

The Keys Of The Kingdom

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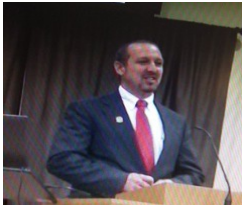
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If you would like to be a guest writer for TKOK you may contact me at jfmiller61@gmail.com. To announce up coming events like Gospel Meetings, Lectures, Singing events etc... Just use the email link above to contact me. Please feel free to tell others and have them sign up for their copy today. Use this link to join the mailing list. http://jfmiller.com/keys-of-the-kingdom/?page_id=1316 . May God Bless You. Jim and the StaffChanges

Voices From The Past

The Curse Of Negligence

Homer Hailey

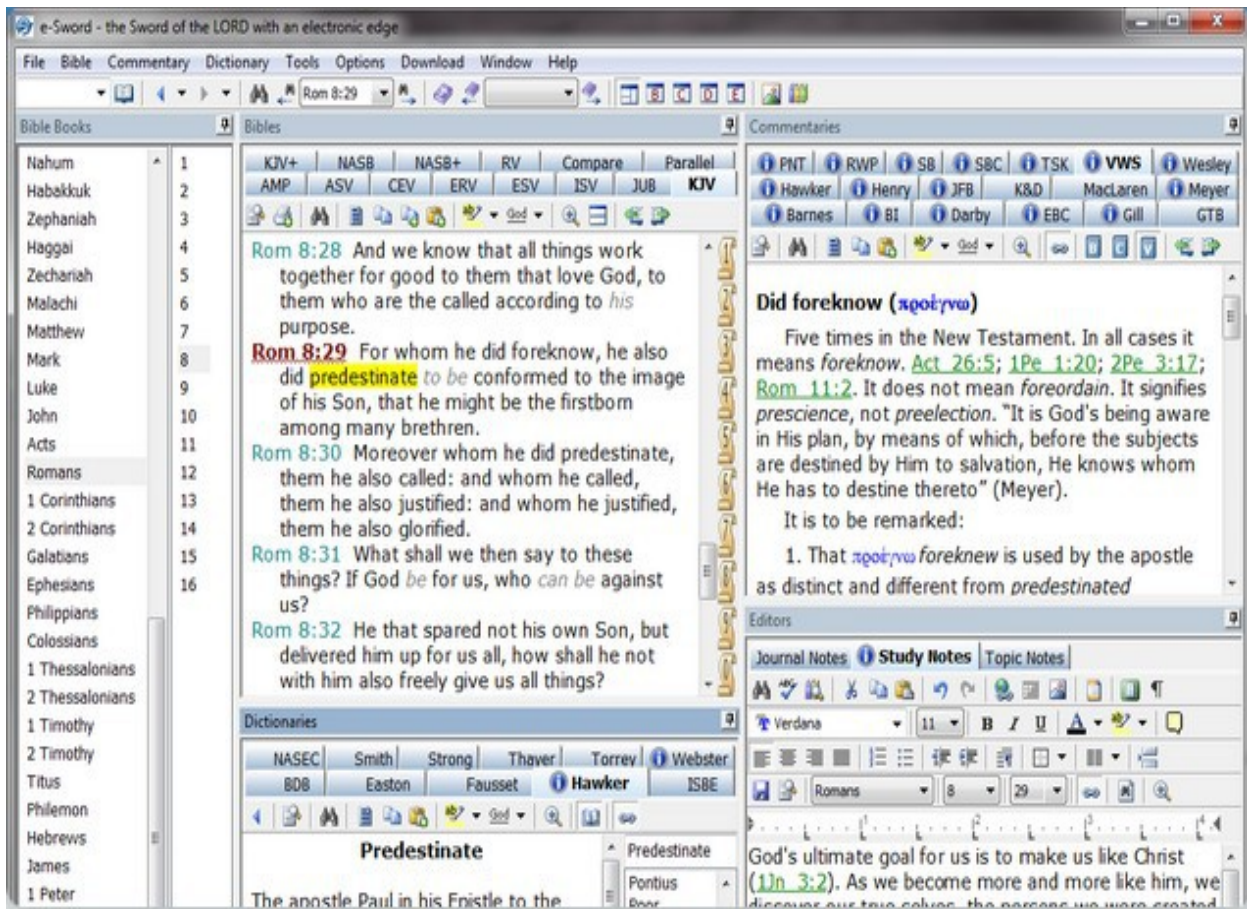
A very dangerous attitude entering into our general me today, and one affecting the whole structure of society, is that of doing just enough to "get by." The efforts of men are too often half hearted, with no spirit and fervor in the work, Such an attitude is serious enough and bad enough in secular affairs, but when it invades the sacred realm of religious life it becomes disastrous. Here one must deal with God, for it is He who is insulted and robbed by half hearted efforts, and the "get by" spirit. In the history of Moab, the time finally came, when, because of her idolatry and corruption, she was ripe for destruction. The word of Jehovah came unto the prophet Jeremiah pronouncing her doom, and commanding that she be destroyed; adding a curse upon those who should enter the work of destruction negligently, or refuse to act at all, Hear the prophet: "Cursed be he that doeth the work of Jehovah negligently; and cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from blood." (Jer. 48:10) Two words here need defining, namely "curse" and "negligently." The word "curse" is defined, "to invoke evil upon, anathematize, excommunicate, execrate." One needn't get over-excited when the pope curses or "damns" him as he did the Russians recently; but when God pronounces a curse, to disregard it is tragic. "Negligently:" "apt to omit what ought to be done." This is about the greatest problem facing the church today, the tendency to "omit what ought to be done." In Deut. 11:13 God demanded service with "all the heart." Jesus said the greatest command is that men should love God "with all the heart." (Matt. 22:37-39) God commanded that "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." (Eccl. 9:10) And also that Christians should be "in diligence not slothful; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord." (Rom. 12:11) But what if someone should not take seriously the Lord in this matter, going about the work negligently today? The nausea of the Lord is declared against the insipid, indifferent, lukewarm attitude in no uncertain terms, when to the church, Laodicea, He said "I will spew thee out of my mouth." (Rev. 3: 16) That exactly expresses God's attitude still toward such a disposition. The general attitude of many congregations today, entirely too many, is that of doing "the work of the Lord negligently;" in worship, in work, and in warfare of a spiritual . and doctrinal nature. But note more carefully the next curse of Jehovah through the prophet, "And cursed is he that keepeth back his sword from blood." Moab must perish, must be destroyed; God commanded it, and whosoever would hold back, or shrink from the task, must perish under His anathema. The Lord's people are still His army, although not now engaged in carnal warfare, yet engaged in a

