Limited Atonement?

By Dr. John Hobbs

The third cardinal doctrine in Calvinistic Theology is the doctrine of “Limited Atonement.” It is the “L” in the T-U-L-I-P acrostic. Most Calvinists prefer the term “Particular Atonement” or “Definite Atonement.”

What Calvinists Believe About Limited Atonement

> *The Canons of Dort, article 8, states, ‘It was the will of God that Christ by the blood of the cross, whereby He confirmed the new covenant, should effectually redeem out of every people, tribe, nation, and language, all those, and only those, who were from eternity chosen to salvation.’*
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> *Henry Fish, a Baptist wrote in 1850, ‘Did the atonement, in its saving design, embrace more then the elect? The elect only; for whatever he designed he will accomplish, and he saves only his people from their sins.’*
>
> *David Steele and Curtis Thomas wrote, ‘But He came into the world to represent and save only those given Him by the Father. Thus Christ’s work was limited in that it was designed to save some and not others.’*
>
> *WJ. Seaton said, ‘Christ died to save a particular number of sinners.’*
>
> *Lorraine Boettner said, ‘The value of the atonement depends upon, and is measured by, the dignity of the person making it; and since Christ suffered as a Divine-human person the value of His suffering was infinite … The atonement, therefore, was infinitely meritorious and might have saved every member of the human race had that been God’s plan.’*

> *Ralph Gore wrote, "Christ died for the elect. The extent of the atonement is identical with the intent of divine election."*
>
> *Paul Enns wrote, 'If God is sovereign (Eph. 1:11) then His plan cannot be frustrated, but if Christ died for all people and all people are not saved then God's plan is frustrated.'*
>
> *R. B. Kuiper said, 'God purposed by the atonement to save only the elect and that consequently all the elect, and they alone, will be saved.'*

The question may be put this way: When Christ died on the cross, did he pay for the sins of the entire human race or only for the sins of those who he knew would ultimately be saved? Calvinists would answer the latter group.

> *Wayne Grudem wrote: The term that is usually preferred is particular redemption, since this view holds that Christ died for particular people (specifically, those who would be saved and whom he came to redeem), that he foreknew each one of them individually (cf. Eph. 1:3-5) and had them individually in mind in his atoning work.*

The Foundational Basis for Limited Atonement

The doctrine of Limited Atonement is based on the concept of double jeopardy (trying a person twice for the same crime). The argument goes like this: If Jesus died for the sins of all men, then the sins of all men are paid for and one has already been judged for those sins. On the Day of Judgment, if God would bring a man into judgment and commit him to hell even though Jesus had already paid for his sins, God would be

putting that person in double jeopardy. God would be unjust – something he is not (Deut. 32:4).

The argument is: Since we do not permit double jeopardy in our own legal system, surely we would not expect God to do something we would not do.

Calvinists argue therefore – Jesus actually died only for the sins of the elect, the chosen, the saved.

However, just because there is an analogy from a human viewpoint, this does not prove that it coincides with the truth of God's word.

Isaiah 55:8-9 states, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith Jehovah. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." Proverbs 14:12 states, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death." We are warned: "Lean not upon thine own understanding" (Prov. 3:5).

We do not formulate doctrine by analogies or examples. They may illustrate doctrine, but they do not prove doctrine. We must determine truth from the Word of God and not human reasoning. There are some great truths of scripture which are beyond our comprehension and we accept because the Bible teaches them (such as, the Trinity, God's love, nature of sin, and such like), and therefore are not proved by reason, but are known by revelation.

Scriptures Used by Calvinists to Support Limited Atonement

> *Matthew 1:21 states, "For it is he that shall save his people from their sins."*
>
> *Jesus "loved the church and gave himself up for it" (Eph.*

5:25).

Romans 4:25 reads, "Who was delivered up for our trespasses."

Romans 5:8 says, "But God commendeth his own love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Romans 5:10 reveals, "We were reconciled to God through the death of his Son."

Romans 8:32 declares, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all."

Acts 20:28 states, "To feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood."

In John 10:15 Jesus said, "I lay down my life for the sheep."

2 Corinthians 5:21 says, "Him who knew no sin he made to be [a] sin [offering] on our behalf."

Galatians 1:4 says, "Who gave himself for our sins."

Ephesians 1:7 says, "In whom we have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses."

Titus 2:14 states, "Who gave himself for us."

Calvinists use the above Scriptures as proof texts that Christ died "only" for the elect.

Christ died for his people. That is the main point of these verses! However the Bible does not teach Limited Atonement – that Christ died "only" for the elect, "only" for a limited class.

Calvinists "twist" and "pervert" other plain Scriptures that clearly teach that Christ died for all men. They do so unto their own destruction (2 Pet. 3:15-17). When we come to the Bible, we must take all of it to arrive at total-saving truth.

Psalms 119:160 states, “The sum of all thy word is truth.” Matthew 4:4 says, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” It takes all of Scripture for the man of God to be complete (2 Tim. 3:16-17). We must preach “the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27).

Christ died for all men. Christians appreciate the fact that Christ died for them. The verses used by Calvinists emphasize that point. Unbelievers do not appreciate that fact and therefore do nothing about it.

