Holy Spirit in the New Testament

By H. A. (Buster) Dobbs
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- I. Introduction
  - A. The writers of the Old Testament looked for a time when the Holy Spirit would do a greater work than was done in their day.
  - B. They stressed the importance of words that would be spoken and written because of the work of the Holy Spirit. Consider the importance of the words of revelation.
    - 1. “The Spirit of the Lord Jehovah is upon me; because Jehovah hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the year of Jehovah’s favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them a garland for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of Jehovah, that he may be glorified” (Isa. 61:1-3).
    - 2. The context of this passage shows these words were spoken to Judah before the Babylonian captivity and refer to the restoration and rebuilding of Jerusalem and the temple but have a second and ultimate fulfillment in Jesus (See Luke 4:16-21). The

message was from “the Spirit of the Lord Jehovah.”

- C. The power and importance of the revealed word is emphasized. The word heard, revealed, preached, believed and obeyed is dominant.
    - 1. Matthew 4:12-17 and Isaiah 9:1-2– Jesus began to preach.
    - 2. Matthew 11:2-6; Isaiah 35:5-10–gospel is preached.
    - 3. Matthew 12:15-21 and Isaiah 42:1 -4–Jehovah’s servant shall declare judgment.
    - 4. Matthew 13:14-17 and Isaiah 6:9-10– see, hear, believe.
    - 5. Matthew 13:35 and Psalms 78:1-3– teach and reveal.
    - 6. Luke 4:16-2 1 and Isaiah 61:1-3–preach good tidings.
    - 7. John 12:37-41 and Isaiah 53:1; Isaiah 6:9-10–a message is to be believed.
- D. The Bible deals with the message more than the messenger. The real messenger was the Holy Spirit, and, being God, he is deep, inscrutable, and incomprehensible, but we can grasp the words the Holy Spirit revealed.

- II. The Holy Spirit and the Word in the New Testament
    - A. John the Baptist was a forerunner.
        - 1. He was filled with the Holy Spirit from birth (Luke 1:15).
        - 2. He was to prepare the way for Messiah (Isaiah 40:3).
        - 3. He would turn the hearts of the people to God (Malachi 4:5-6).
        - 4. He did his work by exhortation and preaching (Luke 3:18)
    - B. The work of Jesus was planned by God.
        - 1. “He that hath received his witness hath set his seal to this, that God is true. For

he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for he giveth not the Spirit by measure. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:34-36).

- a) Note: Jesus is the one God sent. Jesus spoke the words of God: for (the reason is) he (God) giveth not the Spirit by measure. Obviously, the one who spoke the words of God, is the one who received the Spirit without measure—Jesus received the spirit without measure.
- b) Others must have received the Spirit by measure; otherwise it does not make sense to say Jesus had an immeasurable measure of the Spirit.

- 2. Emphasis was put on the teaching (the words) of Jesus: "Never man so spake" (John 7:46).
  - a) "The multitudes were astonished at his teaching" (Matt. 7:28).
  - b) "Hear ye him" (Matt. 17:5).
  - c) "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46).
  - d) "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 y, 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" (Matt. 7:21-24).

- e) "It is the spirit that giveth life; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63).
- f) "No man can come to me, except the Father that 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 one that hath heard from the Father, and hath learned, cometh unto me. Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he that is from God, he hath seen the Father" (John 6:44-46).
- g) "Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I came forth and am come from God; for neither have I come of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? Even because ye cannot hear my word. 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. But because I say the truth, ye believe me

not. Which of you convicteth me of sin? 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 8:42-47)

- h) "If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also: from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; how sayest thou, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I say unto you I speak not from myself: but the Father abiding in me doeth his works" (John 14:7-10; Amos 1:1). Daniel said, ' 'heard I the voice of his words" (Dan. 10:9). Balaam said, ' 'The word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak" (Num. 22:38).

Comments on the Outline

God instructs the people of earth through the medium of words. The Holy Spirit used words in instructing chosen leaders who repeated the words to the public. The words would sometimes come to the receiver through the eye, at other times through the ear, and occasionally the words were put in the mouth, but the message always came in the signs and symbols of ideas and was communicated to the people in words.

"The words of Amos, who was among the herdsmen of Tekoa, which

he saw concerning Israel….” (Amos 1:1). Daniel said, “heard I the voice of his words” (Dan.lO:9). Balaam said, “The word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak” (Num. 22:3 8).

The Bible stresses the importance of inspired writings. The New Testament says the Holy Spirit influences human minds through a medium, except in some miracles—*miracles confined to the first century.*

God made the world by the creative power of his spoken word. God said, “Let there be light, and there was light.” God said, “Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters.” God said, “Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together unto one place.” God said, “Let the earth put forth grass, herbs yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit after their kind, wherein is the seed thereof, upon the earth: and it was so.” God spoke, and it was done. “By faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the word of God” (Heb. 11:3).

“… It is God, that said, Light shall shine out of darkness, who shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor. 4:6). Paul’s argument is that the same God who called light out of darkness in the beginning, de- monstrated how weighty and mighty his word is, by giving the revelation of his gospel of salvation. We dare not ignore nor belittle it.

The force of God’s word is well documented in the Bible. The gospel is God’s power to save (Rom. 1:16). Still, some misguided souls call it “the mere word” and “the dead letter.” Those who faithfully follow the teaching of the Bible are called strict constructionists and legalists. These terms are used in derision and are not unlike the Jews’ calling Jesus a Samaritan to disgrace him. Jesus set the proper response pattern for us when he discounted their slap by saying they dishonored him and pointed out that he was doing his Father’s will, but they were not so disposed. The apostle argues we do

not handle the word of God deceitfully. ..The gods of this world blind the minds of the unbelieving to prevent them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ…We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the exceeding greatness of the power may be of God" (2 Cor. 4:1-7). He calls the scriptures "the word of God…the gospel of the glory of Christ…a treasure…an exceeding great power."

We do not war according to the flesh, but "casting down imaginations, and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ; and being in readiness to avenge all disobedience, when your obedience shall be made full" (2 Cor. 10:5-6).

Our obedience is to be full, complete, perfect. It is the Comforter—the Holy Spirit—who gives to us divine revelation. "Wherefore, even as the Holy Spirit saith, Today if ye shall hear his voice" (Heb. 3:7). "Brethren, it was needful that the scripture should be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spake before by the mouth of David concerning Judas" (Acts 1:16). "The Spirit of Jehovah spake by me, And his word was upon my tongue" (2 Sam. 23:2). "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" (1 Tim. 4:1).

The word of truth revealed by the Holy Spirit is sufficient and adequate to make sinners acceptable to God. We are not to follow the ambiguous leadings of doubtful feelings but are to submit to the absolute standard of scripture inspired of God.

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4).

"Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth" (Matt. 6:10).

"The law of Jehovah is perfect, restoring the soul: The testimony of Jehovah is sure, making wise the simple" (Psalms

19:7).

“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that through patience and through comfort of the scriptures we might have hope” (Rom. 15:4).

“And that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness. That the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work” (2 Tim. 3:15-17)

“It is the spirit that giveth life; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, are life” (John 6:63).

“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death” (Rom. 8:2).

“But he that looketh into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and so continueth, being not a hearer that forgetteth but a doer that worketh, this man shall be blessed in his doing” (James 1:25).

“For the word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Heb. 4:12).

“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deluding your own selves” (James 1:22).

“Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures” (James 1:18).

“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: having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever, For, all flesh is as grass, and all the glory thereof as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower falleth: But the word of the Lord abideth for ever. And this is the word of good tidings which was preached unto you" (1 Peter 1:22-25).

"For seeing that in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom knew not God, it was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor. 1:21).

"Wherefore putting away all filthiness and overflowing of wickedness, receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls" (James 1:21).

John the Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth finished their God-given assignments through the power of words. The overriding importance of the message is prominent in the God-given scriptures (writings). As we look at the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the apostles of Jesus, certain disciples in the first century, and all the saved, we will understand more fully the Spirit's work of revealing, confirming, and protecting the plan of salvation as given in the new covenant.

"Now I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give {you} the inheritance among all them that are sanctified" (Acts 20:32).

Do We Know God?

By Carl G. Hecker
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A basic understanding of the true nature of our God can come only from the Bible. Our ideas of him develop over years of spiritual growth. If our fundamental understanding is wrong, we will never come to an adequate appreciation of what he requires of us. The following simple thoughts seem helpful in searching for deeper insight from the scriptures. See if you agree.

The Godhead

A clear, simple concept of the God of the Bible is essential to the proper faith and practice of the religion of Christ. The Hebrew word translated God *(Elohim)* in Genesis 1:1 is plural in number. It shows plurality in the persons of God. The New Testament also presents the same idea (John 1:1-14).

We ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold or silver or stone, graven by art and man’s device (Acts 17:29). Material representations of the Divine Being are idolatry (Exodus 20:4-6). God is spirit and we must not allow ourselves to think otherwise (John 4:24).

God *(Elohim)* has revealed himself as three persons. Each one in the Godhead is a distinct person but always one in action, thought, and purpose with the other two in the Godhead. These three persons always moved in perfect unity, with each having a specific identity and work apart from the others.

The Father is the designer. The Son, (also designated the Word) is the executor. The Holy Ghost is the organizer. When we read of God in the Bible, it always helps to have these basic thoughts in mind: God, the Father, as Designer; God, the

Son, as Executor; God, the Holy Ghost, as Organizer.

We see these three in the redemption of mankind. A proper understanding of their individual roles in this divine plan is essential to overcoming the often confusing and always conflicting denominational doctrines so prevalent today.

Our God in Redemption

We would expect to see the same unity of purpose and the definite assigned work in the revelation and enforcing of the scheme of redemption. The Father is the designer, the planner (Eph. 3:11; II Tim. 1:9). It was his eternal purpose. It was his grace and it was to be expressed in his gospel (Titus 2:11).

The Son is the one who executes by taking the form of a man (John 1:14) and dying on the cross to save all mankind (I Tim. 1:15). The Holy Ghost then did his divine part by revealing the reasonable and orderly plan in the New Testament. He did this by inspiring the apostles of Jesus.