warfare none the less terrific . and deadly. The Christian fights "against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." The exhortation to "contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered unto the saints" was not given to preachers exclusively, but to all Christians. No man, preacher or otherwise, can "contend earnestly for the faith" and at the same time "hold back his sword," To "contend" is to wield the sword, to smite "hip and thigh," as did Samson of old. The armor of the Christian is of a spiritual nature, perfectly adapted to the warfare; and as said the apostle, "mighty before God to the casting down of strongholds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God." (2 Cor. 10:4, 5) But for the sword to be felt among those whom God has said destroy, the work cannot be done negligently, nor the sword kept back "from blood." Is it true that in the army of the Lord there are too many "camp-followers" and not enough actual fighters? Xerxes said, "I wish I had as many soldiers as men;" maybe that is what the Lord wishes, too. Gideon's army lost nothing of strength when of the thirty-two thousand men, twenty-two thousand of them went back; and then later when, through lack of diligence, nine thousand seven hundred more of them were rejected. "A few with God are mightier than a multitude without Him," someone has said; and certainly the negligent and the "holders back" do not have Him, for He has said, "My righteous one shall live by faith: and if he shrink back, my soul hath no pleasure in him." And now, along with all the other "isms" the army of the Lord has to fight, such as denominatioalism, pre-millennialism, "straddle-the-fence-ism," etc., Catholicism looms more formidable than ever before. For a long time the blood stained harlot that rules from the seven hilled city on the Tiber, has been casting her lustful eyes toward the United States; and it seems that at last our President is about to embrace her. I am not appointing myself a critic of the President of the United States; neither did God appoint me such, but rather said that I should pray for him. But every student of History knows that this gesture will ultimately mean to the religious life of this country if carried to the full maturity of the Pope's desires. Without speculating on what might be the outcome, for only God knows that, the vital point is this: Every Christian must tighten the belt a few notches tighter, whet the sword a few degrees sharper, exercise himself to greater ability, and shaking off the spirit of doing the work of the Lord "negligently," strike with all his might this monster of iniquity upon every occasion, Who dares hold back his sword when God says "Strike!"

March 1940

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The False Doctrine Of Liberal Redefinition Pt. 3

By: Jim Miller
Gray, Maine

We left off in our last issue with reproof and rebuke, Now let us look at Hell.

You might be asking how hell fits in with the study of the false doctrine of liberal redefinition. What we all must understand is that when you redefine any aspect of the Lords word you must then redefine other aspects of the word so that it will fit. This eventually leads to a rewriting of Gods instructions to us.

I came to the conclusion a while back that just calling a man made doctrine such as Baptists or Mormons or any of the others a denomination just wasn't adequate. I goes so much deeper than that and it is all based on what we know as progressivism/liberalism. These progressive sects all in one form or another are not satisfied with Gods instructions and has no qualms about redefining, rewording or even omitting truth from the Bible to make their doctrines pleasing to those they work to deceive.

This is the way the progressives work not just in the church but the government we are under today. The only true moral compass is Gods word and not only does the church realize this but the founding fathers of our country understood well just how important it was that moral men were chosen to lead. You simply can't ignore the fact that biblical principles were used to found our great nation.

Now, this being said there will be a day of final judgment when all mankind good and bad will stand before the Lord. Since there are only two destinations one can enter into one being a home with God in heaven and the other hell it is essential that the liberal progressive redefine hell. One way they do this is to teach you that hell is just a made up place to scare folks into believing the bible. Others teach that you just keep coming back over and over till you get it right and then go to be with God. There are so many false doctrines on hell out there today it is a wonder liberal progressivism hasn't already imploded.

I believe that we can clearly learn that there will be more souls stoking the fires of hell than there will be those who are rejoicing in heaven. We are told that the gate is straight and the way is narrow and few will enter in thereby and a

warning given about those who teach falsely

Mat 7:13 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: Mat 7:14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. Mat 7:15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

The liberal/progressive will twist the scripture in any fashion necessary to fit their vile affections Peter was clear in what he taught about these false teacher....

2Pe 2:1 But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. 2Pe 2:2 And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. 2Pe 2:3 And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not. 2Pe 2:4 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; 2Pe 2:5 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;

The liberal/progressive must redefine the scripture to avoid this same damnation deceiving others and themselves that they will not end up in hell.

In much the same way God allows nations to rise and fall under the weight of their sins. Those who founded this nation knew that there had to be a moral compass to follow thus their belief in God played a big roll in not just our Constitution but the Bill of Rights also. The liberal/progressive has done the same thing to the country that they do to the church. Is it any wonder this great nation has fallen to the depths of depravity that it has. There is NOTHING good in the progressive liberals doctrine in either case. Progressive liberals pave the way to hell with their very souls and the souls of those deceived by them. So yes hell is going to play a huge part in the end. I can't help but remember the words of the Lord when he said.....

Mat 7:18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree

bring forth good fruit. Mat 7:19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Mat 7:20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. Mat 7:21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Mat 7:22 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? Mat 7:23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

What a sad day this is going to be for the progressive liberal

Progressive/liberalism in the church and in government creeps in very slowly it corrupts everything it comes in contact with. It is like a cancer that slowly eats away till death takes its toll and then it is too late.

The liberal/progressive is not just hell bound but they are hell bent on redefining anything and everything to fit their ideals. They change their name on a whim when their true mission is exposed just a few of these names should be familiar. Socialist, Humanist, Communist, Denominationalist, and many others could be shown.

In the church they are known for teaching a social Gospel or Secular Humanism. These damnable doctrines lead straight to the gates of hell. We must remember what Paul told the Galatians.....

Gal 1:6 I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Gal 1:7 Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. Gal 1:8 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 1:9 As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. Gal 1:10 For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. Gal 1:11 But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.

Just as we need to apply Paul's warning here to the church we must also see how it applies to the moral degradation of our government. Utter destruction and

loss of freedom is the end we face both in the church and our country if we do not restore the moral foundation they both were established on.