A True Story Concerning Hebrews 2:9

In 1980, I took second year New Testament Greek through Wheaton College at the Summer Institute of Linguistics in Dallas, Texas. My professor was Dr. John Werner, an outstanding world-recognized Greek scholar. But, he was a Calvinist through and through. One day we were reading the book of Hebrews in class. When it came my time to read, I was to translate Hebrews 2:9. I translated the verse, “But we behold him who hath been made a little lower than the angels, even Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God he should taste of death *only for the elect.”*

My professor and the class laughed. After the laughter subsided, I added, “Excuse me – that should be – for *every* man.”

Brethren, if the grammar makes sense, anything else is nonsense. To deny that Jesus tasted of death “for every man” is to deny the plain and clear teaching of Scripture! Dr. Werner agreed that the verse should be translated “for every man.” But, he denied that is what it meant. He believed that it meant “every redeemed man” even though that is not what the text says!

We should not base biblical doctrine on “feeling” or “thinking.” Biblical doctrine is based on God’s Word!

If the Holy Spirit wanted to say that Christ died only for the elect, he could have easily done so. But, he did not do so. There is no “specific” passage in the entire Bible that teaches Limited Atonement.

Wayne Grudem, a Calvinist, says, “Hebrews 2:9 is best understood to refer to every one of Christ’s people, every one who is redeemed.”

Grudem is reading the Bible with his rose colored glasses on and sees what he wants to see instead of what is really there! The text does not say that Christ tasted of death for every “redeemed” man. Grudem is reading into the text something that is not there. This is something that God’s Word explicitly forbids (Rev. 22:18-19; 1 Cor. 4:6; Gal. 1:8-9; 3:15; 2 John 9-11; Matt. 4:4; Prov. 30:5-6; Deut. 4:2; 12:32).

The words *every man* in Hebrews 2:9 are translated from the Greek word *pantos* (in form it is a genitive masculine or neuter singular word from the adjective *pas, pasa, pan* meaning “all” or “every”).

Bruce says:

> *So far as the form goes, pantos might be masculine (“everyone”) or neuter (“everything”); but since our author’s concern is with Christ’s work for humanity, and not with cosmic implications of His work, it is more probable to be taken as masculine.*

Alford says, “The singular brings out, far more strongly than the plural would, the applicability of Christ’s death to each individual man.” Jesus died for each individual person (which equals all mankind). The singular *pantos* emphasizes his care and love and concern for every human being!

This fact is a strong factor for each individual person to give his life back to him and live a holy God-fearing life (2 Cor. 5:14-15).

This same Greek word, *pantos,* is found in Matthew 13:19 and is translated "when any one." It is obvious in Matthew 13:19 that the Greek word refers only to lost human beings.

It is interesting that the Greek New Testament uses the word *pantos* at least once specifically to refer "only" to condemned human beings. Calvinists say that the word *pantos* in Hebrews 2:9 refers "only" to saved "redeemed" people. If the word *pantos* in Matthew 13:19 refers only to lost people who will spend eternity in hell, does that mean that in Hebrews 2:9 that the same group is being considered? No!

Can the word *pantos* refer to all mankind including those who appreciate Christ's death for them? Of course! Christ "tasted of death for every man." It is important to understand that the meaning of *pantos* will have to be determined by the context. Therefore, we can conclude that in Hebrews 2:9, the Greek word *pantos* refers to all humans period – not just the saved, not just God's special people. Jesus died for all humans – those who are lost and those who are going to heaven. Calvinists deny the plain teaching of God's Word and add to it when they say Jesus tasted of death for every "redeemed" man.

An Examination of God's Word and Limited Atonement

The Bible is very clear that Jesus died for the sins of "all men" and not just for "the elect."

Consider these passages as to who Jesus died for:

1. John 1:29: "the one that taketh away the sin of the world" – i.e. all mankind

2. John 3:16: “the world” – i.e. all mankind
3. John 4:42: “This is indeed the Saviour of the world” – i.e. all mankind
4. John 12:47: “I came … to save the world” – i.e. all mankind
5. Romans 5:6: “Christ died for the ungodly”
6. Romans 5:8: “while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us”
7. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15: “he died for all”
8. 2 Corinthians 5:19: “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself” – i.e. all mankind. Those who believe in Limited Atonement say this refers to “the world of the elect.” Again, they are adding to the Word of God.
9. 1 Timothy 1:15: “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners”
10. Timothy 2:6: “Who gave himself a ransom for all”
11. 1 Timothy 4:10: “Who is the Saviour of all men, specially of them that believe”
12. Titus 2:11: “bringing salvation to all men”
13. Hebrews 2:9: “He should taste of death for every man.”
14. 2 Peter 2:1: “Denying the Master that bought them” – Christ provided redemption for the false prophets but they refused to accept it.
15. 1 John 2:2: “And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world.” – i.e. all mankind
16. 1 John 4:14 “The Father hath sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world” – i.e. all mankind

A Study of 1 John 2:2

One passage that must be the focus of our attention is 1 John 2:2. Here John wrote, “And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world.”

Vine defines “propitiation” as “a means whereby sin is covered and remitted.” The text is very clear that sin covering has been provided “for our sins” – that is, Christians’ and “for the whole world,” or all humanity. If there was ever a verse in the Bible that taught the possibility of unlimited salvation – this is it!