Jesus gave the promise of the Father (infallible guidance) to his chosen apostles just before returning to the Father (John 14:25-26; Acts 1:4-9). The Comforter was to guide them into all truth. This he did. He then confirmed the word with gifts of signs and wonders and with divers miracles (Hebrews 2:1-4). The person of the Holy Ghost is always in the masculine gender (he or him). He is always singular in number. He revealed the word of God but he is not that word. The Holy Ghost has great influence but he is not merely an influence. The Holy Spirit is not some sort of “glorified it.”

The Holy Spirit possesses all the divine attributes equally with God, the Father and God, the Son. He is co-eternal, omnipresent, omnipotent, and omniscient. He is a person of the Godhead.

The term *Holy Ghost* equates with the expression *Holy Spirit.* They mean the same. The two English words translate one Greek word. He is a person and always functions as a person. He can be grieved (Eph. 4:30). The Holy Ghost or Holy Spirit is one person the same as God, the Father, and Jesus Christ, the Son are individual persons (Eph. 4:1-4).

Just as one individual cannot dwell literally within another person, so neither God the Father, Christ the Son, nor the Holy Spirit dwells in us personally. Such divine indwelling is a beautiful expression pointing to the closeness of our relationship to them. When one misapplies these scriptures by making them literal, he not only comes up with conflicting and confusing denominational doctrines but deprives himself of the real beauty of the revelation! The indwelling of the Godhead can only be effected by the words of the Eternal One. When this word is in the heart of the sincere individual it is God dwelling in us and we in him!

God dwells in us. Christ dwells in us. The Holy Spirit dwells in us. We dwell in them, that close! Such a close relationship is described by this beautiful and satisfying figure of speech. Other figures express the close relationship, such as we walk with him; he leads us; we are his sons and daughters. These physical, worldly images are descriptive of the spiritual. Our God is spirit (John 4:24). If any one of them is taken literally, that conveys an unreasonable idea leading to confusion and often unwholesome superstition. Do not allow this to happen to you.

Daniel: Outline

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1. Introduction
    1. The man.
        1. Little is known of Daniel.
            1. He was of royal descent, according to Josephus.
            2. His birth place was probably Jerusalem.
        2. Nothing is recorded of his early years.
        3. At about the age of 12 to 15 (in chapter 1:4 he and his friends are called “children”) he is found among the first captives Nebuchadnezzar took to Babylon.
            1. He is mentioned in connection with three other youths.
            2. He and his companions are selected to be trained in the language, history and customs of the Chaldeans.
            3. The fortunes and misfortunes of Daniel are recorded in his book of prophecy.
        4. How long he lived and when and where he died cannot be determined with certainty.
            1. Epiphanius says he died in Babylon.
            2. Some say he died in Shushan in Persia.
    2. Background.
        1. Egypt was the first world empire.
        2. Assyria succeeded Egypt as dominant in the world and was the first kingdom to attempt a one world government.
        3. Assyria gave way to Babylon.
            1. When the king of Assyria was weakened through rebellion and sickness, Nabopolassar revolted and declared himself the king of Babylon.

2. He then attempted to make himself emperor of the world.
3. The war between Assyria and Babylon caused Pharaoh Necho of Egypt to intercede in an attempt to participate in the plunder.
4. Josiah, king of Judah, tried to form an alliance with Babylon and was killed in a battle with Egypt at Megiddo.
5. Shallum (Jehoahaz) ruled for three months, but was carried by Necho to Egypt.
6. Eliakim (Jehoiakim) became king and ruled for 11 years. He was defeated by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, the son of Nabopolassar, who carried some of the ruling class of Judah and some of the wealth of the Jerusalem temple to Babylon. Daniel was among this number.

4. The Babylonian empire was defeated by the Medes and Persians.
5. Philip of Macedon had for a long time desired revenge on Assyria for having invaded Greece.
    1. Philip died without having achieved his ambition of crossing the Mediterranean Sea and punishing Assyria.
    2. Alexander, the son of Philip, set out to fulfill his father’s desire and developed the Greek empire. He ruled the world for a short time.
    3. Alexander built roads throughout his empire and required all the people to speak the Greek language.
6. Greece gave way to Rome.

1. Upon the death of Alexander, his world empire was divided between his four generals.
2. Slowly the Roman empire began to develop. Julius laid the military foundation upon which the kingdom was built.
3. His adopted son, Octavian (later Augustus), opened the imperial period of Rome (30 B.C.).

2. The Book.
    1. Introduction.
        1. The book was written in two languages. Chapters 2:4 to 7:28 are written in Aramaic, and the balance of the book in Hebrew.
        2. The predictive nature of the book declares its inspiration.
        3. Modern discoveries support the facts in the book of Daniel.
    2. Historical portion of the book of Daniel (1:1 to 6:28).
        1. Prologue of the book (1:1 to 1:21).
            1. The Babylonian captivity occurred in three stages. This was the first carrying away into Babylon in the reign of Jehoiakim (1-3).
            2. Children of the nobility chosen to go to Babylon. They were made eunuchs (2 Kings 20:17-18) and trained in the language and culture of the Babylonians (4-7).
            3. The diet test and its outcome (8-21).
        2. The famous dream of Nebuchadnezzar (2:1-49).
            1. The wise men of Babylon unable to describe and interpret the kings' dream (1-14).
            2. Daniel offers to recite the dream and

give its meaning (15-16).
3. Jehovah reveals the matter to Daniel and his companions (17-24).
4. Daniel describes the strange image Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream and tells the meaning, prophesying four world empires and Messiah's kingdom (25-45).
5. Nebuchadnezzar's reaction (46-49).

3. The fiery furnace (3:1-30).
    1. Nebuchadnezzar made a golden image and required all people to worship the image when they heard the sound of music (1-8).
    2. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (three Jews) were accused of not worshipping the image (8-12).
    3. The king inquires if they will worship his golden image and they refuse (13-18).
    4. The three Jewish men are cast into the fiery furnace (19-23).
    5. The victims are delivered by the power of God (24-27).
    6. Nebuchadnezzar praises Jehovah and promotes Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (28-30).
4. Nebuchadnezzar's dream of a tree and Daniel's interpretation(4:1-37).
    1. Nebuchadnezzar's pronouncement (1-3).
    2. The Babylonian king reports having had a dream, his wise men had not been able to make its meaning known to him (4-7).
    3. Nebuchadnezzar recounts his dream to Daniel (8-18).
    4. Daniel is stricken speechless (19).

5. Daniel gives the meaning of the dream (20-27).
6. One year later the prophecy of Daniel was fulfilled (28-33).
7. Nebuchadnezzar's recovery (34-36).
8. Nebuchadnezzar fully converted to the worship of the one God (37).

5. Writing on a wall (5:1-30).
    1. Belshazzar, grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, gave a feast for 1,000 of his lords (1).
    2. Vessels from the Jerusalem temple defiled and Jehovah insulted (2-4).
    3. Writing on the wall (5-6).
    4. The king's wise men could not read the writing (7-9).
    5. The queen-mother's recommendation (10-12).
    6. Daniel, 78, called to read the writing (13-29).
    7. End of the mighty Babylonian empire (30-31).
6. The den of lions (6:1-28).
    1. Darius of Persia sets up his government (1-2).
    2. Daniel promoted (3).
    3. Occasion sought against Daniel (4).
    4. The law against praying to any god except Darius (5-9).
    5. Daniel defied the king and disobeyed the law (10).
    6. Daniel accused and thrown to the lions (11-17).
    7. The king's lament (18-22).
    8. Daniel delivered (23).
    9. Daniel's accusers punished (24).
    10. Darius' proclamation concerning "the

God of Daniel" (25-28).

3. Visions and Dreams (7:1 to 12:13).
    1. Four beasts (7:1-28).
        1. Belshazzar is co-regent with his father, Nabonidus (1a).
        2. Dreams and visions (1b).
        3. Four beasts coming out of the sea (2-3).
            1. Lion with eagle's wings (4).
            2. Bear with 3 ribs in his mouth (5).
            3. Leopard with wings and 4 heads (6).
            4. Terrible beast with iron teeth and 10 horns (7).
        4. The little horn with a big mouth (8).
        5. A scene in heaven – the Ancient of Days – a coronation in heaven (9-14).
        6. An explanation to the grieving Daniel (15-27).
        7. Daniel, though troubled, hid the matter in his heart (28).
    2. Vision of a ram, a he-goat, and a horn (8:1-27).
        1. A ram with two horns representing the Medo-Persian Empire (1-4).
        2. The he-goat with a horn between his eyes (5-6).
        3. The he-goat overcomes the ram; the he-goat's horn is broken and 4 notable horns appear (7-8).
        4. A little horn comes from one of the 4 horns and desecrates the temple in Jerusalem (9-14).
        5. Gabriel's explanation of the vision (15-26).
        6. Daniel fainted and was sick (27).

3. Daniel’s prayer for himself and the people (9:1-27).
    1. The prayer (1-19).
    2. The sending of Gabriel to Daniel (20-23).
    3. Gabriel’s explanation of conditions – the 70 weeks of years (24-27).
4. Vision of a man (10-1-21).
    1. Daniel is afraid because of the vision (1-9).
    2. Daniel is comforted by an angel (10-17).
    3. Persia and Greece in conflict (18-21).
5. The rise and fall of the Grecian empire (11-1-45).
    1. Alexander of Macedon (1-4).
    2. An alliance, through marriage, between the king of Egypt and the king of Syria (5-6).
    3. Wars between Egypt and Syria (7-10).
    4. Continued struggles and intrigues between Syria and Egypt (11-19).
    5. Antiochus IV Epiphanes’ brutality foretold (20-24).
    6. Antiochus IV Epiphanes invades Egypt, but is driven back and again distresses the Jews in Jerusalem (25-39).
    7. Summary of Antiochus IV Epiphanes (40-45).
6. The time of the end (12:1-13).
    1. The archangel shall stand up (12:1-4).
    2. The great deliverance (12:5-10).
    3. Waiting for the end (12:11-13).

