Such is the case with the words "soul" and "spirit." The context of a given passage is the best determining factor in understanding the proper meaning of the word used.

Since our study is dealing with the eternal spirit (soul), we will not need to be concerned with the other meanings that relate to these words. Both words are at times used synonymously. For example, "soul" (*psuche*) in Matthew 10:28, refers to the immaterial and invisible part of man; while in 1 Corinthians 5:5 the word "spirit" (*pneuma*) has the same meaning. The similarity in meaning is also seen in the phrases "body and soul" (Mat. 10:28) and "body and spirit" (Jam. 2:26). The two terms, are also connected with the emotional makeup of man (Mat. 26:38; Luke 1:47).

However, at times it seems to appear that there is a difference between the words "soul" and "spirit" (see 1 The. 5:23 and Heb. 4:12). More will be said concerning these passages a little later. These two passages are certainly not without difficulty in determining what they mean,

at least to this student Our challenge is now before us—to find from God’s holy revelation what He has to say about man’s eternal spirit.

### I. ORIGIN/NATURE OF MAN’S SPIRIT (SOUL)

According to *Funk & Wagnell’s Dictionary*, the word “origin” is defined as “the beginning of the existence of something.” The word “nature” in the “essential character of something.” The physical body, our flesh and bones, has its origin in the “dust of the ground” (Gen. 2:7). The nature of the human body is simply physical—that which we can see and touch. The eternal spirit is just the opposite. We cannot see or touch it since the spirit is not made of “flesh and bones” (Luke 24:39).

But what about the origin and nature of the spirit of man? The title of this lesson is taken from Zechariah 12:1. The Word of God declares in this passage that it is the Lord who, “formeth the spirit of man within him.” The Hebrew word for “formeth” is *yatsar*. It is defined as, “to form, fashion, or shape...used of potters making vessels of clay...”<sup>1</sup> The forming of the spirit within man, does not refer to the creation of the spirits or souls of men once and for all, but the continuous creative formation and guidance of the human spirit by the Spirit of God.<sup>2</sup>

The Genesis record states, “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness” (Gen. 1:26). In the next chapter we are told that, “the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul” (Gen. 2:7). We all understand this to mean man became a living being—his physical body was made to become active, not remain dormant. But what about the eternal spirit within man? When was it formed? Where was it formed? From what was it formed? I do not have the answer to some of these questions. As I said before, questions can be raised that man cannot answer. Therefore, let us remember that, “the secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever” (Deu. 29:29).

The Bible clearly tells us that there is a spirit within man (Job 32:8) and that that spirit will return to God, at death, for He is the giver of it (Ecc. 12:7). The writer of the book of Hebrews states that God is “the Father of spirits” (Heb. 12:9). The same Hebrew word used in Zechariah 12:1 for “formeth” is found in Genesis 2:7. Both the physical body and the eternal spirit within man were formed, fashioned, molded by God. It can be said that the human body was formed from that which is physical,

the dust of the earth. I believe it would follow that the spirit of man was formed from that which is not physical, but spiritual, whatever that may be.

When did man receive the eternal spirit that resides within his human body? Since God's Word declares clearly that His creative work was completed in six days (twenty-four-hour periods), it seems evident to me that the spirit of man was given to him, by God, when man became a living being. The truth of the matter is that "the body without the spirit in dead" (Jam. 2:16). When God breathed into man the breath of life was such only relative to the activating of the physical structure God made from the earth so that man then could become a functioning being? God gave man His eternal spirit at this time as well. Truly, the words of the Psalmist should be uttered by each of us, "I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well" (Psa. 139:14).

God's relationship to the eternal spirit He made is one of continuous work and concern and love. Let us consider some passages that deal with the nature of man's soul. It is the "inward man" that is being "renewed day by day" (2 Cor. 4:16). It is in this context that Paul makes mention that a Christian is one who is to "walk by faith, not by sight" (5:7). Since Paul, by inspiration, declares that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17), it is clear that the "inward man" is being renewed by God through His precious Word.

When John wrote to Gaius, his beloved brother in Christ, he wished that his fellow-worker would "prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth" (3 John 2). The key to Gaius' soul being in a prospering state lies in the fact that he was walking "in the truth" (v. 3). When the soul or the spirit are spoken of as prospering, being purified, etc. it is in connection with the truth! In his first epistle, Peter writes, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently" (1 Pet. 1:22). James shares the same thought, "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls" (Jam. 1:21).

For our spirits to benefit from God's love for us, we must submit our spirit to Him. He then can indeed, form the spirit of man. One of my favorite hymns manifests this eternal truth:

Have Thine own way Lord, Have Thine own way.

Thou art the Potter, I am the clay.

Mold me and make me, After Thy will,

While I am waiting, Yielded and still.

Have Thine own way Lord. Have Thine own way.

Search me and try me, Master today.

Whiter than snow Lord, Wash me just now,

As in Thy presence, Humbly I bow.

Have Thine own way Lord, Have Thine own way.

Hold o'er my being, Absolute away.

Filled with Thy spirit, Till all shall see,

Christ only always, Living in me.

God is alive and working! Jesus proclaimed that both He and His Father were working (John 5:17). Paul says, "For it is **God which worketh in you** both to will and do of his good pleasure" (Phi. 2:13). The Hebrews writer states, in reference to God, that He makes "you perfect in every good work to do his will, **working in you** that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ" (13:21). "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10). The connection with the scriptures again is seen in 2 Timothy 3:16-17,

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.

At this time it might be good to point out the relationship the spirit has with the body. The physical element of man reacts to the inner man. If we hear good news we have joy inside. But how does another person know we have joy inside? By the smile on our face and the sparkle in our eyes. A case in point would be the Ethiopian eunuch. He was ignorant of being without the Messiah. When Philip preached unto him the Christ, the Ethiopian believed what he heard and responded with a question about being baptized. Since repentance precedes baptism (Acts 2:38) and godly sorrow worketh repentance (2 Cor. 7:10) something was at work within this man. God was working with this man's spirit through the preaching of His Word. When he was baptized, for the remission of

his sins, he went on his way rejoicing! Now, let me ask a question. Was his physical body the course of his believing, his godly sorrow or his rejoicing? Of course not. It was the inner man. It was his soul that had prospered.

Our feelings, thoughts, intents, emotions and will are closely tied in with the spirit of man. They are akin to the soul and not the physical body. Our eternal spirit will live forever with the Lord if we have been found a faithful servant. Furthermore, we will be full of joy serving our King with all our heart. There will be no more sorrow or pain in Heaven. Our spirit and the character of the inner man will go with us into eternity. The spirit that God gave us is immortal, while the body, formed from the earth, is mortal.

Let me close this portion of our study with a few comments on 1 Thessalonians 5:23 and Hebrews 4:12. These comments are for your consideration. I do not claim that the following is without some doubts. These passages are difficult indeed. When Paul prayed that our “spirit and soul and body be preserved,” it seems to me that we are put in a position to make a distinction between the soul and the spirit. Brother Roy H. Lanier, Sr., made the following comments in the “Problem Page” of the *Firm Foundation*, dated May 25, 1971:

There is an interesting use of these words in connection with the death of Jesus. Jesus said the good shepherd given his life (psuche) for the sheep....And I lay down my life (psuche) for the sheep (John 10:11, 15). But in his last moment he said, “Father into thy hands I commend my spirit” (pneuma) and he gave up his spirit (pneuma) (John 19:30). He gave his life (psuche) for us, but his life did not expire until he gave up his spirit (pneuma).

Again, a separation of the soul and the spirit seems to be made in Hebrews 4:12. Could this passage be paralleling certain terms, much like the parallels we find in the books of poetry in the Old Testament?

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

The word “dividing” means to separate. Could the author be relating the “soul” to “joints and marrow” and the “spirit” to the “thoughts and intents of the heart”? Is the soul represented here by the physical element and the spirit by the spiritual? Whatever the meaning, the author certainly is showing us the power of the Word of God!

## II. DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE SPIRIT OF MAN AND ANIMALS

The Jehovah Witness doctrine teaches that mankind is completely mortal. Man will cease to exist when death calls upon him, just like those creatures in the animal world. They claim that the Bible usage of the word *nephesh* (Hebrew) and *psuche* (Greek) for “soul” shows the soul to be a person or an animal or the life that a person or an animal enjoys.<sup>3</sup> All one has to do to verify if this is true or not is to take a concordance and look up the word soul. Then simply replace the word soul with “life” or “breath.” In just a short time one can see the error of such teaching.

Matthew 10-28 reads, “And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” *The New World Translation* (J.W.’s translation) reads almost identical. The soul cannot mean what they teach in this passage! If one kills, the physical body, has he not done away with the person and his life? Of course he has. But Jesus declared that man cannot kill a man’s soul. He can take one’s life but not one’s soul.

Their futile attempt to compare man with animal is simply silly. They take Genesis 2:7, “and man became a living soul” and compare it with Genesis 1:20-21, 24 when the same Hebrew word (*nephesh*) is used in connection with animal life found in the sea, in the air and on the earth. Most translations will render the word “creature” in Genesis 1:20-21, 24 while it is “soul” in Genesis 2:7. Let it be said very clearly, man is not an animal! Man is made in “the image and likeness of God.” Such is not associated with the animal kingdom. There is a vast difference between man and animal.

It is the spirit or soul of man that: a) reasons (Mark 2:8); b) wills (Mark 8:12); c) feels (Luke 1:47); d) is stirred (Ezra 1:1,5); e) is troubled (Gen. 41:8); f) rejoices (Luke 1:47); g) is broken (Exo. 6:9); h) is hardened (Deu. 2:30); i) patient (Ecc. 7:8); j) is humble (Mat. 5:3); k) seeks God (Isa. 26:9). Man’s concepts of spiritual values, his recognition of morals and his universal acknowledgement that he is responsible for his own behavior set him far apart from the animal world.

The spirit of man returns to God who gave it when one dies (Ecc. 12:7). Such is not said of the animal! Adam is called the son of God in

Luke 3:38, obviously by creation. What animal is called the son of God or offspring of God? The following is a partial list taken from the College Press commentary on Genesis showing the difference between man and animal:<sup>4</sup>

1. Animals are conscious; Man is self-conscious.
2. Animals have no power of reasoning; Man is capable of both inductive and deductive reasoning.
3. Animal behavior is determined by physiological impulses; Man is self-determined (free moral agency).
4. Animals have no conscience; Man has a conscience (the voice of practical thinking).
5. Animals have no moral or spiritual propensities.
6. Animals have no power of laughter, weeping, etc.

One other point is that man is a worshipping being, animals are not. Is it not ironic that man will worship creatures much lower than he is while ignoring the Supreme Creator? Notice that the animal kingdom does not worship man or anything else. Man is different because he was created to do God's will. No animal is capable of fulfilling the will and work of God.

### III. ACCOUNTABILITY OF MAN'S SPIRIT

“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Heb. 9:27). Paul said, “For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God” (Rom. 14:10, 12). We will be judged by the Word of God (John 12:48), standing before the just Judge, Jesus Christ (Mat. 7:22). There will be a separating of the sheep and the goats (Mat. 25).

The certainty of a judgment rings throughout the Bible. The humanistic cry that there is no God, therefore there is no law, therefore there is no judgment, and therefore there is no accountability of a person is simply a mockery of the highest form. The doctrine that a man will be saved is simply unreasonable to say the least. If such were the case, why would God have given us His Word?

When one realizes he must at sometime give an account of what he has said, done and thought it should cause him to evaluate himself. Paul declared, “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves” (2 Cor. 13:5). For anyone to get ahead, he must first examine where he is. The accountability of every person is seen in the

marching orders Christ gave to His followers, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:15-16). God will not accept one’s ignorance concerning the matter, but “commandeth all men every where to repent” (Acts 17:30).

What part of man will be responsible for giving an account? The spirit of man within him. Certainly our physical being, as we know it, will not be faced with that task. The key is the inner man! When the gospel of salvation is preached what is it directed to? The inner man! We must reach men through their heart and mind. Notice what happens to one who is being converted. First, he must hear the Word of God preached (Rom. 10:14). He then must believe what he has heard (Rom. 10:14). He is to believe in his heart (Rom. 10:9). This will produce within the inner man godly sorrow, which in turn works repentance (2 Cor. 7: 10). The attitude he now has makes him qualified to confess with his mouth his belief that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (Acts 8:37) and to be baptized for the remission of his sins (Acts 2:38). He rejoices in his heart, the depths of his very being (Acts 8:39). He has committed his whole person (physical and spiritual) to his new Master. He is ready to continue to grow and bear fruit for his King. What is it that is going to grow spiritually? The spirit or the inner man. Throughout one’s walk with the Christ one must realize that it is a walk in the truth. Our love for the truth and the application of it in our lives will show the lost world the light.

While attending preacher training school at Bear Valley, brother Lanier would remind us that if we would fail to prepare, we need to be prepared to fail. Each day we live is but one short breath away from death. Ask yourself, “Am I really prepared for the judgment?”

Someday you’ll stand at the bar on high,  
Someday your record you’ll see;  
Someday you’ll answer the question of life.  
What will your answer be?

Sadly you’ll stand, if you’re unprepared,  
Trembling, you’ll fall on your knee;  
Facing the sentence of life or of death,  
What will that sentence be?

Now is the time to prepare, my friend,  
 Make your soul spotless and free,  
 Washed in the blood of the Crucified One,  
 He will your answer be.

#### **IV. SEPARATION OF MAN'S SPIRIT AND HIS BODY (DEATH)**

The human body of Adam was lifeless before God breathed into him the breath of life. When Adam was without life, he was without the spirit. Combine the two and man is alive. Separate the two and man is lifeless, as we see him. His physical body functions no more, but his spirit lives on! Speaking of death, the great wise man of the Hebrew nation, Solomon, wrote, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it" (Ecc. 12:7).

This is clearly seen over and over again throughout God's Holy Word. For example, in 1 Kings 17:17-24 Elijah raises a widow's son. Her son was sick and died. Elijah prays to God about the matter, "O Lord my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again" (v. 21). The Lord answered the prayer and the soul (spirit) returned to the child and "he revived" (v. 22). The soul (spirit) departs the body at death. "And it came to pass, as her [Rachel] soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Ben-oni: but his father called him Benjamin" (Gen. 35:18).

Paul knew well that there is life beyond the grave. He said,

For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor, yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. For I am hard pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better (Phi. 1:21-23—NKJV).

At death, Jesus declared, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Luke 23:46). Stephen, on the verge of leaving this life said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit" (Acts 7:59).

The Jehovah Witness doctrine concerning death tells us that man simply ceases to exist—period! "At death the sinner soul dies and ceases to be."<sup>5</sup> Their view of death is a state of nonexistence or unconsciousness. The father of the prodigal son stated, "This my son was dead, and is alive again" (Luke 15:24). The father viewed the son as being dead when he was in the far country (when he was in sin). Was he unconscious? No, for it says "he came to himself" (he realized what condition

he was in). Had he ceased to exist? No! He repented and returned home. Another passage of scripture is Luke 16:19-31. This of course centers on the rich man and Lazarus. The J.W.'s try to avoid this by asserting the following:

By this parable Jesus uttered a prophecy which has been undergoing its modern fulfillment since A.D. 1919...The rich man represents the ultraselfish class of the clergy of Christendom...Lazarus depicts the faithful remnant of the "body of Christ."<sup>6</sup>

Such is absurd. They missed the whole point! But let us pursue their doctrine with some reasoning from this text. It is stated that there is a gulf between the two which cannot be crossed over! If the JW teaching is correct, then the so-called ultra-selfish class of clergy could not become part of the faithful remnant of the body of Christ! This would teach the impossibility to repent during one's lifetime. The opposite would also be true—no falling away from the faithful remnant. However, JW's do teach both the possibility of apostasy and repentance. The teaching from the lips of Jesus are plain and clear, two men lived and in due time both died, the rich man going to a place with torment and pain, and Lazarus to a place of joy and peace; they both were conscious of their conditions. Why is this so hard to accept?

The thought of life after death has brought about a false doctrine on the opposite side of the coin as well. It is the belief of reincarnation. It is the belief that one is reborn in one or more successive existences, which may be human or animal. This teaching is prevalent in the oriental religions. Shirley McClaine (famous movie star) is claiming to have lived in several lives of the past. The soul returns to God (Ecc. 12:7). If it ever has an opportunity to return to a body it returns to the body from which it left (1 Kin. 17:17-24). If it does not return to the human body it is found in the Hadean world (Luke 16:19-31).

## **V. THE ETERNAL NATURE OF MAN'S SPIRIT**

Many believe today that there is not and will not be an everlasting Hell with eternal pain and suffering. Some believe eternal joy and peace is to be found on a new earth. Jehovah Witness doctrine says, "It [hell] is no deeper than the grave."<sup>7</sup> We just looked at Luke 16 (the rich man and Lazarus), which shows that there is a place of anguish and one of bliss. In Matthew chapter twenty-five, there will be a separation of the sheep and the goats—the faithful and the disobedient.

Man is made like unto God, his Maker. Man is a spiritual being—he has a soul (spirit). It is this part of man that is immortal. Immortal simply means exempt from death. The body dies but the spirit continues on. The everlasting condition of one's soul is fixed when one's life comes to an end. No further preparation can take place. One now will reap what he has sown in this life. Paul was content in his earthly life, but he realized that it would be far better to be with his Master and King (Phi. 1:23).

In Heaven, our bodies will be incorruptible (not subject to decay), immortal (not subject to death), spiritual (not subject to carnality), and glorious (not subject to shame).

In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality (1 Cor. 15:52-53).

Just think how great it is to have fellowship with faithful brethren here on earth. How much greater will the fellowship be in Heaven with the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit, the faithful angelic beings and the host of God's obedient children through the ages, people like Abel, Enoch, Abraham, Moses, Elijah, Ruth, Naomi, Mary, Paul, Stephen, etc. There will be eternal worship and service to God Almighty, where there is no night, no sorrow, no grief, no gossipers, no sin. The eternal condition of those who do not know God and those that do but refuse to obey Him is too terrible to think about—but we must. It must be one of our motives to live right—not wanting to go to Hell.

“But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death” (Rev. 21:8). No relief from the torment! Wishing you could change the situation, knowing you had your chance on earth, knowing you had failed to prepare, and knowing others who are still alive on earth in a lost condition heading your way is horrible beyond words. “The smoke of their torment accendeth for ever and ever” (Rev. 14:11). Separation from God, the weeping and gnashing of teeth, the screams of pain, and the eternal darkness all around are just a few of the conditions of an eternal Hell. No thanks, not for me!

## CONCLUSION

There is an eternal spirit within you and me. God is the one who formed it and He has the desire to continue to form it. You and I must yield our spirit to Him so that He can mold us and make us after His will. As has been seen, the precious Word He has blessed us with is essential in the shaping of the whole being. We must remember that our physical body is only a temporary house for our soul. The body will die while the spirit will live on, until our spirit is reunited with a resurrected body that is incorruptible.

Our lives are short on this earth. Time is valuable. Let us use the time God gives us to prepare for eternity. Allow the Truth to change our lives so that we can be like the Master, Jesus the Christ and Savior. Let the Scriptures renew the inner man day by day, so that when your body and soul are separated at death, you will have confidence concerning your condition.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>William Wilson, *Old Testament Word Studies* (Kregel, n.d.), p. 175.

<sup>2</sup>Kiel & Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament: Minor Prophets* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans), p. 380.

<sup>3</sup>*Reasoning From the Scriptures*, Watch Tower, p. 375.

<sup>4</sup>Crawford, *Genesis I & II* (College Press, n.d.), pp. 196-201.

<sup>5</sup>*The Truth Shall Make You Free*, Watch Tower, p. 77.

<sup>6</sup>*Let God Be True*, Watch Tower, p. 98.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 91.

# A STUDY OF HEAVEN AND HELL IN THE ORIGINAL LANGUAGES

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The study of any Bible subject would be greatly enhanced by a consideration of the evidence to be gleaned from the words, phrases, clauses, and sentences, which are used in its revelation. A careful study of the origin, development, and use of the words themselves furnishes a better understanding of their meaning. A fuller grasp of the subject itself is also obtained. To understand the words of a given text in the same sense as the original auditors and readers, or as the original speakers and writers, is the focal point of sound hermeneutics! There in both a PRODUCTIVE and PREVENTIVE benefit to be realized by such endeavor. (1) One comes to better understand and know what the Bible teaches, and is thus enabled to teach it more clearly to others. (2) He is also prepared thereby to refute the many false doctrines that may arise concerning the Bible.

The study of Last Things, called ESCHATOLOGY, provides no exception to this, but rather stresses its importance. Few areas of biblical teaching have suffered as much violence as this area. Heresies abound in the world anent both individual and general eschatology. Some of these are: annihilationism, conditional immortality, psychopannychy premillennialism, Kingism (Realized Eschatology), universalism, Calvinism, and the Roman Catholic doctrines of purgatory, *limbus infantum*, and *limbus patrum*.

The words that deal with the study of Heaven and Hell relate to the field of Last Things, and what the Scriptures have to say about the state and condition of the dead both now (i.e., in the “Intermediate State”) and in Eternity. Man is pictured in the Bible as existing in three distinct states. (1) Man in this life is a spirit being housed in a corporeal body (cf., Dan. 7:15, etc.). (2) Following the occurrence of physical death (the separation of the spirit from the physical body, Jam. 2:26), he enters into the abode of the dead, where he continues to exist—but as a disembodied spirit (or “shade,” hence the Hebrew *rephaim*), cf., Gen. 25:8; 35:18, 29; etc. (3) Finally, man, following the bodily resurrection of the dead

and the translation of the living at the coming of Christ, will exist in the highest states of reward or punishment (Heaven or Hell) throughout Eternity.

The thrust of this lesson will be to conduct “A Study of Heaven and Hell in the Original Languages,” viz., of the Scriptures. Included within the scope of our study will be an examination of the language used to describe the state and condition of the dead prior to the bodily resurrection. The languages, basically speaking, are Hebrew and Aramaic in the Old Testament (OT) and Greek in the New Testament (NT). Also what evidence is to be gleaned from the Classical Greek translation of the OT by the Septuagint (LXX) will be observed. I propose to examine the following points respecting the key words employed in these: (1) the ETYMOLOGY of the words—this concerns their *derivation*, *development*, and *definition* as provided by the lexicons and dictionaries; (2) some key EXAMPLES of the use of each word in the biblical text; (3) the crucial EVIDENCE to be deduced anent these terms from the preceding materials; and (4) some of the ERRORS that are refuted by this evidence. The basic outline and course of this study will proceed as follows:

- I. A Consideration of HADES in the Original.
- II. A Consideration of HELL in the Original.
- III. A Consideration of HEAVEN in the Original.

Let us now consider:

### **I. THE DOCTRINE OF *HADES* IN THE ORIGINAL LANGUAGES**

In the Hebrew Scriptures there exists a partial unveiling of the abode of the dead called *Sheol*. It corresponds to the Greek word *Hades* in the text of the Bible. The Hebrew term occurs some 65 times in the OT, and is found in use in every period of biblical Hebrew suggesting both the antiquity and uniformity of the doctrine of an abode of the dead among the Israelites and their ancestors.

**ETYMOLOGY:** The origin of the word is highly disputed among lexicographers. Some hold that *Sheol* is derived from a verb form (*sha'al*) meaning “to ask” which reflects either the as insatiable nature of the region as “all-receiving” or else the common practice of necromancy which involved an asking or inquiring into the condition of departed spirits by means of divination, augury, et. al. The most likely

derivation is from the verb form (also pronounced (*sha'al*) meaning “to be hollow.” The Babylonians are thought by many authorities to have a word that is similar to *Sheol*, called *Sualu*, bearing this idea. Attached to each word seems to be the corresponding idea of “subterranean.” That the Hebrews and their Semitic cousins used phenomenal language that corresponds to such a derivation is not disputed. Hence, one reads of certain “going *down to Sheol*” (cf., Num. 16:30, 33; etc.).

There is also considerable debate among the lexicons and dictionaries as to the *definition of Sheol* in the Hebrew OT. Some scholars contend unequivocally that the word NEVER refers to the “grave” in the sense of a tomb or burial place. A. A. Hodge writes quite forcefully.

Modern Hebrew and Greek scholars...unite with near unanimity in maintaining that these words (Sheol and Hades) never on a single occasion in the Bible mean either “hell” [i.e., in the sense of the place of eternal torment, HDD] or “the grave,” but always and only the invisible spirit world (*Evangelical Theology*, pp. 372-373).

Nevertheless, other authorities, like Benjamin Davidson, define *Sheol* as: “I. *grave*; hence—II. the abode of the departed spirits...” (*Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon*, p. 694). But, while there is conflict concerning the possibility of *Sheol* meaning “the grave,” it should be noted that no such conflict exists concerning the second definition given by Davidson, “the abode of the departed spirits.” Only the authors of the *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* show any vacillation on this matter, even while repudiating the doctrines of annihilationism for the wicked at death and soul sleep (psychopannychy) for the righteous (vol. II, pp. 892-893)! Another important fact to note is that one does not logically disprove the meaning of “the abode of the departed spirits” in some passages simply by proving that the word may mean “the grave” in others. One would have to establish that “the grave” is its exclusive meaning in every test to do go, while just one example wherein the word *Sheol* contemplates “the abode of the departed spirits” is sufficient to show that the OT Scriptures do know of a place of existence beyond death.

Gesenius, the acknowledged dean of Hebrew scholarship, thus defines *Sheol*, as “...orcus, hades, a subterranean place, full of thick darkness (Job 10:21-22), in the which the shades of the dead are gathered together...(Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon, p. 796). John Parkhurst writes of *Sheol* in this vein defining it as:

The invisible state of the dead, “the place and state of those...who are out of the way and to be sought for.” Bate...In this view it seems newly to answer to the Greek Hades (by which the LXX almost constantly renders it), *i.e.*, *ho hades topos* the invisible place, and to our English *Hell*, which though now scarcely used but for the *place of torment* [in the sense of Gehenna, HDD], yet being a derivation of the Saxon *hillan* or *helan* to hide, or *hollas* cavern, anciently denoted *the concealed or unseen place* of the dead in general...” (*Hebrew-English Lexicon*, p. 673).

Keil and Delitzsch state that “*Sheol* denotes the place where departed spirits are gathered after death...” (*Comm. on the OT*, vol. I, p. 338), and Langenscheidt in his lexicon defines it to mean, “nether-world, realm of the dead, Hades” (p. 337). Many other sources concurring with this basic definition can be cited.

*EXAMPLES.* A few examples will suffice to establish the case that *Sheol* is, at least, in some passages used of the abode of the dead, as distinct from the grave. The very first occurrence of the word in the Bible forever settles the point. In Genesis 37:35, Jacob says, “For I will go down to *Sheol* unto my son mourning.” The KJV renders the word here as “the grave.” However, the evident connection is with a place wherein Jacob expected to be reunited with his beloved son Joseph *after death*. Remember, Jacob had been led to believe that Joseph had been torn and devoured by a wild beast! He therefore does not have reference to a tomb: for Joseph had not been buried, nor does the elderly patriarch assume as much. Yet he avers that in *Sheol* they would be reunited!

In Numbers 16:30, Moses prophesies against those involved in the rebellion of Korah and his cohorts. He says that God would “make a new thing.” The earth would open her mouth and swallow up the rabble rousers and all that pertained to them, and they would “go down quick [alive] into the pit.” The word “pit” here is *Sheol*. (NOTE: The KJV translates the word *Sheol* as “grave” 31 times, “hell” 31 times, and “pit” 3 times, while the ASV uniformly gives the anglicized form “Sheol,” which is preferable). Verses 32-33 record the fulfillment of the words of Moses. Verse 33 says, “They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit [Heb. *Sheol*], and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation.” That Moses and the Record were not referring to the receptacle of their physical bodies, or “the grave,” is demonstrated by two key facts. (1) Moses expressly contrasts what would befall the rebels with “the common death of all

men” (v. 29). The marginal reading says the Hebrew phrase means, “as every man dieth.” Hence, their death would be of a remarkable nature. (2) It was therefore termed by Moses as a “new thing.” There would be nothing new about men being buried alive in the ground! Numerous instances of such have occurred in history—both ancient and modern. But it would be quite unusual for living men to go down into the abode of the dead. What a remarkable and powerful object lesson to Israel to warn them against rebelling against Jehovah’s appointed leadership! *The Pulpit Commentary* here states, “They were to go down ‘quick’ into Sheol, because they were still alive at the moment that they were lost to sight for ever” (vol. II, p. 203).

Psalm 9:17 reads, “The wicked shall be turned into Sheol, and all the nations that forget God.” The word obviously contemplates the idea of punishment for the wicked. That this cannot possibly refer to “the grave” as the receptacle for the body is seen in the fact that the righteous, as well as the wicked, are consigned to the physical grave at death. In this respect, there is no difference in the condition of the godly and ungodly in death! This would have the righteous being punished with the wicked. Someone might object that the righteous also go to *Sheol* as “the abode of the departed spirits,” according to orthodox teaching, which is true, BUT for the righteous, *Sheol* is pictured elsewhere in connection with the ideas of welcomed rest, peace, and comfort (cf., Job 3:17-22; 14:12ff.). Thus, Samuel inquires accusingly of King Saul, “Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up?” (1 Sam. 28:15). The verb means “to move, to disturb, to, disquiet” (Gesenius, p. 756). The deceased prophet-judge was troubled by the necromantic activities of Saul and the witch at Endor, which activities were carried out by the tolerance of God. The startled response of the witch at the appearance of Samuel indicates that it was not by her power that he had been called to speak to the rebellious monarch! Samuel’s words show that for him *Sheol* involved a condition of rest and peace, while Psalm 9:17, and other passages connect it with the idea of punishment for the wicked (cf., Num. 16:30ff.; Deu. 32:22; etc.).

*Sheol* is described in a number of other passages. It is said to be deep (Job 11:8) and dark (12:21-22). It is spoken of as having within itself even greater depths (Pro. 9:18) and is portrayed as being fastened with gates (Isa. 38:10) and bars (Job 17:16). Within it are the souls of dead

men (Psa. 86:13; 89:48; Pro. 23:14; Eze. 31:17; 32:21). It is said to be “alldevouring” (Pro. 1:12), never sated (30:16). It is a place wherein the dead are gathered together by tribe and family. Hence, the picturesque expressions that speak of one being “gathered to his people” or “gathered to his fathers” (cf., Gen. 15:15; et. al.). It is a place where the dead are yet “alive unto God,” an Exodus 3:6, 13 imply (cf., Luke 20:37-38). It is also a place wherein the spirit of man is in some sense with God: as it is the case that at death “the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit to God who gave it” (Ecc. 12:7). *Sheol* is a realm wherein the righteous can be and are happily reunited after death: as David shows by his remarkable statement in 2 Samuel 12:23. Anent his beloved child, he says them, “But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.” *Sheol* was obviously thought of by David as a place of activity, of memory, of consciousness, and especially of bliss concerning the godly! The abode of the dead is pictured in Isaiah 14:9ff. as being tumultuously stirred at the entrance of the king of Babylon into its depths. The inhabitants thereof are “stirred,” and the kings of the nations are depicted as speaking and saying (v. 10). Ezekiel 32:21 expressly declares, “the strong among the mighty shall speak to him out of *Sheol* with them that help him.” The idea of activity and consciousness cannot be separated from these texts, nor from the Hebrew conception of *Sheol*! It is described as a place of punishment for evil men. It is a region of “distress” for them (Psa. 116:3). The word refers to that anguish or pain felt when one is placed in the straits of a difficulty. Job 26:5 describes the wicked as writhing in pain with the Hebrew word *chool* meaning “to twist and turn in pain like 6 woman giving birth” (Morey, *Death and the Afterlife*, p. 79).

*EVIDENCE DEDUCED.* The evidence to be gleaned from the word *Sheol* in the OT, shows that it is (1) the place where the spirits of the deceased go at death; (2) a place of conscious existence; (3) a place wherein the wicked are tormented and punished; and (4) a place of rest and reward for the righteous dead—one of happiness and joyful reunion with others gone before! It is also (5) a place of memory and knowledge retention: for without such the prospect of a happy reunion with others from this life would not be possible. It therefore is (6) a place wherein

our present identity is maintained in some fashion. The dead recognize one another in *Sheol*!

*ERRORS REFUTED.* From all of this we can readily see the falsity of the doctrine of soul sleep. The righteous are active and conscious. The language used to describe them in terms of being “asleep,” etc.; therefore, is phenomenal presenting things as they appear, especially to the physical senses, not in their true and literal relationships. (NOTE: the expression “the sun rises” or “the sun sets,” etc.). The doctrine of *annihilationism* is false as well. The wicked do not have immortality, stripped from their souls at death, thus to go into oblivion, but are in a state of conscious existence undergoing excruciating torment and anguish for their evil deeds. The doctrine of *conditional immortality*, including the peculiar brand of brother Edward Fudge in his book *The Fire That Consumes*, is false. The wicked are conscious and active in *Sheol*. The immortality of the soul is not conditioned on the premise of faith before its reception. It is inherent in the very nature of man. *Materialism* of all forms is false: for man is not simply “matter in motion,” but is essentially a spirit being whose existence continues beyond physical death. The doctrine of *hedonism* and kindred philosophies are also to be rejected, because the wicked will pay for their indulgences and indiscretions in this life beginning with their death. The doctrine of *reincarnation* is false: for the dead go to *Sheol* and are not recycled like old newspaper into another life on earth. The idea of *nirvana*—the Hindu form of annihilationism—is refuted. Nirvana in a mythical state, unsuited to the pure and simple teachings of the Hebrew Scriptures. The righteous dead do not become “one with the Universe” and thus dissipate into nothingness by reaching a perfected state, but as the objects of God’s blessing, and by His grace, they enter into a conscious state of existence, of joy and peace hitherto unknown! The doctrine of *pantheism* therefore is also false. God is transcendent of the Universe. Man is not a micro-cosm of the macro-cosm, but is a spirit being answerable to the personal God, the Father of the Spirits! Man is not a part of the Creator, but of the creation. *Universalism* and *Calvinism* both are to be rejected as well. The former denies the punishment of the wicked. The doctrine of *Sheol* teaches that the wicked will be punished. The latter has the wicked being punished for inherited sin(s), while it is apparent from the texts bearing on this punishment in

*Sheol* that they are punished due to sins that they actually committed! They are sinners because they have sinned, not by some genetic defect.

The Greek word most often, used in the Greek LXX text for *Sheol* is the noun *Hades*. Let us now direct our attention to a consideration of it, that we might gather a more complete understanding of the abode of the dead.

**ETYMOLOGY.** Some find the origin of the word *Hades* is the word *hado* signifying “all receiving.” Most Greek scholars, however, aver that its background is to be found in the negated form of the verb *eido* or *idein* “to see.” Alexander Campbell thus says of *Hades*, “It is a compound of a, negative, and idein, to see; and literally means *hidden, invisible, or obscure*” (*Millennial Harbinger*, 1856, p. 703). J. W. McGarvey describes how this word came into use in this fashion, by writing:

The term *hades* designates the place of disembodied spirits. It is, as its etymology indicates...the unseen. The Greeks were good at giving names to things. When they watched a friend sinking into the arms of death, they could see, by the motion of the frame and the light of the eye, the continued presence of the soul, until at last, the muscles were all motionless, and the eyes fixed and leaden. They could still see the body, and after it had been deposited in the grave they could revisit it and see it again. But where was the soul? You aft it no longer. There are no signs of its presence. It is gone; and its invisible abode they call *hades, the unseen...* (*Orig. Comm. on Acts*, pp. 84,35).

In secular Greek sources, *Hades* was originally used as a proper name for the mythological god of the nether-world in the Greek pantheon. It appears in the Genitive case referring to “the house of *Hades*”—thus designating the region itself as his domain. Later, the name became synonymous with the nether-world, with its relationship to the false god Hades taking on a secondary importance.

Brother Guy N. Woods, writing in regard to the definition of *Hades*, points out,

Sixty-five times the Septuagint translators met with the word *Sheol* in the text they were rendering. Not once did they render it *gehenna*, the lake of fire, not one time did they translate it *mnema*, grave; sixty-one times they translated it *Hades*, a word that occurs eleven times in the New Testament text (*Questions and Answers—Open Forum*, Vol. I, p. 266).

He goes on to conclude,

*Hades* is the realm of disembodied spirits because, (1) it is the rendering of the Hebrew *Sheol* which designates such a place in the Old Testament scriptures. (2) Such is the meaning assigned to the word by the classical dictionaries which reflect its usage by the Greeks (Ibid.)

The evidence of the lexicons stands firmly behind this assessment. Edward Robinson writes that *Hades* was “...in later Greek writers put for Pluto’s domain [Pluto was the Roman equivalent of Hades, HDD], *the infernal regions, Hades, Orcus*, the abode of the dead...” (*Lexicon of the NT*, p. 13). He equates it with *Sheol*, and then adds, “...the idea of *Sheol* is found among the later Jews more developed and assimilated to the Greek *Hades*” (Ibid.) Joseph Henry Thayer defines *Hades* in the classics as, “...1. a proper name, *Hades, Pluto*, the god of the lower regions...2. an appellative, *Orcus, the nether world, the realm of the dead...*” (*Greek-English Lexicon*, p. 11). He says that “it denotes, in biblical Greek *Orcus, the infernal regions...*the common receptacle of disembodied spirits” (Ibid.). G. Abbott-Smith gives its NT definition as, “the abode of departed spirits” (*A Manual Greek Lexicon of the NT*, p. 9). W. J. Hickie defines it as “the place of departed spirits” (*Greek-English Lexicon*, p. 4). Cremer, in his monumental work *Biblico-Theological Lexicon of New Testament Greek*, says that, “*Hades*, taken in its most general sense, would thus be the place of assembly and residence for all who depart from the present world, in a word, the world beyond” (p. 67). To this evidence can be Added that of the noted Sophocles, T. S. Green, and the lexicographical work of Liddell and Scott (Woods, P., 267). Arndt and Gingrich in their lexicon render it as “the under-world...the place of the dead” (p. 16).

In the Rabbinic literature of the Intertestament period, the Hellenic Jews used *Sheol* and *Hades* interchangeably, and what they ascribe to the one they also apply to the other. Robert Morey states, “It is universally recognized by modern Talmudic scholars that *Sheol* never meant the grave or unconsciousness in rabbinic literature” (p. 74). In the work *Essays in Greco-Roman and Related Talmudic Literature*, Guttman says anent this matter,

The Talmud, like the Apocryphal literature, knows of a kind of intermediate state of the soul between death and resurrection; true retribution will be dispensed only after the resurrection of the body. But along with this, we also find the fate in a retribution coming

immediately after death and in a life of blessedness for the soul in the beyond (p. 42).

It thus will be observed that this is the basic understanding of the word *Hades* shortly before and during the time of Christ and the Apostles. It was the generally accepted definition of the word to apply it to the abode of departed spirits. One would expect that the use of the word then in the NT would correspond to the accepted and customary use of the word in contemporary Jewish thought! This is the pattern followed in the vocabulary of the NT elsewhere.

*EXAMPLES.* The NT use of the word does indeed bear out the preceding point. As noted earlier, the word occurs eleven times in the Greek text. Of these eleven appearances, only one is disputed concerning the validity of its reading. This is in 1 Corinthians 15:55, where in some manuscripts the reading is *thanatos* “death” in the place of *Hades*. The KJV follows the latter reading, but unfortunately translates it as “grave” here. If the *Hades* reading is to be preferred, the reference is not to the tomb, but to the abode of the dead. Campbell, following this reading, comments in the appendix to *The Living Oracles*,

In the anticipation of the termination of *hades*, Paul exclaims, “O death, where now thy sting! O hades, where now thy victory!”...O death, thy power to separate spirits from their bodies, is no more! O Hades, thy dominion over disembodied spirits is destroyed! (p. 58).

The verse is a free quotation of Hosea 13:14, which reads in part, “...O death, I will be thy plagues; O *Sheol*, I will be thy destruction.” The LXX reads *Hades* for the Hebrew *Sheol*. This would seem to support the *Hades* reading in 1 Corinthians 15:56. The Majority Text, as edited by Hodges and Farstad, maintains this reading. However, other authorities regard it as a later emendation of the text to conform more fully with the freely quoted passage in Hosea. Morey terms it “a corrupt reading” (p. 543). The Westcott and Hort text, the Nestle text, and the text prepared by Aland, Black, Martini, et. al., prefer the *thanatos* reading, while citing the older manuscripts as their source for so doing. If the *thanatos* reading is to be followed, then we must look elsewhere for an idea as to the use of *Hades* in the NT.

In Matthew 11:23, Jesus used the word *Hades*. He warns obstinate Capernaum [i.e., her inhabitants] that she “...shall be brought down to *Hades*.” The language hearkens to the axiom of Psalm 9:17, and bears with it the thought and threat of punishment for Capernaum. Matthew

11:24 goes on to stress a difference of degree in the ultimate punishment awaiting the people of Capernaum as opposed to those of wicked Sodom “in the day of judgment.” It shows that the greater the opportunity and privilege, the greater the responsibility and punishment! It will be observed that the entire passage demonstrates that there is punishment presently for the wicked in *Hades*, for it is that fact upon which the image draws its force, and that there will also be a future and final retribution to be realized in the day of Judgment! This implies that the wicked are not to be paroled from their punishment as envisioned by the doctrine of *purgatory*. The suffering of *Hades* is to be followed by the horrors of Hell! That *Hades* does not here mean “the grave” is evident from the fact that punishment for the wicked is contemplated. Death and consignment to the tomb in this world in a reality for the righteous as well as the wicked (Heb. 9:27; Jam. 4:14). If *Hades* is annihilation for the wicked, it would also be annihilation for the righteous, as both enter into it (cf., Luke 10:15, which is Luke’s parallel to this passage).

Matthew 16:18 employs *Hades* as well. There Jesus, after promising to build His church, declares, “and the gates of *Hades* shall not prevail against it.” The reference here again hearkens to an OT text and imagery on *Sheol*. It alludes to Isaiah 38:10 which speaks of the *gates* of *Sheol*. The LXX reads there *Hades*. Some have taken the Lord’s words as a promise of the eternity of the church, viz. that it would never pass away and that Hell (the KJV rendering in Mat. 16:18) would not triumph over her. But the word used is *Hades*, not *Gehenna*. He refers to the abode of the dead, not to the place of sternal torment. While it is true that the church (or Kingdom of Heaven, cf., v. 19) shall never be destroyed (Dan. 2:44-45), this is NOT the idea expressed by the Lord here in Matthew 16. Immediately following this discussion, the Lord began teaching the disciples concerning His impending journey to Jerusalem to suffer and die, and then be raised again “the third day” (cf., Mat. 16:21; Luke 9:21-22). The close proximity of this teaching undoubtedly must have some bearing on the thrust of the discourse near Caesarea Philippi. Further, the Hebraistic repetition of the conjunction in Mark’s parallel account underscores the close connection and rapidity of action concerning the events and teachings of Matthew 16:16-21. It seems best then to view the words of the Lord anent *Hades* as a promise validating that His death—and subsequent entrance into the abode of the dead—

will not prevent Him from building the church as promised. It is an assurance that He would be raised from the dead, that His spirit would be freed from *Hades* and joined again to His body, which would be buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathaea! Acts 2 demonstrates the fulfillment of BOTH promises His triumph over death and *Hades* by the Resurrection and His establishment of the church (kingdom) made possible by that victory!

It is not surprising then to find that two other appearances of *Hades* in the text are in Acts 2 (vv. 27, 31). In Acts 2:27 Peter quotes an OT prophecy using the word *Sheol* in the Hebrew, while the LXX reads *Hades*. Peter quotes the words of David in Psalm 16:10, thusly, “For Thou wilt not leave My soul in Hades; neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption.” By inspiration, the Apostle shows that this did not refer to David himself, but to David’s Great Son, the Christ. He applies its fulfillment to the Resurrection of Jesus (vv. 29-31). He declares that David has not been raised up from the dead, even as the presence of his tomb would indicate. In verse 34 he adds, “For David is not ascended into the heavens.” These facts the Jews would admit. Hence David, as God’s prophet, must have reference to the Messiah, his promised Seed. Verse 31 contrasts the SOUL of the Christ with His FLESH (or body). While His flesh was lying in the borrowed tomb (Mat. 27:57-61), His SOUL (Gr. *psuche*) was in Hades! “He made His grave [Heb. *gever*, not *Sheol*] with the wicked, and with the rich in His death” (Isa. 53:9). Brother Woods has said concerning the word “soul” here that “...it is obvious that the word soul signifies the immortal nature; that entity of the Lord which was not to undergo death” (vol. II, p. 102). And McGarvey comments.

That the soul of Jesus entered into hades is undeniable. That it returned again to the body at the resurrection is asserted by Peter, and, it is this return which was predicted by the prophet; and which caused the exultation both of himself and the apostle (*Orig. Comm. on Acts*, pp. 34-35).

The summation of Peter’s argument from the prophecy that the Messiah had been raised up to reign at the right hand of God hinges upon two facts: (1) the fact that David’s soul was still confined to *Hades* (He had not ascended, v. 34), and (2) the fact that his body was still within its tomb. These would be admitted by all who heard Peter’s sermon. These facts thus granted, and the integrity of the prophecy

given, then it must be the case that (1) David spoke of another—namely, the Messiah; (2) that the Messiah’s soul no longer resides in *Hades*; (3) that His body is no longer confined to the grave, wherein it had been protected from corruption; and (4) that He has been raised up to sit upon the throne of David! Thus, the kingdom is now a reality and Christ is King *de jure*. Hence the fulfillment of Matthew 16:18-19! The soul sleepers, annihilationists, and premillennialists are all thoroughly refuted. Let them dispute with Peter and David!

Four times in the Book of Revelation *Hades* is used by John. Each time it is coupled with *thanatos* “death” (cf., Rev. 1:18; 6:8). Two of these occurrences are of special eschatological importance. In Revelation 20:13, the Record says, “And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and *Hades* delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.” Here we find the emptying of *Hades* prior to the Judgment (cf., vv. 11-15). Verse 14 adds, “And death and *Hades* were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.” The Hadean realm is to be destroyed in the lake of fire, which corresponds to “the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone” wherein the wicked are confined *after* the Judgment (Rev. 21:8). Into this lake, the Beast and False Prophet of the Apocalypse—the persecuting powers and false religious hierarchy of the Roman Empire are “cast alive” (19:20). It corresponds also to “the second death,” spiritual and eternal separation from God (cf., Rom. 6:23; Jam. 1:15). This stands in contrast with and opposed to “the crown of life” awaiting those who remain faithful to God “unto death” (Rev. 2:10-11). The promised “crown” is to be given at the coming of Christ (cf., 2 Tim. 4:1, 8; Jam. 1:12). It thus contemplates reward in Heaven. *Therefore*, the second death must refer to Gehenna. The lake of fire contemplates the fire and condition of things therein. It thus does not mean nor refer to Hades. Therefore, Hades is not Gehenna! Nor is Hades a part of Gehenna, as Hades is pictured as being cast into Gehenna and destroyed therein. It will terminate in the fire of Gehenna.

The most complete picture of Hades is given in the account of the Rich Man (who is sometimes called “Dives” from the Latin form of the phrase) and the poor beggar Lazarus in Luke 16:19-31. Verse 23 uses the word *Hades* itself. This account, unfortunately, is sometimes called a “parable,” especially by those who wish to weaken the evident force of

the text. These seek to avoid its message of conscious existence and punishment for the wicked and/or its message of consciousness for the righteous in death. Even if considered a parable, however, it would still teach the same thing for a parable draws the force of its imagery from the reality of the action or thing with which the similitude is made. It is the fact of and reality of sowing crops, for instance, that provides the substance for the Lord's lesson in the Parable of the Sower, and it was the common rites of matrimony upon which the Lord drew for emphasis and color in the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins. To use the account of Luke 16:19ff as parable would not be possible, except at first such a condition of things ascribed therein to Hades did, in fact, exist! BUT there is sufficient reason to not assign to it the literary form of a parable, and thus refrain from treating it as an accurate account of actual events! FIRST, neither the Lord nor any NT chronicler refer to it as a parable. The Lord's treatment of it, on the contrary, have all the marks of an account which is to be given historical credibility. SECOND, Abraham, who is part of the account, is a real, historical figure, and undoubtedly, the Rich Man and Lazarus are to be so viewed in the same context. THIRD, the entire scene concerned matters outside the daily experiences of the disciples, and does not use the earthy, mundane events of Eastern life familiar to them, as is common in parabolic teaching elsewhere in the Scriptures and in Jewish literature. It does not fit the tried and true definition of a parable as "an earthly story with a heavenly meaning." FOURTH, the scene, on the other hand, does correspond closely with the general understanding of the abode of the dead THEN CURRENT among the Jews. FIFTH, the use of other figures of speech within the text itself indicate that it was not to be understood as a parable. Such expressions as Lazarus being "full of sores" in verse 20, et. al., make it unlikely that the Lord would further shroud the meaning of the lesson behind a greater veil of imagery and mystery. This its not typical of the parables.