Brown says that the word “world” is the “sphere of human beings and of human experience.” The apostle John uses the word “world” several times to refer to all humanity (John 1:29; 3:16-17; 4:42; 12:46-47; 1 John 4:14).

It is sad that some people “twist” the scriptures from their true meaning (2 Pet. 3:15-17). The same basis for forgiving one man’s sins is also the same basis for forgiving the sins of all men – the death of Christ.

It is not implied or taught that sins are forgiven unconditionally. The Bible does not teach the doctrine of Universalism, i.e. all men will be saved. The Bible does teach that only those who appropriate the blood of Christ over their sins will be saved (Rom. 6:3-4, 17-18; 1 Pet. 1:22; Rev. 2:10; 7:14).

> *Wayne Grudem, a Calvinist, writes, “The preposition ‘for’ [in 1 John 2:2] is ambiguous with respect to the specific sense in which Christ is the propitiation “for” the sins of the world.*
>
> *The Greek word translated “for” in this verse is peri, and means ‘concerning’ or ‘with respect to.” It does not define the way in which Christ is the sacrifice with respect to the sins of the world.*
>
> *It is consistent with the language of the verse to say that John is simply saying that Christ is the sacrifice available to pay for the sins of anyone and everyone in the world.”*

There are several problems with Grudem's twisting of Scripture:

(1) Grudem does not deal with the word *world* in his defense of Calvinism. It is obvious that John uses the word "world" in the verse and in the other verses cited to refer to all humanity. Jesus died for all mankind.

(2) It is true that the word *for* in the phrase *for the whole world* is the Greek word *peri*. I agree that it means "concerning" or "with respect to."

Robertson says that *pen* has a sense similar to *hyper* in the verse. The word *hyper* means "in behalf of." It must be pointed out that the word *for* in the phrases *for our sins* and *not for ours only* in 1 John 2:2 is translated from the Greek word *peri*.

The Holy Spirit inspired John to use the Greek word *peri* three times in 1 John 2:2. This word is sufficient to define the way Christ is the sacrifice "for our sins" but not "for the sins of the whole world."

Grudem says that the preposition *peri* "is ambiguous." He is straining the gnat and swallowing the camel in order to avoid accepting the clear truth. Grudem would say that its third use in the verse is ambiguous but not its first and second uses.

The emphasis in the verse is on Christ's "propitiation" – not the preposition "for."

John says Christ's propitiation is "for our sins" and "not for ours only" but also "for the sins of the whole world."

A Study of 1 Timothy 4:10

Paul wrote, "For to this end we labor and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, specially of them that believe."

This verse is important to the discussion. Here the apostle clearly states the salvation of all men. He does not teach Universalism. But, he does teach that salvation has been provided for all men, i.e. all humanity. However, that salvation is appropriated and appreciated by those who believe. All men are potentially saved by Christ's death, but only those who appropriate the blood of Christ over their sins will be saved.

Grudem says:

> *He [Jesus] is referring to God the Father, not to Christ, and probably uses the word 'Savior' in the sense of 'one who preserves people's lives and rescues them from danger' rather then the sense of 'one who forgives their sins,' for surely Paul does not mean that every single person will be saved.*

Grudem misses it again.

(1) No, Paul is not teaching that every single person will be saved. No New Testament writer ever taught that.

(2) There is no problem with taking the word *Savior* as referring to God the Father. He is the Savior of all men in that He sent Jesus to die for all men (John 3:16; 1 John 4:10). The Father and the Son are one in purpose, aim, plan, and design (John 10:30).

(3) For Grudem to say that the word *Savior* does not refer to "sins" shows his theological bias. In Matthew 1:21, the child is to be called Jesus. Why? Because he will save his people from their "sins." The word "Jesus" means "Savior." Grudem does not want 1 Timothy 4:10 to refer to "sins," so he denies it.

(4) God desires "all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4). Jesus "gave himself a ransom for all" (1 Tim. 2:6). Salvation for "all men" has been

provided (1 Tim. 4:10). However, this salvation is “specially” for those who “believe.” This word does not imply that all will be saved. The Greek word *malista* translated “specially” is also translated “particularly” or “especially” in 1 Timothy 5:17 and “above all” or “especially” in 2 Timothy 4:13. Paul is saying that God is potentially the Savior of all men. For the individuals who “will” to come to the Lord, these individuals “will in no wise be cast out” (John 5:40; 6:37).

J.W. Roberts wrote, “He is the savior (potentially) of all men, but especially (or actually) of believers.”

Dr. J. C. Davis states, “God is the potential Savior of all men (John 3:16; Rom. 10:13; 2 Pet. 3:9). God is the actual Savior of believers” (Heb. 5:8-9; 2 Thess. 1:8; Rev. 2:10).

J. N. D. Kelly wrote, “Paul is no doubt giving expression to his conviction that the certainty of salvation belongs in an especial degree to those who have accepted Christ.” True!

1 Timothy 4:10 is like Galatians 6:10. Christians are to “work that which is good toward all men and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith.” We have an obligation to do “good toward all men” (even the ones who have not named the name of Christ). But, we have a special obligation to help those who are Christians. Christ died for all men but especially for those who believe.