The progressive liberals attitude is we do not like what God said or the way He said so we need to change words and definitions to meet the new age understanding we represent. As an example lets just take one word "Homosexual" Now we all know God is against anyone who changes the natural use of the body for his own lusts. *Rom_1:26 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: Rom_1:27 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 recompence of their error which was meet.* So what does the progressive liberal do they change the name first to queer and now to gay and they force on others their definition of these people on us so as to make it look like we are unloving when we stand against such depraved actions. This is just one example there are many more that go on not just in the church but in government. Redefining whatever begins to look negative to the progressive liberal is the mainstay to justification of evil and error. Yet the Bible teaches us..... *Isa_5:20 Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil;*

We as a society have for far to long have failed to take a stand against such evil choosing to hide within the walls of our church houses hoping it would just go away. Each and every Christian has a duty to stand against the evils of this world no one else can do it for you. God has give us all we need to go into battle and be conquerors. *Eph_6:11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. Eph_6:13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.* We have allowed these progressive liberals to reek havoc long enough in fact too long.

The progressive liberals are the Pharisees of our time. John the Baptist described them as a generation of vipers (Matt. 3:7) they are like whited sepulchres that are beautiful on the outside but rotten on the inside (Matt. 23:27; Luke 11:44) No wonder Jesus said that unless one's righteous is superior to that of the scribes and Pharisees, he could not see the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 5:20). He was concerned about the leavening influence of their doctrine (Matt. 16:12). So where is this liberal progressivism going to lead? The answer is clear straight to hell do not pass go do not collect two hundred dollars.

Where is this same liberal progressivism going to lead this country? The same fiery destination. I ask you to remember that a little leaven, leaveneth the whole lump and there is no such thing as being a little progressive or liberal. Remember no matter what you rename a sin it is still sin so beware the liberal progressive and his redefining of words and phrases both in the church and in our government.

Till next we meet may God bless.

Foot Note: Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are from the KJV Bible.

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Cloyd Frock

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Outline of the book of Romans Part 4

Eric Farrior
Freeport, Fl.

(Continued from part 3, speaking of Romans 6 and specifically verses 3-5)
Those who have been baptized into Christ have “died to sin” and can no longer “serve sin” (vv. 6-7)

Just as Jesus died once, yet rose to a position where death had no more dominion over Him, we as Christians must die to sin (notice also the physical aspect of the “death” of Jesus, He did not “die spiritually”, as some falsely contend!)... To such a point that sin has “no dominion” over us (vv. 9-10). The Christian’s days of living in constant, unrepentant sin are over, that man is dead! The Christian must now live his life in such a way as to be constantly submitting to the will of the Father, thus “alive to God” through Jesus (v11, cf. 1 Jn. 1:5-10). If one is dead to sin, would “sin reign” in their body?? Of course not! Folks, do you not realize that you cannot serve Jesus while also serving yourself?? Do you really think that God is pleased when you wear the “I Love Jesus” tee shirt, yet you are living in adultery? Such a person has no love for Jesus, if so they would heed His teaching on such matters (cf. Mt. 19:6-9)! The Lord Himself said that a person cannot serve two masters (Mt. 6:24), you cannot be a Christian and practice constant, unrepentant sin (1 Jn. 3:7-10).

Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God (Rom. 6:12-13). Wow! What a wake up for so called “Christians” today! You better break out the bible and study up, for it will be your standard in judgment (Jn. 12:48, Rom. 2:16). This chapter is included in such a standard! You absolutely CANNOT allow sin to “reign” in your mortal bodies. You cannot engage in sinful activities. You cannot give into sinful temptations. You cannot live in sinful situations (adultery, fornication, homosexuality, etc.). You cannot continue to willfully sin (theft, drinking alcohol, drug use, etc.). You CAN do these things, but you will pay for it! Notice what Solomon said long ago: *Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these*

*things God will bring thee into judgment (Ecc. 11:9). The body is given to each person by God and cannot be used for lustful pleasures, but for service to God. The Christian must live his life with such an attitude, as “alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God”! What an interesting question Paul frames in v15: *What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.**

Paul specifically states that we CAN sin. Yet we are not under the law (of Moses), but under “grace” (this is a contrast of covenants, “grace” is making reference to the offering of grace through the gospel of Jesus- cf. Rom. 1:16-17, Titus 2:11-12). If there were NO law, we could not sin (Rom. 4:15, 1 Jn. 3:4). So we must understand that even under the New Covenant system, described as “grace” there is still “rule of action” (Law)! God did not devise such a system for folks to willfully and flippantly abuse the grace offered by constant sin, rather, He designed it to make imperfect man “holy and without blemish and unproveable before Him” (Col. 1:22- by continued compliance with the gospel system! v23). This system DEMANDS “holy living” (1 Pet. 1:15-16)!

I think the next 3 verses are of HUGE importance and unfortunately, our denominational friends have no clue about the teachings thereof. Notice: *Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. (vv. 16-18)*

The phrase “know ye not” is framed rhetorically, thus implying the understood truth of the question. To whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants you are- There you have it folks, whatever you yield yourselves to in obedience is your master. So what is it for you? Do you give into the carnal pleasures of sin? If so, you are serving sin (Jn. 8:34). How terrible it is to have sin dominating your life, rather than a good and honest life in service to God! Inspiration says there are two choices:

- Sin unto death
- Obedience unto righteousness

So every person walking this globe is either serving sin or serving God. As we said earlier, you cannot do BOTH! Serving sin leads to spiritual death (cf. Rom. 6:23), serving God is right, thus results in righteousness! The saints in

Rome were not always thus. In time past they were servants of sin, as others were; but just as those in Corinth (1 Cor. 6:11) and every other place where gospel obedience has been rendered, something changed! The saints in Rome “obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine delivered” to them. Now folks, of this notice:

#1- Their obedience played a part in their salvation! cf. Mt. 7:21, Heb. 5:9

#2- They did not just obey “any old thing”, rather they obeyed a certain doctrine- cf. Lk. 6:46, Jn. 7:17, 17:17

#3- The doctrine delivered to them, was the gospel of Jesus (Rom. 1:16-17, 3:22-26, 5:1ff). The very gospel that was to be obeyed, notice the phrase “obedience to the faith” (Rom. 1:5, cf. Acts 6:7). This is speaking of the humble submission to the gospel system, which looks to God to save man (Rom. 16:26, Col. 1:22, 2:11-13)!