Of Lazarus, the Lord says, "And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom" (v. 22a). A brief glimpse is provided of the work of angels "behind the scenes," as it were, in the government of God respecting the condition of the righteous dead. The reference to Abraham's Bosom is, according to Campbell, "An allusion to the posture in which the Jews and other

eastern nations placed themselves at table” (*The Living Oracles*, Appendix, p. 26). He elaborates further,

The Jews and Romans reclined on couches while eating; the upper part of the body resting upon the left elbow, and the lower lying at full length upon the couch. When three reclined upon the same couch, the most worthy generally reclined at the head, sometimes in the middle: the next in dignity lay reclining with his head in the bosom of his superior, as John did on the bosom of Jesus at supper. Hence *Abraham’s bosom* denotes both honor and felicity (Ibid.).

For as much as Abraham was the founder of the Hebrew nation, to be honored with this position represented great blessing after death. How fitting too that this portion wherein Lazarus found blessedness should be named after this great “friend of God,” due to the fact that he too had been a rich man like Dives, but had been faithful to God and considerate of his fellowman in life! Thus, Lazarus is transported upon death to a condition in Abraham’s Bosom where “he is comforted” (v. 25). His life of deprivation, disease, and destitution has ended, and his faithfulness to God, like that of Abraham, has been, in some measure, rewarded. He is freed also from the bonds of his social status in this world, and is not subject to render service at the behest of Dives. A “great gulf” not only bare the escape of the Rich Man from his prison, it also secures the station of Lazarus away from perdition’s flame (cf., vv. 24-26). None may pass over from either place. Their fates and condition are sealed at death. The Greek word *chasma* is akin to the verb *chasko* “to yawn” (Vines, p. 526), and denotes “a gaping opening, a chasm, gulf; i.q. a great interval” (Thayer, p. 667).

Verse 22b records that Dives “also died, and was buried.” One can but speculate as to the pomp that must have attended his grand funeral, as opposed to that of the impoverished—if they were afforded any funeral at all! The Rich Man had “fared sumptuously” in life, and an opulent life-style frequently ended with a magnificent send off. BUT verse 23 strikes a vivid contrast, “And in *Hades* he lifted up his eyes, being in torments.” To compound his anguish, he is permitted to see “Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.” By all indication, he seems to be aware fully of his plight and aware equally of Lazarus’ bliss! In *Hades*, Dives is now “tormented” in flame (v. 24). The extent of his suffering is so great, that even the thought of the smallest amount of water—no more than could be retained by the tip of the finger and

tasted by the tip of the tongue—is viewed as a source of welcomed relief, BUT EVEN THIS IS DENIED HIM! The noun translated “torments” is *basanois*, and recurs in verse 28. It means “torture, torment, acute pain,” and was used in the Classical of “the rack or instrument of torture by which one is forced to divulge the truth,” and became later to be used also of “the pains of disease.” Here it contemplates “the torments of the wicked after death” (Thayer, p. 96). It is in the dative plural, and thus describes a place or region within Hades, a location wherein the wicked suffer intense pain and torment. The verb “tormented” in verse 24 is from *odunaomai*, meaning “to be in anguish, to be in severe pain” (*Linguistic Key to the Greek NT*, p. 190). Its root “signifies to suffer pain, be in anguish, be greatly distressed” (Vines, p. 60). The reference to “flame” stresses the reality and intensity of his pain.

Part of the horrors of the region in which Dives is imprisoned concerns the cognitive and contemplative. (1) He is reminded and therefore aware—of his former existence in life, and of the change now wrought in death. (2) He knows the blessed condition of Lazarus, upon whom he had failed to show compassion on earth, and he perceives that he is unable to join him or else receive comfort from the other side. (3) He remembers the moral condition of loved ones left behind, saying “I have five brethren” and pleading for Lazarus to be sent to evangelize them “lest they also come to this place of torment” (v. 28). (4) He learns from Abraham that their only hope lies in their obedience to “Moses and the Prophets,” i.e., to the Mosaic Law under which they lived. The dead cannot return to preach to them, and even if they could, they would accomplish no more than what God’s Word was already empowered to do! (5) He has now become concerned about spiritual matters, but too little too late! Brother William S. Cline has pointed out on occasion that his first conscious thoughts in Hades had been of concern for himself. Only after having been made aware of the impassable gulf and the finality of his condition, does the Rich Man become mission minded and concerned about others! What a lesson he now learns! Such are some of the conditions to be found for the wicked in Hades.

*EVIDENCE DEDUCED.* (1) We find that *Hades* corresponds to the Hebrew word *Sheol*, and describes the same place. (2) Hades then is the abode of the dead, where the immortal soul of the deceased awaits the resurrection and Judgment. (3) It is a place of conscious existence, and

thus does not equal the grave. (4) It is in a region of bliss, rest, and comfort for the righteous dead, who are within a portion of Hades called Abraham's Bosom. (5) It is a place of torment, pain, and anguish for the wicked dead, who are confined in a region of "torments" therein. (6) It is a place from whence the dead cannot escape, nor in which they can move from one region to the next, due to a "great gulf" that prevents the flight of the wicked into Abraham's Bosom and the fall of the righteous into "torments." (7) It is a place where the dead retain their memory and knowledge of things obtained in this life. Abraham told Dives, "Son, remember," and the Rich Man was yet aware that water could cool and soothe those tormented in the flame. There is therefore some correlation in the physical experiences of this life and the nature of man's spiritual condition in death. (8) It is a place of sublime "poetic justice" where the wicked who prospered physically, now suffer spiritually, and where the righteous who suffered deprivations on earth find comfort and reward. (9) It is a place without hope for the wicked. (10) It is a place where the soul of Christ resided for the three days during which His body was in the grave. (11) It is a place which is not to be equated with Heaven: for Christ in Hades was not in Heaven. (12) It is also NOT to be equated with Gehenna, nor is it part of that realm: for it shall be destroyed in the fire thereof!

*ERRORS REFUTED.* (1) *Christian Science* doctrine is false, because the doctrine of Hades implies the fact of real, conscious pain both in this life (Lazarus' "sores"), in death (Dive's state), and in Eternity (Capernaum's ultimate state). (2) *Spiritualism* is errant, for Lazarus could not return to speak to Dive's brethren. (3) *Materialism* is false, for though the Rich Man's body was buried in the grave, he continued on in conscious existence in his spirit, as did Abraham and Lazarus. (4) *Purgatory* is false as well, for the Rich Man was denied any help from beyond the "great gulf." There is no NT basis for teaching that the prayers and offerings of the righteous living can help parole the wicked dead. (5) *Universalism* is wrong, for the wicked Dives did go into torments, and Capernaum was warned of the same. (6) The *Second Chance* doctrines are false, for such was denied the Rich Man. His condition was sealed. His brethren were offered only the chance provided in THIS LIFE by the Word of God, to obey and be saved or reject it and be lost? (7) *Modernism* is false, because Christ endorses the Scriptures

and their authority. (8) *Hedonism* is false, because Dives is now paying for his “live for today” life-style. (9) *Calvinism* is wrong, because Abraham affirms that the Scriptures are empowered to convert the sinner. Hence, the direct operation of the Holy Spirit and “better felt than told” experiences—the performance of miracles—are not needed to effect moral change. (10) *Psychopannychy* (Soul Sleep) is wrong, because Abraham, Dives, and Lazarus are not slumbering in the grave, but are alert and active. (11) *Annihilationism* and *Conditional Immortality* are both errant, for both the righteous and the wicked dead possess continuing, immortal existence. (12) The idea that *Identity is Lost* at death is also refuted. Dives knew Lazarus.

Two other key words must here be considered concerning the doctrine of Hades. These words are *Paradise* and *Tartarus*. Let us examine the word *Paradise* first.

**ETYMOLOGY.** This word comes from the Greek word *paradeisos*, which occurs three times in the NT text. It is of Oriental extraction, apparently coming into use among the Greeks by way of the ancient Persians. Comparable terms are found in Sanskrit and in ancient Armenian. The Persian word was adopted and popularized by Xenophon in his *Anabasis*, wherein he used it “of the parks of the Persian kings and nobles.” The Persian monarchs had vast gardens or parks, which were shaded and well-watered. They were stocked with wild animals kept for the royal hunt, and the environs of these parks were enclosed with high walls and finished with towers for the hunters. (Thayer, p. 480). The idea of pleasure became permanently attached to the *paradeisos*, which later came to be used among the Greeks universally of “a garden, pleasureground; grove, park” (Ibid.). In the LXX, it is found some 46 times in a variety of connections. The most important use bearing eschatological significance is its connection with the Garden of Eden in certain passages (Gen. 2:15; 3:23; et. al.). The Rabbis frequently employed it during the Intertestament period of the “intermediate home of the blessed” dead within the boundaries of Sheol (Hades), according to William Smith (*Bible Dict.*, P. 487). “To the oriental mind it expressed the sum total of blessedness” (Vine, p. 841). In the NT, Thayer assigns to the word the following uses: (1) “...that part of Hades which was thought by the later Jews to be the abode of the souls of the pious until the resurrection and (2) “an upper region in the heavens...” (p. 480). It

can be seen from this that two basic connections are to be found in the NT for *paradeisos*. (1) It is used of the abode of the righteous dead in Hades—hence is synonymous with *Abraham's Bosom*. (2) It is also used of the ultimate condition or state of the righteous in Heaven. In this latter sense, it relates readily to the phrase *ho tritos ouranos* (“the third heaven”).

*EXAMPLES.* In Luke 23:43, the word *Paradise* occurs for the first time in the NT. Jesus says there to the penitent thief, “Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.” Some try to lessen the force of the statement by applying the word “today” to the preceding clause “verily I say unto you.” As such it is made to modify the verb “say.” Thus, *The New World Translation* and the *Kingdom Interlinear Translation* put out by the Russellites read “Truly I say unto you today, thou shalt be with Me in Paradise.” But *The Emphatic Diaglott*, which they also edit, DOES NOT DO SO, much to their chagrin (p. 305)! The KJV and ASV, whose translation committees were nonpareil in their scholarship and integrity in handling the text, follow uniformly the accepted reading showing that “today” is to be taken with the second and main clause. Jesus was discussing something to transpire on THAT day—the very day He died! To take it with the first clause has no basis in Greek grammar. FIRST, it is totally arbitrary in origin. The JW’s and the Armstrong heresies desire such a reading only because of their preconceived notions anent the nature of death, of the human soul, and of the condition of the dead. SECOND, it totally ignores the rules of grammar and syntax. The noted Lange calls such grammatically “senseless” (Luke, p. 376), while H. A. W. Meyer refers to it as an “idle and unmeaning” ploy to avoid the force of the original language (Luke, p. 567). R. C. H. Lenski concurs by pointing out that there exists no grounds for it (*The Interpretation of St. Luke's Gospel*, p. 1145). Leon Morris comments, “Almost all scholars agree that it (‘today’) refers to being in Paradise” (Luke, p. 329). The erudite H. Leo Boles so understood the passage (Luke, p. 453). THIRD, the application to the first clause creates an absurd redundancy. It was obvious that when Jesus was speaking to the thief He was speaking “today.” This ploy ascribes to Him a solecism unbecoming and uncharacteristic of His stature as the Mesta Teacher! Thus, He spoke of something to occur *that day*—the day of His death.

It is evident that the Lord did not intend to say that He and the thief would go directly to Heaven at death, for that did not happen. Hence, *Paradise* does not contemplate Heaven in Luke 23:43. Observe the following salient points:

1) Jesus, on the day of His death, journeyed with the penitent thief to Paradise.

2) But, notwithstanding the fact that they went to Paradise on that day, Jesus did not ascend to the Father then (cf., John 20:17).

3) His Father was in Heaven.

4) Jesus, therefore, did not ascend to Heaven during the interval between His death and Resurrection.

5) Paradise, as it contemplates the state of the blessed dead, then is not Heaven.

6) Acts 2:27-31 shows that Christ was in Hades during that interval.

7) But He was; also in Paradise, at that time!

8) He undoubtedly did not go to “torments,” where the wicked dead are maintained, but to Abraham’s Bosom, where the righteous reside.

9) The accepted view of the contemporaries of Christ and the most common application of the word *Paradise* equated it with Abraham’s Bosom.

10) The etymology of the word indicates a state of blessedness, which also corresponds to that of Abraham’s Bosom.

11) Thus, Abraham’s Bosom is Paradise.

The second occurrence of the word *Paradise* in the NT is in 2 Corinthians 12:4, where Paul expressly applies it to “the third Heaven.” Its reference is to the Heaven of heavens, where God’s abode is. The same is true also of the last appearance of the word in Revelation 2:7, where it is used anent “the tree of life” pictured within its environs. The connection is with the OT Garden of Eden, of which the word *Paradise* is used several times in the LXX (Gen. 2:15; 3:23; 13:10; Eze. 28:13; 31:8) in the place of the Hebrew word *gan* (meaning, “a garden, esp. one planted with trees...a place protected with a fence Gesenius, pp. 175-176). This garden was the location of “the tree of life” during the primeval days of human history (Gen. 2:9; 3:22-24). In the Paradise of Heaven what was forfeit and lost through sin by Adam is restored through the atoning work of the Second Adam, Jesus Christ! Further, just as the church on earth is a foretaste of Heaven, it may also be said

that the restful bliss of the righteous dead in Abraham's Bosom is a foretaste of that to be experienced by them in Heaven after the resurrection. Thus, the word *Paradise* and the ideas it invokes quite well fit both the abode of the righteous dead and their ultimate state in Heaven.

*EVIDENCE DEDUCED.* What we gather from the word *Paradise* is that it conveys the idea of bliss and happiness. It reflects the condition of pleasure and tranquility for the righteous. It is used by inspiration of two separate states—of the abode of the righteous dead and of Heaven. As relating to the former, it corresponds to *Abraham's Bosom*. It is therefore a place of conscious existence for the righteous dead, and is not a place where the soul slumbers away unreflecting and unresponsive. It is the clime where the soul of Christ and the soul of the penitent thief went ON THE SAME DAY that Christ died. This place is NOT in Heaven, but in Hades. The word *Paradise* in its letter connection contemplates within its scope the beauties and felicities of the ultimate state of the existence of the godly, of which state the former stands as a foretaste.

*ERRORS REPUTED.* The doctrine of *soul sleep* collapses in view of the doctrine of *Paradise*. Annihilationism is also refuted, as well as any kindred system of belief. The doctrine of *Paradise* also contradicts and denies the carnal, material expectations of a physical pleasure-ground on earth anticipated by *Chiliasm*, *Russellism*, *Armstrongism*, *Mormonism*, *Islam*, and the *Pagan Religions*, which all stress inherently sensuality over spirituality. Luke 23.43 destroys the JW theories concerning the nature of man, death, and the afterlife.

The region of Hades in which Dives is tormented is also called in the Scriptures *Tartarus*. To an examination of this word we now turn.

*ETYMOLOGY.* *Tartarus* itself does not occur expressly in the Greek NT, but its verb form *tartaroo* is to be found one time in 2 Peter 2:4, where Peter writes that God cast the angels that sinned down to Tartarus. The expression "cast down to Tartarus" is the translation of this verb. Thayer renders it, "to thrust down to Tartarus, to hold captive in Tartarus" (p. 615).

Among the ancient Greeks, the word *Tartarus* referred to that part of Hades in which the Titans were imprisoned, as per Graecian mythology. Later it came to be used as the proper name for that region in which also wicked men were punished after death, and as the antithesis

of the Elysian fields (the Greek *paradeisos*). Sometimes, the word was employed of the entire under-world in general, but most often as a compartment within it. Robinson thus states that *Tartarus*, “in Greek mythology was the lower part of the abyss of Hades, where the shades of the wicked were imprisoned and tormented” (p. 710); and Thayer defines it as, “...a subterranean region, doleful and dark, regarded by the ancient Greeks as the abode of the wicked dead, where they suffer punishment for their evil deeds” (p. 615). Liddell and Scott, in their Classical lexicon, define it in connection with this latter idea, “a *place of torment and punishment*, as opposed to the Elysian fields” (p. 692). According to Will Durant, the name *Tartarus* was taken from the *Theogony*, or genealogy of the gods, of Hesiod (*The Life of Greece*, pp. 98-99). This was the name given by Hesiod to the god of the under-world.

In the Intertestament period of Hebrew history, Hellenistic Judaism appropriated the word to describe the prison house into which the fallen angels had been cast. The apocryphal Book of Enoch so uses the word (20:2), Uriel was thought by the Rabbinic traditions to be the ruler of Tartarus (*Linguistic Key to the NT*, p. 775). The Jews, like the Greeks, employed the term also to the place “where divine punishment was meted out” to the wicked dead (Arndt and Gingrich, p. 813). *The Sybylline Oracles*, dating from the Second Century B.C., utilizes *Tartarus* several times with reference “to the place of eternal and conscious torment” (Ibid.). As such, it sometimes was equated with *Gehenna*, even as the lexicons indicate. However, its chief connection was with the state of the wicked within the confines of Sheol (Morey, p. 125).

*EXAMPLES.* As noted earlier, the only appearance of tartaroo is in 2 Peter 2:4, which reads, “For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to Tartarus [the KJV reads “hell,” HDD], and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.” In as much as the word refers to the present condition of the fallen angels while awaiting the Judgment, Tartarus must contemplate in this structure the abode of the dead; i.e., the region of torments therein, and not *Gehenna*, the place of eternal punishment. Vincent thinks it strange “to find Peter using this Pagan term, which represents the Greek hell, though treated here not as equivalent to *Gehenna*, but as the place of detention until the judgment” (*Word Studies*, vol. I, p. 329). However, as has been

shown, the use by Peter accords with the most common usage of the word made by the Jews from the Intertestament period onward, as well as by the Greeks from the time of Hesiod. The presumption that *Tartarus* always carried, even among the Greeks, an idea more compatible with the concept of *Gehenna* is false. Thayer shows that it quite frequently was used among the ancients of “the abode of the wicked dead” in Hades. Thus, Peter’s use conforms to this practice.

The ASV reads, “pits of darkness” where the KJV has “chains of darkness.” The difference is over a variant in the text. Some manuscripts give *seirais* “chains,” which Berry’s *Interlinear* follows (p. 604), while others read *sirois* “pits,” as seen in the Nestle text (p. 926). Morey, who prefers the Nestle reading, points out that the expression “pits of darkness” is known in Hebrew apocalyptic literature and was used of “the place of mental anguish and terror in the underworld” (p. 135). The word *siros* properly means “a pit for the storage of grain but was used for a large bin for holding edible roots or of a pit for trapping a wolf” (*Linguistic Key*, p. 775). The idea of “darkness” is found in Homeric passages dealing with the nether-world (*Odyssey*, XI, 155; XX, 355). *Zophos* means “darkness, blackness,” and is applied here by Thayer to “the darkness of the nether world” (p. 272). It is also found in Jude 6 anent the fallen angels’ condition prior to “the judgment of the great day.”

**ERRORS REFUTED.** Again, the word *Tartarus* provides sufficient refutation of all doctrines that deny the conscious existence and punishment of the wicked after death. The word does not, nor ever did, mean “the grave.” It clearly involves the idea of torment for the wicked, regardless of what state it may be applied to by the ancients. In 2 Peter 2:4, it refers to the region of torments within Hades.

**SUMMARY ON HADES.** The words of Alexander Campbell furnish an excellent synopsis of the material discussed at length in our study. He writes in his appendix to *The Living Oracles*:

After the Hebrews mingled with the Greeks and Romans, they insensibly elided into their use of *tam*, and adopted some of the ideas on such subjects as those on which their oracles were silent. Hence the abodes of Elysium and Tartarus became familiar amongst the Jews; and as the Greeks and the Romans had their gardens and fields of delight in *hades*; and their *Tartarus* in the same region; so the Jews assimilated to them, and had their Garden of Eden, or *Paradise*, and their *Tartarus*, all within the boundaries of *Hades*. So Abraham’s

*bosom*, or *Paradise*, was the abode of happy separated spirits, and *Tartarus* was the abode of the wicked. Even Peter, a Jew, and an Apostle of Jesus Christ, adopts their word *Tartarus*, and says (2 Peter 2:4), that God cast the angels that sinned down to *Tartarus*. In the common version [KJV, HDD], it is *hell*; but in the original it is neither *gehenna* nor *hades*, but *tartarus*. Now the truth is, that these terms being thus introduced, must have had some of the ideas of the people that first used them attached to them. And that there is, in the Christian Revelation, a degree of happiness and a degree of misery allotted to disembodied spirits, in beyond doubt or disputation; and alas, that perfect happiness and misery, or happiness and misery in their highest degrees, do not commence until the reunion of their spirits to their bodies in the resurrection, is a common idea, and clearly taught in the Christian books. In *hades*, then, the receptacle of all dead, there are rewards and punishments. There is a *paradise*, or an *Abraham's bosom*, and there is a *Tartarus*, in which the evil angels are chained, and the spirits of the wicked men engulfed. Hence Dives in *Tartarus*, and Lazarus in *Abraham's bosom*, were both in *hades*. Jesus and the converted thief were together in *hades*, while they were together in *paradise* (p. 59).

Let us now consider

## II. THE DOCTRINE OF HELL IN THE ORIGINAL LANGUAGES

Respecting the subject of the Hell of eternal torment, the Hebrew Scriptures maintain a profound silence: as it was not within the purview of their purpose to address a matter so removed from the principal field of revelation given to their writers. Their concerns regarding the Gospel Age were centered principally upon the immediate effects of the Incarnation and the blood atonement. The ultimate or consummate condition of things—were secondary for the most part and lay, as it were, on the fringe of the scope of their visions and revelations. This is especially true concerning the existence and nature of *Hell*. The Prophet Daniel speaks of some who will be raised “to shame and everlasting contempt” (Dan. 12:2), but beyond this little else is given in the OT record. To contend, however, that the Hebrews themselves had no concept of an ultimate retribution for the wicked would be errant, The literature of the Intertestament period is replete with evidence to the contrary. That the Jews held a concept of final and future punishment for the wicked prior to the NT and contemporaneous with its production cannot be denied! The period also witnessed the appearance of an

appellation that would be synonymous with conscious, never-ending pain and torment for the wicked. This word is *Gehenna*.

*ETYMOLOGY.* *Gehenna* is a Greek transliteration of the Hebrew phrase *ge hinnom*, “valley of Hinnom.” In the LXX text, the form *gaienna* is to be found for this phrase in Joshua 18:16, and the Greek form *ge Benennom* is given for the Hebrew construction *ge bhen hinnom*, “the valley of the son of Hinnom,” in 2 Chronicles 28:3 and 33:6.

This valley’s location is near Jerusalem, though its exact identity today is much disputed due to topographical changes and geological lifting, but generally all authorities assign to it a location somewhere to the south of the old city. It is known to have joined the Kidron Valley near the site of En-rogel to the southeast. According to McGarvey, in ancient times, the valley consisted of a very deep and narrow ravine, whose gloomy appearance well-suited the ungodly practices that occurred within its depths during the reigns of Ahaz, Manasseh, and Amon (*Lands of the Bible*, p. 164). The meaning of the name *Hinnom* is also uncertain. Some take it strictly as the name of a prominent man whose son once held title to portions, if not all, of the valley. Geikie, on the other hand, suggests that the word means “groanings” and thus bore special reference to the evils committed there. He translates the phrase *ge bhen hinnom* as “the Valley of the Children of Groaning” (*The Holy Land and the Bible*, vol. I, p. 546).

Under the reigns of the aforementioned kings, was the bloody worship of Moloch, the ox-headed, human-figured fire-god of the Ammonites. The Israelites, encouraged by their leaders, sacrificed many of their offspring to Moloch by placing them upon the outstretched arms of his image, which in actuality was but the facade of a giant heated furnace whose flames poured forth through its hollow arms to consume the victims. They perished in a most gruesome and horrible manner as they “writhed off into a burning fire beneath” (Ibid.). Hence they were said to “pass through the fire.” They were bound helplessly with strong cord, and their pitiable cries of agony were drowned out by a perpetual din created by the incessant drumming of the musicians appointed to the task. The specific location of this central altar became known as *Tophet*, which Masterman translates to mean “the place of burning” (*ISBE*, vol. V, p. 2999). Gesenius ascribes to the word *Tophet* the root idea of “to

vomit with loathing” and translates it as “abomination, detestation” (p. 872). Geikie follows this thought, though-rendering *Tophet* as “the Place to be Spat upon” showing its detested status in the eyes of later Jewry (*The Holy Land*, vol. I, p. 547). The entire valley took on the alternate designation “the valley of Tophet,” and is so named by Jeremiah (Jer. 7:32). Second Kings 23:10 says that King Josiah, the son of Amon, “defiled Topheth, which is in the valley of the children of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech.” From that time, the valley came to be viewed with the utmost of disgust and repulsion by the Jews. It had been desecrated by the ungodly rites of Moloch worship beyond redemption. It was converted by the Later Jews into a dumping ground for rubbish and filth. The bodies of criminals who had been executed and the carcasses of dead animals were cast into it. Tradition holds that a perpetual fire was kept burning within it to prevent the spread of contagion from the putrefaction and to aid its use as a dumping ground. Worms and maggots worked alive amidst the debris and rotting corpses enhanced its terrifying appearance to the Jews (Moray, p. 87). It was only natural then that the condition of the valley of Hinnom in the Jewish mind would become associated as a type of the ultimate end of all idolators, and by extension to all of the wicked! In his excellent work *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, Alfred Edersheim devotes an entire section to discuss the rabbinic and NT evidence on the subject of eternal punishment. He concludes that Gehenna was understood by the Jews at the time of Christ to refer to the place of conscious and eternal torment for the wicked AFTER the resurrection (pp. 791-796). The noted historian Phillip Schaff writes,

Everlasting punishment of the wicked was and always will be the orthodox theory. It was held by the Jews at the time of Christ, with the exception of the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection (*History of the Christian Church*, vol. II, pp. 606-607).

The *Midrash* and the *Babylonian Talmud* in particular deal with the rabbinic thought on *Gehenna*. The use of certain expressions and images such as “fire,” “worms,” “weeping,” “darkness,” “judgment,” etc., are used in Intertestament writ to describe the condition of *Gehenna*, and this language is carried over into the NT teaching on the subject! Expressions like “fire and torment,” “fire and brimstone (sulfur),” and “black recesses of hell” appear in Jewish apocalyptic texts as well.

These phrases or their equivalents are to be found used by Peter, Jude, and John in the NT Scriptures. The evidence is so compelling that the Jews attached to Gehenna the idea of conscious, eternal punishment after the resurrection that even the modernist Beek states,

This name (Gehenna) was given in the second century B.C. to the place of punishment for impious Jews after the last judgment and then it became the fate of all evil men (*Through the Gospels to Jesus*, p. 199).

Sometimes, it will be noted, the word was used as a synonym for *Tartarus* by certain of the Rabbis to refer, "To the place where men were punished while awaiting the Judgment" (Ibid.). This use is reflected in some lexicons, but it is evident from the extensive readings to be adduced in pre-apostolic texts that this latter use was NOT the popular and common one. Let us now consider some of the lexicographical evidence on the word anent the attachment of it to the final place of punishment for the wicked.

*The Theological Wordbook of the OT*, in its comments on the Hebrew term *ge* (or *gay*) "valley," says that the "NT writers transliterated *gay*' *hinnom* (via Aramaic) into Greek and applied the term *geenna* to the place of eternal punishment" (vol. I, p. 347). Vincent, in his *Word Studies*, says of the valley of Hinnom, "From its depth and narrowness, and its fire and ascending smoke, it became the symbol of the place of future punishment of the wicked...As fire was characteristic of the place, it was called *the Gehenna of fire*." He goes on to distinguish it from Hades, "the place of departed spirits" (vol. I, p. 31). G. Abbott-Smith says that *Gehenna* "was used as a symbol of the place of future punishment" (p. 89), and Arndt and Gingrich state, "In the gospels it is the place of punishment in the next life, hell" (p. 152). Geerhardus Vos, after giving the NT appearances of the word, writes of it.

In all of these it designates the place of eternal punishment of the wicked, generally in connection with the final judgment. It is associated with fire as the source of torment. Both body and soul are cast into it. This is not to be explained on the principle that the NT speaks metaphorically of the state after death in terms of the body; it presupposes the resurrection (*ISBE*, vol. II, p. 1183).

Louis Berkhof, after discussing its etymology, writes that "...it became a symbol of the place of eternal torment" (*Systematic Theology*, p.

736), and with this concurs brother E. G. Sewell, who says that *Gehenna* “properly means hell, as rendered” (*Questions Answered*, p. 307). S. D. F. Salmond holds,

...the idea generally connected with the term *Gehenna*, “hell,” in our Lord’s time was that of an irreversible doom for the wholly wicked, and that in His teaching...the word was used in its popular and prevalent sense (*Muting’s Dict. of the Bible*, p. 346).

To this we add the testimony of Alexander Campbell, who writes:

*Gehenna*, which is also translated *hell*, in compounded of *ge*, valley, and *Hinnom*, the name of a person...*Gehenna* neither occurs in the Septuagint Greek of the Old Testament, nor in any classic author extant in the world...Both *tophet* and *Gehenna*, amongst the Jews, came gradually to express a state of torment, and, at the time of the Messiah, were frequently used to denote a future state of punishment. It is suitably enough translated *hell* in our language, because the ideas attached to the English word *hell* very much correspond to the ideas attached to the word *gehenna* about the Christian era. But this is far from being the true import of the word *hades* (*The Living Oracles*, Appendix, p. 67).

**EXAMPLES.** The word *Gehenna* appears twelve times in the Greek NT, and EACH TIME is translated by BOTH the KJV and ASV as “hell.” In Matthew 5:22, it is to be found. The Lord says there, “but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of *hell* fire.” The phrase *ta gehenna tau puros* is rendered by brother Boles as “the *Gehenna* of fire” (Mat. p. 136). The force is emphatic with the definite article appearing before *puros* giving the literal force “the *Gehenna* of THE fire.” The construction and the progression in the term of punishment described by the Lord earlier in the verse show that He had in mind more than a temporal retribution, but had proceeded from the lesser up to the ultimate!

Matthew 5:29-30 employs the word *Gehenna*, and again the idea of punishment, of a canting into Hell, is under the eye of the Savior. The figurative aphorisms of the text draw upon the horror of Hell for their substance as an indication of the awfulness of sin. The Lord does not command self-mutilation to avoid being cast into Hell, but rather emphasizes through the vivid imagery how terrible such a consignment would be. As it were, it would be better to go through life physically maimed and marred, than to enter into Hell unscarred and whole. The horrors and pain of Hell thus ought to be more greatly feared than what

temporal suffering the body may here in this life endure! Matthew 18:9 also uses *Gehenna* in a similar fashion an 5:29-30.

Matthew 10:28 admonished, “And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both body and soul in hell (*Gehenna*).” Besides the obvious contrast between the *body*, which men can kill, and the *soul*, which they cannot kill (thus killing the body does not equal killing the soul), there is an implicit contrast drawn between physical death—which men can inflict upon the body—and the casting of both body and soul into Hell, which is within the power and province of God! Therefore, Hell cannot equal the grave nor physical death. It refers to something infinitely worse. Neither does it mean annihilation, as per Russellism: for this idea they already ascribe to physical death an all materialists do. This view would thus equate what men can do with that which God can do, instead of contrasting them as the Lord does! Luke’s parallel in Luke 12:4-5, where *Gehenna* is again found, shows that men have nothing further that they can do beyond killing the body, but God is able to go beyond that and cast BOTH body and soul into Hell. The verb infinitum *embalein* “to cast in” shows the occurrence and transmission of action, not a state of passivity, on behalf of God. Jesus is talking about something that God DOES! He thus does not mean, as the JW’s have quibbled, that God simply will not recreate man after he has died physically, that He will just passively permit the wicked to continue in oblivion with no hope of material re-creation. The text describes what God DOES, not what He foregoes doing! NOTE: Some quibble that “to destroy” (*apolesai*) means “to annihilate.” But Luke’s parallel shows the real intent of the word. It is equal to the construction “to cast into.” It does not mean annihilation. Thayer says of *apollumi* in Matthew 10-28 that it means “to incur the loss of true or eternal life; to be delivered up to eternal misery” (p. 64). The testimony of Thayer is especially significant in that he was a Unitarian who personally did not believe in the doctrine of eternal punishment, though his integrity as a linguist led him to admit the force of the biblical languages in defence of conscious torment for the wicked after death and in Eternity! The fact is that *apollumi* does not mean annihilation; this is an idea ascribed from the English word, not its Greek counterpart. The burst wineskins of Matthew 9:17 thus did not suddenly cease to exist though they were “destroyed.”

As noted earlier, Matthew 18:9 contains *Gehenna* in a construction similar to that of Matthew 5:29-30. It occurs in 18:9 with the familiar *tou puros* phrase as well. Verse 8 describes this “fire” an “everlasting” (Gr. *aionios*). A. T. Robertson comments on the Greek word here, “The word [*aionios*] means ageless, without beginning or end as of God (Rom. 16:26), without beginning as in Rom. 16:25, without end as here and often...” (*Word Pictures in the NT*, vol. I, p. 147). Thayer says it means here, “without end, never to cease, everlasting...” (p. 20). In Matthew 25:41, *aionios* is used of “the eternal fire prepared for the Devil and his angels.” This verse shows that Hell was originally created for the fallen angels! The fire of verse 41 corresponds to the “everlasting punishment” of verse 46, with *aionios* again the Greek modifier. Of the wicked, Jesus says, “And these shall go away into everlasting punishment,” BUT note the following clause, “...and the righteous into life eternal.” The modifier “eternal” is yet again *aionios*! Here it describes the durative quality of the life to be received by the righteous after the Judgment. It parallels the kingdom to be received by them in verse 34. How ever long then the righteous will experience the blessedness of *eternal* life is how ever long the wicked will suffer everlasting punishment in the *eternal* fire prepared for the Devil and his angels!

*Gehenna* is found three times in Mark 9 (vv. 43, 45, 47). In verse 42, the consequence of being cast into the *Gehenna* is pictured as being worse than having a millstone tied around one’s neck and being cast into the sea. The punishment of *Gehenna* is what awaits those who cause “the little ones” of Christ to stumble. If *Gehenna* meant annihilation, oblivion, or death, then the effect of each realistically would be the same. To be cast into Hell would equal being cast into the sea to drown! But the words of Jesus show that to be in Hell is worse than drowning in the sea. Verse 43 figuratively emphasizes the awfulness of going to Hell in the same vein as Matthew 5:29-30. A new modifier, however, is attached to the word “fire.” It is said to be “unquenchable.” The original calls it “*the* unquenchable.” The Greek word is *asbestos*, and is rendered forcefully by Bagster as “unquenched, inextinguishable, unquenchable” (p. 64). The fire of Hell not only will not be put out throughout Eternity, but God has so ordered it that it CANNOT be put out. for He has willed it to be so! Verses 44, 46, as given in the KJV are not retained in the ASV and the Nestle text, but are considered by their preparers to be emendations

to the text. The material that they contain is to be found in verse 48. Verse 46, meanwhile, speaks of Gehenna, as in verse 43, in contrast with “the life” (*ten zoen*); i.e., eternal life. Verse 47 contrasts it with “the Kingdom of God,” which here contemplates the ultimate condition of the blessed. Sometimes the word “kingdom” (Gr. *basileia*) is used to describe the church and pertains to its government (cf., Mat. 16:19; Col. 1:12-13; Rev. 1:9). At other times, it is frequently used of the ultimate state of the Church in Heaven, as here (cf., Mat. 25:34; where it parallels the phrase “life eternal” in v. 46; 1 Cor. 15:50; 2 Tim. 4:1, 18; et.al.). In Mark 9:48, Jesus describes Gehenna as a place “where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.” The imagery draws to the mind the writhing of the worms (or maggots) amidst the refuse of the valley of Hinnom, as they dined upon decaying matter and felt the sting of the searing flame. It strikes a familiar cord with the memory and experiences of the audience. They could then go and am the gruesomeness of Tophet, and thus better grasp and appreciate the words of Jesus anent the eternal Tophet it typified! The image concerns the condition of the wicked in Hell. It is “their” worm that “dieth not.” W. E. Vine says, “The statement signifies the exclusion of the hope of restoration, the punishment being eternal” (p. 1257). Hell therefore is *not purgatory*, nor any other temporal place of torment from which the wicked may be released with a “second chance” to serve the living God! Thayer says that the verse shows “their punishment after death will never cease” (p. 580). What a tremendous exclamation point the Lord adds to doctrine of Hell!!!

In Matthew 23:16, Jesus chides the scribes and Pharisees as causing their proselytes to become “two-fold more the child of Gehenna” than themselves, and this due to their hypocrisy. The idea of punishment is clearly to be understood by this expression. It is similar to the phrase “the children of wrath” (Eph. 2:3) and “the children of the Devil” (1 John 3:10). Matthew 23:33 warns the scribes and the Pharisees of “the damnation of *Gehenna*.”

James 3:6 contains the only appearance of the word *Gehenna* outside of the gospel accounts, though other language is used to convey the ideas embodied in the term. Here, in James’ epistle, it identifies the ultimate origin of the evil workings of the unruly tongue, which is said to be “set on fire of *Gehenna*.” This emphasizes the devilish nature of evil and

malicious speech. It ought to encourage all to consider their words carefully before given them vent

We have already considered briefly the descriptive phrase “the lake of fire” as used in the Book of Revelation. One should examine closely the following passages: Revelation 19:20; 20:10, 14-15; 21:8.

*EVIDENCE DEDUCED.* In summarizing the NT picture of Gehenna as seen in the original languages, one should note the following deductions:

1) Gehenna in a definite place—a place of judgment and damnation (Mat. 5:22; etc.). It is real, not imaginary, in nature and substance. It is not merely a “moral concept.” It is also not the equivalent of annihilation or death. It does not refer to the grave.

2) Gehenna is always concerned in the NT in its eachatological texts with the end of the world and its occupation by the wicked after the resurrection. Matthew 10:28 especially presupposes the bodily resurrection: in as much as BOTH body and soul are to be cast into Hell.

3) Gehenna is a place of CONSCIOUS torment, as evidenced by such expressions attached to it, like, “unquenchable fire” and “where their worm dieth not.”

4) Gehenna is *eternal*—never-ending—in duration. Its fire will never be extinguished. In fact, it CANNOT be! It will last as long as the life enjoyed by the righteous in Heaven will last. The same Scriptures that teach an eternal Heaven for them teaches also an eternal Hell for the wicked!

5) Gehenna is reserved for ALL the wicked—none shall escape (Rev. 21:8). Neither will they be released at some future time and given a “second chance” to prove themselves. Hell is not the Catholic *purgatory*!

6) Gehenna was originally created for the fallen angels (Mat. 25:41). As they are presently confined in Tartarus (2 Pet. 2:4-5) awaiting a time of future retribution, and as Gehenna contemplates the Second Coming, which is yet future, it then follows that Tartarus and Gehenna do not refer to the same place. Gehenna refers, in fact, to the place of the future retribution awaiting the fallen angels as Matthew 25:41 indicates.

7) Gehenna is a place of excruciating pain, as evidenced by (A) its comparisons with physical suffering and death, which are less severe, Matthew 5:29-30; etc.; (B) the description of its environs with the idea

of “unquenchable fire”; (C) the imagery of the “worm” of the wicked writhing in agony within it; and (D) the equating of the punishment of the wicked men with that also awaiting the fallen angels. There is also the highly descriptive statement in Revelation 14:11 concerning those who suffer the wrath of the Lamb. The text says, “And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever. and they have no rest day nor night.” Note the contrast with the condition of those who “die in the Lord,” ie., “according to or in harmony with the Lord’s will” (v. 13).

8) Gehenna is not Hades, nor is it a part of Hades, “the abode of the dead.”

9) Gehenna is also not a part of Heaven, but is separate from it. It is not, as one has tried to depict it, simply “a lower state of existence of lesser privilege.” It is the antithesis to Heaven! It is a terrible thing indeed for men to lose their souls in Hell (cf., Mat. 16:26)!

*ERRORS REFUTED.* The same doctrines refuted by the Bible doctrine of Hades are also devastated by the doctrine of Hell (Gehenna). The doctrine of conscious, eternal torment cannot be renounced without rejecting the Scriptures themselves. *Annihilationism*, *conditional immortality*, the doctrine of Hindu *nirvana* and *reincarnation*, and other materialistic theories fall before the testimony of Holy Writ. Brother Fudge’s heresy, which affirms “the wicked, following what, ever degree and duration of pain God may justly inflict, will finally and truly die, perish, and become extinct for ever and ever” (*The Fire That Consumes*, p. 425), is false. It is but a rehash of the already worn and threadbare speculations of the Seventh Day Adventists. *Universalism* is soundly refuted; the wicked will not escape their punishment. The omnibenevolent God is also holy and righteous, and will not acquit the wicked (Neh. 1:3). Gehenna does not contemplate *purgatory*, as per Roman Catholicism. Nor does it find its *terminus ad quem* in the Destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, as theorized by *Realized Eschatology*. It does not involve a temporal punishment, but an ETERNAL one—in the fullest sense of the word! The doctrine of Gehenna refutes the teachings of brother King anent the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. It implies the fact of that coming as being yet future. It presupposes the bodily resurrection. It also contemplates the future disposition of the wicked in Hell at the Judgment. These doctrines are denied by Kingism. But any doctrine that denies the existence and eternity of Hell must logically

reject the Bible doctrine of Heaven as well. This is but one of the major dilemmas confronting the King doctrine. I prefer to believe the King of Heaven!

### III. THE DOCTRINE OF *HEAVEN* IN THE ORIGINAL *LANGUAGES*

The biblical doctrine of Heaven is a source of great comfort and hope to those who are faithful to God. It is as much a matter of revelation as is the doctrine of Hell, and tends to be more popular in its acceptance. Let us now consider the linguistic evidence concerning Heaven.

The Hebrew tongue in the OT employed the word *Shamayim* to convey the thought of Heaven. In the Scriptures, this term is found only in the plural, and is rendered by Aaron Pick in all of these instances as "heavens" (*Dict. of OT Words*, p. 192).

*ETYMOLOGY.* *Shamayim* is a Semitic term which is found in Ugaritic, Akkadian, ancient Arabic, and Aramaic. It is generally considered to be derived from an Arabic verb meaning "to be high" (Davidson, p. 723). The original idea of *Shamayim* is thought to be that of "height" (Girdlestone, *Synonyms of the OT*, p. 266). It thus corresponds well to the Greek *ouranos*, and to our English word "heaven," which signifies by its root "that which is *heaved* or *lifted up*" (Ibid.).

*Shamayim* occurs about 420 times in the Hebrew OT, and appears in all periods of biblical Hebrew. There are two *broad* uses of the word in the Scriptures. (1) It is used of "the physical heavens" in the sense of everything that is above the earth. (2) It is used of the abode of God, the place from which God "...reaches down to do his will on earth" (*Theol. Wordbook of the OT*, vol. II, p. 935). Relative to the former use, there exist about four more specific ideas attached to the word. *First*, it sometimes contemplates the atmospheric heavens in which the fowl of the air fly, etc. *Second*, it sometimes refers to "an area farther removed from the earth's surface, where our weather originates and the clouds are formed. *Third*, it is sometime used of the sidereal heavens, "the realm in which the sun, moon, and stars are located." *Fourth*, in conjunction with the word *'erets* "earth" it sometimes appears and contemplates thereby the entire creation. (*Nelson's Expository Dict. of the OT*, p. 179). According to Grotius, the Jews frequently spoke of the heavens being divided into three parts. The first part encompassed the atmospheric heavens, including also the region where the clouds gather. The second

part was “the firmament” where the heavenly bodies were fixed in their respective orbits. The third part was called “the third Heaven” and referred to “the upper heaven” or “the Heaven of heavens”—hence, “the abode of God” (Peloubet, *Bible Dict.*, p. 243). Later, Jews often spoke of the seven strata of Heaven (Ibid.). Paul, himself a Hebrew of Hebrews and well familiar with the rabbinic designations, uses the expression “the third heaven” (*ho tritos ouranos*) in the NT hearkening to the earlier use of *Shamayim* by the Jews to refer to the dwelling place of God (cf., 2 Cor. 12:2). Inspiration thus places its stamp of approval upon such a concept of the heavens.

Gesenius writes of the significance of *Shamayim*, saying it means:

...firmament which seems to be spread out like a vault over the globe as supported by foundations and columns (2 Sam. 22:8; Job 26:11), whence the rain is let down as through doors or floodgates (Psa. 78:23; comp. Gen. 28:17), and above which the abode of God and the angels is supposed to be, Psa. 2:4; Gen. 28:17; Deut. 33:26 (p. 834).

When used of the abode of God, *Shamayim* stands “opposed to *Sheol*, the one being regarded as a place of exaltation, the other degradation; the one being represented as the dwellingplace of the Most High and of the angels, the other as the abode of the dead” (Girdlestone, p. 265). Therefore, to the Jew *Sheol* was not Heaven or *Shamayim*. The upper and celestial Heaven is where the throne of God is—the seat of His glory, power, and majesty. Psalm 11:4 says, “The Lord is in His holy temple, the Lord’s throne is in Heaven: His eyes behold, His eyelids try the children of men” (cf., Psa. 103:19-22). It is the clime in which the presence of God is most manifest and the ethereal glory is fully revealed.

**EXAMPLES.** In the OT, there is but a hint of the glorious after-life awaiting the righteous in Heaven. The Psalmist says to God, “Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory” (Psa. 73:24). Verse 25 then raises the rhetorical query, “Whom have I in Heaven (*Shamayim*), but Thee? and there is none upon the earth that I desire beside Thee.” Thus, his earnest expectation was to be received by Jehovah God into His glory; viz., in *Shamayim*. Barnes comments that the Psalmist’s idea in verse 24 is that,

After thou (God) hast led me along the path of the present life in the way in which thou wouldst have me to go, thou wilt receive me to thyself in heaven—to a world where all shall be clear, where I shall never have any doubts in regard to thy being, to the justice of thy

dispensations, or the principles of thy government (*Psalms*, vol. 11, p. 261).

That the Hebrews anticipated a release from the depths of *Sheol* is seen in Psalm 49-15, which declares, “But God will redeem my soul from the power of *Sheol*: for He shall receive me. Selah.” That *Sheol* here contemplates the abode of the dead, and not the grave, is demonstrated in verse 19 which speaks of the deceased going “to the generation of his fathers,” an expression that reflects the idea of being gathered to one’s kindred in the realm of departed spirits, as we have noted. Thus, the Psalmist proclaims a future release from the confines of death, a breaking asunder of the bars of *Sheol*. The reference then is to the resurrection of the dead, and the subsequent receiving of the righteous by God into His glory. Daniel 12:2-3 also forespoke of these same things, at least to some extent. The place where this reception into glory would be realized is identified by Psalm 73:24, 26 as *Shamayim*.

**EVIDENCE DEDUCED.** The Hebrew does evidence somewhat an idea of an after-life of bliss in the glory of Jehovah for the righteous, however incomplete the picture may be. The place where this glory is to be experienced is called *Shamayim* “heaven,” which corresponds to the celestial dwelling of God Himself. It would not be experienced in *Sheol* (or Hades), nor would it be realized upon the earth in some semi-golden age of carnal pleasures. The Hebrew expectation for the after-life knows nothing of a literal, material Millennium of glory on earth, but of the righteous dwelling in God’s *Shamayim* WITH Him!