An Invitation Is Given to All Men

In Matthew 11:25, Jesus said, “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” The church, the bride as it is called, and the Holy Spirit perpetuate that invitation as shown by John in Revelation 22:17:

> *And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.*

The invitation is given to all men. Why offer salvation to all if that is not possible? The text says “whosoever” will.

God Desires All Men to Be Saved

In (2 Peter 3:9) we read:

> *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness; but is longsuffering to you-ward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*

God wants “all” to come to repentance! Boettner, a Calvinist, denies that it is God’s plan for all to be saved. Seaton, a Calvinist, asks, “The over-riding question must always be the Divine intention; did God intend to save all men, or did He not?”

The fact that God desires that “all” should come to repentance implies that God has provided provisions for “all.” Christ died for all men. This verse teaches that if a man is lost, it is against God’s will because he wants “all” to come to repentance and be saved.

In 1 Timothy 2:4, Paul wrote, “Who would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth.” Here again God’s Word is clear. God desires that all men be saved.

In (Ezekiel 33:11) we read:

> *As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?*

God desires that the wicked turn from his evil ways and live. God does not want or wish that any person be lost.

Paul Enns, a Calvinist, wrote, “If God is sovereign then His

plan cannot be frustrated, but if Christ died for all people and all people are not saved, then God's plan is frustrated."

God is sovereign, but his plan involves the free will of man. His plan is that those who by their free will elect to believe and become obedient will be saved.

God is "frustrated" or "grieved" when men do not respond to his saving grace (Gen. 6:5-6; Mark 3:5; Luke 19:41; Eph. 4:30).

God's desire and will is frustrated when men are lost. God wants "all" to come to repentance and "all men" to be saved. He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked (Ezek. 33:11). "God is not willing that any should perish" (2 Pet. 3:9).

But, some will perish – not because Jesus did not die for them. He died for each individual person to show his intense love. If an individual is lost, it is because he has rejected God's intense love. God does not desire it that way. But, he respects the right of a person to make his own decision.

Pardon for Sins Can Be Rejected

It is possible for pardon and salvation to be offered and rejected. In 1829 two men, Wilson and Porter, were apprehended in the state of Pennsylvania for robbing the United States mail. They were indicted, convicted, and sentenced to death by hanging. Three weeks before the scheduled execution, President Andrew Jackson pardoned one of the men, George Wilson. This was followed by a strange decision. George Wilson refused the pardon! He was hung because he rejected the pardon.

Today, God has provided eternal salvation and pardon for all men. He has accomplished this by sending his one-of-a-kind Son to die for the sins of each and every individual person. However, this salvation can be refused.

If one chooses not to appropriate the blood of Christ over his

sins initially and continually, he is refusing and rejecting the salvation which has been provided for him by God Almighty. While we can recognize the foolishness of such a decision, we must be aware of the fact that the majority of mankind will refuse their pardon (Matt. 7:13-14; Luke 13:23-24). How sad!

Why Did God Create Man?

A lady asked me, "Why did God create man if he knew so many would be lost?"

This is a thought-provoking question. I answer this with two thoughts:

(1) Whatever God does is right and just. We may not understand what he does but that is because we are human and finite while he is divine and infinite (Isa. 55:8-9). Deuteronomy 32:4 states, "For all his ways are justice: A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and right is he." God himself asked Job, "Wilt thou even annul my judgment? Wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be justified?" Job attacked and condemned the present righteousness of God. Job sinned by doing this. Job later repented Job 40:35; 42:1-6).

(2) I think the answer to this tough question is that God respects our free moral agency. If a man is lost, it will be his fault – not God's! God has done everything possible for the salvation of each person. God will not overtake one's will and force him to obey. Life is what we make it! We can avail ourselves of God's love or we can spurn it and reject it. The choice is ours (Deut. 30:11-15; Joshua 24:15; Acts 2:37, 40).

Seaton, a Calvinist, said, "If it was God's intention to save the entire world, then the atonement of Christ has been a great failure, for vast numbers of mankind have not been saved."

Seaton misses it. Christ's death was not a failure. The

failure is man's free moral will. Man by his own free will chooses not to obey. Christ is "the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:9; cf. John 3:36; Rom. 6:17-18; 2 Thess. 1:8; 1 Pet. 4:17).

On the Day of Judgment if a person is cast into the Lake of Fire for all eternity, it will be his own failure – not God's! The failure lies with man not with God.

Calvinists say they focus on God's sovereignty while we focus on man's free will. I say it is not an either/or situation; it is a both/and situation. Both of the these concepts are respected in the scriptures. We must accept both.

Conclusion

To deny the Bible teaching that Christ died for all is to make God a respecter of persons – unjust and unmerciful. The doctrine of limited atonement is false. All men are potentially saved. If a person refuses pardon, death is not the fault of the one who offered mercy, but of the one who refused to accept it.

> *(Editor's Note: The word atonement means to cover or conceal. It is an Old Testament word and is not found in the New Testament. The sins of people before the cross could be atoned, but after the cross the sins of the obedient believer were forgiven. There is a dramatic difference. Under Moses there was a remembrance made of atoned sins year by year [Heb. 10:3 – the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sins]. The blood of animals could cause God to overlook sins while remembering them year by year, but could not remove the sins. This was atonement. The blood of the Lamb of God is able not to merely cover or bypass sins, but to remove every transgression and disobedience. To receive the forgiveness available in the blood of the cross, one must obey [Heb. 5:7-8].)*

On 1 John 1:7 (Forgiveness)

By H. A. (Buster) Dobbs
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There is considerable misunderstanding about automatic forgiveness of sin. Some seem to have the mistaken idea that Jehovah God, by the sheer exercise of his unqualified grace, will wipe out "secret sins."