The Blood Of Christ

Neal Pollard

The topic above should cause one's mind to focus on some precise areas. Naturally, the blood of Christ implies thoughts of the "incarnation" of Christ (that Christ took on the form of man, while all God, and, thus, had blood coursing through His veins; Philippians 2:8). The blood of Christ further educes from one's thoughts the atonement Christ made for all mankind through the shedding of His blood at the cross (cf. Hebrews 9:12-14). The blood of Christ also elicits reflection upon the suffering and death of the sinless man from Nazareth (1 Peter 2:24). And on one might reflect.

The phrase, the blood of Christ, appears verbatim in the New Testament in four verses. With each reference one finds important lessons about the function and significance of His blood. Christ's blood is central in the Father's plan of salvation and life within His favor. What does the blood of Christ bring to needy man?

The Blood Of Christ Brings Redemption (1 Peter 1:19)

In 1 Peter 1, one sees the inspired apostle speaking to persecuted (1), predestined (2), purified (2), and pliant (2) people of God. What would cause a Christian to suffer wrong for doing right? What would cause a Christian to search out from the scriptures the terms of election, accept the terms of pardon, and follow the terms of Christian living? Simply, an understanding of redemption.

Perhaps the verse most loved and quoted is John 3:16. Yet, so

beknown and familiar, this verse is sorely misunderstood and underapplied. Jesus, the speaker of the words recorded in this verse, foretells the act of redemption. With His divine foreknowledge, Christ understood that the gift of the Father's only begotten Son (Himself) meant the shedding of His blood at Calvary. The purpose of that shed blood, He knew, was to redeem the lost race of man from the power and hopelessness of sin. Paul says, "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Galatians 4:4,5). By inspiration, Paul reinforces this with Titus (Titus 2:14).

The Blood OF Christ Brings Removal (Hebrews 9:14)

The King James Version uses, in this verse, the word "purge" in translating the effect of the blood of Christ upon the conscience of one to whom that blood is applied. Purge means "to purify, especially of sin, guilt, or defilement" (The American Heritage Concise Dictionary, 1994). Thayer shows the original word translated "purge" in this verse means "free from the guilt of sin" (The New Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon, 312). Clearly, the Spirit-guided writer of Hebrews speaks of the effect of the applied blood of the Savior. The audience of Hebrews, of which modern man is a part, needs some agent to remove the guilt of sin (dead works) from their lives. The blood of Christ is that agent. For the agent to be effective (to do the job it was intended to do), one must come in contact with it. Where does one come in contact with the blood?

Jesus shed His blood when He died (John 19:34). Paul writes "that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death" (Romans 6:3). One cannot literally go over to Jerusalem to a hill called Mt. Calvary and find the

man Jesus bleeding to death on a cross. Furthermore, because one cannot do this, one cannot in some literal way reach up to Him and take some of His shed blood and apply it to himself. Thus, there is no literal, physical way for today's man or woman to contact the actual, shed blood of our Lord.

Yet, Revelation 1:5 reveals that Christ, on His cross, washed us from our sins in His shed blood. God would not allow His Son to shed His life-blood and then provide no means for mankind to contact that blood in some way. And, there is a way and only one way. In identifical terminology, Acts 22:16 says that baptism washes away sins. In summation, Christ shed His blood in His death. We are buried with Christ in baptism. Christ washed our sins with His blood. We wash away our sins in the act of baptism. The blood of Christ and baptism, inseparably joined, remove the sins of those who recognize and submit to the authority of Christ in being baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 1 Peter 3:21).

The Blood Of Christ Brings Return (Ephesians 2:13)

At the creation of man, there was no need for means whereby man could return to a right relationship with Jehovah. The idea in Ephesians 2 that, specifically here, the Gentiles were "far off" implies the need to return. How could they come back to God? Paul stresses the fact that Christ's blood was the only means whereby reconciliation could be made. Thus, Paul penned the glorious fact that Christ " made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself" (Colossians 1:20). As if an inseparable gulf was crossed by Adam and Eve through their sinning at Eden, that gap of sin separated man from God (cf. Isaiah 59:1,2; Note: This is not to suggest that all inherit Adam's sin– the false idea of Hereditary Depravity – but rather that through Adam sin entered the world, Romans 5:17, and, consequently, all

have sinned, Romans 3:23). Not with acts of goodness or meritorious works could man ever earn his salvation (Titus 3:5). Yet, there are conditions that God expects man to meet in order to have past sins forgiven and the restoration of a right relationship with the Father (Titus 2:12; Hebrews 5:9; Ephesians 2:8). By shedding His blood, Christ paved a road of return (i.e., the "narrow road" of Matthew 7:13,14) to take us back to God. There was no access before and without Him and after sin was in the world (cf. 1 Timothy 2:5; John 14:6). How did Christ effect this return with His blood?

He took the first, old covenant God made with Moses and Israel out of the way by dying on the cross (Ephesians 2:12,14-15). He placed all believers in the faith into one body [the church](Ephesians 2:14,15,16; 4:4). He provided the message of reconciliation in commissioning the preached word to all men (Ephesians 2:17; Acts 1:8). He opened the avenue of prayer by His death on the cross, encouraging petitioning the Father to enhance our relationship with Him (Ephesians 2:18). He sets aside a place in the Kingdom [the church] for all the faithful obedient into which all spiritual blessings flow (Ephesians 2:19-22; 1:3; Matthew 16:18-19). To all who obey the commandments of God relative to entrance into His church, reconciliation and return to God are provided.

The Blood Of Christ Brings Remembrance (1 Corinthians 10:16)

As Eden shows the importance God stressed in mankind before the cross to anticipate that great event, this verse shows the importance God stresses in mankind after the cross remembering it. Those washed in the blood of Christ, contacted in baptism, are added to the church (Acts 2:41-47). Therein, those added [Christians] are governed by the Word of God in worship and conduct. A vital part of New Testament worship is the weekly participation in the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7). Why has God

authorized that Christians do so, and with such frequency?

The answer is “communion.” In connection with the Lord’s Supper, this word is translated “communion” only once in the New Testament. Yet, the original word from which it is translated is koininia, among the most recognized of all Greek words even among those who have little knowledge of that language. Most often, koininia is translated “fellowship.” “Fellowship” is also employed by the inspired New Testament writers to make reference to the “Memorial Feast.” The apostles and early Christians continued steadfastly in the fellowship of the Lord’s Supper (Acts 2:42). The fellowship of the Lord’s Supper was not to be defiled by the presence of idolatry at Corinth (1 Corinthians 10:20), but rather the communion was to be exclusively with the Lord.

In 1 Corinthians 10:16, Paul stresses that there is communion. That fellowship is with the blood of Christ, which suggests a multitude of things. First, the blood of Christ places one into the one body (the church– Colossians 1:18)(Acts 20:28). Therefore, the fellowship of the Lord’s Supper involves corporate (collective) activity. Together, children of God are drawn closer to one another remembering the Savior whose blood purchased them from sin. This communion, then, is a means of expressing encouragement and thanksgiving together as the redeemed. The Lord’s Supper cannot, then, have significance to those not members of the body as there is no celebration and fellowship with Christians. Also, the Lord’s Supper provides a communion between the individual Christian and his Lord. Thus, Paul instructs each to “examine himself” (1 Corinthians 11:28). None other can obey the command of self-examination and remembrance for another in the Lord’s Supper or in any spiritual matter. Yet, the Lord’s Supper is special because of both the sharing with others and the individual responsibility. As an institution, the Lord’s Supper is, in both regards, a crucial means whereby Christians remember the sacrifice, suffering, and death of Christ in shedding His

blood on the tree.

The blood of Christ purchased man's pardon (1 Peter 1:19). The blood of Christ purges man's conscience (Hebrews 9:14). The blood of Christ propels man closer to God (Ephesians 2:13). The blood of Christ provides recollection of atonement (1 Corinthians 10:16). His blood was important in prophesy (Isaiah 53:3-5). His blood was important in physicality (John 19:34). His blood is important in perusal (Matthew 26:28; 1 Corinthians 11:28).

Be Filled with the Spirit

By Earl Trimble
Vol. 106, No. 08

"And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18). Paul gives two commands in this verse. (1) Be not drunk with wine and (2) be filled with the Spirit. The first command demands a life of sobriety. The second command is generally misunderstood.

There are two possible explanations of the meaning of, "be filled with the Spirit." (1) It is a command to be filled with the actual Person of the Holy Spirit, or (2) It is a command to be filled with the Spirit's teaching. Let us consider these views:

If the Spirit actually lives personally in the believer beginning at baptism (Acts 2:38), why would Paul command Christians to be "filled" with the Spirit? If the Spirit personally dwells in the saved person from the time of

baptism, what role would the Christian have, then, in being filled with the Spirit?

If the Holy Spirit personally lives in the child of God personally at baptism, are there degrees or measures of the personal Holy Spirit abiding personally in the Christian? Is each individual Christian commanded to increase this initial measure of the Spirit until he becomes "filled" with the Spirit?

Brother Guy N. Woods' chart graphically shows the parallel between Eph. 5:18-19 and Col. 3:16:

Ephesians 5:18

"Be filled with the Spirit.. ..speaking in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs…."

"Be filled" present imperative. Keep on being filled! Daily filling—not a one-time experience following baptism.

Colossians 3:16

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly. …teaching in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs…."

How filled!

Fill (*Pleero*)—Bagster: to pervade with an influence fully, possesses fully (Eph. 5:18).

Please note Bagster's definition of the Greek *Pleero* (Fill) is to be filled with an influence. For one to "let the word of Christ dwell in" him "richly" is for him to "be filled with the Spirit."

It is true that the Spirit is not a mere influence. Still, the Bible frequently uses a figure of speech (synecdoche) where a part is put for the whole, or where the whole is put for a part. Here, the word *Spirit* is used for the Spirit's influence

through the teaching of the word of Christ.

This rich dwelling of the Spirit through the word results in "speaking in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs" or "teaching and admonishing one another." One does not speak in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs as the result of being filled with the literal Person of the Holy Spirit. If so, then such singing would be the work of the Spirit, and all such teaching would be inspired. The Spirit influences people today only through the once-for-all delivered faith—the Word of Truth.

Which agrees with sound reason and with Scripture, to say (1) that being filled with the personal Spirit results from a command to do so, or (2) that being filled with the Spirit results from being obedient to commands of the Spirit and thus being filled with the Spirit's teaching?