**ERRORS REFUTED.** The words of the Psalmist evidencing the glad hope of life with God in Heaven, oppose the materialistic, carnal, and sensual paradises envisioned by the *Pagan Religions*. From the American Indian’s “happy hunting grounds” to the pleasure fields of the Moslem, there is a tacit rejection of such notions by the OT Scriptures. It also is evident that theme words do not express a longing for the semi-golden age of carnal merriment propounded by *Premillennialism*, but rather an earnest desire for a home in Heaven! Furthermore, it repudiates the doctrine of *nirvana* (and its Hindu and Buddhist attachments). This doctrine was not hold by the Hebrews, nor can it be reconciled with the OT Scriptures. It is folly to try to synthesize the God of the Bible in such a way as to make Him compatible with the god or gods of the Hindu religion. To do so is to go “ahalting between two opinions.” If one

accepts the veracity of the Hebrew Scriptures, he must necessarily reject Hinduism and its off-shoots!

The Greek NT furnishes a far more thorough picture of the ultimate condition of the godly and their abode in Heaven. The central Greek word used for Heaven is *ouranos*, which corresponds to the Hebrew *Shamayim*. It is the word that is chiefly used in the LXX for *Shamayim* (Abbott-Smith, p. 328).

*ETYMOLOGY.* Among the ancient Greeks, *ouranos* was used originally as the proper name for the god of the skies or heavens in their pantheon. The anglicized form of that name is Uranus, who in Greek mythology was the son of Erebus and Gaia (Liddell and Scott, p. 506). In the writings of Homer *ouranos* came to mean “the vault or firmament of heaven, the sky represented as a concave hemisphere, on which the sun performed his course; the stars too were fixed upon it, and revolved with it” (Ibid.). The term later came to be used of the seat of the gods, which lay beyond this vault, so they supposed (Ibid.). It was only natural that the Hellenistic Jews would appropriate the word to describe the abode of the true and living God, and use it as the equivalent of their own word *Shamayim*, as the LXX translators demonstrate. The Greek word is akin to the verb *ornumi* “to lift, to heave” (Vines, p. 548). Hence, like the Hebrew *Shamayim*, the idea of “height” was associated with *ouranos*. The Dorian and Aeolian dialects maintained variant forms of this word employing them in a similar way to the use made of *ouranos* in Attica. Thayer assigns it the root meaning of “to cover, encompass” (p. 464).

In the NT text, *ouranos* is to be found about 284 times, and each time is translated “heaven” by the English Revised Version, and is almost always so rendered in the KJV. Thayer defines the word basically as “heaven” and provides the following clarifications concerning its more specific NT uses:

...1) the vaulted expanse of the sky with all the things invisible in it...2) the region above the sidereal heavens, the seat of an order of things eternal and consummately perfect, where God dwells and other heavenly beings... (pp. 464-465).

Under 2) he comments,

...heaven is appointed as the future abode of those, who, raised from the dead and clothed with superior bodies, shall become partakers of

the heavenly kingdom, 2 Cor. 5:1, and enjoy the reward of proved virtue... (p. 465).

Vine shows that the word is used. (1) of the aerial heavens (i.e., the atmospheric region where the birds fly, etc.); (2) of the sidereal heavens (where the heavenly bodies are located); and (3) “of the eternal dwelling place of God” (pp. 548-549). This latter use is called by other writers “the celestial heaven” and even “the weal heaven.” As already noted, Paul by inspiration calls it “the third heaven” in 2 Corinthians 12:2.

*EXAMPLES.* A compendium of NT passages where *ouranos* contemplates “the abode of God” as the reward for the righteous would include the following.

1) Matthew 5:12, where Jesus says to His disciples, “great is your reward in **Heaven**” (cf., Luke 6:23). The locative construction underscores the idea of *place* to be attached to *ouranos* here.

2) Matthew 6:20; 19:21; Mark 10:21; Luke 18:22, which have reference to “treasure[s] in Heaven,” as opposed to the am of material wealth on earth. These verses enjoin a seeking and compiling of the former, rather than a concentration of one’s life and efforts in accumulating the latter. They show that the reward in Heaven is greater than any amount of temporal riches that can be gathered in this life.

3) Luke 10:20, which says that the names of the righteous are “written in **Heaven**,” a reference to the Book of Life (cf., Rev. 3:5; 20:12, 15; Exo. 32:32-33). Hebrews 12:23 speaks of the saints as having their names “written in **Heaven**.” This is pictured by John as a prerequisite for entrance into the New Jerusalem of the Apocalypse (Rev. 21:27). Failure to have one’s name to be found therein will result in his being “cast into the lake of fire” or Hell (Rev. 20:15). NOTE: It is also possible for one, while yet in this life, to have his name blotted out of the Book of Life, due to sin (Exo. 32:32-33; Rev. 3:5).

4) 2 Corinthians 5:1, where Paul writes of our spiritual “building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal [*aionios*] in the Heavens.” Verse 2 adds, “For in this [our mortal body] we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from **Heaven**.” Observe, the “we” is distinct from the “this,” the body in the which “we” are said to “groan.” It parallels here the “inward man” and the “outward man” of 2 Corinthians 4:16, which falls within the SAME IMMEDIATE CONTEXT! The entire passage (beginning with 4:14) anticipates the

resurrection to precede and signal the transfer into the “house” which is from *ouranos*. 5:4, which is still within the same context, says, “For we who are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that morality might be swallowed up of life.”

5) Philippians 3:20, which reads, “Our conversation is in **Heaven**; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.” Verse 21 shows that Paul is speaking anent the bodily resurrection, as he modifies the name of the Saviour with the clause, “Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.” The marginal reading for conversation is “citizenship.” The Greek term is *politeuma*, which “signifies the condition, or life, of a citizen, citizenship,” and is used here “of the heavenly status of believers” (Vines, p. 195). The saints are appealed to as citizens of Heaven to conduct themselves after a fashion befitting that status. It is an appeal somewhat to patriotism and honor. The saints of God are viewed as possessing certain rights and privileges, as well as duties and responsibilities, that belong to citizens of that better clime. We must act accordingly!

6) Colossians 1:5, which refers to “the hope which is laid up for you in **Heaven**, whereof ye heard before” through the preaching of the gospel. Hence the hope of Heaven is a grand theme of gospel preaching!

7) First Peter 1:4, which teaches that we have “an inheritance, incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in **Heaven**.” These descriptive expressions modify the word “inheritance” and stress the unblemished, pure, and perfect condition of the reward in Heaven, as well as its durative nature—its eternity. What a standing the faithful Christian holds an “an heir of God, and joint-heir with Jesus Christ!” (Rom. 8:17).

8) Hebrews 10:34, which says that the people of God under the term of the NT “have in **Heaven** a better and an enduring substance.” This is spoken in contrast with the blessings and provisions under the OT. The noun *huparxis* denotes a “possession” (Vines, p. 1110).

9) Revelation 19:1, which speaks of there being “much people in **Heaven**.” These probably correspond to that innumerable host “of all nations, and kindreds, et. al....which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the lamb” (Rev. 7:9, 13-14). It is a picture of the ultimate condition of those who

remained faithful to God and overcame the temptations of the Devil presented by the persecuting powers of the Revelation. They are victorious over these powers and the tribulation they occasion. The language stresses the universality of the gospel: in as much as Heaven is to be populated with people out of every nation, kindred, and so on. That this is yet future is seen in John's affirmation elsewhere, "No man hath awn God at any time" (John 1:18; 1 John 4:12; cf., Paul's testimony in 1 Tim. 6:16), and by Peter's pointed argument in Acts 2 that "David is not ascended into Heaven" (Acts 2:34). The dead go to Haden, not Heaven at death.

*EVIDENCE DEDUCED.* Heaven (*ouranos*) is the place of ultimate reward for the righteous. It will be entered, and its blessings fully received, following the resurrection of the dead, and the clothing of their spirits with their glorified and immortal bodies (cf., 1 Cor. 15:23ff.). This is the Christian "hope" (1 John 3:1-3). It therefore ought to be a prevalent theme in our preaching! Heaven will be eternal in duration, and is typified by the highest bliss and purest condition.

*ERRORS REPUTED.* The doctrine of Heaven, as embodied in the word *ouranos* and the texts bearing upon its use in the NT, refutes the following false doctrines:

1) *Premillennialism*, which avers a material "hope" to be experienced on this mortal coil. It is not the one hope in which we have been called (Eph. 4:4).

2) *Kingism*, which also opposes implicitly the "one hope" of Ephesians 4:4.

3) *Materialism*, which does not look beyond the here and now, and leads men to seek after temporal wealth, even at the expense of their souls (cf., Mat. 16:26).

4) *Hedonism*, which seeks physical and sensual pleasures at the expense of virtue.

5) *Bigotry*, which would try to exclude from other nations and races the privileges and blessings available in Christ through the Good (cf., Mark 16:15-16).

6) *Universalism*, because the wicked will not be permitted to defile the purity of Heaven. On the contrary, they will be confined in Gehenna!

7) *Hinduism*, and any other form of *pantheism* or *animism*, for Heaven is not “man becoming one with the Universe” or passing into “blessed nothingness.” It is not akin to *nirvana*.

8) *Evolution*, for mankind’s ultimate condition will not be that of a “higher lifeform” as the result of the working of impersonal forces in nature, nor will it be oblivion by some fiery cataclysm or the “heat-death” of a sun grown cold. It will be individual consignment by the personal Deity to Heaven or Hell, “according to works.”

The term *ouranos* is sometimes combined with the word *ge* “earth” to contemplate the creation, created order, or Universe (G. Friedrich, *Theological Dict. of the NT*, vol. V, p. 515). Of eschatological significance is the use of the construction *ouranos kai ge* concerning the realm of Heaven as the dwelling place of the saints following the end of the present world at the Second Coming of Christ. As such, the nouns “heaven” and “earth” are modified by the word *kainos*, which is the retrospective term denoting “to be new.” It refers, according to Thayer, to what is “recently made, fresh, recent, unused, unworn...new, which as recently made is superior to what it succeeds...” (p. 317). It “points,” says brother Guy N. Woods, “to that which is fresh in contrast to that which is worn and deteriorated” (*Questions and Answers*, vol. I, p. 146). Second Peter 3:13 uses this construction, as also does Revelation 21:1. Brother Woods commenting on 2 Peter 3:13 states, “The heavens and earth which Peter describes, are fresh and new, not worn and old, as are the heavens and earth which now exist” (Ibid.). He goes on to point out that with the destruction of the old heavens and earth, in which “the elements”—the constituent parts—“shall melt with fervent (intense) heat,” the present age will end. The “new” heavens and earth, according to God’s promise, will be ushered into existence. The reference by Peter to God’s promise may be an allusion to Isaiah 65:17, where God promises to “create” (Heb. *bara*, cf., Gen. 1:1) “new heavens and a new earth.” The import of the verb seems to be that of a creation *ex nihilo* “out of nothing,” and thus excludes a renovation of the present heaven and earth (cf., *Beacon Bible Commentary*, vol. IV, pp. 285-286). This would accord with the use of the word *kainos* in 2 Peter 3:13, as well as Peter’s vivid description of the passing away of the present heaven and earth “with a great noise”—an onomatopoeic word denoting in its sound

“the crash of dissolving worlds and the roar of the flames” that consume them (Woods, pp. 146-147).

It should be observed that John places the new heavens and new earth AFTER the Judgment (cf., Rev. 20:11-15), which the Lord says will occur at the Second Coming in the Olivet Prophecy (Mat. 25:31-46). Peter and John thus both concur in applying the construction. They are speaking of the same condition of things anent the ultimate state. It is equally apparent that there does not exist in their writings any time available for us to place the 1000-year period of Revelation 20:1-7, which is undoubtedly to be taken figuratively due to the symbols connected with it, between the Lord’s coming and the end of the world, which is occasioned by His coming. The ultimate state THEN follows. The entire scenario will not fit the doctrine of *Premillennialism*. The present earth will no longer exist, and the new earth will not be a renovated version of it!

Several other names and phrases are given in the NT to describe the ultimate state of the righteous. We have already considered the word *Paradise* in our discussion on Hades, which see. The expression “heavenly kingdom” (*ten epouranion basileian*) in 2 Timothy 4:18, anticipates a state or condition of things beyond death (cf., vv. 6-8), as also does its equivalent phraseology elsewhere (1 Cor. 15:55; et.al.). The word *basileia* denotes the kind of government typical of the heavenly state. Therein the righteous “will reign unto the age of the ages” (cf., Rev. 22:5). The word *spouranion* is a form of *ouranos* and depicts the nature of this realm as distinct from “earthly” or carnal. Jesus, in John 14:2, calls it “My Father’s house” (*te oikia tou patros mou*). It is a place of “many mansions” (*pollai monai*), or “many abodes,” as Marshall’s *Greek-English Interlinear* renders it (p. 428). It is spoken of as being “prepared” and as a place wherein the saints are with Christ. He says, “I will receive you unto myself, that where I am there you may be also” (v. 3b). *Paralambano* refers to a receiving of one “alongside” (hence *para*), as a companion or friend. Thus, Thayer gives as the force of the Lord’s words, “to my companionship, where I myself dwell” (p. 484) (cf., Rev. 22: 3-4 where John describes the New Jerusalem of the new heavens and new earth as a place where the saints will be with God and Christ).

Another image that occurs in the NT is that of Heaven being pictured as a “city” (*polis*). Hence, Hebrews 11:10 speaks of Abraham’s search “for a **city** which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (cf., Heb. 13:14). The imagery denotes the idea of community and permanency. These references also show that within the scope of the promise to Abraham of blessing through his Seed (Christ, Gal. 3:16) the righteous thereby would be enabled to dwell with God in Heaven. Premillennialism seeks to distort the promise to Abraham to involve the setting up of a material kingdom by the Messiah, but this was not the aim nor desire of Abraham! It was God’s purpose that through the sufferings and sacrifice of the Seed to bring “many sons unto [*eis* ‘into’] glory” (Heb. 2:10). The imagery of “New Jerusalem” well suits the comparison of Heaven to a “city” (cf., Rev. 21:2ff.). Observe the description given by John carefully, and note such terms as “wall,” “gates,” “foundations,” etc.

Hebrews 11:16 describes Heaven as “a better country” in contrast with the physical land of Canaan. The word “country” is supplied by the translators, but is to be understood in the substantive “better” which stands in contrast with the land of the patriarchs’ sojourn. It is also directly related to their quest in verse 14 for a “country” or, better, “fatherland” being the translation of the word *patrida*. A sense of belonging, and a call to loyalty and patriotic devotion to the God of Heaven, are all tied together in the image! One key implication of these passages is that physical Canaanland is NOT the “better country” sought after by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but the phrase refers to a Canaan beyond this world—of which the former is but a type (*typos*). This ethereal Canaan is thus called “an heavenly” (*epouranios*).

## CONCLUSION

In this study we have considered the linguistic evidence pertaining to the origin, development, biblical usage, meaning, and force of the syntax bearing upon the various words used in Holy Writ to convey the doctrines of Hades, Hell, and Heaven. We have also observed how these words, by their meaning and use in certain texts, refute some of the many false doctrines prevalent today concerning Last Things.

It has been shown that there is a condition of things between death and the coming of Christ wherein the spirits of men are conscious and active. This realm is called *Sheol* in the Hebrew and *Hades* in the Greek.

Therein, the wicked are incarcerated and punished amid great torment and pain, while the righteous reside in a state of bliss and peace. The region of Hades where the wicked are punished is called *Tartarus*. The region of blessedness where the righteous are is called *Abraham's Bosom* and *Paradise*. The realm of Hades will be emptied at the resurrection, and its presence will be terminated in the fire of Gehenna.

It has also been seen that there is a place of ultimate retribution awaiting the wicked after the resurrection. This region of conscious, eternal—never-ending—torment is called *Gehenna* and “the lake of fire.” It corresponds well to the current use of our English word *Hell* to designate the place of final punishment. It is a place of consummate anguish and final punishment. It is a place of consummate anguish and pain, where “unquenchable” fire forever inflicts just recompense upon both evil men and the fallen angels.

It has been seen as well that there is a place of ultimate reward for the righteous beyond the bodily resurrection. It is a place that makes the suffering endured by them in this life indeed “worth it all.” This region stands opposite that of Gehenna or Hell. It is called in the Hebrew tongue *Shamayim*, and *ouranos* in the Greek. It well suits our English word *Heaven*. It is given a variety of other appellations and designations which describe certain aspects of its condition. It is eternal in duration, as much so as Hell, and as horrible as the realm of torment is, Heaven is as beautiful and radiant. It is the place of the highest degree of blessing and privilege, the abode of the Godhead Three! It will be entered into by the righteous after the close of this present age and upon the destruction of the heavens and earth that now exist. The righteous shall inherit it in their glorified and immortal bodies.

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# SING TO ME OF HEAVEN

*Harrell Davidson*

I am most happy to be on this good lectureship and be associated with this fine congregation and these good speakers. I commend this congregation for this fine lectureship and the quality book that emanates from this place each year. You are to be commended for your determination to do that which is right. We appreciate the capable and effective eldership here at Bellview. May you continue to grow and make great strides for the Lord both here and abroad.

We are particularly grateful for the subject assigned. We love to sing. It is one of the most important things that I remember about my early life. As a boy of five, we stood in a chair to be as tall as the rest and sung in a family quartet. It was a happy time that the family had together and we built the family around singing. Some have said that the late O. G. Davidson led his three sons to preach through singing. Such an article appeared in a newspaper in at least two different states. It was an important part of our lives. At Christmas time, when all of us would return home for a day or two, we would always set aside some time to sing together. We each received great blessings from singing. It set the tone of our gatherings. Each of the boys was schooled in music and voice lessons by parents that could not really afford such a luxury. We were forced (kindly) to practice our piano lessons one hour each day. Our parents wanted us to know music so we would be able to sing properly. Each of us would grow up and be busy entire summers, without rest, in leading singing for gospel meetings. We can't forget the great men of God we heard while leading songs in gospel meetings; all over the country. Brethren Willard Collins, E. R. Harper, Gus Nichols, G. K. Wallace, V. E. Howard, W. Claude Hall, E. W. Stovall, W. Curtis Porter, and many others would influence my life to finally one day preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. Did our parents know what they were doing? You better believe it! They were getting us ready, young as we came along, when they could ill afford it, to be a service to our Master and King.

Thank God for faithful parents that stressed the things in life that make life worth living.

### **THE COMMAND TO SING**

Music in the church is divinely authorized. This must first be understood. Some have said that churches of Christ do not believe in music. We have had this stated to us time and again after preaching sermons on singing. Someone will say, "What have you got against music?" They have misunderstood us entirely. We must let people know that we believe in music in the church. However, let us be determined to note that singing is the kind of music authorized by the Word of God. Now we are getting down to the proper discussion that ought to occur. Music in the church is divinely authorized. What kind of music is divinely authorized?

The New Testament authorizes singing only. By only, we mean without a mechanical instrument of some kind. The New Testament authorizes singing unaccompanied by any instrument of music. Note the following passages which give us the picture of the kind of music that God accepts and has authorized in the New Testament.

Just after instituting the Lord's Supper in Matthew 26, and, Jesus telling the Apostles that He would not henceforth drink of the fruit of the vine until He could do so in His Father's kingdom, the Bible says, "And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives" (v. 30). That they did not play an instrument because they had not been invented at that time would be very foolish to argue. Instruments had been in existence for hundreds of years when this matter occurred in Matthew 26. An instrument of some kind could have been readily available to Christ and the Apostles if Christ had wanted the instrument or if He had authorized it. Had He authorized such an instrument then they could not have sung an hymn. However, the record is silent as the tomb regarding their using a mechanical instrument. If we wish to follow the example of our Lord; will we go out and seek some mechanical instrument and play it while we sing before we can be dismissed? The answer is obvious as to what they did. Obviously this pleased God for such was accepted. Jesus says that the Apostles would be offended but He did not say that God was

offended. If their singing did not offend God then I need to copy the same thing in my life in worship to God.

Another New Testament example is found in the following verse. "And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them" (Acts 16:26). This account is very interesting for many reasons. First, they worshipped at midnight. Second, their worship consisted of singing and praying. Third, the place where they worshipped was in a prison cell. These thoughts open up some suggestions for us to consider. When might a person worship? A person may worship any time that this is his intention. Of the some seven Greek words for worship, they make it crystal clear, that worship is something that cannot be done accidentally. In every case, worship was the motive. It is something done by premeditation. One is therefore prepared to worship. This needs to be considered very carefully. Why? Some of our brethren have taken this too far and hold an extreme position.

We have mentioned that we took music lessons. Sometime ago members of the congregation where we work decided that they would like to sing every song in our song book. We agreed to teach them every song in the book to the best of our ability. I have a piano (mechanical instrument) in my home. I got the song book and played songs that I did not know over and over until I could finally sing them properly. Maybe the last time or two that I played this song I would sing the melody as I played. Was I worshipping? I certainly was not worshipping. That was not my intent! My intent was only to learn a new song so that I would be able to go and sing it when we have our singing night. Others think that you could never sing along with a quartet, that you would be worshipping. We disagree! Brother G. K. Wallace was asked this question some years ago in a lecture on the campus at Freed-Hardeman College. He explained, in more detail than we have, the idea of worship being something that was premeditated and was deliberately entered into. He posed this question: "When I go home today at lunch which had I rather hear, sister Wallace singing 'Amazing Grace' or 'You Ain't Nothing But A Hound Dog'?" He indicated that sister Wallace had no intent of worship but was entertaining herself as she went about her work.

Someone says that we are “worshipping in vain” if we use a hymn that is in our song books and do so as entertainment.

Vain worship would be doing something that God has not authorized. When we sing for entertainment purposes are we taking His name in vain? Can we speak the name of God outside of a worshipful atmosphere without being in vain? Of course we can! Sometimes we ride down the highway going across the country and we hear a religious song on the radio. Some would say that you have to turn the dial immediately or you will be worshipping. Where did this notion ever come from to begin with? All in the world that we are doing is passing the time. It is high time that we study what worship is and what it is not. Everything that we do is not worship. We know of few gospel preachers that at sometime or another have not listened with rapt attention to a denominational preacher as he was preaching on the radio. Were we worshipping? Preaching in a part of worship isn't it? All right, what is the difference in listening to the denominational preacher with no intent to worship and singing a song with no intent to worship? We fail to see the difference.

Let us clearly understand that *at no time* may we use an instrument in *worship* to God whether it be at home, a prison cell, in the car, or at church. God will not and does not accept worship with the mechanical instrument. We cannot use it at home or any other place to worship God. We are convinced that Paul and Silas were worshipping. We believe that worship was their intent. They could not have used the mechanical instrument if they had had one in their prison cell. Mechanical instruments of music are not wrong unless we attempt to use them in worship.

“And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles and sing unto thy name” (Rom. 15:9). Singing without the mechanical instrument was again the case. This in an apostolic practice that Paul wrote about by inspiration. Inspiration did not lie! Inspiration said to sing. That ought to be enough for any one of us and in to the sincere student of the Word.

“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). Paul shown emphatically that we need to understand what we are doing. Our singing (again the Scripture is silent regarding the mechanical instrument) must be done with the spirit and understanding. How could one sing scripturally if he understood not that which was being sung? An impossible mission would be the result. This only adds more “fodder” to the fact that one cannot accidentally worship, and everything we do in life is not worship.

“Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Eph. 5:19). The lexicographers point out that the Greek word *psallo* means primarily to pluck or to twitch or twang. *Psallo* is a verb and the object of the verb is not in itself. The object is found somewhere else in the sentence. The object of the very *psallo* is the word *heart*. Therefore, the heart is the instrument that is to be plucked twanged and so forth. This leaves out any instrument other than the heart of man. Any instrument that is added to the heart finds no authorization in the scriptures. Paul said it a little differently: “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). Amazing facts are learned in this passage. First, let the word dwell in you. If the word dwells in us we will want to do what the word suggests. Let it dwell in us richly in all wisdom. That is, use the word to the very best of one’s ability. Teaching others and admonishing them. One of the purposes of preaching is to teach and admonish others. Singing then is akin to preaching in that through both we teach and admonish one another. Then, we are to sing with grace in our hearts. Grace means favor. Our songs are to be so directed to God and one another that grace may be apparent in our hearts as we sing. We find this amazing! We must realize what we were before obeying the gospel and what we are after obeying the gospel. Such salvation was made available by God’s grace. We are to sing with grace in our hearts to the Lord. Therefore, we give back (express) our favor to God and with God for all that He has done for us. When do we do this? When we sing with the proper

credentials. However, notice that the mechanical instrument is left out and the instrument used is the heart.

“Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms” (Jam. 5:13). Singing is thus an expression of the heart. We sing with hearts of joy. We sing with hearts of gratitude. A song says,

Sing to me of heaven, Sing that song of peace,  
 From the toils that bind me it will bring release.  
 Burdens will be lifted that are pressing so,  
 Showers of great blessing o’er my heart will flow...  
 Sing to me of heaven let me fondly dream,  
 Of its golden glory, of its pearly gleam;  
 Sing to me when shadows of the evening fall,  
 Sing to me of heaven, Sweetest song of all.

What a great delight to sing of the “Home of the Soul.” We want to sing to God blending our voices together in chorus so sweet remembering His precious gift to us that we might be saved. When people truly realize this purpose they will have no problem with singing unaccompanied by a mechanical instrument.

### **THE COMMAND TO SING IS SPECIFIC**

Specific commands are both inclusive and exclusive. In Genesis 6:14, God commanded gopher wood be used in the ark. Some of our liberal brothers say that we ought not use this passage. They say that it is laughable to use this as an example. They say it is not proper hermeneutics. My response is that the example hits the nail on the head and the liberal cannot stand on “holy ground” and not use this as an example. Let’s examine it this way: gopher wood excluded oak, cedar, hickory, or any other species of wood. It included the one kind of wood that God wanted in the ark. Suppose that Noah had used oak. Would the ark have floated? Do you really believe that it would? When one disobeys God he cannot expect any blessings to come from God. Righteous Noah would not have been righteous had he disobeyed God. He did not reason that God did not tell him to use oak, ash, hickory, pine and so forth. You send your child to the store and tell him to get a loaf of bread. Do you tell him not to get tooth picks, soap, bologna, or coffee? No one practices this kind of thinking. The child understands that he is to get a loaf of bread. That included all

that the parent asked for and expected. When the child delivered the loaf of bread, he had obeyed the will of the parent. Getting the loaf of bread excluded everything else and included all that was wanted.

“Remember the sabbath day” excluded any other day. It could not be the first day of the week or the second day of the week, but had to be the seventh day of the week, the sabbath. It included all and excluded all that God commanded. Fruit of the vine in Matthew 26:29, excludes water or Pepsi Cola. It includes fruit of the vine and includes nothing more or less. It excludes everything not mentioned. When Jesus took bread in Matthew 26:26, it excluded mustard greens and cake. It rather included and was limited to unleavened bread. The command to sing excludes playing a mechanical instrument of music. Singing includes all that God accepts and excludes everything else. In 2 John verse 9 the Bible says, “Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God, He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.” Therefore, to go beyond the scriptures is a sin. When we add a mechanical instrument to our worship we have added to God’s Word. In doing so we add the plagues written in the book (cf. Rev. 22:18).

### **WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF SINGING?**

Singing is an expression of the heart. It shows that the heart is merry (cf., Jam. 5:13). It expresses praise and thanksgiving (cf., Heb. 13:15; Rom. 15:9). Singing is to teach and admonish (cf., Col. 3:16). Have you ever thought about the fact that every song in the book is about redemption? Songs before and after prayer are about redemption. Songs of encouragement are most certainly about redemption. Songs in preparation for the Lord’s Supper carry the theme of redemption. Sometime, get a song book and look at the words in the song and forget the music or notes for a moment. You will see that redemption is what every song is written about. Our Songs are to be directed unto God, thus, in spirit and truth (cf., John 4:24; 1 Cor. 14:15). In spirit means with sincerity of heart. Therefore, we need to study the sentiment of the songs that we sing. To sing according to truth means that we cannot scripturally sing an untruth. Some songs are not scriptural or parts of some songs may not be scriptural. In

such case, we could not sing them. We would sin in so doing. Songs, then, are to be understood by others (cf., Eph. 5:19).

### **WHAT ARE SOME ARGUMENTS USED TO JUSTIFY MECHANICAL INSTRUMENTS IN WORSHIP?**

Some say that such was used under the law of Moses; although, the author of these lines has never found its authorization in the old law or the new law. Do you find the instrument in the ten commandment law? Do you see it coming from Mt. Sinai? Do you read of God ever endorsing it at the door of the Tabernacle where He met the people? Not in a single instance do you find the instrument's authorization. "Well, David used the harp." Did he do so because of a command of God? No he did not! Strange that we would try to go back under the law for our proof to use the mechanical instrument. Have we not thought of what this entails? Bloody sacrifices, burning of incense, and polygamy were practiced under the law of Moses. If we are going back to the law, let's keep it all or none at all. I can just see David going by with his harp in a wheel barrow. Brethren would say, "O, brother David, come in and play for us." But, they see him going by with his ninety wives and they say, "We don't want to have any part of this." Where is the consistency in this argument? It is wholly inconsistent. The law of Moses was abolished when Christ died on the cross (cf., Col. 2:14). We are living in adultery if we are trying to live under two laws (cf., Rom. 7:14). We are severed from the law by the death of Christ. And, we are severed from Christ if we try to go back under the law (cf., Gal. 5:4).

Some say that it is just an aid. These folk do not know the difference between an aid and an addition. An aid is something that helps us carry out a command. An addition is something added on to the command. If you wear glasses take them off and tell me what they see. The glasses—absolutely nothing! Put them on your face and they aid you in seeing fine print. They are not an addition but an aid. A song book is an aid. It furnishes no addition. It introduces nothing new to the command to sing. A mechanical instrument *adds* another kind. It is forbidden and thus sinful. We cannot use it or fellowship those who do use it.

## **WHAT ARE SOME OBJECTIONS FOR USING MECHANICAL INSTRUMENTS IN WORSHIP?**

First, it severs one from Christ by his going beyond what Christ has authorized. Christ authorized singing plus nothing minus nothing. He did not teach the use of a mechanical instrument. Second, it makes our worship vain worship (cf., Mat. 15:9; Mark 7:7:8). One is commanded to sing (cf., Col. 3:16). To “lay aside the commandment” is vain. Third, it is not part of the truth. The Apostles were guided into all truth (John 16:13). They commanded us to sing (Eph. 5:19). Fourth, it is not done by faith. We are to walk by faith and not by sight. Faith comes by hearing the Word of God. God’s Word says sing. Therefore, I cannot add a mechanical instrument with faith. Why? The Bible is silent regarding its use.

### **THE BEAUTY OF SINGING**

Have you ever thought about the fact that the things God has commanded are simple things? God commanded water baptism. Water is to be found all over the world. In the Lord’s Supper, Christ used unleavened bread and fruit of the vine to institute the Supper. God commanded us to sing offering up the fruit of our lips. Simple voices, when combined, give us a foretaste of heaven to come. There is nothing more beautiful to the ear than good congregational singing with each supplying a part of the four-part harmony that is written in our song books. Get these parts together and balance them well and no mechanical instrument can touch the hem of the garment. Singing is medicinal! That’s right! At least it is to me. How many times have we gone to worship tired and dragging from the long-day and the song service starts and we are lifted up and made to forget our day. Our hearts are refreshed by songs of redemption. The problem that exists in too many cases is that several do not participate in the singing. They say they cannot sing well. The command is not to sing well but to sing. Obviously, we should sing our very best.

Years ago, we had singing schools every year in most congregations. Today, this has ceased for the most part. As a result our singing is suffering. We are encouraged though that in the last two years we have taught three singing schools in nearby congregations. We had

them reading music in two sessions. We had them acquainted with the proper sounds of the notes very soon. Finally, we would give two nights to just singing and properly so to the best of the congregation's ability. The end result was outstanding. Did you ever stop to think about the fact that when a visitor enters our building the first thing they observe is that there is no organ or piano or some other instrument of music? This makes us different.

This should be a compelling force behind better singing. A word to the wise; don't get your local man to teach your singing schools. Brethren will get angry if he fusses at them for mistakes that they make. Get someone outside the congregation that is not afraid to correct and encourage them to do better. Let us study and practice that which, perhaps more than anything else, makes us different from the denominations at first glance. Our faith will be kindled, our hope will be greater. But, whatever you do, even if you think you cannot carry a tune, get that song book and sing out. It is commanded by God just as much as the Lord's Supper.

We close with these words of sincere sentiment for each reader.

The Lord bless you and keep you, The Lord lift his countenance upon you and give you peace, and give you peace. The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord be gracious, be gracious unto you, A-Men.

# SHALL WE KNOW ONE ANOTHER IN HEAVEN?

*Jerri Manasco*

What we know about heaven, the inhabitants of heaven and of our own participation in that eternal realm is obtained from revelation of God. We cannot *think* our way into the knowledge of that wonderful place, but must depend upon what God has said about it. By careful reasoning; however, from the Scriptures that have a bearing on the subject, we can come to rather intriguing deductions. These are not vague philosophies that we are dealing with, but reality and principles of changeless truth that form the essence of this present study.

Of all the topics that I have ever attempted to deal with, I believe this, concerning future recognition, is one of the most interesting of all. Without controversy, nearly every Bible student is deeply interested in the future state and there has been much natural curiosity about what we shall be like in that sternal abode of the redeemed. There is nothing wrong with this yearning to know all we can about what we *shall* be, for this is one motive for being what we *ought* to be right now (1 John 3:1-3; Phi. 3:18-21)! What we *shall* be far exceeds what we now are; it is this grand expectation of the Christian that impels him on hour by hour in his living for Jesus.

Though a major change occurs in the human state between now and eternity, it is the proposition of this presentation that one loses nothing of his identify or personality. There is a spiritual reality that continues in the person. This spiritual reality does not remove from the person his self-consciousness, nor should it be thought that others would lose their consciousness of that person! I have three pertinent questions that need to be noted here. First, Is it *impossible* that we should maintain our own identify and be recognizable by others in heaven? Second, Is it *impractical* that we should maintain recognizable status? Third, Is it *unreasonable* to contend for future recognition? Given the omnipotence of God, it is not impossible; concerning

the second and third questions, why should it be considered impractical or unreasonable that we will know one another in heaven? Of course, we must have more substantial reasons for our arguments than these.

While I neither pretend nor presume that this is the definitive work or that I am a walking know-it-all machine, I am offering what I consider the Bible teaching on the matter. Hopefully, none who consider the arguments expounded herein will be contentious and suppose he must enter into controversy with me on the subject. There are glorious things God has laid up for his redeemed ones (Col. 1:5-6; 1 Pet. 1:3-5; Heb. 10:32-35), and it is to this end that we must strive. If we are found approved of God so that we may live with him forever, then this is enough! Leave the details to God!

What will man be like in heaven? What is the state of those who will be fitted to reside in that eternal realm of the redeemed? Just what, if anything, does the Bible say about this? We must be content to allow the Bible to guide this study, but observations made by others will be called in to assist us in making proper evaluations of our conclusions. At any rate, we must not intrude where God has not seen fit to tell us anything. Putting ideas into a text where they do not belong would be as wrong in this study as with any other.

That man may expect a form of some sort in eternity is made abundantly clear in the sacred text. We do not go out of existence though what is mortal and corruptible must be replaced by what is immortal and incorruptible.

The sum is that the bodies of the saints, when they shall rise again, will be greatly changed from what they are now, and much for the better. They are now corruptible, flesh and blood; they will be then incorruptible, glorious, and spiritual bodies, fitted to the celestial world and state, where they are ever afterwards to dwell, and have their eternal inheritance.<sup>1</sup>

Albert Barnes observes that it should not be considered strange that there is a difference between “the body as adapted to its residence here and as adapted to its residence in heaven.”<sup>2</sup> While cautious in their comments these two renowned commentators express their faith in the plain teaching of the Scriptures that there will be a state in

which there is no more exposure to the corruption of life as we know it.

Either death or the second coming of the Lord will be the prelude to our being transformed. Each of us shall be changed, perhaps being presented with a resurrection body or by this living body (alive when the Lord returns) being transformed into a marvelously renewed body, fashioned by the powerful working of Christ (1 The. 4:13-17; 1 Cor. 15:51-52; Phi. 3:20-21). Just HOW the Lord can do this is not our concern; we believe it can be done by that same power that brought all things into existence to begin with! But a change must take place, for “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Cor. 15:50). In his comments on 1 Corinthians Chapter Fifteen, Burton Coffman observes “...in man’s mortal state, it is impossible for him to enjoy eternal life.”<sup>3</sup> Another writer noted, “As the believer then passes into a condition of glory, his body must be altered for the now condition...it becomes a ‘spiritual’ body, belonging to the realm of the spirit.”<sup>4</sup> These comments reflect the Bible doctrine that a renewal of habitation in the heavenly city demands a renewal of condition to participate in it.

What this new form of man is to be is not revealed, except that we are told that God will fashion it as it pleases him (1 Cor. 15:35ff.). It is certain that the “mere animal functions of flesh and blood shall no longer be needed.”<sup>5</sup> The “natural” body will give way to the “spiritual” body, what ever that is to be (1 Cor. 15:42-44). This is further defined as the mortal giving way to the immortal (v. 54). The heavenly form will be far different from this present earthly form, for “as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly” (v. 49). The change in state demands a change in form. What a wonderful hand it must be that can bring this into reality!

While we do not know the exact details of this transformation into heaven, what we are told in the Bible is enough to encourage us to want to be with the heavenly number! We know, for example, that this “vile body” shall be changed and fashioned like unto the glorious body of Jesus (Phi. 3:21). The phrase “vile” body refers to the ravages of sickness, disease, and death; thus these things will be no

more! We know that we shall be clothed with immortality, as this naked spirit is provided with that which will make our redemption complete (2 Cor. 5:1-9). We are also assured that the redeemed shall “shine forth as the sun” in that eternal state (Mat. 13:43). These expectations seize the believer with imagination and wonder! While we do not know what we shall be, it is comforting to know that “we shall be like HIM” (1 John 3:2). Whatever this state is, we have the Lord’s assurance that the redeemed shall be as the angels themselves (Luke 20:36). Comprehend this if you can!

The glorious form of man in the heavenly realm is established beyond dispute in the Scriptures. The Scriptures cited above are proof enough of that. The question of future recognition; however, is another matter altogether. What, if anything, does the Bible say on this interesting topic? Does the Bible teach that we shall know one another in that land beyond the river? Shall I be able to consciously converse with those whom I have known here on earth, and consciously be aware of their identity in heaven? In addressing these thoughts we must once again be content to allow the Bible to speak, for that is our only source of information on this noble theme. First of all we must candidly admit that there is not a Scripture anywhere in God’s sacred revelation that says, specifically, that we shall know one another in heaven. However, if we can deduce that teaching from passages relevant to the subject, then we shall accept it as truth. We must avoid philosophical speculations and steer away from strictly emotional appeals. What does the Bible say?

The whole issue boils down to one basic idea, namely, the question of *identify* after death and in heaven. Do we lose our identity in heaven? Do we cease to be who we are? Do the redeemed become part of some heavenly oneness where all is one and one is all, and all identities merge into some metaphysical harmony? Identity is the crux of the matter! For one to argue that we will not know one another over there is to suggest that personal identity no longer exists. When one becomes a Christian he is in a renewed state, for he is a “new creature” (2 Cor. 5:17). He does not cease to be WHO he is though WHAT he is has changed. His identify remains the same. In the heavenly state why should it be thought unreasonable or unnecessary

for us to be WHO we are though WHAT we are has been altered? In heaven I will still be ME though in a different and higher state of consciousness. The consequences of no future recognition are just too great to imagine, as we shall endeavor to point out in the course of this presentation.

It has previously been shown that since flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven, then our present form must somehow undergo a change; a spiritual body, presently undefinable by us, is the gift of God to us at that time. The different state of existence, however, does not mean a lose of recognition. Why should it be assumed that a change of constitution and an exaltation into a higher mode of existence erases identity or personality? Such a thing is unnecessary. Must it be only flesh and blood that has peculiar identity? Cannot a spiritual body still retain the basic something that makes you and me distinctive? Why not?

It is evident that at least two of the heavenly host (other than the divine Three) are named. Michael the archangel (Jude 9) and Gabriel (Luke 1:19, 26) are named. Do they know their own identity? Does this not suggest that in heaven there is the recognition of individuality even among the angels? Why then should it not be so among redeemed and perfected men, who are "as the angels"? Would the perfect state be more so because of a lack of recognition?

The transfiguration of Jesus provides some evidence of the maintenance of identity after one passes into the eternal realm. The Bible student remembers that Peter somehow knew Moses and Elijah (Mat. 17:4). How he knew it is beyond me, but we do have here the evidence that there was strict identity maintained by Moses and Elijah! They did not cease to be Moses and Elijah.

Mention is made in the New Testament of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in a glorified state. Jesus says of those whose faith will lead them to embrace the gospel that they shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Mat. 8:11). Jesus quotes from the Old Testament book of Exodus, selecting the passage where God identifies Himself as the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob (Mat. 22:32). Apparently, the patriarchs have not lost their identity! They are still Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, though in another state of being.

Peter argued, “The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus” (Acts 3:13). Have the three patriarchs lost their identity so that they will never again be recognizable as to who they are? If so, then Jesus has ceased to be who he is and shall not be recognized!

Personal identity must be maintained, or what is said about us after this life is without real significance. Jesus has said, “all that are in the grave 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” (John 5:28-29). Paul taught that “there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust” (Acts 24:15). Who is to be raised? Why, it is those who are buried, the just and the unjust. They are still who they are, their identity has not been lost. How shall I receive *my* reward if I no longer possess the peculiar something that makes me distinctive? If I lose my identity, then who is it that receives my reward? If I am aware of who I am, then why should others not be? If there is loss of recognition, then there is also a loss of identity. One must necessarily fall from the other.

If identity remains the same for us, then why should it be incredible that we should recognize others that we have previously known? Why should it be thought incredible that we should extend conscious fellowship in heaven to those with whom we have enjoyed such fellowship while on earth? That heavenly fellowship will be but an eternal extension of that which we have so richly participated in and benefitted from here.

One familiar example that we might bring forth is that of David, after he lost his son to the clutches of Death. Facing the reality and justice of God’s judgment upon him for his sin and accepting the death of his son, David said, “I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me” (2 Sam. 12:23). I realize that David did not say, specifically, that he would know him then, but what rational purpose could there have been in his saying what he did? Is David speaking only of dying and his body going into the grave? Hardly.

The rich man in Luke 16 gives a glimpse into certain possibilities. The rich man saw and recognized Lazarus as the one whom he neglected in this earth life. Albert Barnes offers an interesting and

cautious comment on this passage. He points out that we are not authorized to infer that the wicked will see those in paradise, but he does add, "That they will *know* they are there is certain."<sup>6</sup> In an fairness I must hasten to admit that what is said of the rich man's awareness is not said of Lazarus. There is in this an interesting possibility: the righteous may not have to be conscious of the sufferings of those in torment but the wicked may indeed be aware of the glories they have carelessly shunned. At any rate, the joy of heaven cannot and will not be disturbed.

Some of Paul's comments to those whom he had converted have a direct bearing on this study. A case or two will suffice. To the brethren in Philippi, Paul wrote, "Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain" (Phi. 2:16). How could he rejoice over those whom he would not recognize? The Thessalonians received a similar exhortation, "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?" (1 The. 2:19). This suggests a conscious recognition of those saints by Paul! I suppose that one may object to this on the grounds that Paul would surely be saddened by the knowledge that there were many who did not make it; therefore, future recognition would at best be a negative and questionable quality. We answer this simply by saying that the joy of the occasion surely will not be tarnished. Paul knew even while in the flesh that many would be lost, yet this did not deter him from his joy in the Lord! The Lord tells us that there is rejoicing in heaven among the angels of God when one sinner repents (Luke 15:7, 10). Does this mean that heaven's joy is ruined because of the knowledge of those who will not repent?

The apostle's teaching regarding the return of the Lord and the gathering of the saints to Him has an interesting bearing on this topic that we are studying. In that famous passage in which Paul seeks to lay to rest the anxieties the living saints had for their deceased brethren, Paul writes, "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 The. 4:17). Though of the opinion that their brethren who were dead were hopelessly asleep,

the Thessalonians are reminded that they shall indeed see them again. Their fondest hopes would be realized in that great day. They will actually be aware of the presence of their deceased brethren with them in this gathering! If not, why not?

If the future state is not one of recognition, then consider a possible scenario based on the text just cited. Consider the implications of the idea that no recognition is in the plan. Here is the scene: Two Christian friends are walking down the street and then, the Lord appears. The dead are raised, among whom is a dear Christian friend whom they had buried the day before. Now these two who are alive and remain are transformed into that glorious body which they receive in “the twinkling of an eye” (1 Cor. 15:52). Now suddenly, these who had been such intimate friends just a second before no longer have any idea who the other one is! There is no recognition beyond this life! One moment, they are conscious of each other but the next second, they will not be able to recognize each other any more! On earth they had this knowledge, but in heaven they will not. In the twinkling of an eye, their recognition of each other fades. To raise the objection that we will not know each other after the flesh any more is really immaterial to this discussion; surely our ability to reason will not depart with, the flesh!

While we have thus far attempted to deal with Scriptures that have a bearing on our theme, we are aware that some may differ with us in the matter presented. But these are the conclusions with which I must live and which grant me encouragement. Objections to the idea of future recognition must be faced, and it is to some of these that our attention needs to be directed.

Some may object that they simply do not see or understand how there could be recognition in heaven. Of course, there are many things we cannot understand, especially in a discussion of the subject at hand. However, our inability to understand the how of something does not detract from the reality of it, I cannot understand that we shall not die any more in that future state (Luke 20:36), but I accept it as truth.

Others may protest on the grounds that if we recognize each other in heaven, then we will tend to stay in our cliques. Well, one must

first prove that there are cliques in heaven! If the believer has enjoyed fellowship with all Christians on earth without respect of persons, then surely it will be even better in heaven! Besides, those who hang around in cliques may well be guilty of factionism and not be in heaven at all.

One of the strongest objections and one that has perhaps the greatest merit is this, "What about the knowledge that someone you love (i.e., husband, wife, etc.) is not there?" This is a difficult objection to answer, but careful reflection may prove that it need not be. For example, is it true that we shall accept God's judgments as true and righteous altogether (Rev. 16:7; 19:2; Psa. 19:9; etc.)? Can you enjoy the fellowship of those who are there? Can the Christian enjoy his salvation from past sin and his fellowship here and now though he knows of loved ones who are not Christians? Besides, can you be happy with the knowledge that someone you love is there? Can you be happy in a place of perfection, where no sin is to be found? What about the joy of seeing someone there that you were afraid would not be there? This objection ignores the change of relationships (Luke 20:34-35). Furthermore, can you be happy where God is? Shall not the reality of being in heaven after our earthly pilgrimage be enough to compensate for the sorrows of this world? There are just too many possibilities to consider in view of this objection.

Another objection is raised that since we will have a new body we will not be able to recognize one another. Yes, there is to be a change as the body of mortality gives way to immortality. This change, however, is a change of state and not necessarily a change of identity! Confusing a change of state with a change of identity is to argue too much. That a spiritual body will be given does not mean that it will be without means of recognition. The common conception seems to be that it will be some sort of "ghostly" something; this conception has absolutely no support in the Bible. To argue that the spiritual body will be without features by which recognition is possible is to demand too much!

One supposedly scriptural objection is based on a statement by John. He wrote, "it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall

see him as he is” (1 John 3:2). The objection goes something like this: “Since we don’t know what we shall be, then instead of being recognized as who we are we will be known only as redeemed souls.” It is true that we shall be known as redeemed souls in heaven, but it is also true that we shall be known as individuals who are redeemed souls! If we are to be like Jesus, then we must ask if Jesus is recognized in heaven! Furthermore, to press this argument to its ultimate meaning, then I must take it to mean that I will not know who I am, either! The argument actually builds on the notion of lost identity, which is not taught in the Bible. Of course I must be aware of who I am if I am to enjoy the reward that is reserved for me. If I know my own identity but am not allowed to tell others who I am, then we have an eternity of secrets, which is just too much to contemplate. Actually, what John is talking about in this text is not future recognition, but; rather, the hope of transformation into a glorious state like Jesus. A text should not be pressed to say more than is actually in it.

After all these feeble efforts of mine in this presentation there is but one final word to offer. The main thing is to so live “that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless” (2 Pet. 3:14).

### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible* (McClean, VA: MacDonald Publishing Co., n.d.), p. 595.

<sup>2</sup>Albert Barnes, *Notes on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, n.d.), p. 796.