Would any honestly contend that the saints in Rome obeyed some other gospel than the saints in Ephesus? The Ephesians obeyed the gospel of Jesus (Acts 19:1-5) and inspiration says that they were recipients of “all spiritual blessings” (Eph. 1:3-7) as a result! I wonder if the saints in Rome were made so by compliance with some OTHER gospel than that which was obeyed on Pentecost in Acts 2 (cf. v38,41,47)? Would any affirm such in light of Gal. 1:6-9 and 2 Jn. 9? Friends, be not deceived, the saints in Rome were saved from their sins when they trusted in the Lord enough to obey His commands (see Rom. 6:3-5)!

It must be quite a difficult thing for our Baptist friends to argue against the teaching of v18; specifically, dealing with obedience leading to being made free sin. What commands must one obey in order to be “made free from sin” if not the terms given to those:- By the Lord Himself (belief, repentance, confession, baptism- Mk. 16:15-16; Lk. 13:3-5, 24:47)- In Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost- Acts 2:38 (repentance and baptism for remission of sins) Is not our submission to the divine commands spoken of being the point at which we are “forgiven all trespasses” and made “alive from the dead” (Col. 2:11-13)? Is not our immersion in water the point where we are made “sons of God by faith” (Gal. 3:26-27). Who could argue against baptism being the act in which the penitent believer is sanctified, being “washed with water by the word” (Eph. 5:26). What powerful teaching indeed!

What is the result of “yielding your members as servants to righteousness” if

not holiness (v19)? Is not this a MANDATE for the servant of God (Heb. 12:14)? Can one be “set apart” and holy if they are living in constant sin? NO!! In fact, when these folks were servants of sin, they were “free from righteousness” (v20). They were so because they were not “doing right” (1 Jn. 3:7)! What simple concept, yet so foreign to most folks thinking: He that does right is righteous! What was the fruit of such behavior? What was the end result of living in wickedness? The text says very plainly that “death” is the result of those things in which saints out to be ashamed! Who are the servants of God, but those made free from sin (v22)? What is the “fruit” of such service? The text plainly says “holiness.. everlasting life”! What a contrast to the “fruit of wickedness”! This contrast is emphasized in the last verse of this wonderful chapter, spiritual death awaits those who live in sin and eternal life for those obedient to God!

(All scripture from the KJV unless otherwise noted)

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Nero (Part 7)

Tim Bench
Abilene, Texas

“The final years of Peter and Paul at Rome are shrouded in uncertainties. The last historical scriptural reference to Peter has him at the Council of Jerusalem advocating Paul’s mission to the Gentiles (Acts 15). The last to Paul puts him at Rome awaiting trial before the emperor (Acts 28).

That both men perished there, probably in the Neronian persecution, is accepted by most historians, and church tradition, considerably strengthened by twentieth-century archeology, identifies the places where each died and where each is buried. In addition to that, however, is a wealth of legend and mythology, most of it appearing 150 years after the apostles died.

The best known appears in the Acts of Peter, a third-century work that records that, when the Neronian persecution begins, Peter leaves the city rather than face crucifixion with other Christians in the Hippodrome. As he flees south along the Appian Way, he encounters Jesus walking toward the city. “Quo vadis, Domine?” he asks. “Where are you going, Lord?” Jesus, in what became known as the Quo Vadis Legend, replies. “To Rome, to be crucified again.” Peter, once again humiliated, thinks further, turns, and goes back to the city where, at his own request, he is crucified upside down, feeling himself unworthy of being crucified in the same way as his master.”

From “The Quo Vadis Legend” at www.christianhistoryproject.org.

“A greater contrast can hardly be imagined than that between Paul, one of the purest and noblest of men, and Nero, one of the basest and vilest of tyrants.

The glorious first five years of Nero’s reign (54–59) under the wise guidance of Seneca and Burrhus, make the other nine (59–68) only more hideous by contrast. We read his life with mingled feelings of contempt for his folly, and horror of his wickedness. The world was to him a comedy and a tragedy, in which he was to be the chief actor. He had an insane passion for popular applause; he played on the lyre; he sung his odes at supper; he drove his chariots in the circus; he appeared as a mimic on the stage, and compelled men of the highest rank to represent in dramas or in tableaux the obscenest of the Greek

myths. But the comedian was surpassed by the tragedian. He heaped crime upon crime until he became a proverbial monster of iniquity. The murder of his brother (Britannicus), his mother (Agrippina), his wives (Octavia and Poppaea), his teacher (Seneca), and many eminent Romans, was fitly followed by his suicide in the thirty-second year of his age.”

from Schaff, Philip, *History of the Christian Church*, CHAPTER VI, THE GREAT TRIBULATION.

Halley’s Bible Handbook provides the following from page 635...

“In and around Rome multitudes of Christians were arrested and put to death in the most cruel ways. Crucified. Or tied in skins of animals, and thrown into the arena to be worried to death by dogs, for the entertainment of the people. Or thrown to the wild beasts. Or tied to stakes in Nero’s gardens pitch poured over their bodies, and their burning bodies used as torches to light Nero’s gardens at night, while he drove around in his chariot, naked, indulging himself in his midnight revels, gloating over the dying agonies of his victims”

A more modern account of Nero’s rationale for his persecutions of Christians appeared in the September 16, 2010 “National Ancient History” by Don Keko...

“The Christians made the perfect scapegoats. They had no political power, enjoyed little public support, and suffered from a public relations problem. Although considered Jewish, the Christians distinguished themselves with their practices. In particular, they tended to worship in secret. This led to bizarre rumors based on distortions of Christian rituals. For example, Romans believed baptism involved drowning babies. They also believed communion was cannibalism. When Christians talked of having a love feast, Romans thought they were talking of orgies.

Nero used public mistrust and misinformation to turn Rome against the Christians. As a result of the cultural misunderstandings, Romans supported Nero’s persecution. The government sanctioned gruesome Christian executions. Rome burnt Christians alive using their bodies to light the streets at night. They unleashed dogs onto people. Romans fed the Christians to lions and other wild beasts. They crucified others including St. Peter. Mercifully, they beheaded St. Paul because he was a Roman citizen.”

And from History of the Christian Church by Jesse Lyman Hurlbut, page 40...