A study of Colossians 3:16 and Ephesians 5:18-19 shows that the singing of psalms, hymns and spiritual songs is the result of being "filled with the teaching of the Spirit," or letting "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."

Lord's Supper

By H. A. (Buster) Dobbs
I. Introduction.
A. "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and
brake it; and he gave to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took a cup, and gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto remission of

sins. But I say unto you, I shall not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom" (Matt. 26:26-29).
B. The Lord's Supper was instituted during a Passover Feast.
1. Passover was observed with unleavened bread.
(a) "Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel" (Exodus 12:15).
2. The juice of the grape, or fruit of the vine, was also on the Passover table.
(a) "But I say unto you, I shall not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom" (Matt. 26:29).
3. The bread represents the body of Jesus; the grape juice represents his blood.
(a) It is basic to understanding language to regard every statement as literal unless the context requires a figurative application.
(b) Jesus said many things that are figurative: "I am the door…I am the vine…I am the bread of life…I am the water of life."
(c) When Jesus said of the cup containing the fruit of the vine, "this is my blood of the covenant," and when he said of the bread, "this is my body," he obviously did not mean literal blood and literal flesh. He was present with them in the flesh. They had to understand he was saying the bread is symbolic of my body, the fruit of the vine is symbolic of my blood.
II. Essentials of the Lord's Supper.
A. The time of observance.
1. First century disciples assembled regularly on the first day of the week to worship.
(a) "Not forsaking our own assembling together, as the custom of some is, but exhorting one another; and so

much the more, as ye see the day drawing nigh” (Heb. 10:25).
(b) “Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come” (1 Cor. 16:2).
(c) “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” (Acts 20:7).
2. Since the first day of the week is the day of worship, and since the Lord’s Supper is a part of worship, it follows that the Lord’s Supper is to be observed on the first day of the week. Acts 20:7 shows this was the practice of the early church.
B. Who may partake?
1. “For I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which he was betrayed took bread; and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, This is my body, which is for you: this do in remembrance of me. In like manner also the cup, after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood: this do, as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord’s death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat the bread or drink the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. But let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of the bread, and drink of the cup. For he that eateth and drinketh, eateth and drinketh judgment unto himself, if he discern not the body” (1 Cor. 11:26-29).
(a) Each person is to examine or prove himself, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup.
(b) The fruit of the vine or the cup is Jesus’ blood of the covenant. A person who is not in a covenant relationship with Jesus is not a proper candidate to partake of the cup or eat the bread.

2. “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a communion of the body of Christ? seeing that we, who are many, are one bread, one body: for we are all partake of the one bread” (1 Cor. 10:16-17).
(a) No person can discern the body of Jesus who has not obeyed the conditions of pardon given in the New Testament.
3. To discern the body and blood of Jesus and, therefore, to partake in a worthy manner, one must have the right attitude toward the supper. A part of that attitude is to know ourselves to be unworthy; only then can we partake in a worthy manner.
4. Still, each person is to prove himself, and then eat and drink.
C. The communion is not the most important part of the worship (one of God’s commands is not more important than another) but it is the centerpiece of our worship.
1. In all worship we must have proper feelings of piety and devotion.

EIGHT STEPS TO GREATER SENSITIVITY

EIGHT STEPS TO GREATER SENSITIVITY

By John Dobbs
Vol. 106, No. 06

Jesus was the most sensitive person who ever walked the face of this earth. There have been many great heroes, great debaters, great scholars, and great orators, but how many

people do you know who are great in their sensitivity? Many a church split, fuss, or wrangle would be solved were everyone more sensitive to each other. Jesus exhibited his sensitivity in at least eight ways.

He considered the physical needs of others:

> *And Jesus called unto him his disciples, and said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days and have nothing to eat: and I would not send them away fasting, lest haply they faint on the way. And the disciples say unto him, Whence should we have so many loaves in a desert place as to fill so great a multitude? And Jesus said unto them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven, and a few small fishes. And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground; and he took the seven loaves and the fishes; and he gave thanks and brake, and gave to the disciples, and the disciples to the multitudes. And they all ate, and were filled: and they took up that which remained over of the broken pieces, seven baskets full. And they that did eat were four thousand men, besides women and children. And he sent away the multitudes, and entered into the boat, and came into the borders of Magadan (Matt. 15:32-39).*

Jesus taught that we should be willing to forgive others of their shortcoming seventy

times seven:

Then came Peter and said to him, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? until seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven. Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, who would make a reckoning with his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, that owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not wherewith to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And the lord of that servant, being moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt. But that servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants, who owed him a hundred shillings: and he laid hold on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay what thou owest. So his fellow-servant fell down and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay that which was due. So when his fellow-servants saw what was done, they were exceeding sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. Then his lord called him unto him, and saith to him, Thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou besoughtest me: shouldest not thou also have had mercy on thy fellow-servant, even as I had mercy on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due. So shall also my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye forgive not every one his brother from your hearts (Matt. 18:21-35).

Jesus considered the spiritual needs of others—even when they were not interested:

> *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her! how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord (Matt. 23:37-39).*

Jesus taught that we should do what we could to solve the obvious problems of others:

> *And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and made trial of him, saying, Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? And he said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. But he, desiring to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbor? Jesus made answer and said, A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho; and he fell among robbers, who both stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance a certain priest was going down that way: and when he saw him,*

he passed by on the other side. And in like manner a Levite also, when he came to the place, and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he was moved with compassion, and came to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring on them oil and wine; and he set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow he took out two shillings, and gave them to the host, and said, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, I, when I come back again, will repay thee. Which of these three, thinkest thou, proved neighbor unto him that fell among the robbers? And he said, He that showed mercy on him. And Jesus said unto him, Go, and do thou likewise (Luke 10:25-37).

Jesus taught that sensitivity is often met by insensitivity:

And it came to pass, as they were on the way to Jerusalem, that he was passing along the borders of Samaria and Galilee. And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, who stood afar off: and they lifted up their voices, saying, Jesus, Master, Have mercy on us. And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go and show yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, with a loud voice glorifying God; and he fell upon his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering said, Were not the ten cleansed? but where are the nine? Were there none found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger? And he said unto him, Arise, and go thy way: thy faith hath made

thee whole (Luke 17:11-19).

Jesus taught that we should accept those who were unacceptable to much of society:

And they come to Jericho: and as he went out from Jericho, with his disciples and a great multitude, the son of Timaeus, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the way side. And when he heard that it was Jesus the Nazarene, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me. And many rebuked him, that he should hold his peace: but he cried out the more a great deal, Thou son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus stood still, and said, Call ye him. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good cheer: rise, he calleth thee. And he, casting away his garment, sprang up, and came to Jesus. And Jesus answered him, and said, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? And the blind man said unto him, Rabboni, that I may receive my sight. And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And straightway he received his sight, and followed him in the way (Mark 10:46-52).

Jesus was blind to social restraints, and treated all

people as real people:

So he cometh to a city of Samaria, called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph: and Jacob’s well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. For his disciples were gone away into the city to buy food. The Samaritan woman therefore saith unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, who am a Samaritan woman? (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) Jesus answered and said unto unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: whence then hast thou that living water? Art thou greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his sons, and his cattle? Jesus answered and said unto her, Every one that drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up unto eternal life. The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come all the way hither to draw. Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither. The woman answered and said unto him, I have no husband. Jesus saith unto her,Thou saidst well, I have no husband: for thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: this hast thou said truly. The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father. Ye worship that which ye know

not: we worship that which we know; for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: for such doth the Father seek to be his worshippers. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth. The woman saith unto him, I know that Messiah cometh (he that is called Christ): when he is come, he will declare unto us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he (John 4:1-26).

Jesus said to always put God and others first; that way, we'll never get in our way.

But the Pharisees, when they heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, gathered themselves together. And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question, trying him: Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law? And he said unto him, 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 (Matt. 22:34-40).

These eight steps are simple, yet profound. Brethren, be more sensitive to the needs of those around us, try to be like Jesus!

BABIES ARE NOT BORN IN SIN!

By Lynn Blair
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The idea of babies being born in sin is foreign to the Bible. Babies do not inherit sin from their parents.

“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” (Ezek. 18:20).

Children are born in a perfect state. “Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee” (Ezek. 28:15). Jesus said that unless we humble ourselves and become as little children, we cannot enter the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 18:1-4).

Among the denominations that teach this false doctrine the misuse of Psalm 51:5 is predominant. That verse says, “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity: and in sin did my mother conceive me.” Some modern versions mistranslate the phrase “I was born a sinner.”

There is a vast difference in the meaning of the translations. In the King James and American Standard the mother did the sinning, but, in the New International for instance, it was the baby that was the sinner! The older versions are correct.

We know this in two ways. First, the original language states it emphatically, as do the King James and American Standard. Second, since the Bible does not contradict itself, and verses such as Ezekiel 18:20; 28:15; and Matthew 18:1-4 teach that babies are not born sinners, the statement that a baby was born in sin cannot be true.

One might ask, if that is not the meaning of Psalm 51:5, then what can it mean? First, it is a Repentance Psalm. David committed adultery and murder (2 Sam. 11:1-27). He said, “my sin is ever before me” (Ps. 51:3). Because of his terrible guilt, he felt he had been sinning so long he couldn’t remember when he started.

There is another scriptural explanation for this. Deuteronomy 23:3 says, “An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord; even to his tenth generation shall he not enter into the congregation of the Lord.” In Ruth 1:4 we find two Israelite men marrying Moabite women, one of which was Ruth. Ruth was the great-grandmother of the author of Psalm 51—David!. He was within “ten generations” of a Moabite! That may be why he said, “in sin did my mother conceive me.”

There has never been a baby that believed (Mark 16:16). There has never been a baby that repented (Acts 2:38). There has never been a baby who had his sins washed away (Acts 22:16), because there has never been a baby that sinned!

NOTES ON AUTHORITY

By Dub McClish
Vol. 106, No. 05

A necessary question is, What is Scriptural authority? Sometimes people who ask this mean, where is this or that specifically mentioned in the Bible as approved of God?