<sup>3</sup>James Burton Coffman, *Commentary on First and Second Corinthians* (Austin, TX: Firm Foundation Publishing House, n.d.), p. 267.

<sup>4</sup>Burton Scott Easton, “Resurrection,” *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, 1929, IV:2564.

<sup>5</sup>“Resurrection,” *Fausset’s Bible Dictionary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, n.d.), p. 604.

<sup>6</sup>Barnes, p. 235.

# THE ETERNAL KINGDOM

*Joe Gilmore*

History records the time and the place of the beginning of the various religious denominations of our day. We are not particularly interested in these since Jesus has said, "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up" (Mat. 15:13).

It is important to know the time of the establishment of the church. No one can understand God's plan of salvation without knowing the time of the birthday of the church.

Jesus said, "I will build my church" (Mat. 16:18). We are interested in when and where this church began and in how we may identify it.

Our Lord used the term "church" and the term "kingdom" synonymously (Mat. 16:18-19). Hence, in this study to determine when and where the church began we will use these terms interchangeably.

There are many positions as to when the church was established. If we can prove that it was established on the first Pentecost following the resurrection of Jesus from the dead then all other positions are wrong.

In studying the history of any institution we are interested in learning at least four things about it: (1) Its founder. (2) Its foundation. (3) The place of its establishment. (4) The time it came into existence.

## **THE FOUNDER OF THE CHURCH**

It is important for us to know the founder of any given church in order to know whether the church is the work of man or the work of Christ. A church must have the Lord as its *founder*. Christ built His church in the first century. He promised, "I will build my church" (Mat. 16:18). The Lord gave the apostles the authority to state the terms of admission into it. To the apostles He said, "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Mat. 16:19; 18:18). The

Lord gave the apostles the keys to His kingdom, or church. But He did not give men the keys they use to admit people into the churches that they have established. No man ever had scriptural authority to say, "I give unto thee the keys of the kingdom," because no man ever had scriptural authority to originate a church.

It is sometimes said that John the Baptist founded the church. The fact that it was established by Christ proves that it was not established by John the Baptist or any other human being. John could not have built the church because he was dead at the time Christ promised to build it. In Matthew 14: 10 we read that John was executed by Herod, and in Matthew 16:18, Christ said, "I will build my church." "Will build" is future tense, and John was already dead when Christ uttered these words. After John was beheaded, the establishment of the church was yet in the future. John the Baptist was a good and great man, and he did a scriptural work as the forerunner of Christ, but he did not establish the church. John preached, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Mat. 3:2). What does "at hand" mean in the Scriptures? Does it mean the event in history had already passed? "At hand" points to the future. The prophet Joel said, "Alas for the day! for the day of the Lord is at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come" (Joel 1:15). The day referred to was "at hand," but it had not come. Before Paul's departure in death he said, "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand" (2 Tim. 4:6). While his departure was "at hand," it was a future thing to take place. When John the Baptist said, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Mat. 3:2), he indicated the kingdom was still future at that time. After the death of John the Baptist, as recorded in Matthew 14, Christ said, "I will build my church" (Mat. 16:18). John was never a member of the church of Christ. He died before Christ built His church. To express this truth in another way, John was never a citizen of the kingdom. Jesus said, "Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he" (Mat. 11:11). How was it possible for John to be one of the greatest born of women, but for one of the least in the kingdom to be greater than he? Please permit me to give an example

that will clarify this statement: In grammar school there is no greater than Bob, but the least in high school is greater than he. Why is this true? Because Bob is not in high school. So the least in the kingdom is greater than John the Baptist because he was not in the church. John died before the church was established. We have no scriptural right to establish a church. The warning that God gives is too plain and the penalty is too severe for us to be a member of a man-made or founded church, "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up" (Mat. 15:13). A church built by man is human and not divine.

### **THE CHURCH HAS A SCRIPTURAL FOUNDATION**

We know that no building or institution can be stronger than the foundation on which it rests. No house built on a shoddy foundation can stand for long. The same principle applies to a church. The Lord's church must have a scriptural foundation.

When Jesus promised to build His church, He asked the apostles,

Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, The Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh, and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it (Mat. 16:13-18).

There are two confessions here. Peter's confession of Christ and the Lord's confession of Peter. Immediately after Simon's confession the Lord confessed to him, "Thou art Peter, a stone." The very name God gave Christ proved that He was God's Son. The Lord simply said to Simon, "Your name is a stone." Peter had been very unstable. Peter's name just meant a stone. This is all that Jesus confessed to Peter.

Some have contended that the church was built upon Peter since his name indicated "a stone." The original language will not permit this idea as two different words are used. The Lord said, "Thou art Peter [Petros] and upon this rock [petra] I will build my church." "Thou art a stone" is masculine gender and upon this ledge of rock (feminine gender) "I will build my church." Jesus did not promise to

build His church upon Peter but upon the rock, the grand and glorious fact that Christ is the Son of God. The Lord's church was not founded upon the weakness of human flesh, but upon the Divinity and Sonship of Christ. Paul says, "For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3:11). It is recorded, "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation" (Isa. 28:16). Our Lord applied this prophecy to Himself (Mat. 21:42). Peter applied this statement to his Lord (Acts 4:11).

If we wanted to build a church, how would we go about it? The first step would be to lay a foundation as every building must have a foundation. If we want the church we plan to build to be well-pleasing to God, it must have a scriptural foundation under it. Where shall we get the material for this building? The Lord laid the foundation for His church upon the truth of His divine Sonship. We cannot use this foundation for it already has a building on it, "the house of God, which is the church of the living God" (1 Tim. 3:15). We preach the truth that Christ is God's Son, but we cannot build another institution upon it, for God has not authorized us to do so. We cannot lay the same foundation for the Lord Jesus could only demonstrate His divinity, and thus lay the foundation of the church. It should be evident that man cannot build a church that God will recognize for he cannot put a scriptural foundation under it. The foundation that Christ laid has stood and will continue to stand through the ages. To plant the church today we do so by: (1) Preaching the gospel (Acts 2:22-26). (2) By sinners obeying the gospel (Acts 2:37-41). (3) By the saved being added to the church (Acts 2:47).

### **THE CHURCH WAS FOUNDED AT A SCRIPTURAL PLACE, JERUSALEM**

If it can be established from the Bible that the church of Christ, the Lord promised to build, would be founded in Jerusalem, then any church born in London, New York or Nashville would and could not be the church of Christ. The prophets of the Old Testament said,

And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills: and all nations shall flow unto it. And

many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways. and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem (Isa. 2:2-3).

From this prophecy, as well as Micah 4:1-2, we learn that the Lord's house was to be established in Jerusalem and that all nations would flow into it. In the New Testament Paul speaks of "the house of God, which in the church of the living God" (1 Tim. 3:15). Hence, we learn that the house of God is the church, and it was to be founded by the Lord in Jerusalem. Again we read, "Therefore thus saith the Lord; I am returned to **Jerusalem** with mercies: my house shall be built in it, saith the Lord of hosts, and a line shall be stretched forth upon **Jerusalem**" (Zec. 1:16).

When the Lord gave the world-wide commission to His apostles he stated that *Jerusalem* would be the starting place.

Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. 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 24:46-49).

We are forced to the conclusion that any church that had its beginning in some other city cannot be the church that the Lord founded.

### **PENTECOST IS THE BIRTHDAY OF THE CHURCH**

Some contend that the church was established in Eden and Adam and Eve were the first members of it. It is argued that when God called unto Adam saying, "Where art thou" (Gen. 3:9) that Christ, who Paul laid as a foundation at Corinth was laid in Eden also (1 Cor. 3:10-11). But Christ, the foundation stone, had to become "a tried stone" before being laid (Isa. 28:16). This brings us to His trial (test) when He was declared to be the Son of God by His resurrection (Rom. 1:4). In laying Christ as the foundation at Corinth, Paul preached the facts that Christ had died for our sins and that He was buried and raised the third day (1 Cor. 15:1-4). Since this was foundation truth and was not preached in Eden, it follows that the church

could not have been built in the days of Adam. Christ did not have any church until He purchased it with His blood (Acts 20:28).

The church which Jesus built had its beginning in Jerusalem on the first *Pentecost* after Jesus' resurrection, in A.D. 33. Isaiah prophesied that the church would be established in Jerusalem "in the last days" (Isa. 2:2-4). In the second chapter of Revelation, we read of the seven churches of Asia, which were churches in actual existence. This was about A.D. 96, so we may conclude that the church must have been established sometime between 760 B.C. and A.D. 96. About fifty years after Isaiah made his prophecy, Micah made a similar prophecy (Mic. 4:1). This was written about 710 B.C. In about the year A.D. 67 the apostle Paul referred to the kingdom (church) as having been received (Heb. 12:28). In 710 B.C., the church was something of the future while in A.D. 67, it had been received and was in existence. Thus, we conclude that the church must have had its beginning on earth sometime between these two dates. In about 603 B.C., the prophet Daniel predicted that God would at some time in the future set up a kingdom (Dan. 2:44). In about A.D. 64, Paul, in writing to the church at Colosse, speaks of people being "translated into the kingdom" (Col. 1:13). Then the church was established sometime between 603 B.C. and A.D. 64.

John the Baptist began his preaching in A.D. 26. Isaiah, Micah, Daniel, and others had prophesied of the coming kingdom. In about A.D. 26, John boldly declared that the kingdom was not only coming, but that it was at hand (Mat. 3:2). About eight years later, A.D. 34, Luke speaks of the church (kingdom) as actually existing (Acts 6:1). This confines our investigation to a much shorter period of time. In A.D. 26, the church was yet to be established, while in A.D. 34, it was in actual existence. In the year A.D. 27, Christ began to preach that "the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Mat. 4:17). In about the year A.D. 31, Christ commissioned the twelve to preach, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Mat. 10:5-7). The seventy were sent out by the Lord about one year later, or in A.D. 32, and were told to preach, "The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you" (Luke 10:8-9). It was during the same year that Christ said, "Upon this rock, I will build my church" (Mat. 16:18). He did not mean that He would at that time

build His church, but that He would build it at some future date. After Christ's death, we read that Joseph of Arimathaea, was "waiting for the kingdom of God" (Luke 23:51).

According to these Scriptures, the beginning of the church was still future in A.D. 32. Just one year later, A.D. 33, Luke tells us that the Lord was adding people to the church (Acts 2:47). We must conclude that the church began within the year A.D. 32-33.

Let us turn back to some of the earlier prophecies of the beginning of the church. The second chapter of Isaiah tells us three specific things about the beginning of the church. (1) It is to be in the last days. (2) All nations are to flow into it. (3) It is to begin in Jerusalem. In Acts the second chapter, on the day of Pentecost, the day we first find people being added to the church, in Jerusalem, we find the apostle Peter declaring as he quoted Joel's prophecy, that this is the time referred to as "last days." The prophets of old predicted that the Lord's house, or church, would be established on earth in the "last days." Peter declared "this is that" (Acts 2:16). It was also on this day that the invitation was first extended to "all nations" (Acts 2:39).

The Lord promised that His kingdom (church) would come with power, and that the power would come with the Holy Spirit (Mark 9:1; Acts 1:8). In the second chapter of Acts, we see that the Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost, which was one of the three annual feast days of the Jews. Therefore, the kingdom (church) came on the day of Pentecost, in the first century after Jesus' resurrection in A.D. 33.

### **FALLING AWAY OF THE CHURCH WAS PREDICTED**

The Holy Spirit revealed that "some shall depart from the faith... forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats" (1 Tim. 4:1-3). This departure was gradual, but the final result was that Boniface III was designated pope by the Emperor Phocus. This was in A.D. 606. This departure from the faith brought on the dark ages. The apostle Paul predicted that such a time would come. To the church at Ephesus, Paul said, "I know this, that after My departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:29-30).

## **AFTER THE DARK AGES CAME A RESTORATION OF CHRISTIANITY**

A religious movement began to take place in the early part of the nineteenth century. It was unlike any that had ever preceded it. This restoration was to consist in holding precisely and only what is taught in the Word of God. Restoration leaders looked to a complete return to primitive Christianity in doctrine, practice and in spirit. The Restoration Movement simply stated was: "All practices having their origin in tradition, human reason, or expediency are utterly eschewed." Leaders in the Restoration Movement were such men as: James O'Kelly, Dr. Abner Jones, Barton W. Stone, Thomas and Alexander Campbell and others. These leaders sought to call people back to the Bible. The Bible should be our guide.

When the inner consciousness is made the supreme authority in religion, the result is rationalism; when feelings are made the source of authority, the result is mysticism; when fallible opinions of the church are made authoritative, the result is traditionalism, but when the Bible is made the supreme authority in religion, the result is Christianity.

A restoration is needed today just as much as it was in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Let us pray and work to the end that primitive Christianity is restored in our day!

### **THE CHURCH IDENTIFIED**

Having found that the Lord built a church on the earth and when and where He built it, the next question is: "How may we recognize that church when we find it?" In attempting to identify any person or thing of which we have an accurate description, we simply compare it (or him) with the description. The New Testament gives us an accurate description of the church. To identify the church that Jesus built, we simply need to find the church possessing the divinely described elements.

Let us turn to the Bible's description of the church: (1) ITS FOUNDATION. The church has but one foundation. Christ is the foundation of the church (1 Cor. 3:11). (2) ITS HEAD. Christ is the only head of the church (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18). As the brain controls the physical body, so Christ, as the head, controls the body,

the church. (3) ITS NAME. The church is spoken of in the New Testament as: The church (Eph. 3:10); The church of God (1 Cor. 1:2); The church of the Lord (Acts 20:28); the church of the firstborn (Heb. 12:23); The body, the church (Col. 1:18); The body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:27); The household of God (Eph. 2:19); Churches of Christ, speaking of local congregations (Rom. 16:16); My church, therefore the church of Christ (Mat. 16:18); The church is the bride of Christ, and therefore wears His name (John 3:29; Rom. 7:4; Rev. 21:9; 22:17). (4) NAME OF THE MEMBERS. Disciples (Acts 6:1); Brethren (Acts 9:30); Believers (Acts 5:14); Saints (Acts 9:13); Priests (1 Pet. 2:5; Rev. 1:6); The people of God (Heb. 4:9); The children of God (1 John 2:1-2); Christians (Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Pet. 4:16). (5) ITS CREED. The word “creed” comes from the Latin verb, “credo,” meaning “I believe.” Human churches have human creeds. The divine church had the divine creed. Christ, Himself, is the creed of His church (Mat. 16:16; 10:32,33; John 20:30; Rom. 10:9, 10). (6) ITS BOOK OF DISCIPLINE. Christ’s church has only one book of discipline, “the apostles’ teaching” (Acts 2:42; John 20:22,23; 1 Cor. 2:9-13). The apostles’ teaching was first oral, but we now have it in written form in the New Testament. The teaching of the apostles as they were guided by the Holy Spirit and sent by Christ is the only Book of Discipline governing Christ’s church. (7) ITS CONDITIONS OF MEMBERSHIP. Hearing the gospel; faith, repentance, confession of Christ, baptism (Mat. 28:18,19; Mark 16:15,16; Luke 24:46-49; Acts 2:36-41; Acts 8:5-12; Acts 8:36-39; Acts 9:1-18; Acts 22:14-16; Acts 26:15-19; Acts 10:34-48; Acts 16:1,15; Acts 16:31-33; Acts 18:8; Rom. 6:3-5; Gal. 3:26,27; Col. 2:12; 1 Pet. 3:21). (8) ITS ITEMS OF WORSHIP. The apostles’ teaching (Acts 2:42); Fellowship, contribution and distribution of offerings (2 Cor. 8:4; 1 Cor. 16:2; Rom. 15:26); Prayer (Acts 12:12; 1 The. 5:17); Singing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16); Breaking of bread (Lord’s Supper) (Mat. 26:26-29; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:23-34). (9) ITS ORGANIZATION. The term “church” is used in the Now Testament to indicate: All of the saved in every nation from the beginning of the Christian era to the end of time (Col. 1:18). It is also used to denote the saved, or children of God, of some one province, or group of provinces (2 The.

1:1; Acts 9:31). It denotes the Christians of some one community who assemble together for public worship and who constitute the local congregation in the community (Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor. 1:2). The churches of Christ in New Testament times were independent of one another organically, yet bound together by a common faith and fellowship. Every church was under the direct authority of Christ (Acts 11:29-30; 2 Cor. 8:4). Local churches had two classes of temporary officers: apostles and prophets. The apostles were personally chosen by the Lord, and had no successors (Mat. 10:1-4; Acts 13:31; 2 Pet. 1:16; John 20:22). The prophets were inspired teachers (Acts 11:27; Acts 13:1-2; Eph. 4:11). The apostolic and prophetic offices ceased when the New Testament was completed (1 Cor. 13:9-10; Jam. 1:25). Local churches were PERMANENTLY given elders (also called bishops, pastors, overseers, and presbyters (Tit. 1:5-9; 1 Tim. 3:1-7; Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:3,4). Deacons (Acts 6:1-5; 1 Tim. 3:8-13). Evangelists (Acts 21:8; Eph. 4:11; 2 Tim. 4:5). (10) ITS FRUITS. Christian growth (1 Pet. 2:2; 2 Pet. 1:5-8; 2 Pet. 3:18). Christian liberality (Acts 2:42; Acts 11:28, 30; Phi. 1:3-5; Phi. 4:13-17), the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-25), and gospel preaching (Acts 8:4; Acts 11:19-20; Acts 19:10; Acts 28:30-31).

### **CAN YOU FIND THE CHURCH THAT JESUS BUILT? ARE YOU A MEMBER OF IT?**

The church that Christ established must have the points of identification listed, together with any other elements described in the New Testament. What made a Christian in New Testament times will make a Christian now. What made a church of Christ in New Testament times will make a church of Christ now. We urge that you study the New Testament, find what made Christians in the first century, and then determine whether you are a Christian, find the New Testament description of Christ's church, and then determine whether you are a member of it. If not, we plead that you immediately become a member of that church built by our Lord, which has existed "since A.D. 33."

# SHALL ONLY THOSE IN THE CHURCH OF CHRIST BE IN HEAVEN?

*Ronnie Hayes*

“Shall only those in the Church of Christ be in heaven?” This is a question that is asked of the members of the church of Christ from time to time. Let me begin to answer this question by making three observations:

(1) In the first place, this question seems to scare people to death, and I think the reason that it does, is that many feel like there is no concrete answer that they can give and maintain the opportunity to teach the one that has asked the question.

(2) In the second place, I feel that the question is a dishonest question asked by individuals that know what we teach from God’s Word on the subject of who will be saved. I think this question fits into the same category of many of the questions asked of Christ. In the book of Luke, we see where Christ was asked a question to tempt Him. “And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” (Luke 10:25). This question is not an honest question. The lawyer is trying to trip up Christ. We can see other incidents where individuals tried to ensnare Christ with questions. “The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?” (Mat. 19:3).

Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in *his* talk. And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any *man*: for thou regardest not the person of men. Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not? But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny. And he saith unto them, Whose *in* this image and superscription? They say

unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's. When they heard *these words*, they marvelled, and left him, and went their way (Mat. 22:15-22).

“And they send unto him certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, to catch him in *his words*” (Mark 12:13).

Then come unto him the Sadducees, which say there is no resurrection; and they asked him, saying, Master, Moses wrote unto us, If a man's brother die, and leave *his wife behind him*, and leave no children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. Now there were seven brethren. and the first took a wife, and dying left no seed. And the second took her, and died, neither left he any seed. and the third likewise. And the seven had her, and left no seed: last of all the woman died also. In the resurrection therefore, when they shall rise, whose wife shall she be of them? for the seven had her to wife. And Jesus answering said unto them, Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God? For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels which are in heaven. And as touching the dead, that they rise: have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, *I am* the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: ye therefore do greatly err (Mark 12:18-27).

And they come again to Jerusalem: and as he was walking in the temple, there come to him the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders, And say unto him, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority to do these things? And Jesus answered and said unto them, I will also ask of you one question, and answer me, and I will you tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, was *it* from heaven, of or men? answer me. And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he Will say, Why then did ye not believe him? But if we shall say, Of men; they feared the people: for all *men* counted John, that he was a prophet indeed. And they answered and said unto Jesus, We cannot tell. And Jesus answering saith unto them, Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things (Mark 11:27-33).

I believe that from these passages anyone can see that there are questions that are used to ensnare one. This question, “Shall only those in the Church of Christ be in heaven?”, is that type of question!

(3) The third observation I want to make is that most who ask this question want a yes or no answer. At the end of my sermon, I WILL NOT DISAPPOINT YOU! You will have a yes or no answer!

## DO YOU BELIEVE THERE IS ONE GOD?

To answer the question before us, I want to use the same tactic that Christ used in Mark 11:27-33. He answered a question with a question. Would you answer this question for me, “DO YOU BELIEVE THERE IS ONE GOD?” If you say yes or no, where did you get your answer? There is not but one place that anyone can go to answer this question, THE BIBLE! Notice these passages: “Unto thee it was shewed, that thou mightest know that the Lord he *is* God; *there is* none else beside him” (Deu. 4:25). “Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God *is* one Lord” (Deu. 6:4). “See now that I, *even I, am* he, and *there is* no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither *is there any* that can deliver out of my hand” (Deu. 32:39). “Wherefore thou art great, O Lord God: for *there is* none like thee, neither *is there any* God beside thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears” (2 Sam. 7:22). “O Lord, *there is* none like thee, neither *is there any* God beside thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears” (1 Chr. 17:20). “That *men* may know that thou, whose name alone *is* Jehovah, *art* the most high over all the earth” (Psa. 83:18). “For thou *art* great, and doest wondrous things: thou *art* God alone” (Psa. 86:10). “Thus saith the Lord the King of Israel, and his redeemer the Lord of hosts; I *am* the first, and I *am* the last; and beside me *there is* no God” (Isa. 44:6). “For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I *am* the Lord, and *there is* none else” (Isa. 45:18). “And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments *is*, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord” (Mark 12:29). “As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols. we know that an idol *is* nothing in the world, and that *there is* none other God but one” (1 Cor. 8:4). “One God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all” (Eph. 4:6). “For *there is* one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus “ (1 Tim. 2:5). After investigating these passages there is only ONE ANSWER. Yes, there is one God. Now, how did we arrive at that conclusion? It is obvious that the answer came from the Bible. Would you have me to teach that there is one God? Why? You

could respond because the Bible says so! And you would be exactly right. It is also obvious to answer the question, “Shall only those in the Church of Christ be in heaven?” can only be answered from God’s Word. Let us look at some more questions.

### IS THERE ONE CHURCH?

If we get into the matter of opinions, then according to most in the world there would be many churches. But is this what the Bible teaches? Look at these passages: “And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Mat. 16:18). Christ said, “I will build my church,” not churches. This statement by Christ is singular possessive. When the church is referred to as the body, notice these passages: “And hath put all *things* under this feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all” (Eph. 1:22-23). “*There is* one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all” (Eph. 4:4-6). “And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all *things* he might have the preeminence” (Col. 1:18). How many bodies are mentioned in these passages? ONE. Since the body is the church and there is only one body, how many churches are there? ONE. Once again, we arrived at our conclusion from the Scriptures. Now, would you have me to go contrary to the Scriptures and teach a multiplicity of churches? Would you want me to teach the most popular doctrine which says, “Attend the church of your choice?” If you stay in harmony with the Scriptures this would be impossible! The truth of the matter is, the only choice you have is to be a member of Christ’s church.

You may ask yourself, “How can I know this church?” You can know it by the description of the Bible. It will have a scriptural name—“the church of God” (Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 1:2), “the church” (Acts 2:47), “the churches of Christ” (Rom. 16:16), “the body of Christ” or “the body” (1 Cor. 12:27; Col. 1:18), “house of God” (1 Tim. 3:15), “church of the firstborn” (Heb. 12:23). It will also be organized scripturally. Christ is the head of the church (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18).

Under Christ, each congregation will be overseen by elders (Acts 20:17-28; 1 Tim. 3:1-7). Under the oversight of the elders are a group of men to serve, called deacons (1 Tim. 3:8-13). Then there are preachers and teachers of the gospel, all who are under the elders. You can recognize this church by its worship. “God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship [him] in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). It is for this reason that we sing (Eph. 5:19), partake of the Lord’s supper (Acts 20:7), give (1 Cor. 16:1-2), pray (Acts 2:42), and teach or preach (Acts 20:7).

### **IS THERE ONLY ONE WAY TO BE SAVED?**

If you were to ask this question on the street you would probably get as many answers as those to whom you talk. How can we come to a logical answer? What if we decided to just let everyone make up their own way of salvation? If this were true, then really there would be no need for salvation for all would stand justified in their own right. What if we decided to let parents be the guide? If this were true, there would be no need to send missionaries all over the world, because one’s parents would establish what they should do for salvation, and the religious world is certainly not ready to accept that kind of thinking. Well, how are we going to answer the question? Listen to what the Bible says: “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6). “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. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me” (John 6:44-45). In these verses, you can see, Christ is the only way. Certainly there are other ways that are offered by the religious world today, but they are not approved by God.

“There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof fare the ways of death” (Pro. 14:12). Jeremiah penned it this way, “O Lord, I know that the way of man *is* not in himself: *it is* not in man that walketh to direct his steps” (Jer. 10:23). What conclusion can you draw from these passages? The Bible says there is one way of salvation.

You might then ask, “What is this one way of salvation?” First, we should note that the sum of God’s Word is truth. “The sum of thy word is truth: And every one of thy righteous ordinances endureth for ever” (Psa. 119:160—ASV). When one obtains the sum of two numbers, he gets the total. For example,  $2 + 2 = 4$ . Four is the sum. Therefore, when one has the truth, which is God’s Word, he has all of it. What then does the Word of God say that one must do to be saved? (1) One must hear God’s Word. “So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). “Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37). (2) One must believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of the living God. “I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins” (John 8:24). “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). (3) One must repent of his sins. “I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3). “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9). (4) One must confess that Jesus is Christ. “And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God” (Acts 8:37). “For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Rom. 10:10). (5) One must be baptized. “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:16). “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16). “The like figure whereunto *even* baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 3:21). (6) One must be faithful for life. “And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name’s sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved” (Mat. 10:22). “For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at

hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing” (2 Tim. 4:6-8). “Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast *some* of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (Rev. 2:10). Now, I have a question for you. If you have not done the things mentioned above for salvation, are you saved? NO! Remember, that the Bible says that this is the only way of salvation. If you are going to be in harmony with the Scriptures, then you must obey them.

### **WILL ONLY THE SAVED BE IN HEAVEN?**

Up to this point, we have established from the Scriptures, that there is one God, there is one church and there is one way of salvation. What can be shown about those that will go to heaven? Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people. “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if *it were* not *so*, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, *there* ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:1-6). Those who are in Christ will be in heaven. “*There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Rom. 8:1). “And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son” (1 John 5:11). “And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed *are* the dead which die in the Lord henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow, them” (Rev. 14:13). “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ” (Eph. 1:3). The Bible gives only three passages that tell one how to get into Christ (Rom. 6:3-4;

1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:26-27). “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:13). “For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Gal. 3:26-27). One can see from these two passages that the same act that puts one into Christ, puts one in the body which is the church. Seeing that those who are in Christ are those that will inherit the eternal reward and those who are in Christ are in the body which is the church, would you say one must be a member of the church to go to heaven? YES! Now let’s ask the question just like we worded it at the very beginning, “Shall only those in the church of Christ be in heaven?” YES! With the evidence which we have seen; there is one God, there is one way of salvation, and there is one church. The only conclusion we can draw is if you are going to heaven, it will be by the means that Christ has made available. There is nothing magical about the church, being in it simply shows one’s obedience to the commandments of Christ Just because one obeys the gospel and becomes a part of the church, does not mean he will automatically go to heaven. One must be faithful to the end (Mat. 10:22; Rev. 2:10). For one to have a chance to go to heaven, he must be a member of the church of Christ.

# HATED HINDRANCES TO A HOME IN HEAVEN

*Noah A. Hackworth*

## INTRODUCTION

That heavenly home, for which the Christian patiently waits, is not automatic nor unconditionally guaranteed. Between entrance into the city that hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God (Heb. 11:10), and the weary pilgrim lies many hindrances which must be overcome or access into God's presence will be denied. It would be wonderful if life was not fraught with unpleasantness or difficulties, but our Lord indicated that this would not be the case (cf., Luke 17:1-2). The objective, however, of every Christian is to remove every obstacle that confronts him so that nothing will prevent him from entering in through the gate into the city (Rev. 22:14). To "lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us" (Heb. 12:1) is our personal responsibility. Our eyes must be kept on Jesus who is the, "author and perfecter of our faith" (Heb. 12:2). Taking our eyes off Jesus can only result in our demise (cf., Mat. 14:30).

## ANTECEDENT REMARKS

Solomon, in Proverbs 6:16-19, mentions "six things which Jehovah hateth; yea, seven which are an abomination unto him." Does the context demand that we place a special emphasis on the number seven? Are we to conclude that only the seventh item is an abomination while the other six are less than consequential? Is the seventh item climactic? Opinions vary. "...Six are the things which He hateth. It is a sort of climax;—He hates six things, but the seventh worse than all."<sup>1</sup> "...The teacher here enumerates six qualities as detestable, and the seventh worse than all..."<sup>2</sup>

An examination of the following verses will, show that the seven exactly measures the things which are described as odious to the Lord. The Authorized Version, so far as the numbers are concerned, exactly represents the original, which, by the use of the cardinal

number “seven” (sheva), and not the ordinal “seventh,” which would be shvii, shows that the things enumerated are equally an abomination in God’s sight. The view therefore, that the seventh vice is odious to God in an especial degree above the others, is untenable...Besides, we cannot imagine that the vice of sowing discord among brethren, of ver. 19, is more odious to God than the crime of shedding innocent blood of ver. 17.<sup>3</sup>

“The six items are the background for the seventh, which receives the emphasis (cf., Job 5:19; Pro. 30:18-19).”<sup>4</sup> Crawford H. Toy states:

The things enumerated belong all together, they portray the character of a man who schemes to despoil and ruin his fellows...The sequence six, seven does not imply that the seventh thing is an afterthought, or inferior in importance to the others; it is a rhetorical form, equivalent to our six or seven, arithmetically indefinite, implying that the enumeration does not exhaust the list of things coming under a particular category...Between the expressions Yahweh hates and abomination to him there is no difference of meaning...The sense of the verse is: God hates and abominates a number of things, namely....<sup>5</sup>

The word “abomination” is extremely significant in Old Testament Scripture. It is of course never used in a good sense. It is used in the Hebrew text to indicate: (1) that which is loathsome, detestable; (2) something essentially dangerous, sinister or repulsive; (3) things, acts, relationships and characteristics that are detestable to God; (4) pagan practices; (5) repeated failures to observe divine regulations; (6) certain acts or characteristics that are destructive of societal and family harmony.<sup>6</sup> Having now grasped the severity of the word abomination, we can easily see why the things in chapter six of Proverbs are hated by God. He loathes them because he knows they are hindrances to a home in heaven. We must hate them for the same reason. In fact, he who practices any one of the seven things of the text will never darken the door of heaven. Like David, we must “hate every false way” (Psa. 119:104). It is therefore the obligation of this presentation to set forth and explain why the seven things of Proverbs six are Hindrances To A Home In Heaven.

### THE TEXT

“There are six things which Jehovah hateth; Yea, seven which are an abomination unto him: Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, And hands that shed innocent blood; A heart that deviseth wicked purposes, Feet

that are swift in running to mischief, A false witness that uttereth lies, And he that soweth discord among brethren” (Pro. 6:16-19).

### HAUGHTY EYES

Haughty eyes is an unusual expression, but it obviously has reference to more than just one’s physical appearance. Haughty means “proud and vain to the point of arrogance.” The Authorized Version says “a proud look.” The Septuagint (Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures) says, “The eye of the haughty.” There is little variation among biblical scholars regarding the interpretation of this phrase. “Haughty or lofty eyes...It is not merely the look which in meant, but the temper of the mind which the look expresses...The lofty look is the indication of the swelling pride which fills the heart...The supreme disdain.”<sup>7</sup> “Exalted eyes; those who will not condescend to look on the rest of mankind.”<sup>8</sup> “Eyes of loftiness.”<sup>9</sup> “Haughty eyes.”<sup>10</sup> Quite obviously there is little room in the kingdom of God for arrogance or one who “looks down” on his fellowmen. And if there ever was a group of people whose heart was filled with “swelling pride” and who would not condescend to look upon their fellowmen, it was the scribes and the Pharisees of Matthew 23:1-39. The Lord shows they were guilty of at least twenty infractions of Christianity in this one chapter alone! They were a selfish, political network, a clique of aristocratic snobs; a social order of “I’m better-than-you” separatists. They were the elite who wouldn’t think of extending any gratuities to the common man. They thought “the common man” was too common, but ignorance of what constitutes real character in God’s eyes was painfully obvious. Little did they know that “God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble” (Jam. 4:6). The word “proud” is the translation of the Greek *antitassetai* and means “sets himself against.” God actually “sets himself against” those who are proud (cf., Psa. 18:27; 40:4; Luke 1:51-53; Jam. 1:9-10; 2:1-6).

### A LYING TONGUE

The devil told the very first lie, God told Adam and Eve that they could eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden, with the exception of the fruit of the tree in the midst of the garden. They were not allowed to either “eat” or “touch” it lest they die. The devil said, “Ye shall not

surely die” (Gen. 3:14). Satan not only told the first lie, he “standeth not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he in a liar, and the father thereof” (John 8:44). “Lying is the willful perversion of truth, not only by speech, but by any means whatever whereby a false impression is conveyed to the mind.”<sup>11</sup> Ananias and Sapphira were both liars. They lied to the Holy Spirit, they lied to God and they paid the supreme price with the loss of their lives (Acts 5:1-4). Because lying is a reproach to Christian character, Paul the apostle said, “Wherefore, putting away falsehood, speak ye truth each one with his neighbor for we are members one of another” (Eph. 4:25). In Revelation, John said “all liars, their part shall be in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death” (21:8). Lying is far more grievous than most realize. It is a hindrance to heaven.

### **HANDS THAT SIRED INNOCENT BLOOD**

From the killing of Abel to the crucifixion of Christ there has been the shedding of innocent blood. There is probably no greater sin than the taking of an innocent life, and no greater innocence than that of unborn children who are the victims of abortion. Consider the thousands that are terminated each year. Abel was slain by his own brother (Gen. 4), but not because he was guilty of sin. Of what crime was Abel guilty? How could he possibly deserve the act of violence inflicted upon him?

Beyond all question the historian designs to describe not an act of culpable homicide, but a deed of redhanded murder, yet the impression which his language conveys is that of a crime rather suddenly conceived and hurriedly performed than deliberately planned and treacherously executed.<sup>12</sup>

Why, then, did Cain kill Abel? “And wherefore slew he him? Because his works were evil, and his brother’s righteous” (1 John 3:12). After the killing of Abel (Gen. 4:8), God said to Cain, “What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother’s blood crieth unto me from the ground” (v. 10).

The voice of thy brother’s blood (literally, bloods, *i.e.*, of this and all subsequent martyrs...). In this instance the cry was a demand for the punishment of the murderer, and that cry has reverberated through all

lands and down through all ages proclaiming vengeance against the shedder of innocent blood (cf., Gen. 9:5).<sup>13</sup>

The hands of Cain had shed innocent blood. And because of it he would be a “fugitive and wanderer” (vagabond) in the earth (v. 12). Unprovoked violence that ends in the loss of innocent life does not take account of character.

The case of Jesus Christ is a prime example. He was the only “perfectly innocent” Person who ever lived. He never sinned in His whole life (1 Pet. 2:22), not even once, never in a single instance, (*hos amartian ouk epoiesen*). To the Jews He said, “Which of you convicteth me of sin?” (John 8:46). No references in the Sacred Text more perfectly or more beautifully picture the absolute innocence of Christ than Isaiah 53:1-9; Acts 8:32-33; 1 Peter 2:21-23. Even the traitorous Judas said, “I have sinned in that I betrayed innocent blood” (Mat. 27:4). During the process of interrogation, in answer to the Jews’ demand to crucify Christ, Pilate said, “Why, what evil hath he done?” (Mat. 27:23). Pilate’s hesitation, however, did not arrest the efforts to put Christ to death. The Jews finally succeeded in killing the Prince of Life (Acts 3:15). This they did by the hand of lawless men (Acts 2:23). They had shed “innocent blood.” They had premeditated the murder of Christ (1 The. 2:15). Their sin, though it could be forgiven through obedience to the gospel (1 Cor. 15:1-3), will stand forever before the eyes of God as a hated thing. Hands that shed innocent blood are unquestionably a hindrance to a home in heaven.

### **A HEART THAT DEVISETH WICKED PURPOSES AND FEET THAT ARE SWIFT IN RUNNING TO MISCHIEF**

“And a heart devising evil thoughts” and “feet hastening to do evil” is the way the Septuagint renders this verse (cf., Isa. 49:7). To understand the thrust of this passage we must understand what the heart and the feet do. The biblical heart is not the large muscle in the chest area that pumps life-giving blood to every part of the body. The heart in our text refers to the mind, the intellect, the seat of volition and emotion (cf., Acts 2:37; 8:22; Luke 24:38). The heart believes (Rom. 10:10); it thinks (Mat. 9:4); it reasons (Mark 2:8); it imagines (Gen. 8:21); it purposes (2 Cor. 9:7). The heart (the mind) is the place where sin begins. “For go he thinketh within himself, so is he” (Pro.

23:7). What we have under consideration is much more than an evil heart. We have a heart that “designs,” “invents,” “conceives,” “concocts,” “contrives,” and “plots” (cf., Acts 8:18-23). The New Testament says, “The devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot” (John 13:2). From this time on Judas “sought opportunity to deliver him unto them” (Mat. 26:16), ie., he “contrived,” “invented,” and “plotted,” to deliver Christ to His adversaries.

The vineyard of Naboth (1 Kin. 21), and how it was coveted by two unscrupulous people is another example of hearts that deviseth mischief. Naboth, the Jezreelite had a vineyard in Jezreel, near the palace of Ahab, king of Samaria. Ahab wanted the vineyard desperately, but Naboth did not choose to part with it. Jezebel, Ahabs wife, told the sulking king that she would give him Naboth’s vineyard. Her heart then began to devise mischief. She influenced the elders and the nobles of the city to proclaim a fast and position Naboth in a conspicuous place. She then outlined a plan, a plot to effect his demise. Her scheme worked. Naboth was killed and a move was made by Ahab to take his vineyard. Ahab and Jezebel’s victory was bitter-sweet, because there would be serious consequences inflicted upon the house of Ahab because of the unscrupulous scheme of which he was a part.

The heart deviseth wicked purposes (imagination) and the feet hasten to carry them out. “For their feet run to evil, And they make haste to shed blood” (Pro. 1:16). “Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil” (4:27). “Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood: their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity” (Isa. 59:7). “To ran to mischief is to carry out with alacrity and without delay what has already been devised in the heart.”<sup>14</sup>

### **A FALSE WITNESS THAT UTTERETH LIES**

The first thing that comes to mind in this case is a court of law where a false witness speaketh lies. We are actually dealing with perjury. Not to bear false witness is a principle that must be observed universally if the world is to survive. “A false witness that speaketh lies; literally, he that breathes out, or utters, lies as a false witness.”<sup>15</sup> As Clarke says, “One who, even on his oath before a court of justice, tells any thing but the truth.”<sup>16</sup> No wonder a false witness is hated by God; it’s the very thing He prohibited in Exodus 20:16. “Thou shalt

not bear false witness against thy neighbor.” Again, the case of Naboth’s vineyard illustrates the meaning of this verse. Jezebel had told Ahab that he would have Naboth’s vineyard. To effect this, she developed a plan that would bring about the demise of Naboth.

And she wrote in the letters, saying, Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people: and set two men, base fellows, before him, and let them bear witness against him, saying, Thou didst curse God and the king. And then carry him out and stone him to death (1 Kin. 21:9-10).

Because of the testimony of two false witnesses, Naboth was killed and his vineyard stolen. However, a day of reckoning came to both Ahab and Jezebel for their deeds (cf., 1 Kin. 21:21-29).

Jesus Christ also found Himself the victim of the testimony of false witnesses.

Now the chief priests and the whole council sought false witness against Jesus, that they might put him to death; and they found it not, though many false witnesses came. But afterward came two, and said, This man said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days (Mat. 26:59-61).

False testimony borne against Jesus, though He was guilty of no crime, contributed to His eventual death. What a shame! Another hindrance to a home in heaven.

### **HE THAT SOWETH DISCORD AMONG BRETHREN**

And he said unto his disciples, It is impossible but that occasions of stumbling should come; but woe unto him, through whom they come! It were well for him if a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, rather than he should cause one of these little ones to stumble (Luke 17:1-2).

Jesus here speaks of the reality of offenses and the consequences thereof, and one thing is absolutely clear—only enemies of Truth sow discord among brethren (cf., Mat. 13:24-28). One of the most heart-breaking things in the brotherhood today is the existence of division and/or discord. Discord means (1) a lack of agreement; (2) dissension; (3) a confused or harsh mingling of sounds. Perhaps more important than the existence of discord is the way or ways through which it is sown.

(1) *Situations*. A situation is “a combination of circumstances at a given moment.” The right circumstance provides an opportunity for

discord to be sown. The problem of circumcision among the Jews and Gentiles illustrates the point (Acts 15). Those Judaizers who came down from Jerusalem and taught the Gentiles that they could not be saved unless they were circumcised did indeed sow discord among the brethren. So much so that the matter had to be discussed by the apostles and elders of the church and finally be settled by apostolic intervention. How many times have we seen similar situations in the church today? Certain individuals who seize available opportunities to sow discord and create strife and confusion among the brethren.

A splendid example of the correct handling of a “situation” is provided by Abraham in Genesis 13. An altercation developed between the herdsmen of Abram and Lot (13:7). However, the seasoned patriarch did not allow it to become a divisive thing. Lot was given the choice as to where he wanted to pitch his tent. He made his decision. He pitched his tent toward Sodom. His decision, however, was unfortunate, because “the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners against Jehovah exceedingly” (13:13). Abraham went in the opposite direction from Lot. There was indeed an opportunity for discord to be sown by Abraham, but he refused to do it. What an example! Every difficulty cannot be solved as easily as this one, but when brethren today become more interested in making peace than in winning an argument, discord will not be named among the saints of God.

(2) *Inferences, Insinuations and Innuendoes.* Many brethren have been provoked to suspicion through these three things. They refer to indirect suggestions, unauthorized conclusions, subtle expressions and oblique hints and allusions. Enough damage to last a lifetime has been done in the church through such things. Character has been assassinated, reputations ruined and effectiveness destroyed forever. Discord among brethren is the result.

(3) *False Doctrine.* It is impossible to calculate how much damage has been done to the Cause of Christ by false teaching. It has permeated the church throughout the world. Churches have split and Christians have been lost because of it. Discord and false doctrine go hand in hand. They are bedfellows. Where one is found, the other is also. There is only one, lasting way to combat these things and that is

strong, doctrinal, back-to-the-Book preaching. Book, chapter and verse if you please. Otherwise, false teaching becomes yet another thing to be added to the list of things that are hindrances to a home in heaven.

### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Charles John Ellicott, *Ellicott's Commentary On The Whole Bible*, Vols. 3 & 4 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1969), p. 314.

<sup>2</sup>F. C. Cook, *The Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, Reprint 1981), 4:546.

<sup>3</sup>H. D. M. Spence, *The Pulpit Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1950), 9:130-131.

<sup>4</sup>*The Wycliffe Bible Commentary* (London, England: Oliphants, Reprint, 1969), p. 563.

<sup>5</sup>Crawford H. Toy, *The International Critical Commentary* (Edinburgh, Scotland: T & T Clark, n.d.), pp. 127-128.

<sup>6</sup>*Nelson's Expository Dictionary of the Old Testament* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, n.d.), pp. 1-2.

<sup>7</sup>Spence, loc. cit.

<sup>8</sup>Adam Clarke, *Clarke's Commentary* (New York, NY; Nashville, TN: n.p., n.d.), 3:717.

<sup>9</sup>Jamieson, Fausset and Brown, *Commentary on the Whole Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, Eleventh printing, 1973), p. 462.

<sup>10</sup>J. R. Dummelow, *A Commentary On The Holy Bible* (New York, NY: Macmillan, n.d.), p. 381.

<sup>11</sup>Spence, loc. cit.

<sup>12</sup>Spence, 1:80.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>Spence, Op. cit., p. 131.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Clarke, loc. cit.

# NEW DOCTRINES IN THE CHURCH—FROM HEAVEN OR FROM MEN?

*H. A. (Buster) Dobbs*

There is a light and flimsy sentiment, running footloose and fancy-free through the brotherhood, to the effect that some of the commands of God are enormous, and must be obeyed, and other commands of God are piddling, and may be ignored.

This strange view is rampant in the church. It is featured in the Bible Departments of all colleges and universities operated by our brethren. It is exalted and praised as being respectful of the New Testament teaching on grace. It is proudly on display at virtually every university lecture-ship.

It is, without doubt, among the most infernal doctrines in the church of our time.

It is common for men to attempt to number the commands of God, and assign a level of importance to each commandment of the Lord. The rich ruler, who came running to fall down at the feet of Jesus with the question, “What shall I do to inherit eternal life?” (Luke 18:18), was apparently laboring under the delusion that there was some great, central command, and if a person found out what it was, and obeyed it, he would be safe. Jewish rabbis, we are told, tediously counted the commands of Moses, and set them in order.

## **WEIGHTIER MATTERS**

Jesus tells us to attend to “the weightier matters of the law” (Mat. 23:23). Some suppose the Master is advising us to pay attention to the more important teaching of the New Covenant, and be less concerned about the smaller matters of that contract. This appears to be the popular view of this passage and the prevailing teaching of most commentators.

The idea is projected that in the law of Christ there are huge, multi-colored, three-dimensional doctrines on the one hand, and there are small, black-and-white, flat doctrines on the other hand. The big ones are

necessary and the little ones can be ignored with impunity. Our task is to sift among the words of the New Testament and decide which word is major and which word is minor.

For example, the authors of the book, *The Worldly Church*, complain that the restoration fathers produced a method of Bible study in which “the New Testament became essentially a law book or divine constitution for the church, with most of the doctrinal ‘facts’ reduced to a level of equal importance” (p. 58). They also say, “Such a method of reading the Bible made it very difficult to distinguish the ‘weightier matters’ from the less weighty ones, the central doctrines of the Bible from subordinate ones” (p. 59). They quote 1 Corinthians 15:3 from the New International Version (NIV), “For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance” (p. 72). Incidentally, this is also the translation of the New American Standard. The actual reading of the passage is, “For I delivered unto you first of all,” but the translators of the NIV changed “first of all” to “of first importance.”

So the notion is projected that we have some doctrines in the New Testament that are weightier, central, and of first importance, and we have other doctrines that are less important, less weighty, subordinate, and secondary. The idea is to faithfully keep the teaching that is weightier, central, and of first importance, and to not bother about, or fuss with, the insignificant, peripheral doctrines of the New Testament.

This same idea is featured in Shelly’s book, *I Just Want To Be A Christian*.

Across the years, this view has been the major tool of the religious liberal as he seeks to discount and dismiss some Bible teaching. The liberal knows that, if he can sell this idea, the Bible will be reduced to a bag full of holes; it will hold nothing, and lose everything.

Well, what about it? Does the Bible teach that some of its teaching is frivolous? What did Jesus mean when He spoke of the weightier matters of the law?

There are at least two possible ways to understand the teaching of Jesus. Weightier can mean more important, but it can also mean more profound. It is a fact that some of the teaching of the Bible is more complex than some other teaching of the Bible; but it is not true that some of the words of the Bible are more important than other words of the Bible. The book of Hebrews exhorts us to leave “the doctrines of the

first principles of Christ, and...press on to perfection.” Not meaning, of course, that we are to forsake first principles of Christ, but rather that we are to proceed from simple things (the milk of the Word) to more complicated things (the meat of the Word).

To advance from foundational facts to more difficult doctrines does not require a rejection, or even discounting, of the basic truths with which we began.

In the ten-unit system of math, two plus two equals four. One may move from this primary equation to the most intricate considerations of the highest levels of mathematics, and earn a terminal degree in statistics, but, in the ten-unit system of math, two plus two will still equal four. If we knock down the basic prop, the whole structure falls.