The notion that the Creator ignores innocent-looking wickedness by the operation of his unlimited mercy takes various twists. A few say that all men walk under the protection of boundless grace and therefore no one will be lost—not even Adolph Hitler and Charles Manson.

Others claim that it is impossible for any man to know and do all that God requires of him. Hairsplitting arguments attempt to show that if a person does not fully understand niceties of divine injunctions, his ignorance or transgression or omission will be spontaneously dismissed.

Advocates of the idea of grace dispensing with some law are unwilling or unable to name specific sins that God "winks at" in our age. Still, they cannot bring themselves to believe that God will enforce his laws absolutely. They fear lest some tender soul might be tortured with nameless guilt and beset with nightmares and look for some basis to say to the transgressor that God will impulsively forgive, and grant the sinner peace and rest.

The one verse to which all advocates of automatic forgiveness appeal is this:

"If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have

fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).

Though we had a lengthy discussion on this around the first of this year, I will again consider the question because a few dear brothers are still having trouble grasping John's teaching—they don't seem to catch his drift, as the dudes say. Certain nervous-nelly types wring their hands and clutch their chests and bemoan the poor soul that violates some obscure and petty rule in the divine lawbook.

Shall such a one go down to eternal perdition simply because he/she was caught on some technicality? Thinking about someone floundering forever in flames of fire because of being entrapped on the hook of some minor point of doctrine is more than they can bear. Surely, they think, we can stretch the strait gate just a little—just enough to take care of insignificant violations.

There are several things amiss in this wrong-headed thinking. In the first place, it casts doubt on God's love and goodness and suggests that the Lord makes loopholes in his law and plays games with us (it does seem God is wise enough to speak to us in our language so we can understand him). The laws of God are not all that complicated. Any person who wants to do the will of God can understand his will (John 7:17).

In the second place, it denies God's holiness and purity and suggests that, after all, God ought to tolerate some sins —*teeny-weeny ones* —(mortal sins deserve hell, but venial sins should be purged in some temporary confinement, or entirely overlooked, according to this view).

In the third place, it does not take into account the justice of God. God is love, but he is also just. His mercy tempers judgment, but according to rule and not by whim. "Behold then the goodness and severity of God: toward them that fell, severity; but toward thee, God's goodness, if thou continue in

his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off' (Rom. 11:22).

In the fourth place, it assumes superior knowledge about what is minor and unimportant and about what is major and necessary. If you keep the whole law but offend in one point—even if you think it is a tacky point—you have violated the whole law (James 2:10). The essence of sin—even so-called small sins—is rebellion. If we rebel in one point, we will rebel in another because we have an indisposition to respect the law. There may be large and small consequences of law-breaking, but all infractions are equally serious. Otherwise God is a respecter of persons. We must understand what it means to walk in the light. The condition upon which the blood of the lamb is cleansing us from all sin is walking in the light, according to 1 John 1:7. Please don't forget the condition—the passage begins with an "if'—"if' we walk in the light, then—and only then—does the blood of Jesus keep us clean from all sin. If we do not walk in the light, then the cleansing does not follow.

Walking in darkness is the opposite of walking in light. Either we walk in darkness or we walk in light, and we cannot do both simultaneously.

Note: "If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in the darkness, we lie, and do not the truth" (1 John 1:6).

Note: "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (1 John 2:3).

He who walks in darkness and says he knows God lies (1 John 1:6).

He who keeps not God's commandments and says he knows God lies (1 John 2:4).

Therefore walking in darkness is the same as not keeping God's

commandments.

If the negative is true, the positive is also true. Walking in darkness is not to keep his commandments. Walking in light is keeping his commandments. Therefore, John is saying if we keep the commandments of God the blood of Jesus keeps us clean from all sin.

Question: How can a person sin who is walking in the light—keeping God's commandments? *Answer:* One who attempts to hear and do the words of Jesus can fail—he may omit to do something the Lord requires of him or do something the Lord forbids. If he should sin, he repents and confesses; that constitutes walking in the light—keeping God's commands—and the blood of the lamb is cleansing him from all sin. If a blood-bought child of God sins but excuses his wrong and will not confess and repent, he is not walking in the light and the blood will not cleanse his transgressions. The key is walking in the light. Walking in the light is a continuous action. Cleansing therefore is a continuous action because walking in the light involves keeping the commands of God, which involves confessing sin and repenting of sin. All of this—walking in the light, confessing, repenting, and cleansing—is continuous action.

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). This passage, by the way, is in the immediate context of 1 John 1:7.

Yet some would have us believe in spite of this that somehow, someway, sometime, God will forgive his child of a slight infraction of sacred precepts, that walking in the light magically forgives casual sins—whatever that is!

That won't wash! The verse under study says, "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all

sin.” We are continuously cleansed not from some sin, nor from haphazard sin, nor from unknown sin, but from all sin—all sin!