“...the gardens of Nero, where multitudes of Christians were burned as ‘living torches’, while the emperor drove his chariot among them, are now the seat of the Vatican palace, the home of the Roman Catholic pontiff, and of St. Peter’s Church.”

Rumors swirled about the city even at that time that Nero himself may have ordered the fire to be set. After the fire had gutted much of the city, Nero ordered the construction of the “Domus Aurea” (“Golden House” in Latin), a spectacularly adorned and massive residence for his highness. The aristocratic dwellings on the slopes of Palatine Hill were destroyed, clearing the way for Nero’s new home, and the 300 acre house would feature gold-leaf, stones and diamonds covered the ceilings, and the walls within in room were frescoed to convey a different theme in each major room.^{4,5} The residence also contained groves of trees, vineyards, and an artificial lake, all topped off by the 35 meter bronze statue of himself, known as the “Colossus Neronis”.⁶

Nero's level of narcissism would reach almost-incomprehensible heights....

“John is told to write seven letters to seven churches who find themselves in the epicenter of a Caesar cult in Asia Minor, which began with Jupiter Julius (Julius Caesar) the father of the Roman Empire in 46 B.C., to Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus (born Lucius Domitius Ahenobarbus) in A.D. 68. Julius Caesar (Jupiter) was voted into the hierarchy of the gods by the Roman senate, calling him “divine Julius.” His successor, Octavius, took on the title “Augustus,” meaning “venerable, worthy of reverence and worship.” Tiberius was worshiped, when the Roman senate voted to build a temple for him in the city Smyrna. Caligula, so convinced of his divinity, erected a colossal image of himself in the temple of the Jews in Jerusalem. Claudius believed the spiritual supremacy of the state was paramount, being summed up in the phrase, “Caesar is Lord” (NT in Antiquity, 36-446). This philosophical pretense was common among the people, including the Jews. When Pilate wanted to release Jesus the Jews cried out, “Whoever makes himself a king speaks against Caesar” and when Pilate responded, “Shall I crucify your king?” the Jews answered, “We have no king but Caesar” (John 19:12, 15).

A generation later Nero succeeds Claudius and is worshiped not only as “Lord”

but as “Savior.” It is within this milieu John admonishes the seven churches to stand firm in the conviction that Christ, NOT Caesar, is both Savior and Lord! (Revelation 2:10, 13:15).

It should be noted that the Jews are equating the title of “king” with the title of Caesar, making them synonymous, a concept which Suetonius, Josephus, Dio Cassius, and the Sibylline Oracles all refer to. “Caesar” was the family name of Julius, making him the first Caesar, which was also applied to subsequent Roman emperors or kings (cf. Rev.17:9-11)”. From Doug Post, Tolland, CT Church of Christ. 9

“Nero became even more tyrannical, claiming that he was equal to Apollo and the other gods. He encouraged emperor worship and had a huge statue of himself erected in Rome.”

From “Nero’s character” at www.bible-history.com.

We will continue with part Eight next month.....

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A PRIMER ON THE MEANING OF FAITH

Dub McClish

Denton, Texas

Introduction

There is hardly a more important subject for mankind to contemplate—and understand—than that of faith. It is a subject (and word) that men widely abuse and misuse. This misunderstanding is especially evident in faith's relationship to obedience, salvation, and knowledge. The subject of faith is so basic that if one goes astray on it, he will do so to his own eternal condemnation.

The Place of Faith in the Christian System

Faith is fundamental and basic to the religion of Christ—the beginning point of man's approach to Deity: “*And without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him*” (Heb. 11:6).¹ Jesus said: “*Except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins*” (John 8:34). Faith is therefore the beginning point of man's response to God's message: “*He that believeth [i.e., the Gospel, v. 15] and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned*” (Mark 16:16).

Faith and *belief* are so much the basic response God requires that one or the other is often used as a synecdoche (i.e., a part representing the whole) for all that one must do to be reconciled to God. *Repentance* (Acts 17:30), *confession* (of one's faith) (Rom. 10:9–10), and *baptism* (1 Pet. 3:21) are all used in the same way. Advocates of salvation by “faith only” notoriously misapply John 3:16 in an effort to advance their heresy. If this statement includes **only** intellectual acceptance of the Christ, it excludes all else (e.g., repentance and confession, and a life of faithfulness, as well as baptism—which “faith only” adherents so despise).

Many passages teach salvation by faith, but none by faith **alone**. *Believeth* in John 3:16 simply stands for all that man must do to be saved eternally, for all such conditions are expressions of faith, even as rejection of any of them is a demonstration of unbelief. The report of Paul and Barnabas at the conclusion of their first preaching trip (Acts 14:27) provides an additional illustration of this use of *faith*.

Further, when the jailer in Philippi asked Paul and Silas what he should do to be saved, they first told him, “*Believe on the Lord Jesus*” (Acts 16:31). A bit more reading reveals that they (1) taught the jailer and his family the Gospel (v. 32), upon which he (2) manifested his repentance by washing their stripes (v. 33a), and was immediately baptized, though it was past midnight (vv. 25, 33b). Only then does Luke describe them as “having believed in God” (v. 34).

Numerous other passages use faith and/or belief to refer to what men had done to be saved and added to the church, all of which conditions are subsumed under one or the other of these words (e.g., Acts 10:45; 13:12; 15:5; 17:12; et al.).

After Pentecost inspired men consistently use *believer* and *them that believe* in reference to those who had **obeyed** the Gospel, had been added to the church, and thereby had become disciples, Christians, brethren, saints, children of God (e.g., Acts 5:14; 1 Cor. 14:22; 1 The. 1:7; 2:10, 13; 1 Tim. 4:12; 6:2; et al.). All such usages of *faith* and *belief* are examples of “subjective” faith—that which comes from within men as they react to the Father, to Christ, and, to the Holy Spirit through the Gospel.

The New Testament often refers to the Gospel as “the faith” in an objective sense. When so used, *the faith* refers to that whole body of doctrine in which men must invest their faith. Note the following illustrations of this meaning (emph. DM):

*And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem exceedingly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to **the faith*** (Acts 6:7).

*Confirming the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in **the faith**, and that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God* (14:22).

*Watch ye, stand fast in **the faith**, quit you like men, be strong* (1 Cor. 16:13).