The most advanced principles of statistics may be difficult to comprehend because of a multiplicity of interrelated elements, but it does not follow that such advanced principles are more important than the basic facts that lie at the foundation.

The admonition to attend to the weightier matters of the law is not a declaration that some of the words of God are big and other words of God are small. Jesus, in the context of Matthew 23:23, tells the scribes and Pharisees to faithfully observe the principles of justice, mercy, and faith (weightier matters of the law), but also to tithe mint, anise and cummin. The Lord does not, in this or any other text, classify the commands of God as being either big or little. He is not saying that the New Covenant (Contract) has fine print that is meaningless, useless, and trivial, and that may be ignored as unimportant.

The genius of the plea to restore the church of the first century resides in the insistence that we are to do precisely and exactly what the Bible tells us to do in precisely and exactly the way the Bible tells us to do it. This makes sense, and has a very wide appeal.

But, if we vacate this lofty ground, and begin to say that some requirements of holy Scripture are secondary and not binding, we are vulnerable, and the appeal loses its appeal.

If some of God's words are unnecessary and other words of God are vital, who, pray tell, can determine which is which? What mortal would be so presumptuous as to go picking and choosing among the very words of God? Shades of Jehoiakim and his pen knife. When a person begins to cut out and cast into the fire any of the words of the Bible, it won't be

long until there is nothing left but the covers, and the bindings, too, will be thrown into the fire in the brazier. “And they were not afraid, nor rent their garments” (Jer. 36:24).

### FIRST AND GREATEST

It is argued, by some who are bent on trying to prove that the Bible has first and second class commands, that Jesus’ answer to a lawyer sustains their position. The lawyer was “trying” Jesus. He was putting Jesus to a test. He said to the Master, “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?” The religious leaders of Israel had long argued that the commands of Moses could be classified according to importance, but had disagreed among themselves as to which command was the greatest. Whatever Jesus said could pit Him against a distinguished, and revered, Rabbi. All who were of a different party would turn on Him. It was a trap!

Jesus answered,

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments the whole law hangeth, and the prophets (Mat. 22:37-40).

A magnificent reply! To love God supremely, and to love fellow man as you love yourself, fulfills the whole law. Love of God, and love of fellow man includes all of the commands of the law, and the prophets. Every command is embraced in the command to love. When we love God, our godliness will compel full submission to every command that relates to God. When we love our neighbor, we will obey every requirement of God’s Word that involves our duty to others. Every command of the Bible has to do with either our service to God, or our service to others. Therefore, love is inclusive.

No carping critic who came with captious questions would be able to accuse the Master of ocean and earth and skies for His brilliant response. What Jesus really said was that all of the commands of the law are of equal importance, and all of them must be obeyed.

Paul’s statement, “And the greatest of these is love” (1 Cor. 13:13) is but an extension of what Jesus taught. Love is greatest because it includes all the rest, and excludes nothing God would have us do. Just

as saving faith is inclusive of all the commands of God, so is love inclusive of all God's laws.

### WHY? WHY? WHY?

It frightens me to know that preachers, and professors are attempting to downgrade some of the commands of God. I am alarmed when men in high places, and who exert great influence, belittle anything that is written in the law of the Lord. Why would anyone encourage disobedience to God, even if the matter appears, in their fallible eyes, to be small? Why would professors in Christian Universities search for what they might consider to be loopholes in the new covenant?

One man, a professor at a West Coast University, brazenly suggested that if we can be 10% righteous, God's grace will take care of us. In other words, he had the temerity to indicate that a person can be 90% unrighteous, and still be saved. He declared that grace will excuse excessive disobedience, and transgression. In a private letter to me, a professor of 35 years standing in a University at Searcy, Arkansas, inquired, "In your talk about meeting the conditions of salvation, do you mean meeting them 100%?"

The Arkansas professor proceeded to propound the view that something less than 100% obedience is acceptable to God. The professor claimed a greater reliance on naked grace by hinting that something less than 100% obedience is all right with God.

Well, how much disobedience, unrepented of and unconfessed, does God promise to overlook, and excuse? Where is it written? If it is unreasonable and extreme to teach that God requires 100% obedience, then how much less than 100% submission will God tolerate? Who can say? If not 100%, how about 75%? 50%? 33%? Or, as the California expert taught, 10%?

If teaching that grace will condone 10% rebellion exalts grace, then is not grace even more honored by telling people they can be 90% sinful and still be approved by the Lord? If we really want to magnify grace, why not take the position that grace is almighty, and no amount of obedience is required? That would really aggrandize grace!

The obvious point is that when we begin to excuse transgression of law, duty, and obligation, there is no place to stop until we fall off the spectrum on the far end of complete disobedience.

My Arkansas friend chided me for wanting us to be perfect. Well, Jesus tells us, “Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Mat. 5:48). Perfect means to carry through completely, to accomplish, to finish, to bring to an end, to add to what is yet wanting in order to render a thing full.

We see this idea developed in the life of Jesus. “Though he was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation” (Heb. 5:8-9).

To whom is Jesus the author of eternal salvation? “To them that obey him.” Well, now, is that partial obedience? No! No! A thousand times no! The obedience required of us is the complete obedience we see in the life of Jesus. That is what made Him perfect. “Though he was a Son, yet learned obedience.” Nothing less than such total submission to God and His Word is acceptable. Be ye perfect!

Why would men, in sensitive positions of importance, say anything that might even remotely suggest that something less than 100% obedience is sanctioned by Bible teaching? Would these men be satisfied with less than 100% obedience from their own children? What possesses a person to actually encourage disregard of divine law?

Partial obedience is disobedience!

When Jesus taught His disciples how to pray, He taught them to say, “Our Father who art in heaven...thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth” (Mat. 6:9-10). How is God’s will done in heaven, think ye? In that celestial realm, is God obeyed partially? Is the obedience of heavenly beings temporary, spasmodic, and intermittent? Do spirit beings, who daily go in and out before the face of God, seek to excuse any failure to do the will of God by saying, “Oh, come on God, surely you don’t mean 100% obedience!” “You don’t expect us to be perfect, do you?”

Why did God cast down angels to hell, and commit them to pits of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment?

Why would a person who claims to be under the total influence of the teaching of Jesus, be so blind to the unambiguous words of Jesus?

If the winds and the waves obey His will, then so should demons or men, or whatever it be! This is basic, and so crystal clear, that I am flabbergasted anyone would attempt to excuse even the slightest disregard for heavenly injunctions. What is their motive? What is to be gained?

Such men surely are not under the misconception that by this teaching they are doing God a service. Who, think ye, do they seek to exalt?

### **IT IS NOT EASY**

Following Jesus involves denying oneself, and carrying a cross. It is hard work, and demands many sacrifices. There is a powerful temptation for us to go along and get along. We would far rather clasp hands with all mankind, smile approval, and keep our counsel. This would make us popular.

On the other hand, it is hard to stand up against evil. It is not a pleasant thing to confront, and expose, false teaching. It causes the loss of friends. It generates animosity. It alienates brothers. People look at us through their eyebrows, and say ugly things.

God told the prophet, "Be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they are a rebellious house" (Eze. 2:6).

If they called the master of the house "the Lord of the flies" how much more they of his household (Mat. 10:25). "All that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3:12). Jesus said, "If I say truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God heareth the words of God: for this cause ye hear them not, because ye are not of God" (John 8:46-47). They answered. "Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a demon" (John 8:48). People today who are indisposed to hear the words of God continue to sneer, and to say, "Samaritan! Demon!"

It is not comfortable to face a jeering, scoffing, unbelieving world, and rebuke its folly and foibles. It is not always pleasant to point out the exclusiveness of truth, and name error. The unholy desire to court the favor of the godless has caused many a saint to compromise himself, and apologize for the truth.

"Ye adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore would be a friend of the world maketh himself an enemy of God" (Jam. 4:4). On this basis, some of God's children are also His enemies. I say this even weeping.

### **ONE POINT**

"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is become guilty of all" (Jam. 2:10).

To violate, what may appear to our human eyes to be a tinsel command, is an insult to God. If a creature is bold to reject a rule of the

Creator in one thing, however insignificant it may seem to be, he will soon transgress some other stipulation of his Master.

The essence of disobedience is rebellion! The rule violated may appear to be trivial, but the disobedience is great because it is rebellion.

When someone tells me that there are important doctrines in the Bible that must be faithfully kept, and unimportant teachings that may be ignored with impunity, my question is, Which is which?

Tell me, I beg you, what was the size of the command violated by the following:

Ananias and Sapphria?

The man who picked up sticks on the Sabbath?

Achan?

Korah?

Nadab?

Abihu?

Uzzah?

Saul the son of Kish?

Alexander the coppersmith?

Please! please, tell me which of the commands of God are ity-bitty, and which are gargantuan. I am, confessedly, simple enough to think that all of God's commands are important.

### THE OLD LAW

“For if the word spoken through angels proved stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation?” (Heb. 2:2-3).

The Old Law was less glorious than is the New Law. If the Old Law was sacrosanct, then surely the New Law is inviolate!

Grace has an important part to play. Without grace no one could be saved! But grace is not unconditional!

The child of God, when he sins, is to agonize over his failure, be filled with a deep sense of regret for having offended God, and out of this godly sorrow will come a firm resolve to do better in the future. Such profound repentance, coupled with confession and earnest prayer, will cause the grace of God to make his child holy again. That is what it means to be perfect! And that is the only biblical basis for a feeling of security.

“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 righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:8-9).

What transgression was punished under the Old Law?

Every transgression!

What disobedience was punished under the Old Law?

Every disobedience?

No exception! When the Word of God was ravished, the wrath of God was poured out!

But God is not without mercy! If we repent, if we confess our sins to those we have sinned against, if we make restitution to the extent possible, if we reform, then, thank God, our advocate in heaven pleads the merits of His blood, and we are forgiven and renewed to our first love (cf., 1 John 2:1-2).

May God grant that no one of us ever gives any indication, however slight, that it is justifiable for us to transgress any law of God, however unimportant it may seem to be in our poor, weak human sight.

God’s Word, the whole of it, is immutable!

Every one therefore that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man, who built his house upon the rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon the rock (Mat. 7:24-25).

# ETERNAL PRINCIPLES OF WORSHIP

*B. C. Carr*

## I. INTRODUCTION:

We have been given the assignment of discussing eternal principles of worship, dealing with worshipping God in the past, present and future. We shall try to deal with examples of worship under the past by giving some attention to cases under the patriarchy, the Law of Moses and in the early church. As time and space permits we will notice worship as it is prescribed for the Christian Age. We shall conclude with some considerations about worship in heaven.

## II. WHAT IS WORSHIP?

1. Such ideas as to serve, to adore, to prostrate oneself, to bow, to draw near, to kiss, to seek the face of Jehovah, are used to describe worship.<sup>1</sup> Worship is an act or a series of religious acts characterized by a feeling of reverence and love. These acts are addressed to God (thus they involve purpose and intent to worship God). These acts must be directed by God if He is to accept them. These acts are to be performed by a faithful servant of God if they are to bring honor to God and to bless the worshiper.
2. Some try to limit worship to an attitude within the heart. We agree that the heart is involved, but more is required. There must be the right act performed. One well-known brother wrote, "Worship is purely internal, worship itself is purely mental."<sup>2</sup> Guy N. Woods comments upon "worship in the heart," in his own special style in these words:

In the American Standard Version of the New Testament at Matt. 2:8, there is reference to a footnote (and often thereafter where the word worship occurs a reference to this footnote), which reads: "The Greek word denotes an act of reverence whether paid to a creature (see ch. 4:9; 18:26), or to the Creator (see ch. 4:10)."

1) The Greek word denotes an act. It will be seen, therefore, that our author under review is in error in declaring that worship is solely a matter of the heart, It is not true that only the inner man worships. Inasmuch as worship consists of *acts*, it follows that such acts are as much involved in worship, and are as essential to it, as the attitude which prompts them. The view that worship is simply and solely an attitude—to be distinguished from, and dissociated with acts—is not in harmony with the facts in the case.

2) The Greek word denotes an act...paid. This emphasizes and enhances the force of our suggestions above. Worship is an attitude; but it is more, it is an attitude which expresses itself in an act—an act paid to another. To worship then, one must engage in acts.<sup>3</sup>

3. Perhaps worship can be better understood as we study examples of worship in the Bible. Before we begin our study of specific examples, however, let us look at some of the things required in acceptable worship.

### III. CHARACTERISTICS OF ACCEPTABLE WORSHIP.

1. *There must be the right object of worship—God:*
  - a. Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 6:13 in his refusal to worship the devil. He said, “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve” (Mat. 4:10; Exo. 20:3-5).
2. *Acceptable worship must be authorized by God.*  
Man don not have the right to decide how he is to worship God. The Bible regulates our worship by command, approved example or implication (Mat. 17:1-5).
3. *Right worship must be according to the law in affect at the time.* As an example of this we are not to keep the Sabbath day in our time (Exo. 20:8). Neither are we to offer animal sacrifices or keep the feast days of the Law of Moses.
4. *Acceptable worship must be offered by a faithful servant of God.* It in generally accepted that God will not hear sinners (John 9:31). One must be a worshipper of God and do His will. The prayer of a righteous man avails much (Jam. 5:16), but the

prayers of the wicked will not accepted (Pro. 15:8, 29; Pro. 28:9; 1 Pet. 3:12).

5. *Acceptable worship must be done in Spirit and Truth.* God is a spirit: “And they that worship him must worship him in Spirit and in truth” (John 4:24).
6. *A right relationship with others determines acceptable worship.* a) Required to get right with brother before worship (Mat. 5:23-24); b) Must forgive others if expect forgiveness (Mat. 6:14-15); c) Wrong actions toward wife can hinder prayer (1 Pet. 3:7).
7. *Proper worship requires action—an act paid.* We cannot worship by just being in an attitude of worship. Some have abused Revelation 1:10, by excusing their absence from the assembly, saying, “I was there in spirit.” This attitude is little different in principle from the Catholic doctrine of “The Baptism of Desire.” They say, “In adults the baptism of desire or of blood may supply the place of baptism of water.”<sup>4</sup>
8. *Certain acts of worship are limited as to time.* a) The passover was to be observed on the fourteenth day of the first month (Num. 9:5). Before an exception could be granted, Moses had to have a command from God (Num. 9:9-13).
9. *Some worship is limited as to place.* a) The Jews were to go to Jerusalem to worship according to the law. God’s Name was recorded there (Exo. 20:24; Deu. 16:6; 1 Kin. 9:3; 2 Chr. 6:6); b) The Lord’s Supper is limited to a place—the assembly (1 Cor. 11:20, 33).
10. *Acceptable worship must be offered sincerely in faith.* (Jam. 1:5-6; Mat. 23:14). Lip worship only is vain worship (Mat. 15:8-9).

#### IV. EXAMPLES OF WORSHIP THAT MAY TEACH US.

Paul said, “For 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). Let us now turn our attention to some things recorded in the Scriptures and learn from these examples.

## A. UNACCEPTABLE WORSHIP

1. *Cain's worship* (Gen. 4:3-5).
  - a. God did not respect or accept (v. 5).
  - b. Lord had respect for Abel (v. 4).
  - c. What was the difference? Abel offered by faith (Heb. 11:4). Since faith comes by the word of God (Rom. 10:17), we conclude that what Abel did in worship was authorized by God. It is inferred that what Cain did was without authorization, hence unacceptable. (See characteristics—Rule 2, above).
2. *Strange fire offered by Nadab and Abihu* (Lev. 10:1-7). No doubt these men had good intentions. So far as I know, they were sincere. They were making an offering by fire, but it was not the kind God had authorized, “he commanded them not” (v. 1). This shows the danger in presuming upon the silence of God. In order for worship to be acceptable it must be authorized. (See characteristics—Rule 2).
3. *Jeroboam's calf worship in Bethel and Dan* (1 Kin. 12:25-30).
4. *The giving of Ananias and Sapphira* (Acts 5:1-10).
  - a. The amount seems to have been generous—maybe more than others.
  - b. It was for a good cause (Acts 4:32).
  - c. They had a right to give as they purposed (2 Cor. 9:7).
  - d. They were hypocritical in their worship—they lied to God (vv. 2-3).
  - e. God shows His wrath by causing instant death (vv. 5-10).
5. *The corrupting of the Lord's Supper* (1 Cor. 11:20-34).
  - a. They were doing this in the right place—the assembly (v. 20).
  - b. So far at; we know they used the right elements of supper.
  - c. Evidently it was on the right day (Acts 20:7).

- d. They had perverted the purpose—a gluttonous feast (v. 22).
  - e. Their heart was not right—they despised the church of God (v. 22).
  - f. They showed contempt for poorer saints (v. 22).
  - g. Their worship was not acceptable (v. 20).
6. *Other things practiced today, but not acceptable according to demands of acceptable worship.*
- a. Instrumental music in worship.
  - b. Lord's Supper observed at times other than first day of week.
  - c. Humming and vocal bands as substitute for singing (Eph. 5:19).
  - d. Tithing or giving as decided by church leaders.
  - e. Silent prayers in public assembly.
  - f. Women preachers.
  - g. Everything we do is worship. You may add to this list many things observed today.
- B. *Acceptable worship is authorized in the New Testament.*
- 1. The New Testament authorizes us to sing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16).
  - 2. The New Testament authorizes us to pray (Acts 2:42; 1 Tim. 2:8).
  - 3. The New Testament authorizes us to teach (Acts 2:42; Acts 20:7).
  - 4. The New Testament authorizes us to give as we have been prospered on the first day of the week (1 Cor. 16:1-2).
  - 5. The New Testament authorizes us to observe the Lord's Supper each Lord's day (Acts 20:7; Acts 2:42). In addition to these, the Bible teaches us not to forsake the assembly (Heb. 10:25). Therefore, when we come together in the assembly, on the Lord's day, each Christian is to worship God in all of the acts described above. I think all will agree that the early church did all of these. No one could successfully charge that any of these acts

are unscriptural. All of these things will stand the test of acceptable worship.

### WORSHIP IN HEAVEN

The final point that we wish to discuss has to do with worship in Heaven. Much speculation has been given by various ones concerning some of these things. In my judgment, we must be realistic in our approach to this matter. There are a number of passages in the book of Revelation which mention worship. Men have been prone to literalize these passages and make applications for our worship today. They had also taken figurative and symbolic language for a literal application of things to come in heaven. I think we must keep in mind that the book of Revelation is filled with symbols and highly figurative language. Let us look at a few passages from this book which have to do with worship.

*In Revelation 4:1-11*, please notice:

1. This is a vision of God upon His throne (v. 2).
2. The audience is made up of 24 elders and four beasts (vv. 4, 6-8).
3. All these are worshipping God (vv. 8-11).

Some observations we can make:

- a. God is worthy of worship, glory and honor (vv. 10-11).
- b. Beasts are worshipping God, surely we do not expect literal beasts to be in heaven.
- c. We must conclude this is not a description of future worship in heaven although we may conclude God will be worthy of such worship.

*Revelation 5:1-14*.

1. This is a continuation of the heavenly vision of God upon His throne.
2. The lion of Judah is worthy to open the seals of the book. He is pictured as a Lamb (v. 6).
3. The four beasts and 24 elders fall down to worship the lamb.
  - a. Each had harps and golden vials, filled with prayers of saints (v. 8).
4. They sang a new song (v. 9).
5. They had been made kings and priests who should reign on earth (v. 10).

6. Countless angels join the beasts and elders in praise to the Lamb (vv. 11-12).
7. Every creature in Heaven, on earth, and under the earth and in the sea John heard worshipping.

Observations:

- a. The symbolic language of the preceding chapter continues.
- b. A time of reign on earth is spoken of—this does not sound like Heaven.
- c. God and the Lamb are worshipped by every creature. We must admit they are worthy to be worshipped now and forever.
- d. This does not clearly reveal what kind of worship will be in Heaven.

*Revelation 14:1-6.*

1. John sees the Lamb and 144,000 with the Father's name written in their foreheads N. 1).
2. John hears voice from heaven:
  - a. As of many waters (v. 2).
  - b. As of a great thunder (v. 2).
  - c. Heard voice of harpers-harping with harps (v. 2).
3. They sang, a new song before the throne, before the four beasts and elders N. 3).
  - a. A song limited to the 144,000 redeemed (v. 3).
  - b. These were not defiled with women—they are virgins (v.4).
4. Another angel is seen flying in heaven.
  - a. Has everlasting gospel to preach on earth (v. 6).

Some observations:

- a. No evidence here to justify instrumental music in the church. This is a heavenly scene.
- b. Only virgin men could sing, (no women mentioned) but in heaven all shall be as angels (Mat. 22:30). Therefore this must have earthly meaning.
- c. The gospel is to be preached, but upon the earth. There will be no need in Heaven.

We must again conclude that passages that are supposed to tell what worship in Heaven will be like have mostly, if not altogether, earthly application.

We need to think carefully about what the Scriptures actually teach about worship in Heaven. We might begin by asking the question:

1. *Will there be worship services such as we have here on earth?*

If it is true that we really should have worship such as here on earth I am certain that it would be a great disappointment for some members of the church. I heard a preacher story which illustrates this point. "It is said that a certain church member was dreaming that he had died and was approaching the gates of heaven and there were many traveling with him. As they approached the pearly gates, they heard great shouting and rejoicing from the other side. When finally the gates were opened, the man inquired, 'What was the occasion for all the shouting and rejoicing that we just heard?' Someone replied, 'They have just announced that they won't have Wednesday night services here in heaven.'" To say the least, I believe that this is the attitude that a great many people have toward worship here in earth. I cannot conceive of those who despise worship or who with resentful hearts assemble to worship, being allowed even to enter into the gates into the holy city. It seems to me that such an attitude would exclude one from that acceptable group who shall enjoy the bliss of Heaven.

2. *Granting that there will be worship in Heaven, I think that we can be certain that it will be carried out according to the will of Heaven.*

In the model prayer given by our Lord in Luke 11, one of the things mentioned in verse 2 of that chapter is: The thought, "Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth." This indicates to me that the Father's will is carried out perfectly in Heaven. So whatever form of worship, it will be according to the Father's Will.

I must confess unto you that I do not know much about the kind of worship that we shall have in Heaven, because I do not find this clearly revealed in these Scriptures. I do know that the apostle Paul speaks of himself evidently as one caught up to the third heaven (2 Cor. 12:2). Paul explained that he heard unspeakable words which it is not lawful for man to utter (v. 4). Since I am not an apostle nor a prophet, I would be presumptuous to claim that I had such a revelation and even if I had, it is likely that I would not be able to tell you about it. It seems that some things will have to wait unto after the judgment be-

fore they can be really determined. But let us reason for a little while about what might or might not take place: I think it is evident that we would not be worshipping as we do in the specified acts done in worship today. For instance:

*Will there be singing such as we have in the church?*

We are told in Revelation 14:3, that they sung a new song no man could learn except the 144,000. It is evident that many of the songs we sing would not be appropriate, for instance:

When We all Get To Heaven  
 On Jordan's Stormy Banks I Stand And Cast A Wishful Eye  
 Send The Light The Blessed Gospel Light  
 Come To Jesus He Will Save You  
 Why Do You Wait Dear Brother?  
 Work For The Night In Coming

These we might sing.

Where We Will Never Grow Old  
 Safe In The Arms Of Jesus  
 Heaven Holds All To Me  
 Amazing Grace

*Let us ask again, shall we observe the Lord's supper in Heaven?*  
 Again, the answer would have to be no.

1. The purpose that we have for observing it here would not be the same then. Here as we observe the Supper, we are to show forth the Lord's death until He comes (1 Cor. 11:26).

2. There would be no need to discern the Lord's body representatively through the fruit of the vine and the bread because the Lord will be there Himself in His new body for us to observe.

3. We could not observe the Lord's Supper there in a fleshly sense. For no flesh and blood shall enter heaven (1 Cor. 16:50). We will have spiritual bodies; hence, I could not understand how we could literally eat and drink at the Lord's table.

4. One thing that might be comforting to many of my brethren is that we would not have to worry about eating with hypocrites and unworthy people (Rev. 21:27; Mat. 23:33). All of these will be in another place and the communion in that case will certainly, be restricted.

*What about the kind of preaching or teaching that might be done?*

If in heaven, we would certainly have to get some new sermon outlines. The Bible does speak of the preaching of the everlasting gospel in Revelation 14:6. But please note that this was to be done unto them that dwell on the earth and not those in heaven. For instance: We would not preach there against sin because there will be no sin there (John 8:21). There would be no need to quote the great commission and to extend the Lord's invitation. It will be too late to go into all the world to preach the gospel to every creature, instead we may be allowed to view the results of our preaching and, no doubt, this would be to our shame and dismay. There would be no preaching in which we promise much better things to come because this is it. There is no superlative to describe anything above heaven. And again, there would be no hypocrites, no backsliding brethren to exhort, for by then they will have already straightened up their lives or they will be in the company of those in the lake of fire. What a great thought it will be that we will not have to deal with all of these church problems in Heaven.

*In the next place, what about our prayer life in heaven?*

It certainly will be different also. For what would we pray? Should we pray for food, raiment and shelter? Of course not. In Revelation 22, we are told that there will be the tree of life bearing twelve manner of fruit, yielding her fruit every month and the leaves of the tress are for the healing of the nations. At that time, paradise will have been restored and maybe much like it was in the Garden of Eden before sin came upon mankind.

There will be no need to pray to ask for forgiveness of sin, as we indicated before, there will be no sin in heaven (John 8:21), and we have the promise of God that those sins in our past life He will remember no more (Heb. 10:17).

Would there be any need to pray for the sick, suffering and the dying? Of course not. In Revelation 21:4, we have these words: "And God shall wipe away all team from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

There will be no need to pray for the Lord to help us to be faithful to the end and to give on a home in Heaven for then our hopes and desires will have been fulfilled in reality.

*What about the giving of our money?*

In 1 Corinthians 16:2, we are taught in the church that on the first day of the week we are to give as we have been prospered. So far as I know, there will be no first day there, but there will be one long endless day. It will be too late to give or to make up our contributions that were neglected. Perhaps if we dare look, we will be able to see the treasures we have laid up while we were here on this earth (Mat. 6:20).

There will be no need for contributions to support mission work, to send missionaries into all the world, that day will be over and it will be too late. There will be no more need for funds to build fancy church buildings or family life centers because we will be meeting around that great throne of God. Even the preacher will not need money for his payday, although Paul does tell us in I Corinthians 9:14: "That those who preach the gospel are to live of it or that they are worthy of support." There will be no need there because the necessities of life as we know it upon the earth will not be needed.

*What shall we conclude?*

Whatever worship may be rendered in Heaven, it will not be like that which we are to render in the church here on earth. Again let me say, in my view, there has been no clear revelation on this subject hence, we must respect the silence of God. It does not even appear what we shall be like there as yet (1 John 3:2). It seems it would be difficult to describe worship not knowing what we ourselves will be like. It does seem that it would be appropriate to praise God (we can do that in Heaven). It will be alright to say, "Hallelujah." We shall be glad and filled with rejoicing (Rev. 19:1-6). Until that time, we need to focus on earthly worship. We must be found acceptable in all of our doings or we shall miss what is to be in that heavenly home.

### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>See American Standard Version footnote on Matthew 2:8.

<sup>2</sup>Hugo McCord, "Worship," *Firm Foundation* (June 1, 1982), p. 6.

<sup>3</sup>Guy N. Woods, *Questions and Answers, Open Forum*, 1:366.

<sup>4</sup>William Addis & Thomas Arnold, *Catholic Dictionary—Baptisms*, p. 71.

# SOME THINGS NOT FOUND IN HEAVEN

*Stephen P. Waller*

I appreciate the elders of the Bellview congregation and their faithful preacher, Bobby Liddell, for the opportunity afforded me of being a part of this lectureship. It is such a distinct honor to be on the same lectureship with the high caliber of preachers who are here to impart unto us a portion of God's Word. The faithfulness and the soundness of the brethren here has gone forth into all the world and the cause of Christ is blessed because of their devotion to the truth of God.

The theme of this lectureship, *In Hope Of Eternal Life*, is indeed timely. We are moving ever closer to eternity and what lies beyond the scenes of this life. The world around us in dying in sin and countless millions have not considered their latter end. The book of Revelation sends forth a message of warning, comfort, joy, hope and victory. In revealing "Some Things Not Found In Heaven" John provides faithful children of God with wonderful hope and an insight into the glorious blessings of heaven.

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away...But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolators, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which in the second death...And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof...And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh an abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life...And there shall be no more curse (Rev. 21:4, 8, 23, 27; 22:3).

In the new heaven and earth (the heavenly Jerusalem) the exceptional quality and glory is so great that some things will not be found there. Because heaven is the abode of God, and because of the very nature of God, His tabernacle will not be inhabited by any one or any

thing which is against His holy character. As one meditates upon the Scripture text, one begins to understand more clearly heaven's relationship to sin, sorrow, fear, and false doctrine. Let us study briefly the text to understand better some things not found in heaven.

### REVELATION 21:4

John shows that there will be no more tears, death, sorrow, crying or pain in heaven. These things will not be found in heaven, not because they are intrinsically evil, but because they are often the results or evidences of evil which has been brought upon us as a part of the vicissitudes and misfortunes of life. Tears, death, sorrow, crying, and pain could, in fact, be instrumentally good for us here. Death is no tragedy to the faithful child of God, but is a blessed relief from the troubles of life that beset us, and is a transition to far better things. Paul wrote, "For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better" (Phi. 1:23). Death for the Christian seals his eternal reward and ensures the leaving of these unhappy realms. Death will no more rob people of joy nor blight their hopes. In heaven there will be no reason for sorrow, crying, or pain, for the former things will have passed away. No more will we experience the pain and sorrow of the loss of a loved one such as we now endure. The tears of pity, sympathy and bereavement; the tears of penitent souls and the tears of sacrifice will all be wiped away.

Many faithful children of God have given their very lives as martyrs for their Savior. The horrible whippings, scourgings, stonings, hangings, dismemberments and other cruel methods of torture and persecution will be no more. Christians who have so valiantly endured such suffering, even unto death, will never again be faced with the threats, intimidations, and evil treatments which evil men have brought upon them. The mental anguish which accompanies such godless oppression will no longer exist.

The glorious body cannot be racked with pain. No incurable diseases can make one cry out in anguish in Heaven. The pain-racked body of the patient dying from cancer, the victim and the family of the victim of the dreaded Alzheimer's Disease, if they are faithful to Christ, will no longer have to suffer. Imperfect bodies with all of the accompanying ailments will be changed into bodies like unto that

which our Saviour occupies. “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (1 John 3:2; 1 Cor. 15:51-54).

The tears that Christians have shed as a result of betrayal by false brethren (who are wolves in sheep’s clothing), and the agony and heartache suffered by the faithful whose friends and family have forsaken them will not be suffered in heaven. Never again will we have to endure the pain and sorrow and hurt which we have endured in ill treatment because we have remained faithful to the Son of God. We are told that such suffering must be endured in this life and that our reward will far surpass the pain and problems suffered here. “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ, Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Tim. 3:12; 2:8-13).

Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also (John 15:20; Luke 12:51-53).

There will be no malicious lies, back-stabbing, or false friends in heaven.

The unbearable, excruciating pain from the fires of Hell will not be suffered by the inhabitants of Heaven. In Jesus’ story of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31), the rich man’s eternal destiny had been sealed at death, and he was in torments in the flame (vv. 23-24). For one to receive the reward of Heaven and escape the eternal pain of burning in Hell and the horror of outer darkness will be a wonderful blessing.

When I was only a boy of ten years, our family visited the newly acquired cemetery lots my grandfather had purchased for our family in Benton, Kentucky. After hearing the family talk so much about death and related matters, I became very ill. The fear of death had taken hold of me and made me physically ill. I cried, but would not tell anyone why I was so upset. Finally, my father, the late Paul J. Waller, a gospel preacher, was able to persuade me to tell him what was troubling me. He patiently took the time to talk to me about death. He spoke of the fact that all of us are going to die unless the Lord returns first. He said that he was prepared to die, and that we

must all make ready for it. He was not afraid of it. He comforted me that afternoon in a way that I have never forgotten. Little did any of us know then that in just less than a year or two he would be taken from us very suddenly. He spoke of Heaven being so much better and more wonderful than life on earth. What a special experience it was to hear such boldness and confidence! We will not know the fear of death in Heaven, that beautiful home of the soul, because Heaven means eternal life and eternal love. The pain of separation will be taken away from us and the joy of a beautiful reunion with the blessed saints of God will be ours forever and ever. “God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”

### **REVELATION 21:8, 27**

The Bible identifies those who will suffer eternal torment in Hell. It should be noted that John does not merely list some sins in Revelation 21:8, 27. He states clearly that not only will sin not be in Heaven, but sinners—those who have committed the sins will not be there. John identifies the people with the particular sins they have committed. This should clearly drive home the fact that people are accountable to God. People, impenitent people will be going to Hell and will miss Heaven. These people are those whose names are not written in the Lamb’s book of life (Rev. 20:15). “And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.” People are responsible for their actions. Sinners are responsible for their sinful actions. Just who are these who will not be found in Heaven? John mentions:

1. *The Fearful*. These would include those who are too timid or cowardly to stand for what is right and holy. It includes those who are two-faced, who stand on both sides of issues where matters of faith are involved, who are afraid of being disliked, losing popularity, or being ostracized. Fear of physical abuse may keep some from obeying the gospel or prevent some from being faithful to Christ as they should. The fear of being rejected emotionally, socially, or physically cast out may hinder some from living up to the high standard which Christ has set for us. Paul encourages us in Ephesians 4:1 to “walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.” When Peter and John were brought before the council in Jerusalem for healing the

lame man and preaching the salvation in Christ, the boldness of Peter and John amazed them (Acts 4:10-14). Faithful Christians have always been characterized by boldness in standing firm for the truth. Acts 4:31 describes the typical manner of preaching performed by the apostles: “and they spake the word of God with boldness.” Frequently, in the book of Acts one reads of the boldness of Paul (Acts 9:27, 29; 13:46; 14:3; 18:26; 19:8). The compromiser and the weak-kneed will find no rest in heaven. Jesus admonished, “And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (Mat. 10:28). The Christian cannot be afraid of being laughed at or scorned in the everyday walks of life because he is a Christian. Our awe of God should be greater than any shrinking fear of our fellowman. No moral or spiritual coward will enter heaven.

2. *The Unbelieving* will not go to heaven because they have rejected the teachings of Christ. This includes apostates, pagans, atheists, modernists, and misguided denominationalists. The atheist is a fool for his rejection of God. “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God” (Psa. 14: 1). Some have never believed in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God. “I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins” (John 8:24).

Modernists have rejected the deity of Christ, His miracles, and the Bible as the inspired Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Heaven will not be home to such infidelity. The tragedy of unfaithfulness in the church has claimed many souls. Those who have lost their faith are in a perishing condition, and we grieve for them. There are many brethren who one time stood for the truth, but have become immoral, or are in full fellowship with religious error, or are unconcerned about the Faith. The Hebrews writer warns us, “Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God” (Heb. 3:12). Paul sends forth a word of admonition, “Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck” (1 Tim. 1:19). “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall”(1 Cor. 10:12).

3. Those classed as *Abominable* shall not be found in Heaven. Those who are corrupted, defiled, and polluted with idolatry and its various types of worship are included. False religious practices and sex perversions are all abhorrent to God. The use of the mechanical instrument of music in worship, snake handling, and the mockery of “tonguespeaking” today is an abomination. The perverse greed of ungodly religious charlatans; the “holy prostitutes” of Corinth and other ancient cities; the canting of babies into fires or rivers or volcanoes as a sacrifice, and a host of unspeakable crimes all come under the heading of abominations.

4. *Murderers*. The apostle of love wrote, “No murderer hath eternal life abiding in him” (1 John 3:15). Murder is the intentional slaughtering of a human being. Those who take the life of another with that malicious intent in mind will not be found in heaven. Genesis reveals how gracious God has been to man by creating him in His own image and giving him an eternal soul (Gen. 1:26-27). When one person develops such a depraved mind that he would go out and take the life of another human being who also is made in the image of God that person is not only guilty of murder, but guilty of presumption as well. Murder is man’s rejection of God’s plan for human life. An Adolf Hitler, a John Wayne Gacy (both mass murderers), or a host of medical personnel who daily make their livings by murdering unborn babies to the tune of four thousand abortions per day will face God in the day of judgment accountable for snuffing out the lives of so many people. Think of the precious babies that could have been born, loved, and cared for, who will never have an opportunity at life. No amount of excuses will justify the dehumanizing of the unborn by calling them a “blob of protoplasm,” “a mass of fetal tissue,” or some other senseless term. The same applies to people who practice euthanasia. To dare to consider murdering an elderly person or one who is terminally ill because “they are useless to society” is to be guilty of the same heinous crimes of which Hitler was guilty in World War II. Our society is swiftly becoming desensitized to the sanctity of human life.

Any brother in Christ who hates another brother is a murderer. “Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer” (1 John 3:15). The

attitude of the hater and the murderer is the same. The only difference between them is that the hater has not yet found opportunity to fulfill the act, or else he is afraid of the punishment for carrying out his sinful attitude of heart. The murderer will not be in heaven.

5. *Whoremongers*. No fornicator has eternal life abiding in him. The world today, as in New Testament times, is plagued with the sin of fornication. Sexual promiscuity, such as homosexuality and lesbianism, pre-marital sex, adultery (unfaithfulness to one's marriage partner), incest, and bestiality violate God's plan for the proper expression of love which is to be fulfilled only within the marriage relationship. "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" (Heb. 13:4).

Paul wrote concerning this sin and stated that those who are guilty of it will not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9-10). Furthermore, Paul discussed the fact that fornication is a sin against one's own body. One should realize that any and all sin is against God (Isa. 59:1-2). But, the various sinful activities involved in fornication causes one to sin against his own body. "Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body" (1 Cor. 6:18-20). Fornication is a sin against the other individual who is involved in the unholy relationship, too. This sin is so difficult to fight that we are simply told to flee from it.

The society in, which we live is becoming more and more immoral. The idea of "living together in a meaningful relationship" without the responsibilities included in marriage, "shacking up," "live-in lovers," "doing your own thing," and numerous other expressions of our day are characteristic and typical of the immoral attitude which has eroded our world. In a recent television interview, a wellknown and popular actress stated that if she should marry again she would not expect her husband to be faithful to her because it would just be expecting too much of a man. Many are expressing the idea that marriage is merely a contract, a piece of paper with little or no significance. How shallow and ignorant are people? We believe that such statements are expressions from hearts and minds which are hardened against God's truth. Such comes from those who seek to follow, in reckless abandon, the hedonistic lifestyle. It is no wonder

that our young people are struggling desperately in the battle between their God-given desires, righteous living and the need for restraint when they see actors, actresses, rock stars, and even their own parents in some cases living immorally. They are bombarded daily through movies, television, and rock music with godless and perverse ideas. The idea of going on dates at earlier and earlier ages and the practice of the “one night stand” are the going things of the day. Many will wake up and realize too late the consequences of such ideas and practices. The number of illegitimate babies born every year is on the increase. Some time ago, when making a purchase in a grocery store, I overheard a boy and girl of early junior high school age arguing. The girl was making fun of the boy by saying, “You don’t have a girlfriend!” The response of the boy was startling. He said, “Oh yes I do! I even got a baby by her!”

The rapid increase in venereal diseases testifies to the increased rate of sexual immorality. The increase in Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and AIDS-related deaths (though not all deaths from AIDS involves homosexuality) testifies to the fact of homosexuality. Two recent tragedies with which I am familiar simply help us to see that even the Lord’s church has been invaded by such sins. The first person in a certain southern state known to die of AIDS was a member of the church to whom I had preached many gospel sermons, though at the time I did not know he was a homosexual. He even taught a Bible class in the congregation where he worshipped. Another man to die of AIDS in another state was a member of the church and his father is an older.

For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet (Rom. 1:26-27).

And, there is even now a Gay Rights movement within the churches of Christ! Homosexuality is more than an “alternate lifestyle”—it is perversion; it is sin. No person is born into this world a sinner. The homosexual claims he was born that way. That is a lie of the devil! The Bible clearly teaches that babies are born sinless and become

sinner later. “Thou was perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee” (Eze. 28:15; Psa. 106:37-38; Deu. 1:39; Rom. 3:12). Brethren, we are living in modern-day Sodom!

Fornication in its many forms is a threat to the purity and holiness of the church. God’s attitude toward fornication is seen in the message of the church at Thyatira,

Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. Behold I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds (Rev. 2:20-23).

The sin of adultery is tearing asunder the homes of our land. Churches are being weakened because of it. And, a nation once strong and proud is being brought to desolation. Those who marry when they have no scriptural right to marry are guilty of fornication and will not go to heaven. The Bible still states that the only cause for divorce and remarriage is when one puts away his or her marriage partner for the cause of fornication (Mat. 19:9). People need to decide that they want to go to heaven, then cultivate that desire over the desire to have an illicit sexual relationship. The fornicator or whoremonger in not going to heaven.

6. Another group of people not found in heaven will be *Sorcerers*. In New Testament days these were people involved in magical arts who used drugs to practice in the field of the occult. Such practitioners exercised great power over their disciples. To follow a sorcerer would involve exalting a witch or sorcerer to the position of a god and; thus, rejecting the power of Almighty God. The modern-day prophets (both religious and secular), crystal ball gazers, faith-healers, astrologers, horoscope writers and others often wield the same influence over the lives of their disciples as the ancient sorcerers. Israel was warned against such activities. “A man also or woman that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death: they shall stone them with stones; their blood shall be upon them” (Lev. 20:27).

There shall not be found with thee any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, one that useth divination, one that practiseth augury, or an enchanter, or a sorcerer, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For whosoever doeth these things is an abomination unto Jehovah (Deu. 18:10-12—ASV).

The minds of men become enthralled and entrapped by these curious arts and are so deceived thereby that faith in men and their methods is substituted for faith in God.

7. *Idolators* will not go to heaven. God describes and condemns the idolator.

Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves: who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen (Rom. 1:22-25).

New Testament Christians are commanded to keep themselves from idols (Acts 15:20; 21:25). When Paul and his company arrived in Ephesus (Acts 19) there was much opposition to the gospel because of the influence of idolatry, and from those whose livelihoods depended upon the making of silver shrines to Diana, goddess of the Ephesians. It is sad when men think they must make a “god” from material things. The Creator of the universe cannot be revered in objects made of silver, gold, wood, or precious stones. Nor can He be enshrined within four walls. God is not flesh and blood, but Spirit (John 4:24; Acts 17:24-26). He is to be enshrined in our hearts for He dwells in our hearts by faith (Eph. 3:17; 1 John 4:12-13, 15). The True God must be worshipped in spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24).

Paul stated that covetousness is idolatry (Col. 3:5). People today have made the accumulating of this world’s goods the major theme of their lives. Some will stop at nothing to acquire “things.” Idolatry has many forms. One may worship or honor his lands, houses, family, job, recreation, or bank account above God, the kingdom of heaven and righteous living. When one does that, he is guilty of idolatry. “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Mat. 6:33).

8. All *Liars* are going to Hell. A man once stated that of all the people in the world whom he despised, the liar was the most despised. He reasoned that if one was skillful in lying he could deceive almost any one and get away with almost anything. Use emanate from Satan. Jesus called Satan the father of lies (John 8:44). Use are diametrically opposed to all that God is and for which He stands. Jesus stated that He is the truth (John 14:6). God is truth and in Him is no lie at all. The Bible refers to the deception practiced by Abraham toward Pharaoh and Abimelech (Gen. 12:11-20; 20). It tells of the lie of Gehazi (2 Kin. 5:20-27), and of the He told by Ananias and Sapphria in the New Testament (Acts 5:1-11). Lies helped condemn and crucify the Son of God (Mat. 26:59-62; Mark 15:3). The final abode of the liar will be with his father, Satan, in Hell. Heaven will not be tainted with people who practice deception.

### **REVELATION 21:23; 22:3**

In that beautiful home of the soul there will be no night. There will be no need for it. The fear, pain, and apprehension that accompanies the night will be gone. There will be no need for a candle, a light bulb, or other artificial means of light. There won't even be a need for the sun to shine because the glory of the Lord is the light. As a small child who was afraid of the dark, I remember my mother calming me with the words, "You don't need to be afraid, God is with you. Everything is all right." Heaven will be that way. What comfort, beauty, and joy! When I used to explore the wild caves of north Alabama we would occasionally turn off all the lights and sit quietly in the blackness of darkness, and almost feel the darkness closing in around us. No one could find his way without the light. God will provide the light in heaven, and it will never go out. Since there is no night in heaven the faithful will enjoy not having to count time. There will be no deadlines to meet, no train or plane to catch, no rushing around.

The curse will be gone. The curse of sin that separated man from God will not exist in heaven. The curse of death will be no more.

In the land of fadeless day has the "city four-square."  
It shall never pass away, and there in "no night them"  
All the gates of pearl are made, In the "city four-square,"  
And the street with gold in laid, And there is "no night there."  
There they need no sunshine bright, In that "city foursquare,"

For the Lamb is all the light, And there is “no night there.”

CHORUS:

God shall wipe away all tears; There’s no death, no pain, nor fears;  
And they count not time by years, For there is “no night there.”

No pain, sorrow, death, fear, sin to be atoned for, crime, hatred, hunger, need, tears, unbelief, liars, no unholy influences or temptations, no false doctrines or divisions, no intimidations, no apprehension, and no night will be in Heaven. In contrast, God pictures for us a beautiful home, a mansion for the soul. The desire to go to Heaven should be kindled in our hearts and nurtured daily. Are you prepared for Heaven? If not, now is the time to begin to prepare by obeying the gospel of Christ.

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# CHRIST IS COMING

*Winfred Clark*

## INTRODUCTION

One of the major themes of Paul's letters to the church at Thessalonica, centers in the fact that Christ is coming again. In fact, every chapter of the first epistle contains that very fact. Such a fact should not be overlooked. The repeated emphasis surely says something of its importance.

We will use much the same approach used by Paul. Notice, "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering unto him" (2 The. 2:1). What he was going to say would be said in view of the coming of the Lord. This should cause the readers to be much more conscious of the seriousness of the letter. One cannot so easily dismiss that which is said with the coming of Christ as a background.

In the first epistle of First Thessalonians, one will find a reference to the coming of Christ in each chapter. So he is emphasizing that fact that all one does or says must be with the coming of Christ in view. This would surely have a sobering effect on those to whom he is writing.

There are, therefore, some very important things to be taken into account in view of the coming of Christ. This book will help one to set his priorities and look at those things he may value.

## SALVATION IS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE

### Chapter One

As you read those ten verses you will find that Paul is addressing people who now were saved but that was not always the case. There was a time when they served idols (v. 9). That is not the case at this time. They now serve and wait for his Son from heaven (vv. 9-10). But how have they come to be this kind of people? Does he tell us? The answer is found in the chapter before us.

1. They have been CHOSEN (1 The. 1:4).

Notice that he says, "Knowing, brethren, beloved, your election of God." These have been chosen as the people of God. But were these the

elect by the decree of God without any action on their part? If they were thus chosen before the world began and could not be otherwise, why would Paul preach the gospel to them? Didn't he say the gospel is the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1:16)? Would the gospel have anything to do with their salvation? After all, Paul did say the gospel came unto them (v. 5). Suppose it had not, would they still be God's elect? They became the elect by their proper reaction to and reception of the gospel. These folks did not merely hear the Word that was preached, they heeded it. They are like those of Acts 2:41. It is said of them that, "They gladly received the word." You will also note that these folks became something that they were not before. In fact, Paul said, "and ye became followers of us." (v. 6).

2. They have been CHANGED (1 The. 1:5-9).

What a change. These who have formerly worshipped and served idols are now among those who sound out the gospel (vv. 7-8). They first become followers of the apostles and then they become examples to other churches as they sound out the Word of God. They were having a widespread impact, for their reputation was reaching beyond Macedonia and Achaia. They are now exercising a very wholesome influence. Their reaction to the Word of God becomes such a good example for others to follow. Yes, they have been changed.

3. They have been CONVERTED (1 The. 1:9-10).

One does not read these verses without coming to the conclusion that these are converted. Where they once served idols they now serve God. They did not just turn from idols, and even that would be good. These did not just stop sinning, they began serving. But what else could they afford to do in view of the fact that the Lord is coming again?