The truth is some things are authorized by the New Testament that are not specifically named. This brings up the subject of the two kinds of authorization found in the New Testament.

First: specific authorization is a given practice named with God's approval. Many examples can be cited, such as going into all the world with the gospel (Mark 16:16), assembling each first day of the week to partake of the Lord's supper (Acts 20:7), and baptizing people in the name of Christ for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).

Second: authorization permitting the use of arrangements not specifically mentioned in the Bible. For example automobiles are not mentioned in Mark 16:16, but are authorized in obeying the command to go into all the world with the Gospel? A plate is not mentioned for serving the bread of the Lord's supper, but is it allowable?

For a thing to be generally authorized there must be behind it the implementing of some specific command. A thing resting upon generic authority must not conflict with any other precept of Scripture. Using a car to preach the Gospel is scriptural, but one may not steal a car in order to preach the gospel.

Building a church building rests upon generic authority and not specific authority. The command to assemble (Heb. 10:25) implies a place to assemble, whether borrowed, rented, or purchased.

Many things about a church building fall in the realm of generic authority. Restrooms, water fountains, carpet on the floor, padding on the pews, ceiling fans and other things fall into this category.

The use to which property of a local church can be put is in this realm. Who is to decide such matters? The obvious answer is the elders. Elders have oversight of every optional part of the work and activity of the local congregation (Heb. 13:17).

Elder's authority does not extend to releasing what Christ has bound or binding what He has released (Matt. 16:19-20). The Lord has made all the spiritual law men need (2 Tim. 2:15),

and He has left it with us in His “perfect law of liberty” to implement his teaching.

Elders, like every child of God, must protect against false teachers, and keep the church faithful to the law of Christ (Acts 20:28-30). Elders have oversight of the policy and programs of the local church. They determine what will be done in matters of generic authority.

Electricity and plumbing in the building; eating a meal on the church premises; whether one or more gospel meetings per year; whether to have a lecture- ship every year and what subjects to study, and the speakers; whether to publish a book and audio and video tapes with which to preserve the messages for further reflection and wider distribution all fall into this category—all are matters of general authority, but authority nonetheless.

The specific authority for a lectureship, publication of a book, and tape recordings of the messages are found in the command to preach the Gospel to the whole creation (Mark 16:16). If such lectureships have solid authority, and if the reproduction of the messages by print and tape rests upon solid authority, then it must follow that distribution of said materials also rests upon solid authority.

If it is right to produce such materials for the Gospel on church property, is it right to sell such, for a fair price, on the same property?

The same general authority authorizing a church building, water, electricity, and gas, authorize the making and distribution of sound Gospel materials for the information of saints. Is the church supporting private business when the plumbing fails, and the plumber makes repairs for which the church pays? A plumber is not expected to clean out the sewer lines for nothing!

Some think a thing is all right as long as it is small, but

when it is big it is wrong. Question: how big is big, and by whose judgment? Such a person is a law maker for God!

Another point relating to littleness/bigness. Neither size nor quantity has anything to do with the rightness or wrongness of a matter of judgment. If it is not wrong for an eldership to decide to install a refrigerated drinking fountain in the church building, then it is not wrong to install a refrigerator in a church building. The size of the thing has nothing to do with it! If it is wrong for people to eat bread and fish in the church building, then it is wrong for the church to install a drinking fountain. Conversely, if it is right to install a drinking fountain, it is right to eat bread and fish (or even chicken) in the church building.

SALVATION IS BY GRACE BUT NOT BY GRACE ONLY

by Thomas B. Warren
Vol. 106, No 05

There is an enormous difference between affirming (1) that salvation is by grace and (2) that salvation is by grace only. The difference is of great importance.

Recently, I saw an article written by a brother in Christ which alleges that it "is a scandalous and outrageous lie to teach that salvation arises from human activity. We do not contribute one whit to our salvation." (Rubel Shelly, *"Love Lines,"* October 31, 1990; Woodmont Hills Bulletin, Nashville. p. 3.)

It is quite serious to charge brethren with lying.

These statements remind me of the booklet (Sam Morris, *Do A Christian's Sins Damn His Soul?* [Sic] [No publisher or date indicated], pp. 1-2, written by a Baptist preacher) which affirms that all of the deeds which one may do in obedience to the Gospel of Christ "will not make his soul one whit safer." In so saying, he taught that loving obedience to Jesus Christ has nothing whatever to do with his becoming a Christian or, finally, with his going to Heaven when Jesus comes again to judge the world.

In regard to the sins which one may commit, the same booklet teaches that "all the sins he may commit from idolatry to murder will not make his soul in any more danger. The justification of the human soul is through the atonement of Christ and not through the efforts of man. **The way a man lives has nothing whatever to do with the salvation of his soul"** (emphasis mine. TBW).

Let us compare these two statements.

The Baptist said: "The way a man lives has nothing whatever to do with the salvation of his soul."

Our brother said: "We do not contribute one whit to our salvation" and that it is an "outrageous lie to teach that salvation arises from human activity."

How do the statements compare? Is there a significant difference between them? I aver that there is not.

They both teach salvation by grace only.

Our brother taught that it is an outrageous lie to teach that salvation "arises from human activity."

The Baptist also taught that the way a man lives (this would include all of his thoughts and deeds) has nothing whatever to do with his salvation. So, this is a clear affirmation that after the moment when one believes in Christ. there is nothing

he can do which would result in his eternal damnation. I even heard one Baptist preacher say. “Since I trusted Jesus as my personal Savior, I could not go to Hell even if I wanted to!” Also, during debates, I have heard Baptist preachers argue that John 6:28-29 teaches, not that man must do the believing, but that God does the believing for him.

Our brother eliminates all human activity from salvation. If he were right, then every human being will be saved, because God’s grace is offered to all men (Titus 2:11)! So, if this false doctrine really were true, then there would be no need for the preaching of the Gospel (all men would be saved without it, without ever hearing it, without ever believing it, without ever obeying it) either to become a Christian or in the living of the Christian life. May it be remembered, that the brother whom we are reviewing also taught that “good works are the fruit of salvation.” Given this doctrine, the things we do in becoming a Christian are not “good works.” This he teaches in spite of such passages as James 2:24-26.

In contradiction to our brother’s positions, the New Testament conditions both becoming a Christian and living a life which will result in eternal salvation on certain specified things. The Holy Spirit, in inspiring the writing of the New Testament, put the little word “if” before quite a number of conditions. Following are just a few of such passages: (1) Galatians 6:7-9: “… in due season we shall reap IF we faint not” (Gal. 6:7-9); (2) Hebrews 10:26: “For IF we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more a sacrifice for sins” [emphases mine in the two preceding points]; (3) Galatians 1:6-9 clearly teaches that if any one preaches a gospel which is different from that of Christ, he will be under the curse of God.

There are many other passages which use “if” in this fashion. May all people be warned that there are works (acts of obedience which are required by Christ in the Gospel) which one must do in order to become a Christian. Also, there are

works which one must do in order to go to Heaven when this life is over.

I want to lovingly affirm without reservation that no one can be saved without the grace of God—no one can earn his salvation. Every person who is saved is saved by grace! But—note this please—no one is saved by grace only! People are saved by the grace of God when by faith they obey the relevant instructions of Christ, who taught that only those who do the will of the Father will enter the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 7:21). Our brother contradicts Jesus, His Apostles, and His prophets.

It should be clear that while the works of man cannot earn the forgiving of even one sin, it is nevertheless the case that salvation by the grace of God is contingent on man's faith in, and obedience to, the Lord Jesus Christ (Heb. 5:8-9).

James 2:24-26 and Revelation 2:10, among many other passages, ought to settle it for all of us: (1) those who live and die in faithfulness to the Gospel of Christ will be saved eternally and (2) those who live and die in unfaithfulness to the Gospel of Christ will be lost eternally (cf., James 2:24-26; Matt. 25:46).

One is saved by grace but faith also has a part (Eph. 2:8-9). But Christ says, through His word, that men are saved by works and not by faith only (James 2:24-26).

The seed of God (His word) must be both believed and obeyed (Luke 8:4-15). Each person is free either to stay in the "mudhole" of sin or, by faith and obedience, to get out of the "mudhole" of sin (2 Peter 2:20-22).

Again, I kindly suggest, that ought to settle the matter for all of us.

Come to Dinner

by George W. DeHoff
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Matthew 22:2-14, Luke 14:16-24

This parable could be called “The Parable of the Great Invitation” or “The parable of Frivolous Excuses.” It is a call to dinner. “All things are ready, come.”

“The kingdom of Heaven is like unto” (Matt. 22:2). Then He describes certain things about the kingdom of God. This is a judgment parable and contains these central thoughts: (1) The guilt of the Jewish nation for rejecting God’s word; (2) God will have a people nevertheless; (3) Since the Jews rejected the gospel message, his servants invited others.

Standing out clearly in the scripture is the importance of the call. In both the Old and the New Testaments, feasts denote spiritual blessings. The feast in this parable is the gospel of the kingdom of heaven. Since this is a call of God to accept the gospel message, it is all important. The certain king of the parable points to the great God of the universe, the King of kings and Lord of lords. Since it is the King’s dinner, the invitation is tremendously important.

In the second place, this call is important because the feast honors the King’s son. Christ refers to Himself. He is the son of God. If the king was giving a dinner in honor of a servant perhaps the call to attend would not be so important, but he is honoring his son. This makes the invitation all important.

To refuse the invitation dishonors the son.

The Bible teaches every knee should bow and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God, the Father (Phil. 2:10-11). Since this confession and homage is inevitable, we must either make the confession here or hereafter. We should gladly accept this great invitation.

Third, this call to dinner is important because of the immense preparation, “all things are ready” (Luke 14:17). Nothing is undone. Can we not see the great banquet table groaning under the load of luxurious delicacies? Nothing is omitted. No expense is spared. Calvary is an accomplished fact. The blood of the Lamb of God soaked into the wood of the cross, and dripped to the ground beneath the accursed tree.

“All things are ready.” Think of what the great spiritual feast cost the Father. It cost His only begotten son. The preparation was most elaborate but very necessary. There was no other way for man to come to God to be forgiven. It took the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the very son of God. What an important call and how tragic it is to reject it.