If walking in the light is something other than keeping all the commands of God, if it is approximate obedience and just getting close, then all sin—all sin!—adultery, murder, stealing, lying, idolatry—all sin—is automatically forgiven. The verse says “all sin,” just as verse 9 says “all unrighteousness.”

If the liberalizing view that grace dispenses with complete obedience to every requirement of heaven is true, then “all sin” is washed away in the blood of the cross unconditionally and all will be saved—Adolph Hitler and Charles Manson included. Simply put— Calvary was a mistake.

Some say “the light” is God, because verse *5* says, “God is light.” So, the passage would read, under this understanding, “if we walk in God, as Jesus walked in God. . ..” The question comes: How did Jesus walk in God—in the light?

Question: Did Jesus obey his heavenly Father incompletely and only when it was handy, or did he obey Jehovah always and in all things? The passage requires us to walk in the light as Jesus is in the light, if his blood is to keep on cleansing us from all sin. Jesus claimed sinless perfection and challenged his contemporaries to convict him of wrong (John 8:46-47). None did! He always pleased Jehovah (John 8:29). Keeping divine law gladdens the heart of God (1 John 3:22). Therefore Jesus always kept the commands of Jehovah, and that pleased his holy, heavenly Father. “Then said I, Lo, I am come (In the roll of the book it is written of me) To do thy will, O God” (Heb. 10:7). The unbending rule of the life of Jesus is “not my will, but thine be done.”

Jesus walked in the light, and so must we if his precious blood is to keep us clean from all sin. He never failed. We may fail, but provision is made for forgiveness, if we walk in

the light as he is in the light.

It is tragic for a professing teacher of righteousness to encourage people to think that any rule of God can be disregarded with impunity. Instead of trying to comfort the guilty by offering false hope, let us console them by rebuking sin and calling for repentance. “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

“For we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help us in time of need” (Heb. 4:15-16).

Now, that gives some real help and lasting relief! “If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”

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.

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.

Musical Instruments in the Temple

By Owen D. Olbricht

Vol. 122, No. 4

An argument often made for the use of musical instruments in worship is that by worshipping in the temple early Christians showed they had no problem with their being used in worship. A proof text states, “So continuing daily with one accord the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart” (Acts 2:46; NKJV).

Some things that are assumed are not stated in the above passage—that Christians were:
• Assembling in the area of the temple where Jews were worshiping.
• Worshiping where musical instruments were being used.
• Giving approval of musical instruments by assembling in the temple.
• Meeting during the time of day when the Levites were singing with musical instrumentals.

These assumptions have at least four major flaws.

Apostles’ Teaching

First – Instead of engaging in Jewish practices, early Christians continued to observe what Jesus commanded as taught by the apostles (Matt. 28:20; Acts 2:42). The apostles could not have taught Christians in an assembly that included Jewish leaders, for they threatened and flogged the apostles for preaching Jesus in the temple (Acts 4:1-3, 17-18, 21; 5:28,

33, 40).

Neither example nor command to use musical instruments is found in the writings of the apostles. If such are not found, then early Christians were neither using nor approving them, consequently, musical instruments cannot be used based on apostolic authority.

Where They Met

Second – Christians met in Solomon's porch, not in the section of the temple where the Levites sang with musical instruments. Herod's temple complex was not like a large, modern church auditorium where all the worshipers gathered in one place. Josephus described the external dimensions of the temple as follows:

> *According to Josephus (Ant xv.11.3 [400], each side was about 180 m. (600 ft) long (500 cubits, according to the Mish. Middoth ii.1, though here we may suspect the influence of Ezk. 41:20). (The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Vol. Four, Q-Z, fully revised, 1988, p 771).*

The temple complex, which was 600 feet by 600 feet, was larger than four football fields. Its outer walls enclosed four inner sections of the temple: the sanctuary that was in the upper court, which was adjacent to the woman's court. These were inside the outer most court, the large Gentile's court.

In the upper court was the temple sanctuary (30 by 90 feet), which included the holy place (30 by 60 feet) that only the priests and Levites could enter, and the most holy place (30 by 30 feet) that only the high priest could enter once a year. The more than 3,000 Christians (Acts 2:41) could neither have assembled in the sanctuary of the temple where the priests alone could go nor could they have crowded into it.

Between the upper court and the woman's court were the fifteen

steps where the Levites sang with musical instruments during the morning and evening sacrifices.

> *Fifteen steps led up to the Upper Court, which was bounded by a wall, and where was the celebrated Nicanor Gate, covered with Corinthian brass. Here the Levites, who conducted the musical part of the service, were placed (Alfred Edersheim, The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, p. 245.).*

This is confirmed by the Jewish Mishna:

> *And Levites without numbers with harps, lyres, cymbals, and trumpets and other musical instruments were there upon the fifteen steps leading down from the court of the Israelites to the court of the women, corresponding to the fifteen songs of ascents in the Psalms [120- 134]. It was upon these [and not at the side of the altar where they performed at the time of the offering of sacrifices] that the Levites stood with their instruments of music and sang their songs (Everett Ferguson, A Cappela Music in Public Worship of the Church, Abilene Texas, Biblical Research Press, 1972, p. 31; quoted from a translation of The Mishna by Herbert Dandy, London: Oxford University Press, 1933).*

The walled woman's court and the upper court were inside the large Gentiles' court from which Jesus drove the Jews who were buying and selling animals (Matt. 21:12; Mark 11:15; Luke 19:45; John 2:14). Solomon's porch, approximately 600 feet long, where Christians met (Act 5:12) was open to the Gentile court on one side and enclosed by the outer wall on the other side.