4. They have been CONVINCED (1 The. 1:10).

They are not just waiting. They are waiting for a certain one. They are waiting for the one who was incarnate, they are waiting for the one who died, they are waiting for the one who arose from the dead, they are waiting for the one that ascended into heaven, they are waiting for the one who delivers man from sin's consequence. They have no doubts about the one for whom they wait and waiting for such a one makes salvation from sin mighty important. In fact, they couldn't afford to wait any other way.

## SUFFERING OUGHT NOT DISCOURAGE ONE

### Chapter Two

This chapter has within it the sad fact of suffering because one is a Christian. The apostle who preached the gospel has faced such, as well as those to whom he wrote. However, they need to keep in mind the fact that the Lord is coming and that will make all their suffering worthwhile.

One would never be able to say that Paul did not face the issues. He would not deny the element of suffering and neither would he allow anybody else to do so. This is seen in this chapter. He wanted these folks to know what to expect and to not be surprised when this sort of thing came their way.

1. He speaks of his HUMILIATION (1 The. 2:1-2).

Paul is not trying to tell these good people that suffering was not a part of what they must face. In fact, he is sure they would face such for he had faced such in the past. There is no indication that he had tried to conceal the fact that he faced the humiliation at Philippi. He and Silas had been shamefully treated. This did not cause him to give up. But, why not? Didn't he know the Lord was coming back? He surely did and he could not afford to allow such to cause him to become discouraged and give up. They were not about to allow such to intimidate them to the point that they would not preach the glorious gospel. No, he would preach it in spite of humiliation.

2. He speaks of his HARD WORK (1 The. 2:9-12).

It becomes very obvious that Paul was not preaching for what he could get out of it. Rather, he is on the side of one who is giving all he can to the cause. Paul was willing to make any kind of sacrifice necessary. Doesn't he say he was willing to impart his own soul? But, go a step further and you will find him talking of "labor and travail." He speaks of "laboring night and day." But why would a man place himself in a position like that? Why would he work the day and night shifts? Because the gospel is worth all the hard work he can do. He doesn't want anything to interfere with the Word having free course in the lives of those people to whom he spoke. That would make it all worthwhile. It would be worth all the hard work he might do.

3. He speaks of his HINDRANCES (1 The. 2:14-18).

If you will look at the footnote of verse 15 you will note that Paul speaks of those Jews who "chased us out" and "are contrary to all men."

He then goes on to say, “Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved.” Again he speaks of the fact that “Satan hindered us.” But does Paul still feel the gospel is worth all the effort he is putting forth? Why would a man face such discouraging things without giving up? Is there a reason? One has but to look at verse 19 to see the reason. “For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing?” Then, he gives us the answer, “Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?” Paul is saying all the humiliation, all the hard work and all the hindrances will mean nothing when he comes to stand before Christ at His coming. If those people are saved, then all that He has suffered will mean nothing. The suffering will be worth it all. Yes, the coming of Christ should encourage.

## **STEADFASTNESS IN FAITH IS VERY IMPORTANT**

### **Chapter Three**

One does not read this chapter carefully without seeing the emphasis Paul will place upon steadfastness. Paul was surely concerned about their steadfastness. This can be seen in a number of ways.

#### 1. The LANGUAGE he used surely shows this.

Take a look at such phrases as, “to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith...That no man should be moved by these afflictions,” “if you stand fast in the faith,” “To the end he may stablish your hearts.” One is surely impressed with the language used by the apostle concerning steadfastness. He would surely underscore the fact that such is important and very vital in view of the coming of the Lord.

#### 2. The ONE he mat shows this.

Paul could not go but he would surely send someone to help. He could not just remain neutral and unconcerned about this. He had to do something to help. But, who would he send? He would send Timothy to learn of their faith. But what would he want to know about their faith? Wouldn't he be concerned about supporting their faith? If you will stop a moment and look back to Chapter Two, you will see the strong emphasis he places on sound teaching. This would act as a support for their faith. If someone came in and taught something that was contrary to such, Paul well knew the consequences. For that reason, he would send somebody that was as concerned as was he about their faith.

3. The PRAYER he would pray shows this to be true.

When Paul could not go he would send, and when he learns that they are still holding on to their faith he would pray that such might continue. Paul wanted to go to help their faith. He prayed that such might be the case. He prays that their hearts might be made strong in faith.

Why would Paul use language to encourage such steadfastness and send someone to help them, and pray that they might be established in the faith? The answer is easy. The Lord is coming again and only those kind of people will be ready for such a coming.

## **SANCTIFICATION OF LIFE IS IMPORTANT**

### **Chapter Four**

Paul hastens in this chapter to use the word “sanctification” (1 The. 4:3). He would have these brethren know that such is the will of God for their lives. This will set forth the pattern for their lives. This is how they are to live.

When a person enters the military, he is told how to live, or when one goes to college, he knows a certain way of life is prescribed. That is, if one is to be successful in these areas. This has to do with the manner of life to be lived and such is not an optional thing if we are to be ready for the coming of the Lord. So this chapter will help us to see how we are to walk and conduct ourselves in view of the coming of the Lord. If one follows the path of sanctification, he will surely live in a certain way.

1. He will live in HOLINESS (1 The. 4:1-8).

Does he not speak of how they are to walk in verse 1? That walk is to be such as would please God. But they have been called unto holiness (v. 7). Thus that walk must be in holiness. Only in that way will they have God’s approval.

But, what kind of living would such insure? What would be guaranteed by such a manner of life? For one thing, it would insure sexual purity as they abstain from fornication (v. 3). It is good to see that men now are coming to acknowledge the fact the abstinence from fornication is the best way of life. But if they had only read their Bibles they would have known this long ago.

Again, such a way of life would insure self-control (vv. 4-5). One would not allow himself to be controlled by lust and sinful desires. He would, as Paul, buffet the body, keeping it under control (1 Cor. 9:27).

It would also insure sincere concern (v. 6). A man would never allow himself to take advantage of another, especially of a brother.

2. He would live in HARMONY (1 The. 4:9-10).

Harmony is the opposite of discord. One could almost predict such a way of life if all lived in holiness. But, if brotherly love is present, you will have the bond that will protect harmony. Where brotherly love is in existence, you will have this kind of harmony. Nobody could question such at this place. In fact Paul said, "But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. And indeed ye do it" (1 The. 4:9-10). You have no less than the word of an apostle that they did indeed love one another. So harmony would have a chance, for such was in existence, But this harmony would be made more secure when such love abounds. Paul would therefore hope that it would "increase more and more."

Such an attitude was present in the early church (Acts 4:32). Here are people who were unselfish and protective of the harmony that was theirs.

3. He would live in HONESTY (1 The. 4:11-12).

This calls for lives above reproach. He knows they live in a world where men are watching and they are to keep this in mind. He thus calls upon those who are living the sanctified life to be industrious (v. 11). They are to work with their own hands and do their own business. They are to provide things honest in the sight of all men. Such living would help them to exercise the right and proper influence among those who were not Christians. Paul would surely practice what he preached along this line.

4. He would live in HOPE (1 The. 4:13-18).

Yes, there were some at Thessalonica that faced sorrow. They had about given up their hope of seeing their loved ones again. But this section says you can have hope if you live the sanctified life. He says, you have some things you believe that should not be surrendered. Notice, "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him," That would give some strong assurance and sustain the hope to, those who are God's children.

They also have some strong affirmations by no less than an apostle. He is quick to say, "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord." That is as secure as you would want it to be. If you have the Word of the

Lord on the subject you don't need anything else. He is here affirming several things that encourage hope. He affirms the resurrection of Christ and also of the dead saints. He affirms the return of the Lord. He has no doubt that the Lord would return. He not only says he will return but describes also what will occur at his return (v. 16). In addition to his resurrection and return there is also the reunion the saints can look forward to at his return. That ought to comfort and give hope to all those who live the sanctified life.

## **SOBER THINKING IS IMPORTANT**

### **Chapter Five**

As one comes to the last chapter of this epistle he is well aware that sober thinking is very important in view of the Lord's return. This is, after all, a very serious thing.

Take a moment to think about some things found in this chapter.

1. That **DAY** is coming (1 The. 5:1-3).

Here is a day, called the "day of the Lord." The apostle has no doubt about its coming. So he will speak of the certainty of that day. In fact, he does not stop to argue the certainty of that day at all, for this was to those whom he wrote, a welcome fact. He spoke of the character of that day. He would tell them what sort of a day that would be. Among other things, it would be as a surprise for his coming would be as a thief in the night. He would also speak of the calamity of that day. Those who did not watch and were not prepared would not be ready for that day. Yes, they need to think seriously of that day.

2. There are **DIFFERENCES** that should be maintained (1 The. 5:4-5).

One does not read these verses without understanding that there are some lines of demarcation between those who are God's children and those who are not. The lines are there.

There is a difference in the character of their lives. They are not of the darkness but of the light. There is also a difference in the way they are to conduct themselves. Yes, there are differences to be maintained.

3. Their **DUTIES** are clear (1 The. 5:6-15).

One does not read these passages without an awareness of a sense of duty. This may be said of several areas. First there is the duty one has to himself as is found in verses 8-11. We are called upon to have the right attire. That is, to be clothed with the right kind of armor for the

battle we face. We are also to have the right aim. That is to live with him.

We have duties to others as we are called upon to comfort and edify one another. Then, there are our duties to those who lead us.

We have a duty to help those who are unruly and are weak and all of this is to be done with the right and proper attitude.

We also have duties toward those who are without. Note that the writer will say “both among yourselves and to all men” (v. 15). This we must ever be conscious of in view of the fact that our Lord is coming back someday.

4. There are Directions we are to follow (1 The. 5:16-22).

Here one comes to see the finished product. This is what sober thinking and sanctified living will produce in the life of one who is a child of God. There will be the atmosphere of joy (v. 16). There is the abiding prayer life (v. 17). An appreciation for all things (v. 18). There will be the acceptance of truth (vv. 19-20), and the allegiance to truth (v. 21). This will lead in turn to the avoidance of evil (v. 22).

Thus out of this sober thinking, sanctified living, and sound teaching comes one who has a joyful spirit, dependent heart, a grateful attitude, a perceptive disposition, open ears, a discerning mind that leads to a deliberate choice which produces a separate life. Wouldn't you say such a person was living his life with the coming of the Lord in mind?

Paul knew there was a destiny toward which they were traveling and he also knew they needed to be ready. This epistle would surely help them to be ready for the coming of the Lord.

# THE DOORWAY TO ANOTHER LIFE

*Bobby Liddell*

Men often fear that which they do not understand. For that reason, many fear death, yet the fact of death need not be seen as strange nor surprising. Some soul passes from the walks of this lower world each and every moment of each and every day. Recent statistics placed the number of deaths worldwide at 5,417 per hour or 1.5 per second. In the time it takes for a normal man to breathe in and out (about four seconds), nine people have died. Indeed, all are rapidly traveling to that appointment with death. Earth is but a temporary home and for its weary travelers the journey from the cradle to the grave is short at best. James, by inspiration, declared, “Whereas ye know not what *shall be* on the morrow. For what *is* your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away” (Jam. 4:14). Job 14:1-2 records: “Man *that is* born of a woman *is* of few days and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.”

Still, even in death, we are reminded of life.

That which thou sowest is not quickened [made alive, BL], except it die. And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other *grain*: But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body (1 Cor. 15:36-38).

For the plant to come forth, the grain must die. From that grain buried in the ground, springs life. For man, the careful student of the Holy Scriptures finds death not as the end of all life, but as the beginning of new life: that is, as “The Doorway To Another Life.”

## **PHYSICAL DEATH**

*PHYSICAL DEATH IS UNIVERSAL.* All who have ever lived have died, with the exceptions of Enoch and Elijah. Of Enoch, Genesis 5:24 says, “And Enoch walked with God: and he *was* not; for

God took him.” Hebrews 11:5 reveals: “By faith Enoch was, translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he hid this testimony, that he pleased God.” Concerning Elijah: “And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, *there appeared* a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder, and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven” (2 Kin. 2:11). All who now live and who shall ever live shall die, with the exception of those who are alive at the coming of the Lord. God’s Word says those alive at His coming shall not sleep (die), but shall be “changed”; that is, from flesh and blood, corruptible and mortal, to that which is incorruptible and immortal.

Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality. So when this corruption shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where *is* thy sting? O grave, where *is* thy victory? (1 Cor. 15:50-55).

Though all shall die, not all shall be prepared. Though Christ died for all, not all shall be saved. He said of Himself, “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). He shed His blood in death for the whole world (Heb. 2:9). His gospel is for every man (Mark 16:15-16). His commands are for all men everywhere (Acts 17:30). His invitation is extended to all (Mat. 11:28-30). The Bible reveals the death of Christ to make possible the everlasting life of man: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3-16). Sadly, not all, not even the majority, so live in Christ in the present that they might live with Him in eternity. Yes, the majority shall choose the broad way that leads to destruction (Mat. 7:13-14).

The apostle Paul said, “For to me to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain” (Phi. 1:21). That is why he lived in hope of eternal life. What a

great confident faith; thus, he could also say, “For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better” (Phi. 1:23). The faithful child of God has no need to fear death for “to be with Christ” is “far better.”

*PHYSICAL DEATH IS SEPARATION.* Physical death involves the separation of the spirit from the body. James declared, “For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also” (Jam. 2:26). The body without the spirit is dead. Of Rachel, the Holy Word says, “And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Benoni: but his father called him Benjamin” (Gen. 35:18). The widow’s son was dead, but, “The Lord heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived” (1 Kin. 17:22). The union of spirit and body means life but the separation of spirit and body means death.

Death means separation from living loved ones; thereby, causing grief and loss for those left behind. The death of the faithful companion who has walked by one’s side and shared the joys and burdens of half a century naturally brings a deep sense of loss. The friend in whom one confided and upon whom one depended does not pass without a void being left and intense emotions being stirred. The departure of a parent, so faithful and loving, will forever be felt. The loss of a child leaves an emptiness which time lessens but cannot fill.

Death may also mean the loss of one’s soul and separation from God and the faithful.

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 (2 The. 1:7-10).

For the one unprepared, the disobedient and rebellious, the journey into an eternity without God; thus, an eternity holding neither help nor happiness, is a dark and hopeless reality.

*PHYSICAL DEATH IS THE END OF ABILITIES ON EARTH.* No longer does one have the ability to carry on the affairs of this life.

Those affairs, as far as that one is concerned, are forever as they were left. The departed father is not able to bring his children up “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4). If he did not in this life, he forever forfeited that ability. The deceased wife can not now submit herself unto her own husband as unto the Lord, being subject unto him in every thing, respecting him as her head (Eph. 5:22-33). If she failed in this life, she failed forever. The husband, separated from the earth, is also separated from ever again in this life being able to heed God’s command to love his wife as himself, to cherish her and to exercise proper headship of the family (Eph. 5:23-33). The brother in Christ can no more show the “badge of discipleship”; that is, love for his brethren (John 13:34-35). If he has not loved his brethren here, he shall not know God’s love and fellowship with the faithful in Heaven. Too late, then, is it to be the loving brother one should have been. No longer does one have the ability to answer God’s call and prepare for eternity. Those days are forever and finally finished. No longer does one have the ability to be where he should have been, do what he should have done or say what he should have said. All that should have been, but was not, is everlastingly left undone.

*PHYSICAL DEATH IS THE END OF OPPORTUNITIES ON EARTH.* The opportunities to do good to one’s fellow man are ended. The cup of cold water so needed but not given, yet which could have been so easily given, shall never be given. To take the soul-saving gospel to lost neighbors and loved ones is an impossibility after death. The opportunities to tell and to show love are gone. The unsettled quarrel and the bitter enmity remain though bitter tears like the floods may flow and anxious petitions be lifted. The opportunities to obey the gospel of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ are sealed. Not another stanza of “Just As I Am” shall be sung for that one while tears stain the cheeks of pleading and praying loved ones. Yes, physical death brings the end of abilities and of opportunities on this earth.

*PHYSICAL DEATH DOES NOT MEAN THE END OF ALL THINGS.* Time and many of its relationships end, but eternity and its relationships begin. Man does not cease to exist at death. (Excellent manuscripts have been prepared for this lectureship which deal with

the intermediate state and the conscious existence of the dead; hence, we direct you to them for that study). The memories created by and the influence of man continue on earth, at least for a time. For the faithful Christian, even though departed, his good influence may be felt in many lives for many years and may result in the blessing and salvation of others years later. Those treasured memories of one's life in Christ shall soon replace the weeping of beloved brethren with rejoicing and sustain and encourage them in their hope for a grand reunion in eternity.

Eternity is not found in this life; however, one's life determines his eternity. One's eternal destiny is not determined by what a "preacher" might say, whether good or bad, aft one's life is over. Jesus said,

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 (John 5:28-29).

Neither good intentions, sincerity, good morals (alone), the will of the world, the view of the majority nor the love of family and friends shall affect one's destiny after death. None of these factors shall cause the lost to be saved nor the saved to be lost.

Our Lord warned. "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). Paul said, by inspiration, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad" (2 Cor. 5:10). Again, he said that he lived: "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot he, promised before the world began" (Tit. 1:2). Death is that entrance to eternity. In Jesus' portrayal of the Great Judgment He said in conclusion, "And these [the wicked, BL] shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal" (Mat. 25:46).

Life is brief. Death in certain. Man's spirit lives on. Eternity awaits.

***PHYSICAL DEATH DOES NOT NECESSARILY MEAN THAT ONE IS WICKED NOR THAT HE IS RIGHTEOUS FOR DEATH IS NO RESPECTER OF PERSONS.*** The unborn, the cherished baby, the

wide-eyed first grader, the growing youth, the maturing teenager, the newlywed, the loving parent, the retiree and the elderly all face death. The important and the unknown die. Neither strength nor weakness spares. The evil and the good go the way of all the earth. Both rich and poor walk through that doorway. The kind and lovely die along with the hateful. Distinctions in races, nations, tongues and creeds have no impact on impartial Death.

*PHYSICAL DEATH DOES NOT MEAN GOD DOES NOT LOVE MAN.* Through the fall of Adam and Eve, death was brought upon the human race. “For since by man *came* death...For as in Adam all die” (1 Cor. 15:21-22). God did not turn His back on man’s calamity even though man turned his back on God’s will, but God promised His Son to come bringing redemption. Again, in 1 Corinthians 15:21-22: “by man *came* also the resurrection of the dead...even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” After the fall and in view of man’s salvation, God made this wonderful prophetic proclamation: “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel” (Gen. 3:15). The seed of the woman, Christ, would bruise the head of Satan; thus, making possible for man freedom from the bondage of sin. Inspiration recorded: “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him” (Rom. 5:8-9). Truly, the worth of man is shown by the fact of the One Eternal God’s love for him in making possible man’s redemption.

God does not look upon death as man does.

Say unto them As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked: but that the wicked turn from his way and live. turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel? (Eze. 33:11).

Men may rejoice at the death of a wicked man, but God desires all to be saved, and not that any should die in sin (1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9). That being the case, we should be busy in taking the gospel to every creature that all who will may live in Christ and die in hope. “Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins” (Jam.

5:20), Psalm 116:15 records: “Precious in the sight of the Lord *is* the death of his saints.”

No, physical death does not mean God does not love man. The death of a saint is “precious” in the sight of the Lord. Who could affirm otherwise in view of the comforting words of 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18?

But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

To His faithful children, God shows His love as Revelation 21:4 states: “And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.” Thus, Paul could look to death without fear and say,

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

Now, all in Christ can say,

O death, where *is* thy sting? O grave, where *is* thy victory? The sting of death *is* sin; and the strength of sin *is* the law. But thanks *be* to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15:55-57).

**PHYSICAL DEATH IS BUT A DOORWAY.** Death is a doorway from time to eternity. Man does not live forever on earth, but man does live forever; that is, in spirit. This portal may lead from pain and sorrow to eternal bliss—or to eternal damnation. Death may be the doorway to happiness for the troubled. In Revelation 14:13, John

wrote, “And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed *art* the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.” Lazarus, the poor beggar fall of sores, was laid at the rich man’s gate and begged for just the “crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores” (Luke 16:20-21). “And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom...now he is comforted” (Luke 16:22-25).

Death may be the doorway to torment for the comfortable. The rich man “which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day” denied the crumbs to the poor beggar. He

also died, and was buried; And in hades he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented (Luke 16:19-25).

## SPIRITUAL DEATH

### *THE SOUL THAT LIVES IN SIN SHALL DIE SPIRITUALLY.*

The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him (Eze. 18:20).

The Bible plainly points to the possibility of one being dead (spiritually) while alive physically. “But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth” (1 Tim. 5:6). Two familiar passages in Romans state: “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23), and, “For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 6:23).

Just as physical death means separation of spirit and body, spiritual death means separation of man’s spirit from God. “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).

*THE SOUL THAT SINS IS SPIRITUALLY DEAD UNTIL AND UNLESS FORGIVEN.* Because of sin, spiritual death ensues, therefore, forgiveness of sin must be sought and obtained in accordance with the will of God for spiritual life.

Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God. for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death (Jam. 1:12-15).

Man needs forgiveness. He must have forgiveness to live abundantly now and forever (John 10:10). God, in His supreme love, offers forgiveness—on His terms; that is conditionally. Man may choose to accept the forgiveness offered or reject it. Recognizing one's undone condition and resultant dreadful future in sin, and then perceiving the amazing love of the Creator God should cause one to love God ("We love him, because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19), and to obey God ("For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous" (1 John 5:31).

### ETERNAL DEATH

*THE SOUL THAT LIVES IN SIN AND DIES IN SIN SHALL SUPPER ETERNAL DEATH.* Jesus said, "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24). In Revelation 14:13, one may read, "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed *are* the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." One may die "in his sins" or one may "die in the Lord." All those subject to the gospel call will be found at death to be in one or the other of these possible conditions. There is no other possibility. Those who live in sin and die in sin shall live in the eternal doom, damnation, darkness and despair of Hell. To such ones, thoughts of death bring a gripping fear. There is no hope outside of Christ (Eph. 2:12). One who lives outside of Christ thus, without hope, shall die without hope. There is no hope in Hell. Those who live in Christ and die in Christ shall live in the eternal joy of Heaven. Their hope shall

be fulfilled. Their eternity shall be blessed. To them, death is but a doorway to a happier, better life in that beautiful Heavenly city.

The Lord and Saviour presented the final eternal sentence predicated upon the condition in which one is at death and His coming: “And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal” (Mat. 25:46).

# THE LAST ENEMY THAT SHALL BE DESTROYED (1 Corinthians 15:26)

*Ray W. Peters*

The passage from whence the title of our lesson is taken sets forth the fact that the last enemy to be annihilated is death 1 Corinthians 15:26, “The last enemy *that* shall be destroyed *is* death.” In the context of 1 Corinthians, the apostle Paul has been discussing the fact that just as surely as Jesus has been raised from the dead, we will be raised from the dead. Therefore, the subject of death and the resurrection is intertwined. The resurrection, along with the Virgin Birth of Christ, is a focal point of the opponents of Christianity, and; therefore, must be the focal point of our preaching. In January, 1979, a religious science and theology professor at the Jerusalem University, shockingly but correctly stated,

Without a factual historical event there is no act of faith. Just as there would have been no Judaism without the Sinai event, so there would have been no Christendom without the Easter (resurrection) event (*Stockton Record*, Jan. 31, 1979).

He went on to state that he believed that there was factual proof for the resurrection, even though he referred to it as the “Easter Event.” If Christ is not risen, our preaching and faith is in vain, “And if Christ be not risen, then *in* our preaching vain, and your faith *is* also vain” (1 Cor. 15:14). Also, we are yet in our sins, “And if Christ be not raised, your faith *is* vain; ye are yet in your sins” (1 Cor. 15:17). If there is no hope of life after death, we are most miserable, “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men moot miserable” (1 Cor. 15:19). The Lord’s veracity or truthfulness is at stake, because if He did not rise, He spoke falsely, because He stated He would rise “For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth” (Mat. 12:40). “And as they came down from

the mountain, Jesus charged them saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead” (Mat. 17:9). “And they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again. And they were exceeding sorry” (Mat. 17:23). “And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify *him*: and the third day he shall rise again” (Mat. 20:19). “Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. But he spake of the temple of his body” (John 2:19-21). Either the Lord rose from the dead or He lied. The fact that Jesus rose from the dead and destroyed the grip of death is truly the “Firm Foundation of God,” (2 Tim. 2:18-19—ASV). Paul stated, that by the resurrection, Jesus was declared with power to be the Son of God, Romans 1:4, “And declared *to be* the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.”

Josh McDowell, in his book, *Evidence That Demands A Verdict*, states, “...the resurrection of Jesus Christ is one of the most wicked, vicious, heartless hoaxes ever foisted upon the minds of men, or it is the most fantastic fact of history.” Philip Schaff, in his *History Of The Christian Church*, set forth the fact, “The resurrection of Christ is therefore emphatically a test question upon which depends the truth or falsehood of the Christian religion. It is either the greatest miracle or the greatest delusion which history records.” Wilbur M. Smith, in *Christianity Today*, observed that, “The resurrection of Christ is the very citadel of the Christian faith.”

It is with these facts before us that we look at the *Reality of the Resurrection*, *Results of the Resurrection*, and the *Responsibilities of the Resurrection*.

## THE REALITY OF THE RESURRECTION

Thus far in the introduction, we have basically considered the importance of the resurrection. We now turn our attention to the proof or the actuality of Christ’s resurrection. Also, in the beginning, we noticed the claims of Jesus that He would be raised from the dead, but a few more are given for emphasis: “But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee” (Mat. 26:32). “And they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean” (Mark 9:10). “Saying, The Son of man

must suffer many things, and be rejected of the olden and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day” (Luke 9:22).

THE PROOF OF OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY. “For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to am corruption” (Psa. 16:10). FULFILLMENT: “He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption” (Acts 2:31). There are other passages that allude to a resurrection that could be talking about Jesus (Psa. 30:3; 41:10; 118:17; Hos. 6:2). A statement found in the *Sanhedrin II, Babylonian Talmud*, is interesting.

Mishnah, All Israel have a portion in the world to come, for it is written, “Thy people are all righteous; they shall inherit the land..But the following have no portion there-in: HE WHO MAINTAINS THAT RESURRECTION IS NOT A BIBLICAL DOCTRINE, the Torah was not divinely revealed.”

Paul pointed out that there was a division among the Jews in their belief about the resurrection of the dead.

But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men *and* brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question. For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both (Acts 23:6, 8).

The ASCENSION is connected with the reality of the resurrection; therefore, notice, “Thou hast seconded on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, *for* the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell *among them*” (Psa. 68:18).

THE ASSURANCE OF THE APPEARANCES. The apostle Paul declared on Mars Hill, “whereof he hath given ASSURANCE unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead” (Acts 17:31). An “assurance” is a “state of mind that in free from doubt.” When our Lord and Saviour appeared to different ones after His death and burial, this removed all doubt, suspicion, uncertainty, or mistrust. These appearances are part of the “infallible proofs” mentioned by Luke in Acts 1:3: “To whom also he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.” Infallible means, “not liable to mislead, deceive, or disappoint.” There were five showings

of the Lord on the first day after His coming forth from the grave:(1) To Mary Magdalene at the tomb, “Now when *Jesus* was risen early the first *day* of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils” (Mark 16:9; also, John 20:11-18). (2) To the other women on the way to tell the apostles, “And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him” (Mat. 28:9). (3) He appeared to impetuous Peter alone, “Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon” (Luke 24:34). “And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve” (1 Cor. 15:5). (4) To the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, “And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem *about* threescore furlongs...Jesus drew himself near, and went with them” (Luke 24:13, 15; cf., Mark 16:12-13). (5) To the, ten disciples (Thomas Didymus was absent) in Jerusalem, “Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen” (Mark 16:14). There were five other appearances spaced throughout the forty days before his ascension. (1) To Thomas Didymus with the disciples the next Sunday night, “And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: *then* came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace *be* unto you” (John 20:26). We might point out that the Scriptures are silent about the activities of Jesus during the preceding week. (2) To the seven on the sea of Galilee and the large catch of fish, “After these things Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise shewed he himself” (John 21:1).(3) He made a showing to the 500, “After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep” (1 Cor. 15:6). The time of this appearance is not certain. The place is also uncertain, but probably Galilee (Mat. 26:32; 28:7-16). (4) To James, the brother of Jesus, “After that, he was seen of James, then of all the apostles (1 Cor. 15:7). (5) To the apostles and the giving of the Great Commission, “Go ye therefore and teach all nations” (Mat. 28:19; cf., Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-49). Then there were the times He re-

vealed or spoke to others after His ascension. (1) To Stephen, “But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God” (Acts 7:55). (2) To Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus, “And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: *it is* hard for thee to kick against the pricks” (Acts 9:5). (3) And finally, to the apostle John, in the compiling of the Revelation letter (Rev. 1:10-19).

**FORTIFICATION OF OTHER FACTS.** Along with fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy, and along with Jesus’ appearances there are other corroborating facts that reinforce the actuality of the resurrection of Jesus.

The fact of the **EMPTY TOMB** (Mat. 28:6; Mark 16:6; Luke 24:3; John 20:2). There are three possibilities as to what happened to the body of Jesus. (1) The enemies took it. (2) The disciples took it. (3) Or, it was removed by the power of God. First of all, the enemies had the body, so no need to remove it; secondly, they would have produced the body on the day of Pentecost when the apostles began to preach about the resurrection. As far as the disciples taking the body, they would have been afraid of the Roman guard; many were there who were their enemies and would have stopped them; plus, there was really no point in it, and they did not really expect the resurrection, for their hopes of a kingdom had been demolished. Hence, the body was removed by the only plausible way, by the power of God!

The fact of the **GRAVE CLOTHES** (John 20:5-7; also John 19:38-42). If the body had been stolen, then the clothes would more than likely have been taken or strewed around the tomb—but they were lying with the napkin at the same location and not scattered. The **APOSTLES** and their transformation, stand as evidence that Jesus really rose from the dead. Here was a group, that doubted, eg., Peter actually denied he knew the Lord (Mat. 26:73-74), and they deserted him in the garden (Mat. 26:56). If Jesus had not risen or had been stolen they would surely have been the first to say something, but they preached the resurrection and were willing to suffer as a result of their preaching.

Last, but not least, the very EXISTENCE OF THE CHURCH, given testimony to the actuality of the resurrection.

Through biblical evidence, the church has been preaching and teaching the resurrection fervently for 2,000 years!

### THE RESULTS OF THE RESURRECTION

As Henry Morris well stated, in Bernard Ramm's book, *Protestant Christian Evidences*,

The resurrection of Christ is the seal of our resurrection...It is the resurrection of Christ as firstfruits which alone opens the grave-in anticipation-to the believer and unto life eternal. Because He arose, we shall arise (Romans 8:11).

Hence, the resurrection is a "bed rock" in the pillar of Truth. Without it, God's "scheme of redemption" would not have been complete.

When Jesus ascended (Acts 1:9-11) and left His apostles, He promised to send the Holy Spirit (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13-16). As a result of His leaving (John 16:7), He sent the Holy Spirit and the completing of God's redemption plan (cf., Acts 2:1-4,38). Jesus had stated, "In my Father's house are many mansions: if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:2) and He went after His resurrection. This passage may have reference to the church and the preparation of its coming on the day of Pentecost, and not just to preparing a place in Heaven, as usually thought.

Another consequence of the resurrection is the VICTORY OVER THE GRAVE AND DEATH! This is the main thrust of Paul's discussion of 1 Corinthians 15. Death is personified as an enemy or foe, that which is hostile to someone or something. It was death that stood in the way for the righteous to realize the reward of Heaven. The Hebrews writer declared,

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil (Heb. 2:14).

Our Saviour broke the bonds of death when He arose from the dead. When He is referred to as the "firstfruits of them that slept" (1 Cor. 15:20), there were others who had been raised; e.g., Lazarus, but Christ was the only one not to taste death again. "Firstfruits" states

that there will be “other” fruit. So, Paul assures the Corinthians, and us, that just as Jesus rose, we shall rise.

So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? (1 Cor. 15:54-55).

Here Paul, quoting from Isaiah 25:8, points out that a prophet over 700 years ago, at his time, states that in the future death would be no more. Death, the enemy, has been defeated! When it is stated, “this mortal shall have put on immortality” it is saying, “when this body, which is subject to death *mortal* shall have put on that which is not subject to death *immortal*.” Earlier on Paul said, “We shall be changed” (1 Cor. 15:52). To the Philippians he said, “Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself” (Phi. 3:21). Yes, just as surely as Jesus rose “bodily” from the grave, we shall be raised “bodily” from the grave!

But, what kind of body will it be? Jesus had a “glorious body,” therefore, His body had been changed when He was resurrected. To the two on the road to Emmaus, “he vanished out of their night,” (Luke 24:91). He suddenly appears in the midst of apostles and they suppose they had, “seen a spirit” (Luke 24:37). Jesus replied, “Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have” (Luke 24:39). “Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption” (1 Cor. 15:50). This dispells that it will be “purely” a fleshly body, because, our Saviour “ascended” up into Heaven (Acts 1:9-11). We will have to leave it there. The apostle John sums it up, “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (1 John 3:2).

**NO HOAX BUT HOPE.** Hope is earnest expectation backed up by confidence. As a result of the sacred Scriptures (Rom. 15:4), the glorious message of the gospel (Col. 1:23), and living an approved life (Rom. 5:3-4—ASV), a Christian has “hope.” The hope of being resurrected (Acts 23:6); of the second coming of Christ (Tit. 2:13); of

being like Jesus (1 John 3:2); and ultimately, ETERNAL LIFE. This is the “reaching crown” of the tree of the Christian life. “In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began” (Tit. 1:2). A Christian does not have possession of eternal life, no more than an unrighteous person has possession of eternal damnation in this life. “And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal” (Mat. 25:46). The verse states that one will “go into,” not that one is “already there.” The “unrighteous” can always change their direction this side of eternity (2 Pet. 3:9), and the “righteous” can become unrighteous (1 Cor. 10:12; 2 Pet. 1:10). Why would Paul, through inspiration, say “hope of eternal life” if we had it? In Romans 8:24, “For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?” Paul, points out, that if one has something, why earnestly expect to obtain it in the future? There are those that will use John 5:24 where Jesus stated, “he that...believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life,” but, Hebrews 5:9 reveals that, “he is the author of eternal salvation unto all that obey him.” Also, the Scriptures often speak of a thing in the present when it is in the future. For instance, when Jesus was born it was stated, “a Saviour is born” (Luke 2:11), but he did not become a Saviour until he died and rose from the dead! First John 2:25 speaks of, “the promise of eternal life” (For further study: Rom. 6:23; 1 John 5:11, 13; 3:15). There is a rule of biblical interpretation that states, “One passage is to be understood in the light of another passage, and one passage does not contradict another passage.” Such is the case in regard to the passages about eternal life. When Paul stated, “lay hold on to eternal life” (1 Tim. 6:12), he was encouraging Timothy and others to remain on the path of faithfulness which would lead to the possession of eternal life. That is the ultimate hope of each Christian.

### **THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE RESURRECTION**

Jesus stated, “I must work the works of him that sent me” (John 9:4). In like manner, since Jesus died, shed His blood, was buried, and rose from the dead, for “all” mankind (Mat. 20:28), mankind “must” obey His will! There is an incumbent responsibility, that is, man is obligated to obey the Lord’s will. Our Saviour put it this way,

“Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again” (John 3:7). Jesus paid the price, there is the “gift of salvation” but mankind has to meet the terms of obligation. God has done “His works” and mankind has to “work the works of God” (John 6:28). Each person is obligated to “believe” that Jesus is the Christ (John 8:24); “repent,” that is reform their lives (Luke 13:3); “confess” that Jesus is the Christ, not that they we sinners (Acts 8:37; Mat. 10:32-33); and finally, to get into Christ, be “baptized,” “for the remission of sin” (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16). This will put one into Christ, the church, the body of Christ (Gal. 3:27; Eph. 1:22-23). Jesus is the “Saviour of the body” and the “body in the church,” therefore, the church is the saved.

In 1 Corinthians 4:2, Paul implored, “Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.” One that is a Christian is obligated or indebted to the Lord to be “full of faith,” that is, obedient. Revelation 2:10 states, “be faithful unto death” and literally means, “be faithful facing death.” If one is to have “eternal life,” after having started the “race,” if one is to be “crowned,” one must “strive” or “agonize” to be faithful. Paul refers to it as a “fight” in 1 Timothy 6:12, “Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.” One must be faithful in their lives, and to give their bodies as a “living sacrifice” (Rom. 12:1). Also, a Christian in to be a “servant,” “And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant” (Mat. 20:27). A Christian is motivated by love. “We love him because he first loved us” (1 John 4:19), will serve Him out of love, and will be thankful for the obligation and the responsibility so he can live eternally!

# HAS ANY BROUGHT BACK WORD FROM HEAVEN?

*Curtis A. Cates*

## INTRODUCTION

The theme of the 1989 Bellview Lectures, *In Hope of Eternal Life*, is very needed in a day when God is mocked, the Word of God is assailed, and man's only hope is undermined on every hand. God bless Bobby Liddell and the Bellview elders for giving words of comfort and hope (1 The. 4:18)!

The question "If a man die, shall he live again" (Job 14:14) is as old as man. Another question which has been asked nearly from the beginning of history is, "If the spirit lives on, does it sometimes communicate with those still living on earth?" Several wishes may have spawned such belief. *One*, being unsatisfied with or ignorant of what is infallibly revealed from God in His Word concerning the life beyond, many have desired to obtain information about life after death; do loved ones and friends continue to exist, are they happy, are they sad, do they still have bodies, etc.? *Two*, being separated from the departed, many have wished still to communicate with those whom they loved. This chapter will notice the belief itself and examine it in the light of God's Word.

## SPIRITISM—DEFINITION AND HISTORY

Through the years, the belief that the living can communicate with the spirits of the dead has been called *Spiritualism* or *Spiritism*. It has been widely described as the oldest cult known to man, as old as humanity. Many prefer to term it Spiritism, because of its marked contrast to what the Bible describes as spiritual. Spiritism is from "spiritus" in the Latin, or spirit. Its history can be traced back to the ancient Egyptians, Hindus, Chinese, Babylonians, etc. In the hundreds of years before Christ, the belief was common in Greece and Rome. The Israelites had also long been exposed to these cultic practices

among the Canaanites. Spiritism was also widely practiced during the Middle Ages in Europe.

Modern spiritism can be in part traced to Emmanuel Swedenborg, a Stockholm university professor, who in the middle 1700s claimed to receive special communications from such deceased persons as Martin Luther. He had profound influence upon William Blake, gifted English poet, and others. In fact, the Swendenborg Foundation exists in America today.

The Spiritism movement in the United States began when Kate and Margaret Fox, daughters of John D. Fox, moved with their family, in 1847, to a new residence in Hydeville, New York. They reported strange, mysterious happenings, which allegedly eventuated in the sisters' devising a means of communicating with the spirit of Charles Rosma, who, it was told, was murdered by an earlier resident of the house. Later when the cellar revealed some human bones, word of the supposed phenomena spread universally. Though the "rappings" by which the women "communicated" with the spirit were admitted by them, in 1886, to be actually the cracking of the joints in their toes (which confessions they later retracted), Spiritism continued to spread and to grow in its popularity. The "spirit alphabet," or rappings, continued to be used and the confessions discounted. The Fox sisters' cottage is now a spiritism shrine.

Additional noted spiritists could be named, including: Arthur Conan Doyle, who created Sherlock Holmes; philosopher William James; Sir William Crookes, who invented the Crookes tube, etc. Perhaps the one receiving the most notice was "Bishop" James Pike, Episcopalian and modernist, who after his son committed suicide, contacted Arthur Ford, former preacher in the Disciples of Christ and well-known "medium" relative to the possibility of contacting his son's spirit. Harry Houdini, famous magician, and numerous others, including some former mediums, have shown such practice to be deception.

In the Spiritist religion, the number of believers is variously estimated to be from 150,000 to 200,000 in the United States and from 50 to 75 million throughout the world.

## SPIRITISM—BELIEFS AND TECHNIQUES

Though not all beliefs are held by all spiritualists, the following tenets have been generally listed among the doctrines of Spiritism.

*God*—The “God” of Spiritualists is not the true God of the Bible. They hold to a kind of Pantheism, meaning that physical objects such as the sun, stars, the moon, trees, whatever ministers to one’s needs is “God”; to them, there is no one personal “God,” whom man is to worship. “God” is to them a type of “Oversoul” who pervades the universe.

*Christ*—Since all human beings are divine, they aver, Christ is divine only in that sense; He is a “child of God” as all men are. Thus, all have spirits and the spark of deity. He is not the One through whom all was created. He was a great “medium,” or mediator, and is now exalted in the spirit realm. The virgin birth, vicarious death, and bodily resurrection of Christ are all fables. And, Christ will not return personally at the last day. He does not have all authority nor is salvation only in Christ’s name. His death was simply that of a martyr. That three persons make up the Godhead is rejected.

*Atonement*—Since man never fell, then there is no place nor need for the atonement. The “atonement” from “sin” has no value, they say. There is no sin.

*Bible*—The Bible, they say, is not the inspired, holy, infallible revelation from God. Spiritualism is the divine revelation, the foremost revelation from the beyond, ever. Much of the Bible is rejected, for it does not fit the tenets of Spiritism, neither does Spiritism depend upon the Bible for its basis.

*Spirits and Angels*—The communion in the other world is composed of spirits, or souls, of those who once lived on earth. Spirits differ from Angels, the Angels being those who reached higher ranks, having died earlier.

*The Church*—The “Christian Church,” they say, held people back from progress. Christianity and Spiritism are held to be opposites. Thus, when one grows, the other declines. Worship assemblies, Bible classes, and Christian doctrine are harmful to the movement.

*Heaven and Hell*—Though the Spiritists recognize the existence of a kind of “heaven,” hell is rejected completely. It does not exist,

they affirm. There exists a purification, a type of “chastisement,” but the idea of endless hell fire is repulsive. There is no “great gulf,” for the remorse and sorrow is remedial. They desire to pursue their evil, but being restrained from doing so, they suffer. In time their sorrow leads to purity.

*Communication with Spirits*—A person or persons can communicate with the spirit world through using a “Medium,” also called “necromancy.” It is defined as, “The art that professes to conjure up the spirits of the dead and commune with them in order to predict the future” (*The American Dictionary of the English Language*, p. 878). Some hold that there are seven levels or states encircling the earth; thus, the spirit progresses, per the above purification, from one level to another. The closer one is to the earth, the more his thoughts are earthly. They can know what is happening on earth and even communicate through mediums to people on earth; as they move further from the earth, from one sphere to another, this ability ceases. They possess bodies, unlike those possessed on earth. Since all have forces which are psychic, they can communicate. However, since mediums have more of this power of the soul than others, they serve as the intermediary between those still alive and the departed. This they do generally in a “spiritistic” setting called a seance. The medium is sometimes termed a “sensitive,” most of whom are women.

The seance is generally held in a quiet room, with the lights lowered. After the medium enters a trance, her body is possessed by another spirit, her own spirit having left. Her voice, countenance, and personality often change. She is no longer like herself. Since departed spirits are interested in the living and in earthly affairs, questions can be directed to the spirit now possessing the medium about their departed friends and loved ones, about the future, et al. These meetings are always started promptly, for to offend the spirits by someone arriving late is not good.

In order to assure the audience that the spirit has been called up, various “unexplained” phenomena take place. The spirits may “materialize,” they may speak through a trumpet which is seen “floating” about the room, they may write on cards which are blank, “automatic writing,” or they may tilt the table, around which the communicants

are gathered. They might even be given certain presents (apports) from the spirit, such as jewelry, etc. Raps, such as those of the Fox sisters, have continued to be “created.” Even photographs of the “spirits” and ectoplasm are sometimes produced. Of course, these techniques have long since been exposed as deception (even by some former mediums).

The belief that one can receive communication from the spirit world is not confined to those who practice the above mentioned Spiritists. The writer has evidence of such beliefs in certain cults, and he has heard of individuals who claimed they had spoken to their deceased loved ones. In addition, certain religionists have told him that they talk to Christ on a regular basis. Of course, their communications from the Lord virtually always contradicted the teachings of Holy Writ. For example, “the Lord told” one lady who had a compound fracture in her arm not to see a doctor—it was for her chastisement. When he, his father, Curtis C. Cates, long time gospel preacher, and another preacher quoted Scriptures to her on the subject, she accused them of blaspheming and called for them to crawl under her bed and repent before being struck dead. Of course, that, they refused to do!

Has any brought back word from heaven? Do spirits, or even God, communicate directly with the living today? “What saith the scripture?” (Gal. 4:30).

### **SPIRITISM—REFUTATION BY THE SCRIPTURES**

*God*—The Scriptures teach that God is the Creator of the universe and man (Gen. 1:1-2:3; Exo. 20:9-11; Psa. 19:1-3; Acts 17:24-31; Heb. 11:3). The Godhead is composed of three persons—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit; yet they are One (2 Sam. 7:22; Psa. 83:18; Jam. 2:19; 1 Cor. 8:4; Mark 12:28-29; Col. 2:9; Acts 5:14; John 1:1-3, 14; Mat. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14). God is sovereign. Each Person in the Godhood had a role in the physical creation and in the scheme of redemption, as well.

*Christ*—Human beings are made in God’s image (Gen. 1:26-27; Acts 17:29; Heb. 12:9); however, they are not deity. Thus, in that sense, they are children of God. However, like Adam and Eve were separated from God, having gone astray like sheep, through transgres-

sion (Isa. 59:1-2; Gen. 2:16-17; 3:1-15; Rom. 5:12ff; Isa. 53:6), so likewise have all accountable persons been separated from God by their own personal sins (Eze. 18:20). Unlike man, Christ is deity, the second member of the Godhood, the Word who became flesh (Heb. 2:14-18), the only begotten Son of God (John 1:14-18; 3:16), “the **holy thing** which is begotten...called the Son of God” (Luke 1:35), not a mere mortal! He died to redeem man (Col. 1:13-18) and is the *One Mediator* (1 Tim. 2:5). He is not a “great medium” among other “mediums.”

Christ was born of the virgin (Isa. 7:14; Jer. 31:22, Mat. 1:20-25; Luke 1:31-35; et al.), died for all men (Heb. 2:9; John 1:29; et al.), and arose bodily from the dead the third day (Luke 24:6, 39, 46; Rom. 1:4; 1 Cor. 15:3ff), having shed His pure, precious, innocent blood to redeem man (Col. 1:13-14; Rev. 1:5; Mat. 26:28).

*Atonement*—The justice of God demanded/demands punishment for sin. Only through the offering of the perfect Lamb (Christ) could the demands be satisfied (Heb. 10:4-10; Rom. 3:23-26). Only through the atonement made possible through the gracious gift of the only begotten Son of God could the mercy of God rejoice against His justice (Rev. 7:13-17). Reconciliation is only in Christ (2 Cor. 5:15-21).

*Bible*—The inerrant, infallible, plenary, verbally inspired Bible is indeed the very Word of God (1 The. 2:13; 1 Cor. 2:12-13), throughly furnishing unto every good work (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Thus, one must not add to, nor take from, nor substitute for the Word (Deu. 4:2; Pro. 30:5-6; Rev. 22:18-19). The Word is complete, “all things that pertain to life and godliness” having been therein recorded (2 Pet. 1:3); those who preach another gospel are anathema (Gal. 1:6-9) and have not God (2 John 9-11). “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God” (1 Pet. 4:11). Notice that grave and terrible consequences rest upon man or angel who would teach another gospel or give a modern day revelation, whether man, spirit, or angel, and upon those who would be thus led away from the truth.

*Spirits and Angels*—The Spirits of the departed from earth, being separated from their fleshly bodies, go to be with the Lord; they live on and are not annihilated (Ecc. 12:7; Rev. 6:9-11; Luke 16:19-31; 2

Cor. 12:1ff; 2 Cor. 5:8; Luke 23:43; Phi. 1:21-23; Rev. 7:15-17; 20:4). The spirits are very much aware and conscious of their own realm of existence, but they are asleep to the things on earth (Ecc. 9:5-6; Isa. 63:16).