Fourth, the punishment of those who refused the call shows the importance of the call to dinner. If it seems drastic for the disappointed king to send his armies to destroy those who rejected his invitation, and killed his servants, consider the importance of the invitation. If you think the man found at the supper table without a wedding garment was too severely punished for his neglect, weigh the significance of this invitation he had slighted.

Those who heard the call and rejected the invitation suffered severe punishment. Christ’s prophecy, for the Jewish nation, came to pass in the year A.D. 70, when the Roman armies, under Titus, laid siege to the city of Jerusalem and razed it to the ground. The terrible destruction of Jerusalem in the first century of this age is a kind of prophecy of the utter

destruction that awaits the impenitent at the close of this age. Modern day people should take note, and shudder.

This call is universal—to the Jew first, and also to the Greek (Rom. 1:16). In the parable under discussion the elite received the invitation. They turned it down with scorn and frivolous excuses. The King's servants then went out into the highways and hedges looking for guests. The Jews rejected Christ and cried, "His blood be on us and on our children" (Matt. 27:25). At first, the offer of salvation was to the Jews. When they rejected it, the teachers turned to the Gentiles.

The call was to dine at the great banquet table of the Lord. It is universal, God is not a respecter of persons. "Whosoever will" is the language of the scriptures. His loyal servants are still delivering the message all over the world that whosoever will may come to Christ and obey His gospel. It is a message of love, and freedom. Thank God, everyone has an invitation to attend this great wedding feast.

This call is for preparation. Orientals wore long white robes at public festivals. Those who appeared with any other garments were culpable, and punished. The wedding garment is the righteous deeds of the saints. If we obey the commands of Jesus to believe and be baptized the promise of salvation from past sin is ours (Mark 16:16). If we are faithful at all costs, we will receive a crown of life (Rev. 2: 10). Obedience to the plan of salvation, and clean living, and faithful service are the right clothes for this feast. N& one attended this banquet with improper robes. Common clothes would insult the king, and dishonor his son. If we are to enjoy the great blessings of God we must make preparation. Why should anyone appear in filthy rags when clean garments are available? "He that is unrighteous, let him do unrighteousness still: and he that is filthy, let him be made filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him do righteousness still: and he that is holy, let him be made holy still" (Rev. 22:11).

This call also contains a warning. Much of our Lord's teaching is interspersed with warnings. Those first bidden began to make excuses—feeble, flimsy, foolish, frivolous excuses. Verse 7 tells the consequences of the refusal of the call to dinner: "But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth; and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murders, and burned up their city." Verse 13 tells what happened to the poor fellow who tried to get by with unfit garb: "Bind him hand and foot, and take him. away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

These things are for our admonition. Transgression deserves severe punishment. Notice that these people "made light of it and went their ways." Some took his servants and treated them shamefully, slaying them. One man came, "not having on a wedding garment." These words speak disaster. The call of God contains a warning. It is tragical to go about your business as if nothing happened. You can enjoy a feast of good things at the Father's table. It's up to you!

Spirituality – What is it?

by Wayne Price
Vol. 106, No. 02

The word spirituality is often used to describe worked-up-emotion, which is a horrid caricature of the sober and sacred idea. The New Testament uses the adjective *pnumatikos* (translated spiritual) twenty-six times. What is spirituality?

Paul’s Spiritual Man

Paul contrasts the natural man and the spiritual man, and describes the natural man as one who “receives not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things” (1 Cor. 2:14-15). Martin Luther pictured man in his natural state “like a pillar of salt, like Lot’s wife, yea, like a log and a stone, like a lifeless statue which uses neither eyes nor mouth, neither sense nor heart, incapable of understanding the things of God until he is enlightened, converted, and regenerated by the Holy Ghost.”

According to Luther, the natural man cannot understand the Bible. He needs special illumination from the Spirit to discover the message of the Scriptures. The spiritual man, according to this view, is, at first, like a lifeless statue incapable of understanding the scriptures, but after being regenerated by a direct operation of the Holy Spirit, he is illuminated and converted. The teaching of Luther does not agree with the teaching of the New Testament, but is popular with many well-meaning, deceived people.

Paul contrasts the gospel he preached with false doctrines of false teachers. In first Corinthians chapter one, the apostle helps us to understand the term spiritual. The words “foolish” and “foolishness” are used seven times and “wise” and “wisdom” twelve times to contrast God’s wisdom with man’s wisdom (foolishness). “Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world” (1 Cor. 1:20). Paul is discussing God given teaching versus human philosophy.

Paul affirms that his preaching was “not with enticing words of man’s wisdom” (1 Cor. 2:4). In the first two chapters of 1 Corinthians, Paul develops the theme that Christianity is a revealed religion, and that man, without revelation, cannot

know the blessings of redemption. God reveals redemption, and also its interpretation and explanation (see 1 Pet. 1:10-12). Paul proclaims, “God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all thing, yea, the deep things of God” (1 Cor. 2:10). The plural pronouns of verses 10-13 do not refer to Christians of all ages (the very thing that Luther misunderstood), but to the apostles and other inspired teachers of the first century who were involved in revealing “the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3).

Paul’s “natural” man is the uninspired man, and his “spiritual” man is the inspired man. Paul uses the word “spiritual” in 1 Cor. 14:37 with the same meaning: the spiritual man was guided by the Holy Spirit, and miraculously empowered.

Paul contrasts inspired revelation with false teaching. To make the passage mean a sinner who cannot understand the Bible until the Holy Spirit interprets it for him is a terrible perversion. If the sinner cannot understand the gospel until he receives supernatural illumination, and if illumination never comes, God is at fault.

The Spiritual Man Today

In 1 Corinthians 3:1, Paul uses the word spiritual with a different emphasis. Paul accuses the brethren in Corinth of being carnal, and therefore of not being spiritual. The carnal man, oblivious to the gospel, is sinful. The spiritual person, influenced by the gospel, is godly. This is the way the term spiritual ought to be understood by mankind in today’s religious world. Inspiration has ceased, and there is no progressive revelation of saving truth today. Paul’s usage of spiritual in 1 Corinthians 2 applied only to the first century in the age of miraculous manifestations of the Spirit.

The word spiritual may mean, in the New Testament, things that have their origin with God, and are in harmony with his character. Passages such as Romans 7:14; 1 Corinthians 9:11 and 10:3; and Ephesians 1:3 are examples of this usage.

The Apostle Paul writes the brethren in Galatia that "if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted" (Gal. 6:1). There are two classes in this verse. One is spiritual, and the other is not. Spirituality was something that was recognizable, else no one would know who was to restore who!

The spiritual person today is the one who walks by the Spirit, and does "not fulfil the lust of the flesh" (Gal. 5:16). The fruit of the Spirit will be seen in the life (Gal. 5:22-25). Vine's Expository Dictionary points out that in 1 Corinthians 3:1-3, "Paul contrasts the spiritual state of a mature Christian with that of the babe in Christ, i.e., of the man who because of immaturity and inexperience has not yet reached spirituality, and that of the man who by permitting jealousy, and the strife to which jealousy always leads, has lost it. The spiritual state is reached by diligence in the Word of God and in prayer; it is maintained by obedience and self-judgment."

"But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and for ever. Amen" (2 Pet. 3:18).

Inexcusable Excuses

By Terry R. Townsend
Vol. 121, No. 09

Have you ever thought about what folks might say to God at judgment for their failure to obey him? It's sobering, isn't it, to know there's a coming judgment – a day in which all men will give account of themselves to the Lord! Paul writes, "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). Let's consider a few inexcusable excuses.

Without question, millions of people will blame their lack of obedience on preachers. Unfortunately, millions today put more faith in mortal man than they do God. Yet, the Bible is abundantly clear that one must be a doer of the word and not a hearer only (James 1:21-25). False teachers are deceiving millions into thinking they have "peace and safety," when in reality they're on a collision course with destruction (1 Thess. 5:1-3; 2 Pet. 2:1-3). Thus, it behooves us to test the spirits (1 John 4:1; Acts 17:11). Blaming false teachers at Judgment will be an inexcusable excuse.

There will be many on the Day of Judgment blaming the weather for their lack of involvement in the Lord's work. When asked why they fail to participate in spiritual activities, many blame mother nature – too hot in summer, too cold in winter, too wet in spring, too windy in fall, etc. If truth be told, people will do whatever their hearts so desire! Inclement weather does not negate one's responsibility to serve God (1 Cor. 15:58). Blaming the weather at Judgment will be an inexcusable excuse.

Undoubtedly, millions will blame their parents at Judgment for their failure to do God's will. How often have I heard non-members say the following in a Bible study, "I see what you're saying, but if what I believe was good enough for dad and mom, it's good enough for me!" But what if dad and mom were wrong? Will God still grant you entrance into Heaven despite your failure to obey that which you knew to be true? The Bible says that one must obey Christ above all else, including family

(cf. Luke 9:57-62; 14:26-35). In matters of faith, who should we ultimately listen to? Parents or Christ? Obviously, the answer is Jesus (Matt. 17:5; Heb. 1:1-3). Putting the blame on parents for your lack of obedience will be an inexcusable excuse.

Others at Judgment will use the excuse of profession for their failing to do the Father's Will. I'm sure some will say, "I would have obeyed and served you Lord, but my job wouldn't allow it." Truth be told, millions are more interested in money than they are in God. Paul had it right when he penned, "But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs" (1 Tim. 6:9-10 ESV). Jesus said that we're to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Matt. 6:33). To blame one's profession at Judgment will be an inexcusable excuse.

I'm sure that on Judgment Day some will use their lack of earthly substance (poverty) as an excuse for their failing to do the will of God. Some will probably say, "Lord, I wasn't as blessed as others; thus, I didn't do all I could." I wonder if God will have standing beside Him the widow who gave two mites as an example to those making such excuses (cf. Mark 12:41-44)? The Lord expects us to do what we can with what we have (Matt. 25:14 ff). Blaming our lack of service on poverty will be an inexcusable excuse.