By meeting in Solomon's porch, Christians could assemble without seeing or hearing the Jewish services. Walls and more than 300 feet, a football field length, separated the assembled Christians from the animal sacrifices and the fifteen steps where the Levites were singing and playing

instruments. When they entered the temple, they could pass through the outer gates and walk across the Gentile court to Solomon's porch without coming near to the place where Jewish religious ceremonies were being conducted.

The Levites sang with instruments during the morning and evening sacrifices (Exod. 29:38-42; Num. 28:3, 4; 1 Chron. 16:40-42). It is not a foregone conclusion that Christians met during these times, for they had at least eight hours between the morning and evening sacrifices when they could meet.

Christians met in the temple because they needed a large meeting place, like Solomon's porch, and not because they desired to worship where the Jews were worshiping. The burden of proof is on those who claim that by meeting in the temple Christians showed that they were not against musical instruments being used in worship.

Third – If Christians saw nothing wrong with worshiping in the temple where the Levites were singing with instruments, the same would have been true concerning their assembling where animal sacrifices were being used in worship, for the musical renditions were associated with the animal sacrifices. Their attitude toward the one would have been the same as their attitude toward the other.

When David brought the Ark of the Covenant into the tabernacle, he worshiped with singing, instrumental music, dancing, and animal sacrifices (1 Chron. 15:17-29). Solomon did the same, except for dancing, when he brought the ark into the temple (2 Chron. 5:11-14). After this he prayed. "Now when Solomon had finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the temple" (2 Chron. 7:1).

The ceremony continued with Solomon and all the people worshiping in the temple by sacrificing hundreds of oxen and sheep to the Lord while the Levites played musical instruments

(2 Chron. 7:5-7). If God showed his approval of musical instruments in worship, thus acceptable for Christian worship, by filling the temple with a cloud (2 Chron. 5:13, 14), as some have argued, then God's lighting the sacrifice and his glory filling the temple when animals were sacrificed (2 Chron. 7:1) showed his approval of them in worship, hence meaning they are all right for Christian worship. If not, why not?

Some would object to this line of argument by contending that the New Testament teaches that Jesus' sacrifice replaced animal sacrifices but nowhere states that musical instruments are no longer to be used. Sin sacrifices were replaced by the death of Jesus (Heb. 5:1-3; 7:27; 9:9-14; 24-28; 10:1-18), but what passage in the New Testament specifically states that worship sacrifices were abolished?

Worship offerings such as thank, freewill, first fruit, and peace offerings were as prevalent as sin sacrifices. Neither Jesus, the book of Acts, nor any other New Testament documents specifically state that worship sacrifices were abolished. If a specific statement must be made before an Old Testament practice is not to be used, then worship sacrifices are still acceptable to God. However, the statement that the "first" was replaced by the "second" (Heb. 10:9) is proof that not only worship with animal sacrifices was abolished, but that the complete Old Testament sacrificial and worship systems were set aside. The only way to bring any practice of the Old Testament into Christian worship is to find that practice taught in the New Testament.

Singers Were Male Levites

Fourth – Male members (not women) of the tribe of Levi (2 Chron. 5:12; 35:14, 15; Neh. 11:22) were the only ones who sang with musical instruments during the animal sacrifices (1 Chron. 15:16-26; 2 Chron. 5:6-14; 29:27-35; 35:13-16). If

temple worship can be used as a pattern, then singing and playing of instrument should be done only by male Levites.

Other Considerations

Some argue that Christians should feel free to practice what they read in the book of Psalms about worshiping with musical instruments. If this is true, then Christians should follow the statements in Psalms concerning the use of animal sacrifices in worship (Pss. 20:1-3; 50:7, 8; 51:18, 19; 66:13-15; 96:8, 9; see also Jer. 17:26; 33:15-18). David wrote that he would "offer in His tent [tabernacle] sacrifices with shouts of joy" (Ps. 27:6; NASB). Christians also should praise God with a "two-edged sword in their hands, to execute vengeance on the nations, and punishment on the peoples; to bind their kings with chains and their nobles with fetters of iron, to execute on them the written judgment" (Ps. 149:6b-9a; NKJV). If musical instrument should be accepted in worship based on Psalms, so also should animal sacrifices and swords for vengeance.

Altars for Sacrifice

Altars for worship sacrifices were used before the Law (Gen. 8:20), during the Law age (Exod. 20:24; 24:4-6; 27:1-6), and were seen in heavenly visions by John while he was on the Island of Patmos (Rev. 6:9; 8:3, 5; 9:13; 11:1; 14:18; 16:7). If Christians can use musical instruments because they were used in worship before the Law commanded in the Old Testament and pictured in the book of Revelation, then they can use sacrifice altars in worship. If anyone should respond that the altar in the book of Revelation is symbolical, then musical instruments should also be considered symbolical.