*Till we all attain unto the unity of **the faith**, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ* (Eph. 4:13).

*I was constrained to write unto you exhorting you to contend earnestly for **the faith** which was once for all delivered unto the saints* (Jude 3).

One’s faith in **the faith** is the basis of a life that pleases God after Gospel obedience: “*For we walk by faith, not by sight*” (2 Cor. 5:7). The following principle is age-lasting: “*But the righteous shall live by faith*” (Hab. 2:4; Rom.

1:17). The foundation of the “Christian graces” is faith (2 Pet. 1:15).

Faith is so basic that Paul wrote that Moses’ law was a “*law of works*,” and the Gospel is a “*law of faith*” (Rom. 3:27). (Note that Paul depicts the Gospel as “law,” doubtless much to the chagrin of the “all grace-no law” voices among those who have departed from us, as well as those in the denominations.)

What Faith Is Not

Faith, like many other Bible words, has been wrongly defined.

- Some equate faith with wishful thinking—“pie in the sky by and by.” In this misconception, “faith” has no reality upon which to rest. The existence of God, Christ, the Bible, and Heaven are all things one **wishes** to be real and **wants** to believe in so badly that one convinces himself that they exist.
- Some completely sunder faith from knowledge. To them “faith” goes beyond knowledge, taking up where knowledge ceases. To these misdefiners, “faith” is the proverbial “leap in the dark.”
- Many conceive of saving “faith” as merely intellectual acceptance of certain Biblical facts (e.g., the existence of God, the Deity of Christ). Although such acknowledgement of Bible teaching is the **beginning** point of saving faith, it is far from its **end** (as earlier noted).
- Some view faith as believing in things that may **possibly** exist. Accordingly, some allege that, while we cannot prove God’s existence empirically, yet His existence is more probable than improbable. This misapprehension of faith constitutes agnosticism.
- Others conceive of believers as those who ignore evidence with which they disagree. Skeptics often thus view Biblical faith. However, the better demonstration of this aberration of faith is the evolutionist, who defies, denies, and denigrates the huge body of evidence that validates the Bible and combats his irrational hypotheses.

While not exhaustive, the foregoing list is representative of the major misunderstandings of faith.

What Faith Is

Biblical faith has to do with the elements of belief, trust, confidence, assurance,

and conviction. Hebrews 11:1 helps us see the true nature and meaning of faith: *“Now faith is assurance [the substance, KJV] of things hoped for, a conviction [the evidence, KJV] of things not seen.”* The words *assurance*, *substance*, *conviction*, and *evidence* are strong terms of certainty. An assurance or certainty undergirds the reality of the things for which we hope, although we cannot now physically see them. This certainty and assurance imply evidence sufficient to convict one that the things for which we hope are fact rather than fantasy.

The source of adequate evidence of the reasonableness of our spiritual hopes is the Bible: *“So belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ”* (Rom. 10:17). How did the message of the apostles and other New Testament prophets engender faith in first-century unbelievers? They presented compelling, undeniable evidence that confirmed their message. The “great salvation” they preached,

...which having at the first been spoken through the Lord, was confirmed unto us by them that heard; God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders, and by manifold powers, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will (Heb. 2:3-4).

This principle is evident in the statement of Nicodemus: *“We know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him”* (John 3:2).

Since the age of such signs, wonders, and miracles has ceased, how do men develop faith now? The **written** record of the Biblical miracles provides the very same evidence of the authenticity of the message that the **actual** miracles did. The message has not changed, so the miracles that confirmed it until its completion will effectively confirm it from now on. The words of John are instructive just here:

*Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not **written** in this book: but these are **written**, that ye may **believe** that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that **believing** ye may have life in his name* (John 20:30-31, emph. DM).

Apparently, John was writing for the benefit of those who had not seen any of Jesus’ signs. He therefore **wrote** a record of some of those signs so that they might **believe** in the Christ and be saved. If the written record had confirmatory power before the end of the first century, it has the same power indefinitely

Faith is not **beyond** knowledge or **antagonistic** to it, but is actually another **form** of knowledge or means of attaining it. The account of the people in

Samaria demonstrates this fact. At first the Samaritans “*believed on him [Jesus] because of the word of the woman*” (John 4:39). Later, Jesus entered Samaria and taught the people, upon which they said, “*Now we believe, not because of thy speaking: for we have heard for ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world*” (v. 42). Evidence created faith and knowledge.

On Pentecost Peter reminded the crowd of Jesus’ “*mighty works and wonders and signs*” (Acts 2:22), proclaimed His resurrection (v. 32), and then caused them to reflect on the powerful signs that accompanied the apostles’ baptism in the Holy Spirit (v. 33). Peter also appropriately applied various prophecies (vv. 17–21; 25–28; 34–35).

He then challenged them to believe, on the basis of solid evidence: “*Let all the house of Israel therefore **know assuredly**, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified*” (v. 36, *emph. DM*). Some had witnessed some of Jesus’ signs, but those from far-flung nations (vv. 9–11) could not have done so. Perhaps most of these had seen some of the miracles on Pentecost. However, **none** of them had witnessed the resurrection, ascension, of coronation of Christ, but Peter said that they could **know** all of these things **assuredly**. The murderous infidels became penitent believers.

Verse 37 is an implied confession of their **faith**: “*Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do?*” Peter described their newfound **faith** as something they now “***know assuredly***” (*emph. DM*). God has never asked men to believe in anything or anyone except upon adequate evidence.

Conclusion

We must never cease to emphasize to a world of confused “believers” that saving faith is always obedient faith (*emph. DM*):

*But when they **believed** Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were **baptized**, both men and women (Acts 8:12).*

*And Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, **believed** in the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing **believed**, and were **baptized** (18:8).*

The only sort of faith that accomplishes anything is one based on Biblical evidence and is a “*faith which worketh by love*” (Gal. 5:6).

Endnote

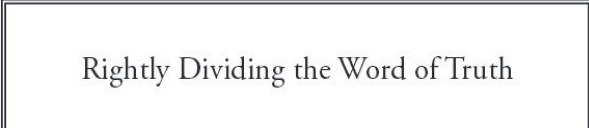
1. All Scripture quotations are from the American Standard Version, unless otherwise indicated.