Another excuse many will make at Judgment will be that of persecution. I can hear some now, "Lord, I would've served You, but I didn't because I feared persecution." But didn't he tell us in his word that Christians would be mistreated on occasion (cf John 15:20; 2 Tim. 3:12). Didn't he assure us his presence, protection, and panoply to help us overcome (cf. Matt. 28:20; Heb. 13:5-6; Eph. 6:10 ff)? Jesus said, "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" (Matt. 10:28). Thus, fear of persecution as a defense for failing to obey God will be an inexcusable excuse on Judgment Day.

Finally, millions will offer unto God the excuse of procrastination; that is, many will say, "I wanted to obey You Lord, but I simply ran out of time!" I wonder if Felix will be among the masses who will make such an excuse (Acts 24:25)? The Lord is patient, and he gives men ample time to obey (cf. 2 Pet. 3:9-14); thus, to use procrastination as a reason for failing to obey will be an inexcusable excuse on Judgment Day.

Simply put, we can make all the excuses we want to as to why we fail to do God's Will; however, on the Day of Judgment, God's answer to such excuses will be this:

"Depart from me, ye that work iniquity!"

The Marks of Jesus

By Owen Cosgrove
Vol. 121, No. 09

Early Christians in the area of Galatia caused some consternation to the apostle Paul as they drifted away from the purity of the gospel that he had preached to them. He wrote to them and told them that he was amazed that they were so quickly departing from the truth that they had received.

The apostle warned them that if anyone, even an angel from heaven, taught them any other gospel than the one he had taught and that they had received, that the false teacher

would be accursed. He wrote of his concern that he may have bestowed labor on them in vain and told them that those who sought justification except through the gospel of Christ would fall from grace. With all of his rebuking these wayward disciples he then asks, “Am I become your enemy because I tell you the truth?”

Paul closes the epistle to the Galatians rather abruptly telling them, “From henceforth let no man trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.”

Some have preached lessons on “The Marks of Jesus” using such topics as the mark of love, the mark of sincerity, the mark of honesty, etc. This may be an interesting way to develop a topical sermon, but it stretches the meaning of the original text.

Here the Greek word for marks is “stigma,” referring to marks or brands put on slaves and sometimes on criminals in order to identify them in some special way. It is very unlikely that Paul put any tattoos or other body markings upon himself, since such were strictly forbidden by the Mosaic law under which he had grown up (Lev. 19:28).

Some commentators think that Paul is here referring to scars left by the severe persecutions that he had undergone as a preacher of the gospel of Christ. He had been scourged and abused at various places. In 2 Corinthians 11, he speaks of being imprisoned often. Five times he had been beaten with 39 stripes, and these were not mere spankings. Three times he was punished with “rods,” a device used by the Romans to inflict severe punishment. Once he was stoned and left for dead. All of these things were written about in about A.D. 58 ten years before his death in Rome in A.D. 68, and so it is reasonable to believe that he could add many other sufferings to this list before his martyrdom.

Probably Paul had scars all over his body to remind him of

places like Philippi and Lystra and Jerusalem where he had been physically assaulted for his faith.

Someone has said that Christianity has come to us on rivers of blood and sweat and tears. How could those early disciples bear the crosses of persecution put upon them? What made them endure when it would have been so easy to give up?

There were two great incentives and ideals that drove people like Paul and other early Christians. One was the persistent remembering of Jesus and his magnificent sacrifice at Calvary. The other was the hope of going to haven and being with God forever. Paul wrote at about the same time he wrote Galatians, on his third missionary journey, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:11).

Some day, the faithful Christian will be privileged to trade his cross of suffering for the crown of life. "Oh, for such a faith as this, and then whate'er may come, we'll taste e'en here the hallowed bliss of

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How Are Men Saved?

By Louis Rushmore

Out of boundless love, God the Father sent his son Jesus Christ into the world to die for our sins. "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). "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2

Corinthians 5:21).

The sacrifice of Jesus Christ for us was part of God's grace and mercy by which we are saved. The sacrifice of Christ and grace permits a just God to grant forgiveness of sins; Christ's sacrifice and mercy permits a just God to withhold punishment for sins. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8). "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Titus 3:5).

Through grace God gives men what they do not deserve (salvation), and through mercy God does not give men what they do deserve (punishment). However, the grace and mercy of God which results in salvation is conditional upon man's obedience to the Gospel.

With no less love for our souls, Jesus Christ willingly died for us. "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me" (John 6:38). Through his shed blood Christ saves us. "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood" (Revelation 1:5). "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Ephesians 1:7).

Also, as mediator between God the Father and ourselves Jesus saves us. "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:4-5). However, Christ as mediator and his blood save men conditionally.

The Holy Spirit's role in conversion relates primarily to the provision of inspired revelation (the Word of God). Second

Peter 1:20-21 summarizes the way in which Scripture was communicated from God to man. “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Peter 1:20-21).

The Holy Spirit, along with God and Jesus Christ, participates with men in their conversion. “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 Corinthians 12:13). That joint participation of the Godhead with us in the forgiveness of sins is non-miraculous and through the Word of God.

All that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit have done to arrange for the forgiveness of sins is conditional upon man’s obedience to God’s plan of salvation recorded in the Gospel (the New Testament portion of the Bible). First, one must examine what the Bible teaches about salvation in order for faith to develop. “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17). Without faith salvation is impossible. “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” (Hebrews 11:6); “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).

However, faith only is useless. “But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?” (James 2:20). “Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only” (James 2:24). Though men cannot earn salvation, God refuses to grant forgiveness of sins to men who refuse to obey him.

Faith is followed by repentance. All men are required to repent or perish. “And the times of this ignorance God winked

at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent" (Acts 17:30). "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3).

Profession before others of one's faith in Jesus Christ naturally occurs next. "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:10). One New Testament character worded his profession: ". . . I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Acts 8:38).

Baptism (immersion) is the point at which sins are forgiven. "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 Peter 3:21). "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). Baptism, though, does not save without the Godhead's role in salvation as well as man's part in his own salvation (i.e., hearing, believing, repenting, professing).

God the Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit have done their parts toward saving men. However, man also has a role in his own salvation according to Philippians 2:12. "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12).

Man's role is summarized in the Bible as obedience. Speaking of Jesus, "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Hebrews 5:8-9). Obedience is the conditional basis of the Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit's roles in our salvation.

Men who do not obey the Gospel will be lost. "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 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

Dear Reader, are you saved? Have you obeyed the Gospel yet? The Father Son, and Holy Spirit have done their parts toward your salvation. It only remains for you to fulfill your role in your own salvation.

Marriage, Divorce And Remarriage

By H. A. (Buster) Dobbs

The Bible is the foundation of morality and marriage. Marriage is the support and stay of morality. Undermining marriage sabotages Bible teaching and thwarts righteousness. The Christian pattern for marriage is indissoluble unity. Marriage is to be had in honor among all—saint and sinner—and the bed undefiled (Heb. 13:4).

"Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because Jehovah hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously, though she is thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. And did he not make one, although he had the residue of the Spirit? And wherefore one? He sought a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth. For I hate putting away, saith Jehovah, the God of Israel, and him that covereth his garment with violence, saith Jehovah of hosts:

therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously" (Mal. 2:14-16).

Malachi points out that God is witness between a man and his wife. He says God made one man for one woman. Though he had a residue of the Spirit from which to make other humans, God did not do so because he sought a godly seed. The prophet then declares that God is against divorce. He hates it! The teaching of this Old Testament prophet is like the teaching of Jesus on the subject of marriage and divorce. He warns against putting away because it undermines the home and destroys morality. It is strange that any teacher of religion would make allowance for what God clearly disallows. The emphatic and indisputable statement of divine revelation is that marriage is permanent and not temporary and fleeting. This point must be featured and we must guard against saying, especially in public pronouncements, anything that would cloud what God made clear.

It is not uncommon for church leaders to make statements that confuse people about what the Bible teaches on the home and its importance. There has been a flurry of classes, lectures, seminars and workshops discussing marriage recently. Much of this creates doubt about the sanctity of the home and is designed to console those who have violated God's marriage law. Some seem to be hung up on trying to make people feel good about transgression of divine precepts. The result is clutter in an area that should be plain.

In discussing the important matter of the home we must talk about what makes a marriage according to the teaching of God's word.

What Is Marriage?

Marriage is sacred. It is the appointment of the living God. It is the coming together of two lives in the deepest possible

unity. It is the surrender of separate individuality and the mingling of each in a common stream.

The following passages give us just about all the Bible says on the subject of marriage and divorce:

“And Jehovah God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him” (Gen. 2:18). “and the rib, which Jehovah God had taken from the man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And the man said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (Gen. 2:22-24).

“Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, that every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart” (Matt. 5:27- 28).

“It was said also, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: but I say unto you, that every one that putteth away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, maketh her an adulteress: and whosoever shall marry her when she is put away committeth adultery” (Matt. 5:31-32).

“And there came unto him Pharisees, trying him, and saying, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And he answered and said, Have ye not read, that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh? So that they are no more two, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. They say unto him, Why then did Moses command to give a bill of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses for your hardness of heart suffered you to put away your wives: but

from the beginning it hath not been so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery" (Matt. 19:3- 9).

"And there came unto him Pharisees, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? trying him. And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you? And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away. But Jesus said unto them, For your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment. But from the beginning of the creation, Male and female made he them. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh: so that they are no more two, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. And in the house the disciples asked him again of this matter. And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her: and if she herself shall put away her husband, and marry another, she committeth adultery" (Mark 10:2-12).

"Every one that putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth one that is put away from a husband committeth adultery" (Luke 16:18).

"For the woman that hath a husband is bound by law to the husband while he liveth; but if the husband die, she is discharged from the law of the husband. So then if, while the husband liveth, she be joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if the husband die, she is free from the law, so that she is no adulteress, though she be joined to another man" (Rom. 7:2-3).

"But unto the married I give charge, yea not I, but the Lord, That the wife depart not from her husband (but should she depart, let her remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband); and that the husband leave not his wife" (1 Cor.

7:10-11).

“A wife is bound for so long time as her husband liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is free to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord” (1 Cor. 7:39).