The departed spirits do not graduate into angels. They do not become angels, but are “as the angels”; in heaven, there will be no marrying nor giving in marriage (Mat. 22:30). Note also just here that though God once allowed departed spirits of wicked men to take over and control one’s person (demon possession) in order to show His superiority over the spirit realm in casting them out, such a miracle no longer takes place (Luke 10:18; Zec. 13:1,2; 1 Cor. 13:8-13; Eph. 4:8-15; et al.). If demon possession still existed, Satan’s power would be superior to God’s. In addition, demons acknowledged Christ to be the Son of God, who would torment them in Hell fire; they believed and trembled (Mat. 8:29; Mark 1:24; 5:7; Luke 4:34; Jam. 2:19). The spiritists who appeal to the demons an evidence do so at the expense of their own tenets.

*The Church*—The New Testament church, the church one can read about in the Bible, holds the Word of God to be the final authority in matters religious. Christ has all authority over His kingdom, or church (Mat. 28:18). He is the one Head of the body (Col. 1:18). Faithful children of God continue in the apostles’ doctrine (Acts 2:42), refusing to teach for doctrine the commandments of men (Mat. 15:9). The superiority of the church is described in Isaiah 2:2-3; all others will be rooted up come judgment day (Mat. 15:13). Christians reject all rival doctrines, creeds, and religious organizations (Eph. 4:4).

*Heaven and Hell*—When men’s spirits (the actual persons, or individuals—Luke 23:43; Luke 16:19ff; Acts 9:39) go to the intermediate state, the Hadean world, the righteous souls go to Paradise, and the unrighteous souls go to torments, or Tartarus, where they await the general resurrection (John 5:28,29; 1 Cor. 15:20-28; 35ff; 1 The. 4:13-18) and the universal judgment (Mat. 25:31-46). They will then be sentenced either to eternal life in heaven or to eternal damnation in hell (Mat. 25:34, 41, 46; Dan. 12:2; Rev. 20:11-

15; 2 The. 1:6-9). Indeed, heaven and hell are eternal, and they are reality!

*Communication with Spirits*—Some of the Bibles *most severe warnings* have been dearly sounded against attempting to communicate with spirits. The following are examples of *Old Testament regulations* against these heretical practices.

Thou shalt not suffer a sorceress to live (Exo. 22:18)

Turn ye not unto them that have familiar spirits [mediums], nor unto the wizards; seek them not out, to be defiled by them: I am Jehovah your God (Lev. 19-31).

And the soul that turneth unto them that have familiar spirits and unto the wizards, to play the harlot [spiritual adultery] after them, I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people. Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy; for I am Jehovah your God (Lev. 20:6-7).

A man also or a woman that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death: they shall stone them with stones; their blood shall be upon them (Lev. 20-27).

Surely there is no enchantment with Jacob; Neither in there any divination with Israel: Nor shall it be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought! (Num. 23:23).

There shall not be found with thee any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, one that useth divination, one that practiseth augury, or an enchanter, or a sorcerer, or a charmer, or a consulter with a familiar spirit, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For whosoever doeth these things is an abomination unto Jehovah...For these nations, that thou shalt dispossess, hearken unto them that practise augury, and unto diviners; but as for thee, Jehovah thy God hath not suffered thee so to do (Deu. 18:10-14).

And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits and unto the wizards [wise men], that chirp and that mutter should not a people seek unto their God? on behalf of the living should they seek unto the dead? To the law and to the testimony! if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them (Isa. 8:19-20).

One can see the severity of the crime of this apostasy (abandoning God and His Word to seek to communicate with the dead) in examining some *Old Testament examples*.

*Egypt*, whom God punished with the ten plagues in rescuing His people, endeavored unsuccessfully to counter His power through ap-

pealing to cultism, sorcery, and necromancy (Exo. 7:11, 22; 8:18). Isaiah prophesied of Egypt's later destruction.

And the spirit of Egypt shall fail in the midst of it; and I will destroy the counsel thereof. and they shall seek unto the idols, and to the charmers, and to them that have familiar spirits, and to the wizards. And I will give over the Egyptians into the hand of a cruel lord; and a fierce king shall rule over them, saith the Lord, Jehovah of hosts (Isa. 19:3-4).

Their necromancy could not save them.

*Saul, King of Israel*, by the command of God, “put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land” (1 Sam. 28:3). However, later, when Saul abandoned God's commands and rebelled against Him,

Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and inquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor (1 Sam. 28:7).

When Saul arrived, disguised and with two other men, he asked the woman, “Divine unto me, I pray thee, by the familiar spirit, and bring me up whomsoever I shall name unto thee” (v. 8). Some have appealed to this account in defense of the practice of necromancy. However, notice the surprise of the Necromancer that Saul would make such a request.

And the woman said unto him, Behold, thou knowest what Saul hath done, how he hath cut off those that have familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land: wherefore then layest thou a snare for my life, to cause me to die? (v. 9).

When she was asked to bring up Samuel and Samuel appeared, she “cried with a loud voice; and the woman spake to Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me? for thou art Saul” (v. 12). Several additional things should be noted: the Necromancer was terrified, when Samuel actually, unexpectedly appeared (v. 13); Samuel, who was indeed not annihilated, rebuked Saul for not obeying God and told him he would be killed at the hand of the Philistines (vv. 18-19), which prophecy was fulfilled the following day; God, not the medium, enabled Samuel to appear with the message to Saul. First Chronicles 10:13-14, relates,

So Saul died for his trespass which he committed against Jehovah, because of the word of Jehovah, which he kept not; and also for that he asked counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to inquire thereby, and inquired not of Jehovah: therefore he slew him, and turned the kingdom unto David the son of Jesse.

*Manasseh, King of Judah, did evil and abominations in Jehovah's sight.*

And he made his son to pass through the fire, and practised augury, and used enchantments, and dealt with them that had familiar spirits, and with wizards: he wrought much evil in the sight of Jehovah, to provoke him to anger (2 Kin. 21:2-6).

He was more wicked than those before him and made Judah also to sin with his idols; thus God would bring "such evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whosoever heareth of it, both his ears shall tingle" (vv. 11-12). See also 2 Chronicles 33:6.

*King Josiah, on the other hand, was one of the royal reformers.*

Moreover them that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, and the teraphim, and the idols, and all the abominations that were own in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem did Josiah put away, that he might confirm the words of the law which were written in the book that Hilkiah the priest found in the house of Jehovah. And like unto him was there no king before him, that turned to Jehovah with all his heart (2 Kin. 23:24-25).

Seeking to communicate with the dead is the antithesis to turning to Jehovah and confirming His law. One does it to his own destruction.

*The Book of Daniel* clearly shows the impotency of magicians, soothsayers, astrologers, enchanters, and sorcerers to reveal and interpret dreams (Dan. 1:20; 2:2ff; 4:7ff; et al.). Babylon would be destroyed, for she trusted in wickedness, among which was the "multitude of thy sorceries, and the great abundance of thine enchantments" (Isa. 47:9-10).

Spiritism is also forbidden in the New Testament; the gospel clearly teaches that no one has brought back word from heaven. Paul condemns sorcery as a work of the flesh which will keep one from inheriting the kingdom of God (Gal. 5:19-21). How important it is, then, for all to "prove all things; hold fast that which is good; abstain from every form of evil" (1 The. 5:21-22) and to "believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits, whether they are of God, because many

false prophets are gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1); not all confess that Jesus is of God (v. 3).

No proof exists that any spirit ever returned to communicate with the living about things beyond. Think of all the Lord Himself and the apostles raised from the dead. Did the ruler’s daughter (Mat. 9:18-25), Lazarus (John 11:17-44), the son of the widow of Nain (Luke 7:11-17), and others whom the Lord raised from the dead (Luke 7:22) tell of their experiences in the unseen world? Did the saints who were raised at the time of Christ’s crucifixion speak of the world beyond (Mat. 27:52-53)? Did Dorcas, who was raised by Peter (Acts 9:36-42), and Eutychus, who was raised by Paul (Acts 20:9-12), reveal their experiences in the intermediate state? Did Christ (Luke 23:43; Acts 2:27)?

Indeed, when the *rich man* lifted up his eyes in Tartarus (Hades), in torment (Luke 16:19-31), he cried out for a drop of water. However, the *great gulf* between Paradise and Tartarus kept Abraham from sending Lazarus to the rich man. Neither could the rich man or Lazarus warn the rich man’s five brothers (note that he was still selfish). *No departed person* is allowed to speak to the living. If they would escape the doom of the rich man, they would have to hear and believe the inspired message from God—not a familiar spirit. Indeed, they would not believe even the words of one who arose from the dead. Christ did arise, but He is largely rejected (John 12:48).

The *apostle Paul* himself was “caught up even to the third heaven” (2 Cor. 12:1-10), to Paradise. He may or may not have been in the body; he knew not. But, he was conscious, hearing things which would have a tendency to cause him to glory.

And by reason of the exceeding greatness of the revelations, that I should not be exalted overmuch, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, that I should not be exalted overmuch (v. 7).

However, it was “**not lawful**” for him to tell of those experiences and revelations (v. 4).

## CONCLUSION

Dead people do not talk to the living, though they are fully conscious in the intermediate state. Eliphaz averred that a “spirit” talked

to him, but what the “spirit” allegedly told him was false doctrine (Job 4:12ff). The Lord was restricted by His testament, or covenant, from telling Saul of Tarsus what to do to obtain salvation (Acts 9:22, 26). God’s Word, the gospel, is His power of salvation (Rom. 1:16). The Holy Spirit speaks only through the Word and leads only through the Word (Luke 8:11; Eph. 6:17; Heb. 4:12; et al.).

Our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the worldrulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Wherefore take up the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand (Eph. 6:12-13).

“Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve” (Mat. 4:10). “Ye cannot partake of the table of the Lord, and of the table of demons” (1 Cor. 10:21).

For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, fashioning themselves into apostles of Christ. And no Marvel; for even Satan fashioneth himself into an angel of light. It is no great thing therefore if his ministers also fashion themselves as ministers of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their works (2 Cor. 11:13-15).

# DO WE REALLY WANT TO GO TO HEAVEN?

*Jerry L. Martin*

You may think this is a strange question to ask those of you who are present at this lectureship or those of you who are reading this lectureship book. You may think you have already demonstrated by your actions an attitude indicative of your interest in going to heaven. But do you know that more people will miss heaven than will go there (Mat. 7:13-14)? Why is this so? It's not because God doesn't want them to be saved. God desires "all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4). Peter reaffirms by saying, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise a's some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (1 Pet. 3:9).

To miss heaven is to be lost, eternally separated from God. One will not find himself in his hopeless state because there have been no provisions made for his salvation. "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Heb. 2:9). God's desire for man's salvation and the provisions He made are expressed in the sacred words of His Son in John 3:16-17,

For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.

There truly would be no greater tragedy known to man than for him to miss heaven after so much has been done on heaven's part for him to live there.

How in the world could anyone say, "No, I really don't want to go to heaven"? Yet many are saying that very thing by their thoughts, desires and actions at this very moment. How tragic, because there is no

reason for any to be lost seeing that through the death of Jesus the debt of sin was paid and full satisfaction given.

My friends, in order for man to go to heaven, he must first be convinced that the heavenly realm exists. Secondly, he must be convicted of sins that will keep him from entering heaven. Thirdly, he must be converted to Christ who can carry him there. Why are there so many people who are not convinced, convicted and converted? The simple truth is that no one will go to heaven unless he really wants to go. The following points will help us determine whether or not we really want to go to heaven.

### FOR HEAVEN WE MUST YEARN

To *yearn* is “to desire, to long persistently for something or someone.” God has filled His book of Holy Writ with reason after reason for us to yearn for heaven. First of all, heaven is where God dwells (Ecc. 5:2; Dan. 2:28). Christ, the Son of God, in instructing us to love our enemies said, “That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven” (Mat. 5:45). Again, while instructing His disciples concerning prayer, Christ said, “After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven” (Mat. 6:9). The fact that our Father is in heaven is repeated over and over again. Add to that knowledge the assurance that Christ our Saviour now sits at the right hand of the heavenly Father (Mark 16:19; Acts 2:33; 5:31; 7:55; Col. 3:1). To further deepen our yearning for heaven our Lord made the following promise,

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also (John 14:1-3).

In describing the judgment scene, the Lord said these comforting words to the sheep on his right hand, which represent the righteous. “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Mat. 25:34). No wonder Paul said to Christians, “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth” (Col. 3:1-2).

With so many reasons why we should yearn to go to heaven, why is it then that so many will miss heaven? Satan blinds the mind of many to keep them from seeing the light of the glorious gospel of Christ (2 Cor. 4:4). He blinded the mind of Eve by luring her eyes away from the instruction of God and caused her to desire the forbidden fruit. Satan has had similar success down through history causing men to yearn for temporary earthly pleasures rather than eternal heavenly joy. Through lustful desires, he draws men away from God and heaven's Promises. James outlines Satan's strategy as follows, "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (Jam. 1:14-15). The Evil One uses all kinds of attractive lures to distract our eyes from their heavenly view.

James also lays before us a counteraction to such powers.

Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded (Jam. 4:7-8).

The only way we can resist the Devil is to keep our eyes and minds fitted on things above. If we really want to go to heaven we will follow the Lord's instructions to

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also (Mat. 6:19-21).

If you do not have a yearning in your heart for heaven, the indication would be that you have placed your treasures in the wrong place. A vivid example of such misguided affection is given by the Lord in the form of a parable of a certain rich man in Luke 12:16-21,

And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: and he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater, and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then

whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided. So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

The enticements of the world have captured the hearts, of many individuals and congregations today and will rob them of a place of eternal security for their souls. This danger is precisely why the Lord warned,

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

What about you, my friend? Do you really want to go to heaven? How often do you think of heaven? I don't mean, do you have an occasional thought or a shallow wish. I am asking you how deep is your yearning. Not until you want to go to heaven more than you want anything else in this world will you go to heaven. Not until you have an insatiable hunger for heaven will you go there. The Lord said, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Mat. 5:6). This spiritual appetite is a required characteristic of a Christian. It is hard for us in this land of plenty to comprehend the hunger the Lord described here. My wife and I had an image of true hunger etched into our minds a few years ago. Though neither of us had experienced such hunger, we were foster parents to two young boys who had. My wife was called late one evening by the Department of Human Resources to come and pick up these children because they had been abused and neglected by their mother. Their father was in prison. There were four little boys in all and the police who took these children into the custody of the state related a heart-breaking story. It had been reported by neighbors that the children had for some time been searching through the neighborhood garbage to find any morsel of food. After searching the house and finding nothing to eat, someone was sent to get a bucket of chicken. When they arrived with it they were almost attacked by the little fellows. During the "attack" a piece of chicken was knocked out of the box onto the ground where a cat began eating it. The oldest of the boys, who was six at the time, kicked the cat off the half-eaten piece of chicken and devoured it himself, dirt and all. Now, friends, that is true hunger. Experiencing such deep craving for food was

never forgotten by those young lads. While keeping the two oldest in our home during the next three years, there was never a time, that I can recall, when they left the meal table without asking, “When are we going to eat again?”

Jesus said that until we hunger for righteousness like those starving children hungered for food, only then will we be filled. He was not talking about a hunger that could be satisfied with a cup of coffee and a donut. Over half of this world’s population will go to bed tonight physically hungry. Millions will know real hunger. I wonder how many will go to bed spiritually hungry. How many yearn for heaven more than they desire job, money, popularity, power or anything else in this world? This business of going to heaven ought to be a matter of spiritual craving, a great desire based on a deep-seated yearning. We ought to think of heaven day and night, night and day. We should never be satisfied with the earthly. We ought to get homesick for a heavenly home.

### OF HEAVEN WE MUST LEARN

To *learn* is “to gain knowledge or understanding.” Let us remind you that God desires “all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:4). Notice that our being saved depends on our coming to the *knowledge* of the *truth*. The grace of God is seen in his revelation of this saving truth. Paul further states, “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world” (Tit. 2:11-12). Though God has extended his grace to all men that they might be taught how to live properly in this life and thus inherit eternal life, many do not have a willingness to learn. Many want to go to heaven on their own terms. They are willing to go only if they can stipulate the policy. These people have the attitude, “You are not going to tell me anything religiously. I’m going to do what pleases me regardless of what the Lord says.” How sad it is to see so many in the world and in the church developing such an unwise attitude. Notice carefully the Lord’s condemnation of such an attitude in Matthew 7:21-23,

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. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Some people are like a certain ruler in Luke 18, who asked the Lord, “What shall I do to inherit eternal life?” (v. 18). When the Lord answered by saying, “Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me” (v. 22), the ruler went away “very sorrowful: for he was very rich” (v. 23). This man thought he wanted to go to heaven, but he was not really willing to learn.

Still others are like the Galatians, who were led away from the gospel they had learned from the inspired apostles unto a perverted gospel that could not give them spiritual understanding (Gal. 1:6-11).

If you really want to go to heaven you will be willing to learn how to get there. There is but one way to heaven as Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6). This makes His invitation so enticing, as described in Matthew 11:28-30,

Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Are you willing to learn as the Ethiopian eunuch was in Acts 8? This man was wrong in his worship and confused on the scriptures, yet he had a willingness to learn. When Philip, the evangelist, asked, “Understandest thou what thou readest?” (v. 30), notice his attitude: “How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him” (v. 31). Because of this man’s willingness to learn Philip was able to preach unto him Jesus (v. 35). This man obeyed what he had learned and was immersed into Christ and could go on his way rejoicing, understanding how to worship and live properly.

Are you as willing to learn as those who were gathered at Cornelius’ house in Acts 10? Though Cornelius was a good man in

so many ways, he was instructed to send for Peter who would tell him words whereby he and his house could be saved. This man was willing to learn of heaven and upon Peter's arrival, Cornelius had gathered his kinsmen and near friends (v. 24) and said, "Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God" (v. 33). These are people who really wanted to go to heaven and were willing to learn.

### TOWARD HEAVEN YOU MUST TURN

To *turn* means "to change course or direction." The Bible word describing this action is *repentance*. Once again we start with heaven's desire for us. Peter states that the Lord is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9). Following the dictates of the world will lead to death and destruction while turning to the Lord will lead to life everlasting (Rom. 6:23; John 10:10). Paul magnifies the importance of this change of direction by informing us that it is a command of God. He says in Acts 17:30, "And the times of this ignorance God winked at: but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent." Provisions for the proper change of life have been made. James specifies the "turning about" that is required of one walking in the heavenly way in James 1:21. "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls." Notice that "laying apart" or *turning from* "filthiness" and "naughtiness" makes it possible for us to turn to "the engrafted word" which can save us. This change of life indicates that we are "doers of the word, and not hearers only" (v. 22). It takes more than learning, there must be a turning. We must not be forgetful hearers. The Lord has given us a perfect law of liberty to guide our every step but we must be willing to walk as it directs.

The Lord Himself said that a wise man is one who hears and does. "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man" (Mat. 7:24). In giving the interpretation of the parable of the soils in Luke 8:15, Jesus said, "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."

Are you as willing to turn as those who were assembled for Pentecost in Acts 2? After being convicted of their sins that would keep them out of heaven, they asked what they should do to change the direction of their lives (v. 37). “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (v. 38). They had a desire to go to heaven and were willing to learn, but without changing their lives to conform to what they had learned they would not reach heaven. Those who really wanted to go to heaven are set forth in verse 41, “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.” They not only learned of heaven’s directions but followed them. “And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved” (v. 47).

Are you willing to change the course of your life as Paul was? This man changed from Saul, the persistent persecutor of Christians, to Paul, the peerless preacher who patiently pressed toward the prize which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Acts 8:1-3; Phi. 3:13-14). A man who once rejected and hated the truth now could say,

So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek (Rom. 1:15-16).

This man could ably describe the change that takes place as a person becomes a Christian as a turning from being the servant of sin to being the servant of righteousness (Rom. 6:16-18). Notice that one does not become the servant of righteousness (v. 18) until he obeys from his heart the doctrine delivered to him. Then, and only then, can one say he really wants to go to heaven.

My fear is that the contrary attitude is all too prevalent today. Far too many are like Felix who heard the apostle Paul reason of “righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come” yet he deferred any decision to change the direction of his life. Though he trembled at what he learned, he waited for a “convenient season” to respond to such learning (Acts 24:25). To our knowledge, such a season never came to Felix. Too often such is the case.

Another regrettable fact is that too often, many who have turned away from the pollutions of the world, find themselves again entangled therein. Peter describes the sad state of those who tamed from the heavenly way in 2 Peter 2:20-22:

For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb. The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

Demas is an example of a poor soul who turned back to the world (2 Tim. 4:10). Such a frightful thing can happen to congregations of people. The church at Ephesus was called on to repent for she had left her first love (Rev. 2:4-5).

If you really want to go to heaven, you will turn in that direction and never look back at the country from which you came, or else you might find opportunity to return (Heb. 11:15).

### **TO BE A BEACON WE MUST BURN**

To *burn* here means “to give light, to glow, to be on fire or zealous.” If one really wants to go to heaven, others will be able to see such desire in the consistency of his life. Our Lord set forth the required characteristics of a Christian in the beatitudes, which are recorded in Matthew 5:1-12. He then describes the effect such characteristics will have in our lives and on the lives of others in Matthew 5:13-16. The culminating result is that the light of our life will so shine before men that they will see our good works and glorify our Father which is in heaven (v. 16). The world will know who our Father is and where He dwells. They will see our desire to share our Father’s heavenly habitation. Many, hopefully, will be inspired to share our quest.

Our light will be seen burning if our attitude toward God’s Word is right. We must share Jeremiah’s attitude. In Jeremiah 20-9, he says, “Then I said, I will not make mention of him, or speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up

in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.” If we are convinced that the truth is what sets man free (John 8:32), we will not be able to keep it from a lost world. Paul emphasizes the importance of receiving and dispensing the light of the gospel when he said,

Do all things without murmurings and disputings: that ye may be blameless and harmless, the none of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain (Phi. 2:14-16).

Paul considered it an exalted privilege to preach the good news that could cause man to see God’s marvelous way of redemption. He said in Ephesians 3:8-10,

Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ: And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.

If we share Paul’s attitude we will be convicted about carrying the gospel to the world as the Lord commanded (Mat. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16). Our love for our Lord must be demonstrated through obedience for He said, “If you love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15).

Those who really want to go to heaven will keep their light burning by being ready to every good work (Tit. 3:1). An eternal flame is kindled in one’s life when he is reminded of the Lord, “Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Tit. 2.14). Such knowledge should cause us to “sanctify the Lord God in our hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (1 Pet. 3:15). The Christian influence is described again in 1 Peter 2:9, “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priest, hood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light”

If one really wants to go to heaven, he will keep the light of proper Christian worship burning brightly. Jesus emphasized the necessity of the distinctive flame of acceptable worship when He said,

But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit. and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24).

The Lord also exposed the emptiness of worship prescribed by man when He 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).

Too many have allowed their light to be extinguished and their zeal to grow cold by not regularly assembling with the saints to gain spiritual strength. Far too many congregations, in our day, have so perverted and watered down the worship service with superficial entertainment that God is robbed of our praise and homage, Christians are robbed of spiritual nourishment and the world is robbed of a view of the heavenly way. When Christians cease to exhort and encourage one another to assemble to pay homage, show respect and praise to God in regular and reverent worship, spiritual anemia is sure to follow. The Christians to whom the Hebrews letter was written received umpired instructions concerning the importance of faithfully assembling to avoid spiritual weakness and death in Hebrews 10:22-26:

Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith. having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let no hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another. and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.

The person who is not drawn to the assembly of the saints every first day of the week has allowed his Christian light to go out. Such a person has forgotten the blood-stained cross of Christ. The person

who does not find himself at the foot of that cross when he partakes of the Lord's Supper cannot appreciate the sacrifice that was made on the cross for him. This person is not conscious that Christ, through that sacrifice, passed into heaven to be our high priest (Heb. 4:14-16). That person then, cannot properly, with a true heart full of assurance, approach the throne of grace in prayer through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 5:20), nor can his heart overflow with the sweet music of songs of praise and edification (Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19). Such a one in never over-whelmed by the richness of heaven's gift toward him and will never be motivated to freely give from a grateful heart as God has prospered him (1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 9:6-7). That person will not desire the sincere milk of the Word that he may grow thereby (1 Pet. 2:2), nor will he "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 3:18). My friends, Christian worship is a foretaste of what it will be like to assemble with the heavenly hosts around the throne of God to glorify His name eternally. One who does not have a burning desire in his heart to participate in true and pure worship here will not get to enjoy it there. Such are those who failed to heed the Lord's warning in the parable of the virgins in Matthew 25:1-13. There are those today who will find themselves with their lamps burned out and like the foolish virgins will be ill-prepared when the Lord comes.

Now, my friend, how will you answer the question, "DO YOU REALLY WANT TO GO TO HEAVEN?" May your heart yearn for heaven. May you be willing to learn how to get there. May what you learn cause you to turn in heaven's direction and may you determine to keep your lamp filled and your wick trimmed so your light can burn bright for the lost world to see the heavenly way. Then you can be among those who declare they "desire a better country, that is, an heavenly- wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city" (Heb. 11:16). As the old, familiar song states, "Heaven will surely be worth it all."

# WILL HEAVEN COST TOO MUCH?

*Foy L. Smith*

The subject of heaven is one of the greatest subjects in the entire Bible. It is a subject everyone gets around to talking about sooner or later. Everyone wants to go there. Even the unbelievers say that if such a place exists, which they doubt, they would love to live in it. But they are not willing to pay the price to go to heaven. And there is a price attached to going there. We pay far too much for many things in this life. Cars cost too much. I paid one hundred twenty-five dollars for my first automobile, a 1929 Model A Ford Coupe. That was more than I was able to pay, but I needed it. I drove it for two years and sold it for the same amount. I wish I had it today; as a vintage automobile it would bring several thousand dollars. It would be too much for it, but that is what it would bring anyway. Go out and buy a car now and see what you pay. It will be too much, but this present life is geared up that way. Housing costs too much, and the luxury of owning their own home is beyond the fondest dreams of most young married couples. Books cost too much. I sold my first book back in 1944 for seventy-five cents per copy. That book reprinted today would have to sell for possibly as much as ten dollars. Yes, things cost too much, but does the price we pay to go to heaven cost too much? It has always been the same. Church buildings, cars, books, drapes, carpets, pews; they all cost too much in dollars and cents, but the cost of going to heaven remains the same as always. If it costs too much now then it cost too much centuries ago. Has it ever cost too much? I say no! Definitely not!

Jesus gives a parable in which He talks about one king going to war against another. He has ten thousand men and the enemy army consists of twenty thousand. Jesus stated that if the king with the smaller army does not think he can win over the larger numbers, he would do well to think about it—to count the cost, and send a medi-

ator, ambassador, to try to bring about a peace (Luke 14:28-32). He also talks about a man building a house. If he does not have “where-with to finish it” he would do well to sit down and count the cost before he begins. If he does not, his friends will pass by and laugh at him for “biting off more than he can chew” to put it in today’s parlance. Many today buy houses, end up having to pay one thousand dollars, or more per month on payments, then find out that they just were not able to afford such a dwelling; consequently, they lose all.

This principle works in the most important decision one can ever make in this life—the decision that involves going to heaven. Too many by far take the step thinking that there is nothing to it, that it is always a downhill trail when it is not. There are times when the hill is steep and the climbing most difficult, frequently too difficult for those who did not count the cost. They begin and then fail. How can we arrive at an answer to this all-important question, “Does heaven cost too much?” Let us together approach this question with three great major questions in our minds:

### **WHAT DOES HEAVEN HAVE TO OFFER?**

In the first place, heaven is a place where there will be no troubles. Now, that alone makes it worth whatever it costs to go there. But that is not all. Troubles will be unknown there where they are so much of our daily lives here. “Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble” (Job 14:1). No one questions this verse—it is so true of this life. “Trouble is my name” someone said one time. Think of the countless songs that deal with troubles and troublesome times. The next verse in this text says that “he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.” Some are cut down much sooner than others, but death is the final act man experiences in this life. The Psalmist said further, “My soul is full of troubles” (Psa. 88:3). It is not always easy to “laugh your troubles away” as an old song goes. When we get through laughing, they are still there. Oh, some of our troubles will disappear, maybe never to return, but if so, there will always be some new ones coming along that we have to face. It is said that Lincoln would say when trouble hit him, “This, too, shall pass.” This was, and is, a fine philosophy, but troubles are always near. And Lincoln knew

that very well. The great man's life was a life of war and troubles. There will be no troubles in heaven—thank God!

Next, in heaven there will be no sickness. We are told that Lazarus was sick (John 11:1). When the sisters told Jesus that their brother was sick, Jesus said it was not unto death. But he died physically. Jesus meant that his sickness was not unto eternal death—Lazarus would live again, and he did. At the command of Jesus, Lazarus came up out of the grave. One day, we know not when, Jesus will speak and the graves will no longer hold their victims. Bodies will be raised up and the righteous will be changed and welcomed into the Glory World prepared from the foundations of the world. Sickness is one of the prices mankind pays to get there. We may enjoy health above that of millions of earthly dwellers, but in time sickness will stop at our door and perhaps enter in without even bothering to knock. What do we do when that day comes, if it has not already? We do the best we can, praying daily and fervently to our Lord for Divine help and leaving the rest to him and those who are able to care for us. We cannot choose the time we prefer to be sick, if we could, we would never be sick. If we could, we would probably choose perennial health. But the choice in the final go round is not ours to make. We must get sick and we must die. Do we pray for the sick? Of course we do. Do we believe in “the prayer of faith?” Of course we do, but we try to apply the words of James as they are intended for us today (Jam. 5:15). Do the elders ever pray for the sick? Certainly. Do we anoint with “holy oil” like they did in apostolic days? No! Well, why not? Because we do not live in that age in which the will of God was still in the making—being revealed to the divine apostles “bit by bit and part by part” until the revelation was completed (1 Cor. 12, 13, 14; 13:13). We pray for the sick according to the will of God (1 John 5:14-15). We do not demand and we do not expect a miracle to “confirm the word” which has long since been confirmed (Mark 16:20). The oil in those days was symbolic of the Holy Spirit and the power the divinely appointed elders had to lay hands on the sick when they prayed for them. This was not only “a prayer of faith,” it proved that God was with these chosen men and would work directly through them and others until the New Testament Will was completed and given in written form. It

existed in the minds of inspired men until it was put in writing. When it was given through divine writings, from then on faith came “by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). We pray “in faith” now, but we do not lay hands on the sick as the divinely appointed servants did in those days. The Holy Spirit worked directly through them. Now, the Spirit works through the revealed and written will of God. Every prayer the Christian prays is a “prayer of faith” whether it is for the sick or the well, whether it is for our daily bread, for the sick, or for the success of a gospel effort. In other words, any prayer the Christian prays is a “prayer of faith.” Sickness belongs to this world, and how terrible it can be. In Heaven sickness will be unknown. Does Heaven cost too much?

Heaven is a place where there will be no disappointments. In the book of Nehemiah, we learn of Nehemiah’s disappointment over the city of his fathers, Jerusalem. The walls had been torn down and God’s house was in apostasy. The people were scattered—“out of duty” as we say today. The king, Artaxerxes, saw his face and asked, “Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick?” (Neh. 2:2). Nehemiah explained the condition of the house of God and asked for permission to go back and restore it to its former glory (v. 5). Permission was granted and Nehemiah went back and began the work of restoration. The Lord lifted up his countenance and in the same process lifted up Nehemiah’s, as he did others in former days (Num. 6:26). Disappointment is a terrible thing, but this life is full of such. I hate to see anyone disappointed especially a child. I always dread to see the Holiday Season come with December 25<sup>th</sup> staring down into the faces of millions of disappointed little children. The disappointment of adults is bad enough, but children! It is terrible. Why, I was even sympathetic with the little boys who slipped under a tent thinking they were going to see the circus, only to find out that they were in a revival meeting! I have never forgotten, when a lad, how an old boy in our school got my name to put a gift on the tree for me at the chapel party. He had torn out sheets from a big ledger he used, folded them up and put Christmas wrapping around them. My name was called. I opened the “gift” and he thought it was terribly funny! Well, part of that was right. It was terrible! And he was a bit embar-

rassed by it because it was not as funny as he thought it would be. The disappointments we face in life always begin in one way or another when we are children. As an adult we still have disappointments. Preachers face so many disappointments when brethren do not live faithfully to the Lord and his work. They work hard, set goals and see the almost complete indifference on the part of those who are counted as the dependable; yes, it is disappointing. Preachers are often accused of not having any feeling for the brethren—turn it around and see the cold indifference the brethren so often have toward the preacher's work, and his work is his very life. Thank God, in heaven there will be no disappointments. Is heaven worth the price of going there?

In heaven there will be no separations. This life is characterized by separation. When our children grow up and leave the old home nest they are separated from us. True, they come and go, but it is never like it formerly was. This is the way it is supposed to be. This is one of life's undeniable decrees. But this natural separation leaves us sad, for things change and are never exactly the same again. In life, we have constantly to separate ourselves from things that hold us back, and sometimes these things are very dear to us. "Come out from among them, and be ye separate" is applicable to many things in life (2 Cor. 6:17). The saddest of all separations in this life is that separation caused by death, yet this final separation in this life is as natural as anything can be. It is by divine appointment (Heb. 9:27). There is no escape from it until Jesus comes. Should He tarry His coming, there are "millions now living who shall never see death" as a famous date-setter said many years ago. Yet he died, and his name, Rutherford, has all but vanished from human memories. When Jesus comes, those living will not die but will be caught up to be with Him forever if they are righteous "unto the end" (Rev. 2:10). Christians are the only ones who can sing, "Till we meet again," and rejoice with full belief that they will meet their loved ones again. This is a song that sinners cannot sing, for there will be no singing where they will go if they die unrepentant. There will be only outer darkness and torment of soul in hell (Psa. 9:17). Heaven will be a place of grand and glorious reunions where there will never be separations from those we

love again. If we can sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the eternal kingdom of heaven why can we not sit down with John, and Mary, and Bill and, maybe even Foy, in that blessed place? Why not? And the answer has to be, we can (Luke 13:28-29). Heaven will compensate for all the sad and lonely separations we experience in this life. I do want above all things to be among the faithful in that day! No more separations—forever!

There will be no more tears in heaven. This life is a constant flow of tears; with brief intermittant periods between, and then right back to tears. David said once, “I water my couch with my tears” (Psa. 6:6). How many, many times have we all done this? Job said once in the very midst of his many troubles, “Mine eye poureth out tears unto God” (Job 16:20). “Laugh and the world laughs with you, cry and you cry alone” may be ever so popular as an old adage, but it is not true in the life of the Christian. The Christian does not cry alone. Jesus wept at the grave of Lazarus, and he weeps with us when we weep (John 11:35). Isaiah knew something about tears; in fact he said, “the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces” (Isa. 25:8). Jeremiah who said his eyes were “a fountain of tears” knew something of their power (Jer. 9:1).

On and on we can go, but why go further? All of us as God’s children are familiar with tears, even the value of tears at times. We have the glad promise that in heaven Jesus will wipe away all tears from our eyes and we will cry no more (Rev. 7:17). This makes heaven worth our every effort expended to get there. And then, after all our efforts and all our good works, it will be in the final analysis the result of the mercy and grace of God.

In heaven the redeemed will enjoy eternal happiness. Our happiness in this life is never long-lasting. Something will happen that mars it, but there will be nothing in that glory world to mar our total happiness and satisfaction. It is hard to find people today who are truly happy. “Are you really happy?” we can ask our friends and loved ones. They often reply like this, “Well, yes I suppose I am, but” In heaven we will not have to qualify or explain why we are happy or unhappy. There will be no ifs, no and’s, no maybe-so’s, or but’s; in

that glad world it will be happiness only. Do you think it is worth the effort to go there?

In heaven we will have new bodies. They will not be a makeover job on our old bodies, they will be new. They will have the same identity, but everything will be perfect. When the wheat farmer plants his wheat seeds and the crop comes up, he does not get the old stalk of wheat. Paul says, “God giveth it a body” (1 Cor. 15:38). Though the body is new, it is still wheat and recognizable as wheat. So will it be with our changed and glorified bodies—they will be new, but the identity will be the same. “Will we know each other in heaven?” I often wonder just who started a ridiculous question like that in the first place? In the transfiguration did those involved know each other—Jesus, Moses, Elijah? Read the account in Matthew 17 for yourself and see. Of course, they did! They were in glorified bodies, but the identity remained the same. “But, how can God make it that way?” That is his business, not yours nor mine. Leave it to him. I’m just glad that it will be that way and that we can know each other in heaven! Is this much of an incentive to you to go there? It is to me.

To the believer heaven will mean eternal life. In the gospel of Mark, Jesus talks about how some who follow him have to give up just about everything in this life of a worldly nature, houses, family members—how they have persecutions, but how it will be different, far different in the next world. He closes on this encouraging note: “and in the world to come eternal life” (Mark 10:29-30). This makes anything we have to suffer in this life bearable. Paul talks about our “light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2 Cor. 4:17). Now, this is a powerful statement from the apostle, knowing the persecutions and terrible agonies he suffered physically. He was beaten with the Roman rod; he was shipwrecked; he was robbed and left for dead on one occasion; he barely escaped with his life on another occasion; he was betrayed by false brethren, yet he counted all these things as nothing when he thought about the great day of compensations! And so will at least the latter part of that apply to us when life for us is over on this earth. It is hard for the finite mind to conceive of a place where eternal happiness goes on and on forever without one single

thing to ever mar it. We are used to unhappiness and turbulence in this world. How can there be one where these things never occur? Well, there is, and the name of that land is Heaven. All life ends in a physical way here in this earthly realm, but eternal life reigns forever in the land beyond the skies. I hereby declare that heaven is far greater than the cost of going there! We come now to the second major question in this lesson:

### **DID GREAT BIBLE CHARACTERS THINK HEAVEN COST TOO MUCH?**

What did Moses think about the cost of going to heaven? He had enough to discourage the average person. He was not allowed to enter into the promised land with those he had led. He disobeyed God by smiting the rock when God told him to speak to it. Seemingly a small act of disobedience we say, but the consequences were great. As the result of this act of disobedience God said, "Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them" (Num. 20:12). This seems like such a small act of disobedience, why should God keep Moses from going into the land with the people he had led this far? God was forever establishing the importance of doing exactly what he says do when a specific command is given. The world today as a whole refuses to believe this. "Do whatever you wish just as long as you are honest and sincere," the religionists today cry. But it is not a matter of what today's religious leaders say, it is wholly and solely a matter of what God says. Now did Moses give up because of this Word from God? No, he went on doing his best. Finally, God took Moses up to the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, and "showed him all the land of Gilead, unto Dan" (Deu. 34:1). Moses looked over the land and then died. God buried him in a valley,"but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day" (v. 6). Though Moses did not enter that physical Canaan, we know his reward was great for he appeared with Elias in the transfiguration of Jesus (Mat. 17). Yes, when we get to heaven, Moses will be there and we will meet him face to face. He did not get discouraged and give up. He kept on and the Lord rewarded him. Evidently, he thought heaven was worth whatever it cost to get there.

Next, did Job think the cost of going to heaven was too great? Not for a minute. He suffered like few earthlings have ever suffered, but he knew that in heaven he would be free of such sufferings. Listen to his determination to please God: “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him” (Job 13:15). And listen further: “I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God” (Job 19:25-26). Job did not doubt—he knew that his Redeemer lived—he knew He would come to the earth, to this world and do His work of redemption, and, best of all, he knew there would be a bodily resurrection in the last day. Paul, centuries later said, “For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality” (1 Cor. 15:53). The change will be fast—so fast perhaps that no human invention can detect it, but a change from the earthly to the heavenly there will be. Job of old looked forward to it and rejoiced in the fact that he would have hope beyond this life. The cost for him was not too much.

Let us call upon David next: What did he think about the future life? Did he believe in it? When the baby was born and died, the king arose, refreshed himself and took nourishment. When asked why his change of attitude, he said, “Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me” (2 Sam. 12:23). The blessed hope that the “sweet singer of Israel” had is the hope we have, only ours is perhaps even greater. Jesus had not been manifested in the flesh at that time, but David knew he would come and the final victory would belong to the righteous. If this is not enough then go back and read that immortal Shepherd Psalm: “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.” Notice the highlights of that glorious Psalm:

green pastures...leadeth me beside still waters...restoreth my soul...with me through the valley of the shadow of death...a table prepared in the presence of mine enemies...goodness and mercy shall follow me...and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Now you reach the conclusion, did David think the cost was too much?

We next call upon Stephen. The hope of eternal life cost him the supreme price—his life (Acts 7:54-60). We need to read the entire seventh chapter to get the entire picture. Read his sermon, the longest

recorded sermon in the New Testament. It is quite an historical account from the call of Abraham through the death of Jesus. The people hated what they heard for they all stood condemned and knew it. They were “cut to the heart and they gnashed on him with their teeth” (v. 54). They stoned him, and in his dying moments he saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and his last words were, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit,” and “lay not this sin to their charge” (vv. 59-60). With this, he fell asleep and went to be with the Lord forever. Did this grand prize cost him too much? Ask him when you see him in heaven and hear what he says!

We can consult the apostle Paul and find if what he paid was too great a price. Perhaps none other among the chosen ones suffered as much as did this apostle. Read 2 Corinthians 11:24-28 and determine for yourself if Paul thought he paid too much. After all these sufferings, he still praised the name of the Lord and expressed his predominant desire to go and be with him forever (Phi. 1:23).

After consulting Paul, consult the great cloud of witnesses in Hebrews 11:33-40. They faced torments like few ever faced in this life. The world was “not worthy of them,” but heaven was. No, they did not pay too much.

Finally, though we could call upon many others if space permitted, we call upon the greatest one of all—Jesus. He paid the supreme price in a way that no others did. He laid down His life freely for our sins (Heb. 2:9). He “tasted death for every man.” In His extreme agony on the cross He even felt forsaken of His Father (Mat. 27:46). Jesus had to stand the test for the salvation of the whole world. Everything depended upon His response to the cross, the very cruelest of deaths. There was a curse attached to dying on a cross: “Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree” (Gal. 3:13). Jesus died freely and He would do it all over again if it took it for our salvation. Evidently He did not think the cost too great. Now this brings us to our last question:

### **WHAT DOES IT COST US TODAY?**

It costs us self-denial and this is the hardest thing we can do, deny self. It is not hard to deny others but when it comes to denying self; well, that’s different. But this is the cost we must pay (Mat. 16:24).

Look at a selfish brotherhood today—multimillion dollar buildings, not for the glory of God but for the satisfaction of the vanity of many of our own brethren. “Oh, look how they must love the Lord!” some exclaim as they pass by our Cathedral-like edifices. It should rather be, “Look at how they love themselves!” Now we all love nice, even beautiful edifices in which to meet, but we have gone far too far and any sober thinking person will have to admit it. Self denial is not much in evidence when we meet in buildings that literally cost millions upon millions of dollars!

Sometimes going to heaven costs us those we love much in this world, members of our own families. Sometimes we have to “deny” family to follow Jesus (Luke 14, 16, 17). We are often hated by those round about (Luke 6:22). These are not little prices to pay. Are we up to paying them if we have to?

Going to heaven costs us obedience (Rom. 1:16; 10:16-17; Heb. 5:9; 1 Pet. 1:22-23). We will be called “legalists” when we obey the Lord and command others to do the same. Can we take their criticisms? Is heaven worth it? Going to heaven demands total dedication (Mat. 12:30; Luke 9:62). This means we will have to forego many personal pleasures at times. Are we willing to do it? “But, what about the majority?” comes from every side, it seems. Just one response to that: so what? The majority cannot obey for us, live for us, or go to heaven for us.

Now we come to the conclusion by asking again, is heaven worth what it costs? Is being with the saved of all ages worthwhile? Is being with loved ones in the Lord again worthwhile? Is being with heavenly hosts worthwhile? Is being happy forever worthwhile? It is believed by some that the most beautiful part of the entire Bible is the last part of John 14:3: “that where I am, there ye may be also.” To be with Jesus, our Savior, our elder brother, forever—think of it! Yes, the only conclusion we can sensibly reach is, whatever it takes to go to heaven, the cost is small indeed to what the believer receives in return. Thank God for this heavenly home far beyond the skies, yet so near to the true believer. And I tell you this for sure: as for me, I plan to go there!

# ARE YOU READY?

*Guss Eoff*

There is no way to estimate how many thousands of times we have been asked, “Are you ready?” Are we ready to go visit? Are we ready for work? Are we ready for school? Are we ready for worship? Are we ready to teach the gospel? Are we ready to do mission work? Are we ready to follow Jesus? Are we ready to give our lives in God’s service? Are we ready to give an answer to every man that asketh a reason concerning the hope that is in us? (1 Pet. 3:15). Are we ready to be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate? (1 Tim. 6:18). Are we ready to be obedient, ready unto every good work? (Tit. 3:1). But one of the most important questions is, Are you ready to die?

## DEATH IS COMING

Just as surely as we are alive, we are going to die! It is an appointment we shall all keep. There is only one exception, that is if Jesus comes first. The apostle Paul said,

Behold, I tell you a mystery: We all shall not sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed (1 Cor. 15:51-52).

Death is certain! The Psalmist said, “What man is he that shall live and not see death, that shall deliver his soul from the power of Sheol” (Psa. 89:48)? No man has the power to avoid death. The wise man Solomon tells us, “A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted” (Ecc. 3:2). The Hebrews writer makes it very plain that death is coming as well as the judgment, “And inasmuch as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this cometh judgment” (Heb. 9:27).

The masses of people today act as though they are going to live forever, but death is coming and the question is, “Are we ready?”

## LIFE IS SO UNCERTAIN

Death is only a step and we never know when we are going to take it. David told his dear friend Jonathan,

And David sware moreover, and said, Thy father knoweth well that I have found favor in thine eyes; and he saith, Let not Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved: but truly as Jehovah liveth, and as thy soul liveth, there is but a step between me and death (1 Sam. 20:3).

David knew that Saul was trying to kill him and that death was very near. Saul would have killed David at any time and he was aware of death's nearness.

Sisera, the captain of Jabin, the king of Canaan, was a great warrior. In fact he was a much better military man than Barak who was to lead the children of Israel into battle. I am sure that Sisera never had a notion that Israel would defeat him. He never dreamed that death was so near when he went into Jael's tent. He was weary of battle and fled for his life from the army of Israel. He was thirsty and asked Jael for a drink of water. She gave him some milk and then hid him under a rug. When he went to sleep, Jael slipped in quietly and took a hammer and drove a tent stake through his head and pinned him to the earth.

Then Jael, Heber's wife, took a tentpin, and took a hammer in her hand, and went softly unto him, and smote the pin into his temples, and it pierced through into the ground; for he was in a deep sleep; so he swooned and died (Jud. 4:21).

Life is so uncertain! I am sure that Eglon had no idea that he would be assassinated by Ehud. Eglon, the king of Moab, ruled Israel for eighteen years (Jud. 3:14). When Israel cried to Jehovah to deliver them, God raised up a deliverer, Ehud the son of Gera. When it was time for Israel to pay tribute to Eglon, Ehud offered the tribute to Eglon the king of Moab. Ehud had made a two-edged sword about twenty-two inches long. He strapped it on his thigh under his garments. Eglon was a very fat man. After Ehud had given the tribute to the king and had sent away the ones that carried it, he turned to king Eglon and said, "I have a special message for thee." He took his sword and thrust it into Eglon's body. Even the handle part of the sword went into his body. Eglon was so fat that the fat covered up the

handle of the sword so Ehud did not pull out the sword, but its point came out Eglon's back. Surely the king never dreamed he would receive such a message. He never dreamed that instead of tribute he would receive death.

I am sure that as John F. Kennedy rode the streets of Dallas that death was the farthest thing from his mind. He could never have dreamed that morning that a sniper's bullet would plunge him into eternity.

A Christian man and his wife never imagined they would be killed that day when they lied to the apostle Peter. It was such a small thing to die for. All that Ananias and Sapphira did was to keep back a small part of the money they received for a possession they sold. But they lied and they died! Who would have thought that they would die while giving money to help needy people? But they lied to God as well as to Peter and God struck them dead (Acts 5:1-10). Life is so uncertain! We never know when it is going to end.