[**NOTE:** I wrote and published this MS for my “Editorial Perspective” in the May 2003 issue of *THE GOSPEL JOURNAL*, of which I was editor at the time.]

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Learning to Give an Answer (6)

John P. Mabrey
Hilham, TN

Last month we approached God's plan of salvation from the standpoint of *man's part/God's part*. We discussed God's part last month; now we shall turn our attention to man's part of salvation. *"What must I do to be saved?"* (Acts 16:30)

Hear.

First of all, we cannot believe something that we have not heard. This is what the scripture tells us about the importance of hearing the gospel. Let us look at what the apostle Paul wrote to the Roman brethren concerning this subject in Romans, chapter 10, beginning with verse 13. *"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent? As it is written, how beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!"* In addition to this, let us look at John 6:44-45. This says in the words of Jesus: *"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him; and I will raise him up in the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me."* Each of us should be able to see therefore, the pathway to salvation begins by "hearing" the word of God; the gospel of Jesus Christ. Before a man can be saved, he must first realize that he is lost.

Believe.

Once having heard the gospel, we then must believe the gospel of the Bible which we have heard. Heb. 11:6 tells us, *"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."* To have faith means that we must believe in something. We can have faith in a lot of things, but not every kind of faith will get us into a saved state with God. We must have faith in what God's word tells us to have faith in. How do we get this faith? According to God's word, we get this saving faith by hearing God's word. Romans 10:17 confirms

this by saying: *“So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God.”* Without the proper faith we shall not inherit eternal life. In John 8:24 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.”*

Repent.

When one hears and believes the gospel of Christ, this brings about conviction of sin. The Jews on the day of Pentecost in Acts chapter 2 were convicted of sin and thereby the guilt of sin was laid bear by the sermon that Peter preached. *“Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their hearts, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren what shall we do?”* (Acts 2:37) This is repentance! The word “repent” means to “change your mind” or “to turn.” These men were ready to turn and go another direction. They were ready for a “change of mind” which would lead to a change of action. They were ready to follow the course of action that Peter told them to take in Acts 2:38. *“Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for remission of sins...”* True repentance signifies a willingness to change our minds about the way we have been living. We must be sincere in our repentance. John the Baptist told his fellow Jews to *“Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:”* (Matt. 3:8) True repentance is so very important to our soul’s salvation that the Bible states the necessity of it over and over again. According to Jesus we must “repent or likewise perish” (Luke 13:3,5) The writer of the book of Acts tells us that God will no longer tolerate using ignorance as an excuse not to repent. *“And the times of this ignorance God winked at: but now commandeth all men every where to repent:”* (Acts 17:30) Repentance is a command that must be obeyed in God’s great plan of salvation.

Confess.

Upon conviction of our sins, then an outward confession must be made. Before we look at what biblical confession is, let us look at what it is not. The confession we must make is NOT a confession of all of our sins at an *altar* or a *mourner’s bench*. God already knows that we are sinners, for it is declared in Romans 3:23 that *“...all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”* Nowhere in the New Testament scripture, is an alien sinner commanded to confess his sins before God in that manner. The true confession that all men must make is confessing the name of Christ before men, so that Jesus in turn will confess our name before our Father in heaven. (Matt. 10:32) In Romans

10:9-10, the apostle Paul has this to say about such confession: *“That if thou wilt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto righteousness.”* From the previous scripture we can see that confession is two-fold. We must confess that Jesus is Lord, and with that we are confessing the belief (faith) that he is able to save our souls. Perhaps the greatest example of such confession is found in the 8th chapter of the book of Acts. Philip had just preached Jesus to the Ethiopian eunuch, and as they were riding along in the eunuch’s chariot, the eunuch said: *“See, here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized? 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.”*(vs. 36-37) And there you have it. What a simple confession that all must make in order to become a child of God; but does it end there? Is that all we have to do to be saved? Not quite; read on:

Be Baptized.

The next step that man must take in order to be saved is baptism. Without a doubt, this is the most controversial subject when it comes to salvation. Everyone seems to agree that man must hear and believe the gospel, and that repentance must be made. Everyone in the religious world agrees that a confession must be made, although what is to be confessed is sometimes in dispute. But, when it comes to the subject of water baptism, the denominational world will try to argue every way in the world to escape the necessity of it. Before we look into the scripture to see if water baptism is necessary, let us first discuss what “baptism” is. I do not claim to be a scholar of the Greek language, but we must go back to the Greek text to render an accurate definition of this word. The word “baptism” is transliterated from the Greek word “baptize” which means: “to immerse, to submerge.” Consider the following article that was written concerning a man who lived in the 3rd century:

“Not to be confused with 911, bapto. The clearest example that shows the meaning of baptizo is a text from the Greek poet and physician Nicander, who lived about 200 B.C. It is a recipe for making pickles and is helpful because it uses both words. Nicander says that in order to make a pickle, the vegetable should first be 'dipped' (bapto) into boiling water and then 'baptised' (baptizo) in the vinegar solution. Both verbs concern the immersing of vegetables in a solution. But the first is temporary. The second, the act of baptising the

vegetable, produces a permanent change. Mark 16:16. 'He that believes and is baptised shall be saved'. Christ is saying that mere intellectual assent is not enough. There must be a union with him, a real change, like the vegetable to the pickle!" 1

Granted, Christians are not pickles, but when a person is raised from the waters of baptism, he is a new creature, because he is raised "to walk in newness of life." (Rom. 6:4; we will talk more about this later.) In order to make the change from a cucumber (alien sinner) to a pickle (Christian) a believer must be baptized in water. There is a great symbolism here as portrayed in Romans 6:3-4. We are "*...baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we should walk in newness of life.*" All should be able to see from this scripture that baptism is an immersion or a "burial." A burial does not consist of sprinkling a little dirt on a dead body, nor does it consist of pouring some dirt on it; rather a body must be totally immersed in order to consider it buried. The same is true with water baptism. Sprinkling or pouring water on the head of an individual does not constitute water baptism. Only when a person is totally submerged in a watery grave is one scripturally baptized.