The Bible is emphatic in telling us that marriage is a man and woman who have committed themselves to live together as husband and wife and who therefore have been joined together by Jehovah so as to be considered by their creator as a unit—as one. They, of course, continue to have their separate identities. The man has his physical body and the woman has hers. They are two, but the two are one. Each is responsible for his or her conduct and each of them will stand individually before God in the last judgment. The woman is not guilty of the sins her husband may commit, and the man cannot be credited for his wife’s good character. They are one in the sense that Jehovah has honored their decision to be united in marriage. He sees and hears their pledge and they are joined together in his mind. Jesus said, “What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.” It is God who joins the man and woman together. Man cannot undo what God has done.

The civil law is also a factor in marriage, but it is not the determining factor. For the good of society God commands us to obey civil rulers. God appoints that there shall be governments among men, but he does not define the government or give the nature of the public establishment. It does not matter what it is—republic, monarchy, democracy, dictatorship—we must honor it because society cannot endure in the absence of authority and rule keeping and punishment of evil doers and praise of those who do well (Rom. 13:1-7). The Bible tells the Christian to be a good citizen and pay his taxes.

Some governments exercise their God given right and legislate rules for marriage and the home. Other governments may have scant or no rules to control the home. Tribes in uncivilized

countries may have only their tribal customs to govern marriage, and those customs may be vague.

The marriage custom of Jesus' day was not as structured as American civil law governing the home is today. In the first century in Judea there was no marriage license, country clerk, recording process, or family law center. If a man and woman consented to be married, they merely announced it to family and friends. Usually there was a celebration in the form of a feast and flowers. The groom's men and the bride's attendants sometimes brought the couple together as a sort of unofficial beginning place for the marriage. It was mostly a family and community arrangement. In the case of Boaz and Ruth the ceremony consisted of one man handing his shoe to another man in the presence of witnesses.

Regardless of what the civil rule for marriage is, the critical thing is God joining the man and woman together. Marriage is a four cornered contract. It involves (1) the man and (2) the woman and (3) the Lord God and (4) the social custom or law of the land. Civil law is to be obeyed to the extent it does not contradict divine law. Where there is a conflict in two laws, the lower law is set aside at the point of disagreement. "Whether it is right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye: for we cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard" (Acts 4:19-20).

No matter what the civil rule is God joins the couple together. In every culture, clime, language and nation God is involved in the marriage. Malachi reminded his brothers that "Jehovah hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth" (Mal. 2:14).

If God does not join the two together when they conform to the rules of their community, then it is no marriage and the children that may be born are illegitimate. Paul makes the argument that if God does not sanction the marriage the children are unclean, but when God does approve the marriages,

the children are holy (1 Cor. 7:14).

God is involved in every marriage, joining the man and woman together, or the marriage is unsanctioned and the children are bastards. This consideration should forever settle the question of whether the unsaved person who is not in a covenant relationship with God is bound by the marriage laws of God. Even in a situation where the people do not recognize the God of the Bible, but follow Hinduism, Islam, tribal religion, or some other unbiblical system, God is involved in the marriage and joins the couple together. If not, their children are unclean. Those who say the marriage law of God is not universal and does not apply to folks who are not in a covenant relationship with God are stuck with the conclusion that children born to such marriages are illegitimate. This disagrees with Paul who says that such children are not unclean but holy. If God joins together all who enter into a marriage– whether or not they are in a covenant relationship with God–then it still follows "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matt. 19:6).

What Is Divorce?

The Greek word translated "divorced" in our English Bibles is also translated dismiss, let depart, let go, loose, put away, release, send away, set at liberty, and depart. The Hebrew word translated "divorce" in our English Bibles is also translated drive out, put away, be cast out, drive away, expel, and thrust out. Vine says the Greek word means, "to let loose from, to let go free." Thayer says it means, "to dismiss from the house, to repudiate" and, in Mark 10:12 is used of a wife deserting her husband. In the Bible divorce is a departure, a going away, or being driven out, or sent away, a repudiation, or abandonment. It has nothing to do with family law court, or a judge on the bench, or county records, or the official declaration "divorce granted." In our Western

civilization we think of divorce as the action of a court of law in pronouncing the end of a marriage under civil usage. The truth is that a divorce happens when the man or the woman forsakes his or her partner with the intention of ending the marriage.

A husband may go away from his wife for a period of time to engage in business and it would not be a divorce in the Bible sense of that word. A wife may go away from her husband to visit her family, and it not be a Bible divorce. If either the husband or the wife intends to abandon the marriage and departs, that is divorce from a Bible viewpoint. This is made plain in Paul's statement, "That the wife depart not from her husband (but should she depart, let her remain unmarried…" (1 Cor. 7:10-11). If the wife departs she is unmarried. The departure is the un-marriage—the divorce.

Our understanding of divorce is when a judge on the bench grants a cancellation of the marriage contract under modern day civil law. This procedure was unknown in New Testament times. In the days of Christ and of Paul there were no county clerks, county courthouses, family courts of law, marriage licenses or certificates, divorce lawyers, or divorce petitions. If a man threw his wife out, or if the wife departed from her husband without intent of returning, that was the divorce.

In our modern world, people may no longer live together as husband and wife because of the abandonment of the marriage bed of either one or the other, and a divorce is requested and awaited. We foolishly ask, Can we stop the divorce. Not from a Bible perspective. The divorce occurred when the husband or wife left without intending to return. It is a divorce when one or the other partner to the marriage contract is repudiated.

Paul says if the wife departs she is to remain unmarried. Her only marriage option is to be reconciled to her husband (1

Cor. 7:10-11). She is unmarried but she has a husband, an unmarried woman with a husband. The reason she has a husband is that while the civil, social, and community aspects of the marriage have ended, the act of God in regarding the pair as a unit is not canceled. In the mind of God they are still husband and wife. They are still one. They may not be living together. Society may have declared them divorced. Still, the divine tie continues and he is her husband and she is his wife. If a Christian man is married to an unbeliever, it is a marriage. If the unbelieving husband has a wife—she is his wife—he is her husband—"and she is content to dwell with him, let him not leave her" (1 Cor. 7:12). If a Christian woman is married to an unbelieving man, they are nevertheless married. They are husband and wife. His unbelief does not violate the marriage. If he is content to dwell with her, "let her not leave her husband" (1 Cor. 7:13). He is her husband and she is his wife even though he is an unbeliever. The religious condition of either partner does not render the marriage invalid. If it did, the children would be unclean – illegitimate – unholy. Paul says this is not the case and he argues therefore that the marriage is intact.

"Yet if the unbelieving departeth, let him depart: the brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us in peace" (1 Cor. 7:15). If the unbeliever departs without intending to return—divorces the believer—the Christian is not under bondage. Is the saint, therefore, free to marry another person under the rules for marriage given in the Bible? The text gives no express information on whether Paul allows the Christian partner in such a marriage to marry again. The stringent rule Jesus gave for putting away one's marriage partner and marrying another would make it mandatory for Paul to express plainly and bluntly that abandonment on the part of an unbeliever permits the saint to marry someone else without sinning against God's marriage law. When Jesus gave the rule for marriage, divorce, and remarriage his disciples were shocked and concluded it is better not to marry

than to be in an inescapable contract (Matt. 19:3-12). If Paul now gives an exception other than fornication it would seem necessary for him to clearly state it. We must not make Paul contradict Christ. We know the marriage rule is for a wife not to leave her husband and for a husband not to leave his wife. If the weaker vessel in a marriage covenant is under insupportable duress—abused verbally, physically, mentally and spiritually—she may depart, but may not marry another man. Her only option to living celibate is to be reconciled to her mate (1 Cor. 7:10-11).

We know, therefore, that under circumstances Paul would require a person to live without sexual intercourse. This puts to silence all those "it is better to marry than to burn" arguments designed to set one divine precept against another hallowed principle. If a husband is called away to the service of his country and must be separated from his wife for a long period of time it is required that both the man and the woman abstain from sexual activity. Sickness and disability may make it impossible for one partner to a marriage to perform sexually, but that circumstance does not permit the healthy and able partner to misbehave. We have put such a premium on sex in our society that we discount the possibility and necessity of self-control. It may not be easy but we can be eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake.

Paul says that if two heathens are married and one of them is converted to Christ and the other is not a believer, and the unbeliever decides to quit the marriage, the child of God is not "under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us in peace" (1 Cor. 7:15). The heathen is obviously attempting to put pressure on the believer to forsake the church and the hope of heaven. The unbeliever is trying to enslave the believer and force the saint to abandon the right way. The unbeliever is creating strife, confusion, and disharmony. Paul simply says the child of God does not have to put up with such tactics: God has called us in peace. Let the unbeliever depart

(divorce). You can't do anything about it. You are not in bondage to the evil temper of the unbeliever in such a case. Still, the apostle says nothing about the believer's right to marry someone else.

It is interesting to note that the two heathens were married while they were both heathens. God had joined them together and they were one flesh. They were under the marriage rule of God, which has been in effect since creation (Matt. 19:8). Jesus restored it and it will continue while the earth lasts. One of the two is converted, and the unconverted partner makes a problem for the believer. Paul says, You don't have to put up with that. If the unbeliever leaves, let it happen. You are not under bondage. You have no obligation to attempt to live with someone who does not want to live with you because of your faith.

There may be many reasons for putting away, but only one reason for divorce and remarriage. If a brutal husband endangers the lives of the children and threatens the mental stability of his wife, she may depart (divorce), but she may not marry some other man. She can be reconciled to her husband, but is not to have another husband of a different kind. An unbeliever may make life so miserable for the Christian mate that separation happens, but the believer is not free to marry some other person. That permission is not given and that license is not granted. You do not have to be enslaved to someone who is trying to force you to give up your hope of glory, but your alternative is to be single.

The marriage law of God is very strict. The rule is one man for one woman for life, with fornication as the single exception. We must stridently uphold the sanctity of marriage. We must ardently obey the God-given rules for the home. The future of the church and of the nation depends upon maintaining good, solid family relationship. There may be exceptions, but let us focus on the rule. Our children need to be taught by both example and word the sacredness of the

family. Let us cease trying to find excuses for failing to walk by the rule to which we have attained. “Hath Jehovah as great delight in burnt- offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of Jehovah? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.”