### **SOME DON'T KNOW THEY ARE NOT READY**

The ten virgins were anxiously awaiting the coming of the bridegroom. They were going to a wedding feast. What a grand occasion! They had gone out to meet the bridegroom, but he did not arrive when they expected, so they were sleeping while they waited. When the cry came about his coming, the ten virgins arose and trimmed their lamps to be able to see as they accompanied the bridegroom. But five of the virgins did not bring extra oil, so their lamps were going out. They asked the five virgins who had brought extra oil for some of theirs. But for fear they would not have enough, they told them to go buy for themselves. While they were gone, the bridegroom came and went into the feast. The five virgins that had made preparation entered the feast. When the other virgins arrived the door was shut and they were not allowed to enter. They cried, "Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know not the day nor the hour" (Mat. 25:11-13). They thought they were ready! But they had not made adequate preparation. Many are going to face death without having done the will of Jesus. Even though they think they are ready, they are going to be surprised to find out they are not.

### **SOME THINK THEY ARE READY**

Just after our Lord Jesus had established the Lord's Supper and had gone out to the mount of Olives, our Saviour made a shocking statement.

Then saith Jesus unto them, all ye shall be offended in me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. But after I am raised up, I will go before you into Galilee. But Peter answered and said unto him, if all shall be offended in thee, I will never be offended. Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, that this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. Peter saith unto him, Even if I must die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples (Mat. 26:31-35).

Peter thought he was ready, even to die for Jesus. In Luke's account we read, "And he said unto him Lord, with thee I am ready to go to prison and to death" (Luke 22:33). Yet, we know that Peter denied the Lord three times. How sad to read the way Peter denied Jesus (Mat. 26:69-75; Luke 22:55-62).

There is a bright side to this story. Thank God, Peter repented! We know from reading God's Word that Peter had a change of heart. He became a great apostle and suffered many things for his Master Jesus. According to his own statement he made ready,

And I think it right, as long as I am in the tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; knowing that the putting off of my tabernacle cometh swiftly, even as our Lord Jesus Christ signified unto me (2 Pet. 1:13-14).

Peter had an opportunity that many will not have. He had a chance to repent, many will not be so fortunate.

### **SOME ARE READY**

Thank God for examples of men who were ready. The apostle Paul was such an example. When we are first introduced to Saul, we see a zealous Jew persecuting the church. We read his own statement, "For ye have heard of my manner of life in time past in the Jew's religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and made havoc of it" (Gal. 1:13). But Saul was converted! He at once began preaching and building that which he had destroyed. Notice as he wrote to the Galatians, "but they only heard say, He that

once persecuted us now preacheth the faith of which he once made havor; and they glorified God in me” (Gal. 1:23-24).

The man whose name was changed from Saul to Paul so lived that he was ready to die. He said, “But I hold not my life of any account as dear unto myself, so that I may accomplish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God” (Acts 20:24). To prove his words, he made another statement. When the prophet Agabus came to Caesarea where Paul was, he took Paul’s girdle and bound his feet and hands. He then said, “Thus saith the Holy Spirit, so shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles” (Acts 21:11). When the brethren heard this they begged Paul not to go up to Jerusalem. Then this great man of God said, “I am ready.” Listen to him, “Then Paul answered, what do ye, weeping and breaking my heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 21:13). Paul was **READY!** He was ready to go be with Jesus. He told the brethren at Corinth,

We are of good courage, I say, and are willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be at home with the Lord. Wherefore also we make it our aim, whether at home or absent, to be well-pleasing unto him (2 Cor. 5:8-9).

He was ready because he was serving our Lord. He really wanted to leave this old body of flesh and go to be with Jesus. When he wrote the letter to the Philippians he said, “But I am in a strait betwixt the two, having the desire to depart and be with Christ; for it is very far better: yet to abide in the flesh is more needful for your sake” (Phi. 1:23). Finally, we must hear Paul’s words to his son in the gospel, Timothy.

For I am already being offered, and the time of my departure is come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing (2 Tim. 4:6-8).

Yea! Paul was ready to die. The question for us to ponder is, are we ready to die?

The first man to be martyred for Jesus was ready to die. One of the greatest sermons ever to fall from human lips was preached by Stephen and is recorded in the seventh chapter of the book of Acts. Stephen preached and gave a history of the people of Abraham. In that history he told of how their forefathers had rejected the preaching of the prophets. He reminded them of things in the history of the Jews that could not be denied. Stephen brought his sermon to a close by showing that they had rejected and murdered the Son of God. When those who had killed the Christ heard the accusation they were enraged. They laid hold of the preacher, Stephen, and gnashed on him with their teeth. But this man of God was ready to die. Luke records,

But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God (Acts 7:55-56).

God permitted Stephen to gaze into heaven itself. Those Jews were even more infuriated. They covered their ears and shouted so as not to hear his voice. Then they dragged Stephen out of the city and stoned him to death. When we talk about a man being ready to die, Stephen was!

And they stoned Stephen, calling upon the Lord, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep (Acts 7:59-60).

Stephen was ready to die! Are we ready?

### **WE ARE WARNED TO GET READY**

When Hezekiah, king of Judah, became very ill, in fact so ill that he was at the point of death, he was warned. Isaiah told Hezekiah that God said, "Set thy house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live" (Isa. 38:1). How fortunate! God warned Hezekiah ahead of time to get ready. He had time to prepare. Most of us will not have that opportunity.

Just recently, the Kansas City area was rocked with a horrible explosion. Six firemen were trying to put out a fire in a storage house. It exploded and blasted them into eternity. They had no warning to get ready. Their bodies were blown to bits. Many parts exploded into a

jelly like substance. Their fire truck could not even be recognized as such. They were fighting a fire and in a split second were in eternity.

Hezekiah begged God to let him live. He pleaded with God reminding Him of how faithful he had been. The message of God came again to Isaiah. Jehovah told Isaiah to say to Hezekiah,

Thus saith Jehovah, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years. And I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city (Isa. 38:3-5).

Just think, God warned Hezekiah to get ready to die, and then gave him fifteen more years to live. But he still knew that he had time to set his house in order in that fifteenth year.

What about us being warned to be ready to die? Oh yes!, we have been warned! Our warning is to be ready at all time.

Watch therefore: for ye know not on what day your Lord cometh. But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what watch the thief was coming, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken through. Therefore be ye also ready; for in an hour that ye think not the Son of man cometh (Mat. 24:42-44).

### **SOME KNOW THEY ARE NOT READY**

A woman that I am very well acquainted with, who is supposed to be a Christian, was not ready to die. She and her husband were having an argument. She had prepared his dinner, and as they were sitting at the table, the argument became more heated. Finally, the husband became so enraged that he picked up his plate full of food and smashed it upside down on her head. It knocked her to the floor and dazed her. He then said, "Well, we will just end it all." He went to the kitchen cabinet and got his pistol, he walked over to her and pointed the gun at her head and was about to pull the trigger. She began to scream and cry, "Don't kill me!, Please don't kill me, I am not ready to die!" He turned and fired a shot into the drawer that contained the silverware. Then he put the gun to his temple and fired. He was plunged into eternity, but he was not ready! His wife was not ready to face God and she knew she was not ready. Whether she is ready to meet God now or not, I do not know.

This is the reason for our question, “Are you ready?” Now is the only time we have to get ready. This should encourage us to make ready as soon as possible. The righteous have a great hope when they face eternity. The wise man tells us, “The wicked is thrust down in his evil-doing; but the righteous hath a refuge in his death” (Pro. 14:32). What a wonderful promise! This should inspire every one of us to seek to do the will of God. Notice again the words of Paul as he gave hope to the brethren in Thessalonica.

For God appointed us not unto wrath, but unto the obtaining of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him (1 The. 5:9-10).

Thank God! We can have the cleansing of our sins. John said, “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1:7). God loved us enough to give His Son so that we might have eternal life with him. In Christ is salvation. Are we in Him? Are we ready?

# GRACE FOR GRACE

*H. A. (Buster) Dobbs*

The charge is made that gospel preachers, for the most part, do not know about, nor care about, nor preach about the New Testament doctrine of grace. We are gravely told that those who pioneered the mighty plea to restore New Testament Christianity were ignorant of Bible teaching on this subject.

The allegation is untrue. The perpetrators of this slander should be ashamed. Men of the book know the teaching of God on the subject of grace; and the pioneers of the restoration were preeminently serious students of the Word of God.

For the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us, to the intent that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world; looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people for his own possession, zealous of good works (Tit. 2:11-14).

## **WHAT IS GRACE?**

The word grace really just means gift. The word is translated in the New Testament benefit, favor, grace, liberality, pleasure, and thanks. A popular, but inadequate, definition of grace is, “The unmerited favor of God.”

Grace is a comprehensive word, and includes such things as:

- 1) The original creation, including the making of man and woman (Gen. 1:1-2:25). The Creator has plentifully provided for every physical need of man in the created universe. Food, clothing, shelter, medicine, water, and every other need of our race is provided in abundance. The earth is a veritable storehouse of material goods. One small seed can grow a tree that may produce many truckloads of apples. There is life in the seed. Who put the life there? Not man! It is a gift of God! It is of grace!

- 2) The God who made us, and who loves us, also gives spiritual endowments. The Bible is an expression of God's interest in our moral well being, and spiritual enrichment. Without a revelation of God's eternal wisdom, and a disposition to obey it, and a knowledge of its requirements, humans could never be free from the guilt of sin, and therefore could not be with God. Psalm 119 is an eloquent tribute to the power, beauty, and importance of God's word. The Bible includes the gospel which is God's power to save (Rom. 1:16). The unspeakable gift of God's Son, His death, His resurrection, His ascension, His intercession, and His eternal reign manifest the amazing grace of a living God. Without belief in the Son of God we cannot be saved (John 3:16). All spiritual blessings, in heavenly places, are located in Christ (Eph. 1:3).

It is by and through grace that we enjoy both material and spiritual blessings.

### **MATERIAL THINGS**

How do material blessings of God come to us? How, for instance, does God give us our daily bread? God puts the power in the seed. God sends the sunshine and the rain. God assures us of both seedtime and harvest. But God does not send the corn harvested, ground, and baked to a turn, and then force it down our throats. There is something for man to do! Man must plant the seed God has provided. Man must keep the crop clean. Man must reap the grain. Man must grind the corn. Man must bake it, and man must eat it.

Question: Does the fact that man must do something in order to have material things make the physical gifts of God any less a matter of grace?

Question: Does man's activity in procuring material goods mean that he earns the life that is in the seed, or the sun's golden rays, or the drenching rain, or the quiet dew, or the changing seasons?

Question: If man sits idly by, and does nothing, will he eat, and be sheltered from the elements? Does that diminish ought from God's grace?

God provides material blessings in abundance, but man must do something in order to possess them.

God gives the seed, the sunshine, and the rain, but man must contribute the sweat of his brow. There is a sense in which man is worthy of his living, but he does not earn the power and riches God has vested in the created universe.

Everything necessary for our physical well-being is generously provided in the created universe. Thank God for all His gifts.

But, remember, we can sit in the midst of plenty and starve.

### **SPIRITUAL THINGS**

What is true in the physical realm is also true in the spiritual domain. The goodness of God causes him to provide superabundant gifts (amazing grace). The eternal riches are readily available to us. But there is something for man to do.

Peter told the believing Jews on the day of Pentecost to repent and be baptized in order to obtain the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).

“With many other words he testified, and exhorted them, saying, Save yourselves from this crooked generation” (v. 40).

What?

Save yourselves from this crooked generation.

Can a person save himself?

How can a person save himself?

“Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins” (Acts 2:38).

That’s how!

There is something for a man to do in order to put bread on his table, and there is something for a man to do in order to be saved. He must obey in order to receive the rich grace of God, but the gifts of the Almighty are still gifts.

God doesn’t owe us life in the seed, and God doesn’t owe us life in the Son, but it does not therefore follow that we can have either physical or spiritual blessings without action on our part.

Those whose spirits are born of water must “work out their own salvation with fear and trembling” (Phi. 2:12).

Wherefore, brethren, give the more diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never stumble: for thus

shall be richly supplied unto you the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (2 Pet. 1:10-11).

If ye “do” these things! There is something for you to do ! You must add virtues to your faith, or be blind!

Grace is not without conditions! But the conditions do not make void the grace, but rather the conditions establish grace.

### **WORTHY OF ETERNAL LIFE**

Is it possible for a sinful mortal to become worthy of eternal life?

Paul and Barnabas once said to some Jews, “It was necessary that the word of God should first be spoken to you. Seeing ye thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles” (Acts 13:46).

If by refusing to receive the word, and respond to its commands, these Jews judged themselves unworthy of eternal life, then what about those who receive and obey the Word? Would it not follow they are worthy of eternal life?

We are to “walk worthily of the calling wherewith we were called” (Eph. 4:1). Paul prayed that God would count the Thessalonians “worthy” of their calling (2 The. 1:11). We are commanded to “let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ” (Phi. 1:27). We are to “walk worthily of the Lord unto all pleasing, bearing fruit in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God” (Col. 1:10). We must “walk worthily of God” (1 The. 2:12). We may “be counted worthy of the kingdom of God” (2 The. 1:5).

Jesus said concerning the few in Sardis that had not defiled their garments, “They shall walk with me in white; for they are worthy” (Rev. 3:4).

Most of us would consider this to be tremendous heresy were there not Bible proof for it.

God’s grace appears to us, bringing salvation, and instructing us to live right. We must respond to the grace of God by honoring His word, and respecting His authority, through careful obedience to His every command. God’s gifts to us inspire returning gifts to God. But, though it is necessary for us to do something, we do not, by what we do, earn our salvation. We can be worthy of it, but it is not a debt God owes us.

Still it is true that when we have done all that is commanded of us, we must appear before God with this confession upon our lips, “We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which it was our duty to do” (Luke 17:10).

When we have submitted ourselves to the proposition of pardon offered through the gospel, God receives us by the obedience unto death of His Son; and not for any labor, or remorse, or righteousness of our own.

### **ANOTHER ASPECT OF GRACE**

We often read, think, and talk about the grace of God, but the Bible also speaks of the grace of man.

Paul speaks of the “grace” of the Macedonians, and urges the Corinthians to abound in “this grace also” (2 Cor. 8:4-6). The apostle is talking about a gift of money the Macedonians and the Corinthians were preparing to send to the suffering people in Judea. He calls this gift grace. It was grace from man to man.

Question: Did the hungry people in Judea merit the gift of money from Macedonia and Corinth? Did they earn it? Is there a difference between earning and meriting a gift?

There is also such a thing as grace extended from man to God. “Wherefore, receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us have grace, whereby we may offer service well-pleasing to God with reverence and awe: for our God is a consuming fire” (Heb. 12:28-29).

God gives gifts, both material and spiritual, to man; and man, in turn, gives gifts to God. We sing with “grace” in our hearts (Col. 3:16); We “offer up a sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is the fruit of lips which make confession to his name” (Heb. 13:15).

The Bible speaks of grace extended God to man, and of grace extended man to God, and of grace extended man to man.

### **PERVERTED GRACE**

The theology of the protestant reformation presents a perverted grace. Luther was offended by the Roman Catholic teaching that redemption is a matter of so much salvation for so much works done. That man, by his works, earns salvation. That the sins are forgiven as the coins strike the bottom of the collection basket.

Luther, in his opposition to the heresy of the Pope, ran to the opposite error of teaching that works have absolutely nothing to do with salvation. That man is saved by grace only through faith alone. The Catholics teach works without faith, Protestants teach faith without works, the Bible teaches “faith working through love” (Gal. 5:6).

The Protestant Reformation, which embraces most of the denominational churches in the world, holds to the following perversions of Bible teaching:

#### DENOMINATIONAL PERVERSION

Babies are born totally depraved. That, at the time of birth, infants are as bad as they can be, and cannot get any worse.

Depraved humans cannot help themselves and are therefore helpless. There is nothing man can do about his lost condition.

God is the sole actor in salvation. Man, being helpless, can do nothing in order to be saved.

God sends the Holy Spirit, in a direct operation, apart from and separate from the Word of God, to cut away the sinful nature, and enable the person to repent, believe, love God, have faith, and be instantly saved.

Being saved by grace only, and by faith alone, man is now to observe the two sacraments of the church—baptism, and the Lord’s Supper.

#### BIBLE TEACHING

Babies are born sinless, inasmuch as God is their father, because God cannot father evil (Heb. 12:9). Jesus received little children (Mat. 19:14).

Man is accountable and responsible. He is born sinless, but becomes sinful (Rom. 3:23).

There is something for man to do in order to be saved (cf., Acts 2:40; Phi. 2:12).

Man, who became sinful by his own volition, must hear the gospel (Rom. 10:17); believe the message (Heb. 11:6); repent of this sins (Acts 17:30-31); be buried in water in order to obtain the remission of sins (Col. 2:12; Acts 2:38).

The saved, or born again person, is to be faithful, in his service to God, at all costs (Rev. 2:10).

There is something for the sinner to do in order to be saved, and there is something for the child of God to do in order to stay saved.

People, in the denominational world do not understand this, and teach the false doctrine that man is wholly passive in the matter of salvation.

If the position of protestant denominationalism is true then please explain why any person, however sinful, would be lost. The grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men (Tit. 2:11-12). If there is nothing for man to do, then all men will be saved. The grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to Adolph Hitler. If there is nothing for man to do, then Adolph Hitler is saved. The grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to Charles Manson. If there is nothing for man to do, Charles Manson is saved.

The doctrine of unconditional grace is an inescapable affirmation of universal salvation, if the grace of God has indeed appeared to all men.

The sectarian falsehood that man is passive in salvation brings the necessary implication that God is the sole actor in the salvation process. If God is the only actor in the regeneration of man, and if some are to be saved, and others lost, then it follows that God is capricious, and therefore unpredictable, in the matter of man's redemption.

It has been pointed out that if the teaching of the Protestant Reformation is correct on the unconditional nature of salvation, and if anyone is eternally lost, it is God's fault, and He is a respecter of persons. Man who is lost is lost through no fault of his own. He inherits the guilt of sin. He is powerless to do anything about it. God arbitrarily and despotically saves some, leaving all others to perish forever, according to this false doctrine.

If I had no other reason to know that this denominational teaching is false to its core, I would know because the Bible teaches me that "God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness is acceptable to him" (Acts 10:34-35).

The false prophets of earth who advocate this sacrilegious doctrine are guilty of a very great profanity.

### **SO QUICKLY REMOVING**

Tragically, this erroneous teaching has gained a foothold in the church on earth in our time. Some advocate the idea that grace and law are mutually exclusive. Others promote the belief that because of grace some of the laws of God do not have to be obeyed. There are

various positions along the spectrum of this delusion on the nature of grace.

Some teach that grace exempts us from all laws of God, and others are more selective, and say that grace excuses us from obeying some laws of God.

A long time professor in a university operated by our brethren, in a personal letter to me, wrote:

How much error and failure God will forgive I cannot say. I am convinced that as long as one has the faith of Eph. 2:8-9, the grace of God there mentioned will take care of him. Obviously, this is only for Christians. We are loaded with people who have never tried to lead even one person to Christ notwithstanding the great commission. Their giving is pathetic. They attend church only on Sunday mornings. They make little or no attempt to bring up their children in God's nurture and admonition. The list could go on...If the grace of God does not cover some ignorance, error and failure, you and I are both ruined (Jimmy Allen, Harding University, letter dated August 29, 1988).

The Bible teaches that God will forgive all error and failure, provided we obey the conditions of forgiveness. The alien must hear (Rom.10:17), believe (Heb. 11:6), repent (Acts 17:30-31), confess (Rom. 10:9-10), and be buried in the water of baptism in order to obtain the remission of sins. Jesus said such a one "shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). Not may be, or even should be, but shall be saved. The word of God tells the child of God, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). The forgiveness here promised is not merely a possibility; it is a solid certainty, but is conditional.

The good professor is contending for unconditional forgiveness of some sins on the basis of unconditional grace, which produces questions and problems, to-wit:

1. If God's grace provides unconditional forgiveness for some sins, why not all sins?
2. Which sins will God's grace unconditionally forgive, and which sins will his grace fail to unconditionally forgive?
3. Is God a respecter of sins? If God arbitrarily forgives some sins, but not other sins, is he capricious and inconsistent?

4. If unconditional grace will forgive some sins, then unconditional grace will have to forgive all sins, or the unconditional grace of God is limited and partial.

One reason people attempt to excuse the guilt of sin is in order to make the sinner feel better. Some have said that because of the pulpit emphasis on obedience they go to bed at night in great distress, and with much anxiety. Some misguided preachers (and university professors) look for an excuse to excuse the sinner. The idea of automatic, unconditional grace is born out of the desire to make people feel good.

The insurmountable problem with this attempt to making the sinner comfortable is that it has no basis in the Bible. If this is a part of the New Covenant, please give the book, chapter, and verse.

The Bible teaches that the mercy of God is offered to the sinner on condition of obedience. To make the alien sinner rejoice, teach him the gospel plan of salvation, and encourage him to submit to it, and, like the eunuch, Saul, and the jailer, he will rejoice greatly.

If a child of God is grieved over sin in his life, teach him to “confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another.” When we repent of our wickedness, and ask God for forgiveness, confessing our sins, His grace is great and His mercy is sure, and His forgiveness is certain (cf., Acts 8:22-24). If we believe what the Lord says to us in his word, we will then forgive ourselves, and be happy.

No preacher, and no professor, has any right to offer forgiveness apart from the clear teaching of God’s Word.

The disciples of Christ should be so sensitive to sin, and so constant in prayer, that their life of trust and obedience keeps them in the love of God. There is no Bible reason for an obedient child of God to feel uneasy about his relationship with God; the disobedient child of God ought to feel queasy about his eternity. But the solution is not to attempt to discount law, but to resolve to keep the law of the Spirit of life in Christ. God’s law is doable!

### UNKNOWN SINS

The questions come, What about sins we commit that we don’t know about? How can we repent of, and confess, a sin we do not know we have committed?

The questions are based, in part, upon the supposition that the law of God is so complex that mature people find it impossible to fully grasp it, and may therefore violate it without knowing they have done so. If God's Word is so constructed and arranged that simple people may not easily understand its requirements, then God is unjust. If the Lord gives us a rule book we cannot understand, and punishes us for failure to faithfully observe its decrees, He is totally unfair, and unworthy.

Jesus makes it indisputably plain that it is required of us that we hear and do the words of God in order to receive an abundant entrance into eternal tabernacles.

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 who is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. Every one therefore that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man, who built his house upon the rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon the rock. And every one that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and smote upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall thereof (Mat. 7:21-27).

If a person does not know that which he does is sinful, is he therefore excused from the guilt of that sin by the power of grace only? I am told that in uncivilized places some parents kill their babies in the mistaken belief that this will appease the gods. We read in the Bible about some who made their children to walk in the fires of Baal. Such people do not know they sin.

If sin which a person does not recognize to be sin, is dismissed by the power of unconditional grace, then the worst thing that could be done is to preach the Word to such ignorant sinners. If they are never enlightened, grace alone keeps them free from the guilt of sin, and in a saved condition. On this theory, we can save the world by not preaching the gospel to them! Safety in ignorance!

God is not so unjust as to demand more than we can do. We can hear the words of the New Testament, understand those words, and do them, or God is not God. "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able" (1 Cor. 10:13). God is not incorrigible, cruel, vengeful, and unfriendly to sinful men, but He is kind, loving, gentle, and solicitous of man's highest good.

Albeit, the gracious God of heaven and earth is also capable of a very fierce anger!

Another possible point of misunderstanding on what some call "hidden" sins is a failure to recognize the difference between sin, and poor judgment. A failure to do the best thing under the circumstances is not necessarily sinful. It may be poor judgment but it is not sin.

A case in point is Paul's statement to the Corinthians concerning marriage. The apostle told the church that it is best, in view of the persecution they then suffered, to not marry at all, but, he said, if you marry you have not sinned (See 1 Cor. 7).

We may sometime "thrust rude hands among the heart strings of a friend" but that is not necessarily sin. It is unfortunate, but not sin. At other times, it is necessary. Brother Simon Peter hurt brother Simon the Sockerer's feelings, but with good reason.

What some sensitive soul may brand as sinful could be nothing more than an overly delicate and sentimental creature seeking attention, or control. Not everything that some bleeding-heart calls sin is sin.

Still another possibility is failure to recognize the validity of various levels of spiritual growth. Jesus, in the parable of the sower, recognized that even the seed which falls upon good ground does not all produce alike. "And he that was sown upon the good ground, this is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; who verily beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty" (Mat. 13:23).

Every hundredfold producer expects all others to produce a hundredfold, and is frustrated when they do not do so. In his disappointment, he may accuse his less productive brethren of hypocrisy and sin. But the accusation may have no foundation in fact. We would that all produced the maximum, but the reality is they will not, and we

must not let this discourage us, and cause us to make groundless charges. The thirty-fold producer is not a sinner simply because he does not produce more.

### CONCLUSION

Grace is not lawlessness. The law of the spirit of life in Christ is as much a law as the law of gravity. If we would be free from the law of sin and of death, we must submit to the law of the spirit of life (Rom. 8:1-3).

Those who obey the call and command of the gospel, would have been lost except for the gift of the cross. The wonder of Calvary stops every mouth from boasting, and compels grateful humility. The sinner, knowing he is a debtor without hope to pay, sues for mercy and mercy is obtained by obedience to all of the commands of God. It is an insult to God for any one in his sins to ask him for any blessing and then refuse to accept it in the way God has proposed it. The basis of all true hope and happiness is an assurance of the pardon of all sin. But this assurance comes only from the written, and well attested, Word of God, received and obeyed.

# THE BOUNDARIES OF FELLOWSHIP—NOW AND ETERNALLY

*Andrew M. Connally*

## INTRODUCTION

Seldom has there been more emphasis on fellowship within the church than has been true in recent years.

The permissive society has spawned a liberal element in our congregations that is anxious to fellowship any and everything that appears to be religious. It is tragic that men seemingly have so little respect for the authority of God's Word.

All authority is resident in God, for, "In the beginning God." God being the Supreme Being of our universe has by inherent right the power and authority over all things in the heaven and on the earth. The universe is His, His to command and to do with as seems good to Him.

God has delegated "all authority" to Jesus Christ, His Son (Mat. 28:18). The Son has given authority to His Apostles. Notice:

But all things are of God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and gave unto us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit. that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself not reckoning unto them their trespasses, and having committed unto us the word of reconciliation. We are ambassadors therefore on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled to God. Him who know no sin He made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the of God in Him (2 Cor. 5:18-21).

## **THE EXTENT OF OUR FELLOWSHIP IS CLEARLY OUTLINED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT**

The New Testament is very clear—fellowship is taught, fellowship is regulated and fellowship is limited by the Word of God. Anyone who does not recognize God's outline of fellowship flies in the face of God's authority. Anyone who does this will answer at the Judgment for such action (cf., 2 Cor. 5:10).

The extent of fellowship is clearly seen in 1 John 1:5-7.

And this is the menage which we have heard from him and announce unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we am that we have fellowship with him and walk in the darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin (1 John 1:5-7).

So, “God is Light”—this is a statement of the absolute nature of God. Therefore, when God is revealed physically, it becomes “glory” (Mat. 17:2). “And he was transfigured before them; and his face did shine as the sun, and his garments became white as the light.” When God is revealed intellectually, it becomes, “the Way, the Truth, the Light” (John 14:6); when God is revealed morally, it becomes the Righteousness of God (Rom. 1:17). Men, then, reflect the very nature of the gods they serve: with the Heathens, their gods are of darkness, superstition and fear. With Philosophers, God is an abstraction, an idea, not cognizable to man. To the Jews, God was a consuming fire, but God hid Himself. With the Christian, “God is light.”

“And in him is no darkness at all.” “No darkness, no not in any way at all.” Darkness in the Bible often is used as sin, evil and error (cf., Rom. 1:21; Eph. 4:17-19; Eph. 5:7-14). There is an abundance of darkness; physically, intellectually, morally and spiritually, yes a great abundance. Ours is to portray “the Light.”

**IF WE SAY—WE HAVE FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD—  
BUT WALK IN DARKNESS—WE LIE—  
WE DO NOT THE TRUTH!**

Fellowship is *not* based on claims, but rather actions! Three times in four verses, it says, “If we say” and each time something *untrue* is said! Does our claim to fellowship with God stand the test? This is a moral issue, and depends on moral conditions and ends with moral results. No moral results, no fellowship!

“Walking in darkness” simply is a refusal to do the truth. Every fragment of right done is so much truth made visible. Right action is true thought realized. Truth is not just intellectual truth, but always moral truth. *It affects action.*

Truth is not just thinking but doing. Notice the words used with truth:

- (1) Hindering the Truth (Rom. 1:18).
- (2) Obeying the Truth (Rom. 2:8).
- (3) Walking according to the Truth (Gal. 2:14).
- (4) Resisting the Truth (2 Tim. 3:8).
- (5) Erring from the Truth (Jam. 5:19).

For the Christian, then, truth is *first* to be discovered and *then* obeyed?

**BUT IF WE WALK IN THE LIGHT—  
WE HAVE FELLOWSHIP ONE WITH THE OTHER—  
AND JESUS' BLOOD CLEANSSES US**

“Walking in the light” is present active—“Keep on walking”—continual vs. spasmodic. Lots of people have Malarial Christianity. It is spasmodic and shakes them, but then as quickly, subsides! It must be obedient, serving and sacrificing.

“We have fellowship with one another.” We certainly have fellowship with God, because He is always in the light, but we have fellowship with each other. The Bible knows nothing of big “F” and little “f” fellowship (a la Rubel Shelly). A man is either in the Truth or out of it. There are two great tests of Truth:

- (1) Truth is the begetter of fellowship. Without both walking in Truth, no fellowship as God defines it, exists. You enter the fellowship by obedience to the Truth (1 Pet. 1:22). “Seeing ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth unto unfeigned love of the brethren, love one another from the heart fervently.” You remain in the fellowship by walking in the Truth—Light.
- (2) Walking in Truth assures us of Jesus’ cleansing blood! Humanitarians have a great love for people, but not necessarily the Truth! Some of our brethren are like humanitarians!

**THE EXTENT OF FELLOWSHIP IS CLEARLY  
OUTLINED IN THE BIBLE**

First John 1:5-7 is the answer. Notice, “And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is in the truth” (1 John 5:6).

How do we get into the light? By acceptance and obedience to the Truth. Notice:

James therefore said to those Jews that had believed him, if ye abide in my word, then ye are truly my disciples (1 John 8:31).

Sanctify them in the truth, thy word is truth (John 17:17).

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

Then Peter states,

If any man speaketh, speaking as it were oracles of God; if any man ministereth, ministering as of the strength which God supplieth: that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, whom in the glory and the dominion forever and ever (1 Pet. 4:11).

Seeing ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth unto unfeigned love of the brethren, love one another from the heart fervently (1 Pet. 1:22).

Paul affirms,

Wherefore remember, that once ye, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called Circumcision, in the flesh, made by hands; that ye were at that time separate from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of the promise, having no hope and without God in the world (Eph. 2:11-12).

Jesus outlined it, in language clear and unmistakable,

I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in our sins: for except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins (John 8:24).

I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all in like manner perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and killed them, think ye that they were offenders above all the men that dwell in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish (Luke 13:3-5).

Jesus answered, verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God (John 3:5).

These passages show what constitutes becoming a child of God. But, no man, can I call brother, who cannot call God, Father!

And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority is given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all

things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world (Mat. 28:18-20).

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned (Mark 16:15-16).

And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem (Luke 24:47).

And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And he that heareth, let him say, Come. And he that is athirst, let him come: he that will, let him take the water of life freely (Rev. 22:17).

This is a far cry from what is being done! God has no illegitimate children. Some are practicing open membership—when asked, they lie and deny it, but they practice it! They accept people with denominational baptism.

Fraternalizing with the First Christian Church, the Methodist Church and holding sunrise services with the sectarians is *not* what God wants.

Men can either come to the truth and accept it or be forever lost! The choice is theirs. “Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son” (2 John 9).

### **THE LIMITS OF FELLOWSHIP ARE CLEARLY OUTLINED IN THE BIBLE**

A distinctive factor of Christianity is exclusiveness! (cf., John 8:24 and Acts 4:12).

I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for except ye believe that I am He, ye shall die in your sins (John 8:24).

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

God does not want any to perish. “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness; but is longsuffering to you-ward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9).

Now all men, Muslims, Hindus, etc., must bow to King Jesus or be forever lost?

But not all are Christians who cry, “Lord, Lord.” “Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven” (Mat. 7:21).

Some, even in the body are walking disorderly. “Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which they received of us” (2 The. 3:6).

Therefore the limits of fellowship are matters of Christ’s authority and loyalty to the Master (cf., Mark 8:38; Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 5:13; 2 The. 3:6).

For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of man shall also be ashamed of him, when he cometh in glory of his Father with the holy angels (Mark 8:38).

Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them that are causing divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned. and turn away from them (Rom. 16:17).

But them that are without God judgeth. Put away the wicked man from among yourselves (1 Cor. 5:13).

Now we command you, brethren in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which they received of us (2 The. 3:6).

These passages show the limits of fellowship and furthermore, these passages establish that fellowship is tied to the authority of Christ. To reject the limits set by Christ’s authority is to reject His authority.

### **THE PRESENT DISTRESS: A PRACTICAL APPLICATION: WALKING IN THE LIGHT (1 John 1:5-7)**

The hue and cry of “our division in the body,”—how ridiculous—James Woodruff’s and Bill Humble’s speech at A.C.U. 1986, “I Am In Error—They Are In Error.” Therefore anything goes! For shame! There is a plea by liberals for acceptance of baptized believers—even those in denominations!

But Jehovah said,

For my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water (Jer. 2:13).

Can a virgin forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? Yet my people have forgotten me days without number (Jer. 2:32).

The pride of thy heart hath deceived thee, O thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground? (Oba. 3).

The Unity meetings; exchanges of pulpits; Sunrise Easter Services, and the writings of many of today's liberals are strictly forbidden by the following two passages:

Be not ye therefore partakers with them; for ye were once darkness, but are now light in the Lord. walk as children of light for the fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth, proving what is well-pleasing unto the Lord; and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather even reprove them; for the things which are done by them in secret it in a shame even to speak of (Eph. 5:7-12).

Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son. If any one cometh unto you, and bringeth not this teaching, receive him not into your house, and give him no greeting: for he that giveth him greeting partaketh in his evil works (2 John 9-11).

### **LET US NOTICE THE TEACHING OF THE ABOVE PASSAGE WHICH FORBIDS FRATERNIZING WITH ERROR**

We must reject the false teachers of verse 7, then, "Whosoever goeth onward" (cf., Jer. 6:14). "They have healed also the hurt of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace." To go beyond, is as soldiers going on too far (cf., Gal. 1:6-9). Notice:

I marvel that ye are so quickly removing from him that called you in the grace of Christ unto a different gospel; which is not another gospel only there are some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema. As we have said before, so say I now again, If any man preacheth unto you any gospel other than that ye received, let him be anathema (Gal. 1:6-9).

Progress, progression. The liberals of our day are perfectly described here! A lot of people are of such disposition as to never be bound (limited) by Christ's teaching. Some are disposed to lead, others to follow.

“The doctrine of Christ” is subjective genitive, the doctrine taught by and authorized by Christ-not the teaching about Christ (cf., Mat. 15:9; 1 Tim. 4:1-6; Acts 5:28). Genitive Case, “out of, from” hence Jesus said: “But in vain do they worship me, teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men” (Mat. 15:9).

Paul said,

But the Spirit saith expressly, that in later times some shall fall away from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons, through the hypocrisy of men that speak lies, branded in their own conscience as with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by them that believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good. and nothing is to be rejected if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified through the word of God and prayer. If thou put the brethren in mind of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Christ Jesus, nourished in the words of the faith, and of the good doctrine thou hast followed until now (1 Tim. 4:1-6).

Again we read, “We strictly charge you not to teach in this name: and behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us” (Acts 5:28).

You have lost all hope of eternal life if you “have not God” (Eph. 2:11-12). Notice,

Wherefore remember, that once ye, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called Circumcision, in the flesh, made by hands; that ye were at that time separate from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of the promise, having no hope and without God in the world (Eph. 2:11-12).

How important is doctrine? “He that abides...hath both the Father and the Son.” Our God requires faithful following of the Word. All else damns!

## CONCRETE ILLUSTRATIONS OF MEN'S REFUSAL TO BE LIMITED BY CHRIST'S AUTHORITY

Christ's doctrine is limited and based by what is authorized (spoken). Do not go beyond the things that are written! Consider.

Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes: that in us ye might learn not to go beyond the things which are written: that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other (1 Cor. 4:6).

I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto them, God shall add unto him the plagues which are written in this book. and if any man shall take away from the words of this book of prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city, which are written in this book (Rev. 22:18-19).

And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him (Col. 3:17).

And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, all authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world (Mat. 28:18-20).

God has always felt the same about these matters (cf., Deu. 4:2).

Notice:

Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish from it, that ye may keep the commandments of Jehovah your God which I command you (Deu. 4:2).

Add thou not unto his words, Lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar (Pro. 30:6).

Men have always tried to add to God's words and thereby have rejected His authority. Let us notice man's attempt at rejection—the Catholics—Papacy of Peter, images, incense, infant baptism. All of these are contrary to the teaching of God's Word.

The Sabbatarians and the first day of the week. This Seventh Day binding flies in the face of Ephesians 2:14-15 and Colossians 2:14 that demands the cessation of the Mosaical Law and all it includes.

Notice:

For he is our peace, who made both one, and brake down the middle wall of partition, having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances: that he might create in himself of the two one now man, so making peace (Eph. 2:14-15).

Having blotted out the bond written in ordinances that was against us, hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross (Col. 2.14).

Instrumental music advocates must ignore Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16. Notice:

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

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs' singing with grace in your hearts unto God (Col. 3:16).

The communion at any time other than every first day of the week is contrary to Acts 20:7. "And upon the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul discoursed with them, intending to depart on the morrow; and prolonged his speech until midnight."

Suppose we carry it further? Suppose we decided to put ham and eggs or cake and ice cream, on the Lord's table. Why not? We have as much right to change this as anyone does anything else not forbidden.

Whatever you enjoy in worship—instrumental music, dancing, incense, animal sacrifice, etc.—why not, if the silence of the Scriptures does not have to be respected?

The major move to unite with the First Christian Church and ignore the silence of the Scriptures is a can in point. God will be honored if and only if we adhere to His Word and recognize the authority of the Scriptures in both that which is taught by word, and implication.

### **THE ETERNAL FELLOWSHIP**

Heaven in a prepared place for a prepared people. No one shall enjoy the eternal fellowship of God, Christ, the Holy Spirit and the saved, who has rejected God's guidelines of fellowship here on earth.

Sectarians, denominationalists, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus and all disobedient believers will forever be cut off from God's fellowship. Notice:

And the gates thereof shall in no wise be shut by day (for there shall be no night there): and they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations Into it: and there shall in no wise enter into it anything unclean, or he that maketh an abomination and a lie: but only they that are written in the Lamb's book of life (Rev. 21:26-27).

Therefore, we must beware else we too shall be shut out. Brethren, fellowship is truly sweet and precious, provided we recognize the limits set by God.

# IS HELL REAL?

*William S. Cline*

## INTRODUCTION

There are many false prophets who are abroad in the land and who have no regard for the Truth nor for the Giver of Truth. As Paul, by inspiration said, “There is no fear of God before their eyes” (Rom. 3:18). Many teach that Hell is just a “figment of Jewish imagination” and that which results in a baseless fear unbecoming of the love of God. Even very religious people treat Hell as a joke, but God’s Word says, “Fools make a mock at sin” (Pro. 14:9). Satan rejoices when Hell becomes little more than a curse word in our thinking and vocabulary.

In 1942, L. R. Wilson took a poll of seven hundred denominational preachers concerning their beliefs about Hell. That poll, over fifty years ago, revealed that 34% (238), rejected belief in Hell as a reality. In 1962, a Harris poll, involving hundreds of ministerial students in leading seminaries, revealed that 71% rejected belief in the reality of Hell. The most recent poll shows that only 27% of the people believe in Hell. In 1970, the major theological advisor to the Pope said that the Pope believed in Hell, but he never warned his people about the dangers of Hell (that sounds like many of “us”).

Today, there is little preaching done on Hell. The old sermons delivered by the pioneer preachers such as, “Hell And Who Is Going There,” and “The Dangers Of Hell,” have become unfashionable with those who preach a “feel good” religion. We must get back to studying the Bible, God’s Holy Word, and walk in reverence and awe of its teaching on Hell.

## THE PLACE OF HELL

*Hell is real.* The reality of Hell is plainly taught in the Old Testament. Hell is shown to be the place of punishment of the wicked after death. “The wicked shall be turned into hell, *and* all the nations that forget God” (Psa. 9:17). Daniel 12:2 shows Hell to be the place

where the resurrected wicked shall have everlasting shame and contempt: “And many of them that sloop in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame *and* everlasting contempt.” If one believes the Old Testament and the inspired men who penned these words, he must also believe in the reality of Hell.

Christ taught on the reality of Hell. The Greek word Gehenna occurs twelve times in the New Testament. Of the twelve times it appears, eleven of those occurrences are quotations of Jesus. James used it once in James 3:6. Notice these passages.

But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the Judgment and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire (Mat. 5:22).

And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out and end *it* from them for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not *that* thy whole body should be cast into hell (Mat. 5:29).

And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cost *it* from thee. for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not *that* thy whole body should be cast into hell (Mat. 5:30).

And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell (Mat. 10:28).

And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast *it* from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire (Mat. 18:9).

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass we and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves (Mat. 23:15).

*Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?* (Mat. 23:33).

And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched (Mark 9:43).

And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched (Mark 9:35).

And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire (Mark 9:47).

But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him (Luke 12:5).

Jesus spoke of Hell as a “furnace of fire” in Matthew 13:41-42,

The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

In His other descriptions of Hell, He called it a place of “outer darkness” (Mat. 25:30), “everlasting fire” (Mat. 25:41), “everlasting punishment!” (Mat. 25:46), and of the wicked being raised “unto the resurrection of damnation (John 5:28-29). If one believes in Jesus and His words, he must also believe in the reality of Hell which Jesus preached.

New Testament preachers taught on the reality of Hell. Hear what John the Baptizer said,

I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and *with* fire: Whose fan *is* in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire (Mat. 3:11-12).

Paul taught that Hell is real.

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 (2 The. 1:7-9).

Again, Paul spoke of the penalty for sin: that is, punishment in Hell: “For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 6:23).

Peter preached believing in Hell.

For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast *them* down to hell, and delivered *them* into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth *person*, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorraha into ashes condemned *them* with an overthrow, making *them* an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; And delivered just

Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (for that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed *his* righteous soul from day to day with *their* unlawful deeds;) The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the, day of judgment to be punished” (2 Pet. 2:4-9).

For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known *it*, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, the dog *is* turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire (2 Pet. 2:20-22).

Jude taught that Hell is a real place.

And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. Even as Sodom and Gomorrhah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire (Jude 6-7).

Likewise, John, in Revelation, said, “And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (Rev. 20:14, 16).

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

If one believes the New Testament writers, he must also believe in Hell.

*IF HELL IS NOT REAL, THEN WHAT?* If Hell is not real, David and Daniel lied about it for they taught that Hell is real. Not only David and Daniel, but John the Baptizer, Paul, Peter, Jude and John the apostle all lied about it. If Hell is not real, Jesus, the very Son of God, that is, God in the flesh, lied about it! So did God and the Holy Spirit who guided the inspired men to write the words which we have read—if Hell is not real. But these did not lie.

*HELL IS JUST AS REAL AS GOD, CHRIST, THE BIBLE AND HEAVEN.* Do you believe in an eternal Heaven? Matthew 25:46 says,

“And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.” Do you believe in an everlasting God? Romans 16:26 says, “But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith.” Do you believe in the eternal Spirit? Hebrews 9-14 says, “How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” If you believe in these, how can you not believe in the reality of Hell? Certainly, no right-thinking man can accept the one without the other.

Hell is the PLACE for the punishment of the wicked. Hell is a place of torment. Listen to Jesus, “And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” Jesus stressed that Hell is such a place that it should be avoided at all costs.

And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off. it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt” (Mark 9-48-49).

### THE PERSONS OF HELL

Who shall be in Hell? Those who *never knew our Lord* nor obeyed Him (2 The. 1:7-9). This passage should put marching shoes on every Christian that the lost might be reached with the saving gospel.

The *immoral* shall be in Hell (Rev. 22:5). Our nation reeks with immoral filth. Cities are cesspools of filth and sewers of iniquity. Paul, in Romans 2:5-8, spoke of the destiny of disobedient men:

But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; Who will render to every man according to his deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for

glory and honour and immorality, eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath.

*Hypocrites shall be in Hell.* False religions are filled with hypocrites. Jesus condemned such in Matthew 7:21-23:

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. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Such hypocrisy brought forth these stinging words from the Savior.

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. *Thou* blind Pharisee, cleanse first that *which is* within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead *men's* bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity (Mat. 23:25-28).

Yes, hypocrites shall be in Hell.

Time would not permit the naming of *all* who shall be in Hell, but **MOST** will be there. The majority of people—friends, neighbors, perhaps even family members—shall be lost in this eternal place of punishment, Hell. Jesus said,

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

The *Christian who turned back to the world* shall be the worst of all. Peter spoke of the condition of such a one:

For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known *it*, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, the dog *is* turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire (2 Pet. 2:20-22).

What a price to pay for a few moments of sin. Notice these verses.

For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, where-with he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance *belongeth* unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people (Heb. 10:26-30).

For *it is* impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put *him* to an open shame (Heb. 6:4-6).

### THE PUNISHMENT OF HELL

Every time Hell is mentioned in the Bible, the horrors and punishment of Hell are stated. There is no joy there. Hell is described as a place of outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth (Mat. 8:12; Luke 13:27-28). Hell in “where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched” (Mark 9:48). Hell is a place where one is forever separated from the presence of God (2 The. 1:7-9). Hell is described as a “lake of fire and brimstone” (Rev. 20:15). *The human mind cannot really comprehend the horror of such a place.*

Note the pain for the inhabitants of that terrible place. Those there shall cry for mercy (Luke 16:23-24). If in *hades*, the temporary abode of the departed spirit of man, the wicked suffer in such agony, how much sorer will the pain in *gehenna* be?

Hell is a place where there is no rest night and day (Rev. 14:8-11), but rather there is eternal torment. “And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet *are*, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever” (Rev. 20:10).

Hell is such a horrible place of punishment—yet most of humanity is on a speeding roller coaster, Hell bound, and have little or no interest in the gospel!

## THE ESCAPE OF HELL

Hell can be escaped by obedience to the Gospel and faithfully living the Christian life. GOD LOVES MAN. He has provided a means for man to escape Hell. GOD WROTE A BOOK. The WRITING of the book is seen:

And it came to pass in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, *that* this word came unto Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, Take thee a roll of a book, and write therein all the words that I have spoken unto thee against Israel, and against Judah, and against all the nations, from the day I spake unto thee, from the days of Josiah, even unto this day. It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them; that they may return every man from his evil way, that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin. Then Jeremiah called Baruch the son of Neriah: and Baruch wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the Lord, which he had spoken unto him, upon a roll of a book (Jer. 36:1-4).

The book is verbally inspired; therefore, men should reverence the Bible because of its origin (from God); its power (Heb. 4:12); and the consequences of being judged by it (John 11:48).

The READING of the book (Jer. 36:5-21). God's Book must be understood and followed. It can be understood (Eph. 3:1-4). Man can know what God would have him to know (Rev. 1:3). God says: search the Word (Acts 17:11); study it (2 Tim. 2:15); understand it (Eph. 5:17); live by it (Acts 20:32); defend it (Phi. 1:17); contend earnestly for it (Jude 3); and preach it (Mark 16:16).

The REJECTION of the book (Jer. 36:22,23). Man may choose to reject God's Word, but, man is accountable. By God's Word, man shall be judged (John 12:48). Therefore, God's Book must be followed and obeyed.

The REPRODUCTION of the book (Jer. 36:27-32). This shows that God's Word shall stand no matter what.

## CONCLUSION

God's Word plainly declares that Hell is real. Hell is a real PLACE in which real PERSONS shall suffer the eternal PUNISHMENT which is deserving of those who reject God and His love. God's Word also plainly declares how one may ESCAPE such a

destiny; that is, by faithful and loving obedience to God's commands. Hell is just as real as Heaven. To which place are you now headed?