So, why be baptized? In answer to this question we must look seriously at the purpose of baptism. We already know that it is a burial in water symbolizing the death, burial, and resurrection with Christ. We become dead to sin, and are buried just as our Lord was buried, and we are raised just as he was resurrected. What a beautiful symbol to be a part of our Lord Jesus Christ. But the simple answer to the question of why we are to be baptized is this: We are commanded to do so in the scripture by our Lord and Savior. Mark 16:16 contains the words of Jesus which says, "*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*" On that basis, how can anyone argue with the necessity of baptism for salvation? Jesus told Nicodemus that men must be "born again" "*of water and the Spirit*" or they could not enter the kingdom of God. (John 3:5)

What more do we say then to convince the naysayer that baptism is necessary for the salvation of a person's soul? Does baptism save? Peter said it does. Look at First Peter 3:20-21: "*Which sometimes were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, when the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is eight souls were saved by water. 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:” When we read this scripture and put the proper emphasis on baptism, we realize that baptism not only saves, but we are “disobedient” if we are not baptized.

God cannot and will not save a person that is covered in sin. For those who say that they were saved before they were baptized, they speak in error. That would mean that God saved them while the soil of sin was still on their soul. This is why Paul was commanded by Ananias in Acts 22 to “...*arise and be baptized and wash away thy sin, calling on the name of the Lord.*” (v. 16) In order for a person to be saved, he must have his sins washed away, because God cannot save a person in a sinful state. That is, God cannot save a person while he is still covered with sin.

Perhaps the most compelling defense of water baptism is found in the great commission. When Jesus sent his apostles into the world, he sent them by command saying: “*Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*” (Matt. 28:19) If baptism is not important, and if a man can be saved without water baptism, then why did Jesus put such emphasis on it when he sent his disciples into the world? And not in his name only, but in the name of all three in the Godhead. If obedience to water baptism means that much to Jesus, shouldn't it mean that much to us as well? We need to get serious when we talk to others concerning the step baptism plays as an essential part of the salvation of the soul.

Lord willing, we will continue our discussion of salvation next month by examining all the facets of the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch. (Acts 8)

1 Bible Study Magazine/James Montgomery Boice, May 1989.

All scripture references are from the KJV unless otherwise noted

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Out of Sin and Into His Service

Archie Green
DeSoto, Texas

Without a doubt the entire workings of the Bible demonstrate God's love towards mankind. John 3:16 We have been created in His image and made "*upright*". Ecclesiastes 7:29 To stand in His presence and proclaim Him as our God among men! He breathed into us the "*breath of life*" and separated humanity from all other life on the face of the earth for His good pleasure. Unfortunately mankind soon forgot who his benefactor IS and left the grace of God to seek his own selfish and sinful affections. Romans 5:12 The merciful Father of heaven stepped in and demonstrated His compassion and resonance towards mankind by promising deliverance to an offspring that did not deserve it. Genesis 3:15 God has ALWAYS proven himself over and over again resolute in His desire to save humankind. 1 Timothy 2:4 Even when men had "*grieved him to his heart*" and sought to accomplish "*every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually*", God stayed His hand from destroying the totality of the world by having eight souls "*brought safely through water.*" 1 Peter 3:20-21 He made a covenant with Abraham and claimed for Himself a people, a "*peculiar nation*" committed ONLY to Him. Deuteronomy 14:2

God's children, Old Testament or New Testament, have been made "*strange*" by His righteousness; not by any measure of virtue we could bring about ourselves. Each generation has been brought out of sin to be evident of His great love and mercy towards the entire world! 1 Peter 2:9 He saved Israel. Exodus 14:30 He saves those who are hated for His names sake. Matthew 10:22 He saves those who endure to the end. Matthew 24:13 He saves those who believe and are baptized. Mark 16:15-16 He saves those who trust in His Son. Luke 7:50 He saves those who believe the testimony of His dear Son. John 5:34 He saves those who call upon the name of the Lord. Acts 2:21 He saves those "*in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness*". Acts 10:35 The Lord of Heaven and Earth will ALWAYS do right and never has intended for His creation to spend an eternity in a devil's hell. Genesis 18:25, Matthew 25:41

No soul reading the Bible could miss the truth of God's salvation and all the peace which flows from it. As children we longed to hear more about a land that flowed with "milk and honey". Leviticus 20:24 Some have identified with a "lost coin", a "lost sheep" and a "lost son" who when humbled "came to

himself” and received redemption. Heaven still waits anxiously to rejoice over any like-minded sinner that has grown weary in their iniquity and decides to turn their life over to the King. Luke 15:10 And certainly because of this and many other actions showing God’s wonderful grace, we should turn back, praise God and fall on our knees thanking Him for His goodness and mercy in our healing! Luke 17:11-19

But what about the rest of the story? Too often as Christians, we gain God’s blessing of salvation, but do not want to acknowledge that after baptism, the real work begins. 2 Timothy 2:3-4 God would tell Israel thru Moses that salvation was **CONDITIONAL**. *“But I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, **you shall serve God on this mountain.**”* God did not display His righteous liberation from Egypt just so Israel could frolic without heed in Canaan no longer under the lash of its taskmasters. He had saved them from serving a false god on earth to serve the Great I Am. The same ideal applies to those saved under the New Covenant today. Paul writes to the church at Rome, *“Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?”* If God has freed us from sin, we cannot in good faith serve it any longer. We must serve the God of our deliverance. Paul writes to the church at Thessalonica encouraging them to continue in the **WORK** and **LABOUR** that accompany salvation. *“Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;”* 1 Thessalonians 1:3 They were an example unto all the churches by their consistent efforts in the Lord.

Too often those who call themselves *“followers of Christ”* spend their spiritual lives day dreaming less than three hours a week on a back pew. This is a poor use of the love that God has shown us. Jesus called all of us into action...an active lifestyle of always being in service. Luke 9:23 states, *“If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross **daily**, and follow me.* We are commanded to work and show love towards God and all the saints. Hebrews 10:24-25 All things will be considered in our final day. *“For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?”* Matthew 25:42-44 *We have no excuse and should not be found lacking in that day. God’s gift of grace is free for all, but God desires us to be thankful for it. And we show it by the way we engage*

ourselves in His ministry. Hebrews 6:10 Even Adam was required to dress and keep a place of peace and tranquility. Genesis 2:15 No one gets a pass. Jesus is our ultimate example in pleasing God. He stated in John 9:4, "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work." Don't you also want to accomplish what God has sent you to do? John 17:4 "Little is much, if God is in it. Labor not for wealth or fame. There's a crown and you can win it, if you go in Jesus name!" God Bless.

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