Synagogues

All historical evidence indicates that Christians worshipped without musical instruments for many centuries after the beginning of the church. Everett Ferguson wrote, “Recent studies put the introduction of instrumental music even later than the dates found in reference books. It was perhaps as late as the tenth century when the organ was played as part of the service” (Ferguson, ibid., 81).

Some explain that the reason for non-use of musical instruments in worship by Christians was that they were influenced by Jewish synagogues where instruments were not used. They gathered in homes (Rom. 16:3-6; 1 Cor. 16:19; Col. 4:15; Philemon 2) instead of Jewish synagogues. Even though they came out of Judaism, they were guided by the apostles instead of Jewish practices and traditions. The question then is:

Were early Christians influenced by temple worship to look favorably on musical instrument or the synagogue to turn against them? The answer is neither. Apostolic teaching, not Jewish customs, was what governed Christian worship.

Conclusion

No conclusive argument can be made that Christians associated with, accepted, or used instrumental music based on their assembling in the temple. Even though Christians gathered there for a short period of time before persecution scattered them (Acts 8:1), they met in Solomon’s porch, a meeting place far removed and isolated from the singing and playing of musical instruments and animal sacrifices. Instead of following Jewish practices, Christians continued in the apostles teaching (Acts 2:42:). Christians should do the same today.

The Blood of Christ (Outline)

By Victor M. Eskew
Vol. 111, No. 03

I. Introduction.

A. Jesus shed blood at Gethsemane, in the halls of Pilate, and at Calvary.

B. Christians remember his blood each Lord's Day.

C. Peter called it "precious" blood (1 Pet. 1:19).

1. The word precious means "dear, valuable, costly."

2. The blood of Jesus is invaluable.

II. The Precious Blood of the Lamb.

A. The blood was real.

1. While on earth, Jesus had a human body of flesh, blood, and bones (John 1:14; Phil. 2:5-8; Luke 24:39).

2. Jesus' blood, like ours, was composed of red cells, white cells, platelets, and plasma. It was real blood.

B. The blood was royal.

1. He was of the house and lineage of David, whose dynasty continues to the end of time (Isa. 9:7; Luke 1:32-33).

2. His kingship was mocked during his crucifixion (Mark 15:16-20).

3. Jesus was raised from the dead to sit on his eternal throne (Dan. 7:13-14; Acts 2:32-36).

4. Jesus is "King of kings and Lord of lords" (1 Tim. 6:15).

C. The blood was innocent.

1. Jesus did nothing wrong (Heb. 4:15; 1 Pet. 2:22).

a. Judas said, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood" (Matt. 27:4).

b. The wife of Pilate said, "Have nothing to do with this just man" (Matt. 27:19).

c. Pilate said, "I find no fault in this man" (Luke 23:4).

d. Pilate also said, "I am innocent of the blood of this

just person" (Matt. 27:24).

2. The people who knew Jesus best could not convict him of sin (John 8:46).

3. If the enemies of Jesus could not convict him of sin, who can?

D. The blood was substitutionary.

1. Jesus gave himself for us (Titus 2:14).

2. Jesus "bare our sins in his own body" (1 Pet. 2:24).

3. Jesus "washed us from our sins in his own blood" (Rev. 1:5).

4. Jesus' stripes heal us (Isa. 53:5).

E. The blood is satisfying.

1. God is holy (holiness is a general term for moral excellence).

a. "The Lord our God is holy" (Psa. 99:9).

b. “Holy and reverend is his name” (Psa. 111:9).

c. His pure eyes cannot behold evil (Hab. 1:13).

d. Men fear God because he is holy (Rev. 15:4).

2. The holiness of God demands that sin be punished.

a. God is just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus (Rom. 3:26).

b. God cannot tolerate evil.

c. God must judge and condemn sin.

d. God can justify sin only by the merit of a substitutionary sacrifice.

e. God can only be just if he forgives by a blood sacrifice, because “the blood of it is for the life thereof” (Lev. 17:14).

3. Jesus' blood satisfied the demands of divine justice.

a. Jesus was made a sin-sacrifice for us, though he knew no sin (2 Cor. 5:21).

b. Jesus became an "offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour" (Eph. 5:2).

F. The blood of Jesus was effective.

1. It cleanses from sin (Matt. 26:28; 1 John 1:7).

2. It redeems from sin (Eph. 1:7).

3. It gives life to the dead (Eph. 2:4-5; 1 John 5:11).

4. It purchased the church (Acts. 20:28).

5. It was shed once, never to be shed again (Heb. 10:11-12).

III. Conclusion.

A. The blood of Jesus is precious.

B. His blood is real, royal, innocent, substitutionary, satisfying, and effective.

C. We remember his blood each Lord's Day.

Working the Works of God

By H. A. (Buster) Dobbs
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The Bible teaches that works have nothing to do with salvation, and it teaches that works are necessary to salvation.

Still, the Bible does not contradict itself.

How can this be? How can the Bible say two things that seem to be diametrically opposed and yet not contradict itself? It would appear to be self-evident that works cannot be both necessary and unnecessary to salvation.

Since the Bible is inspired of God (2 Tim. 3:16-17), it must be true and therefore cannot contradict itself. Truth, in order to be truth, must be coherent. If two statements contradict, either one or both of them must be false, but there is no way they can both be true. How, then, do we deal with the fact that the Bible says works are not necessary to justification, and also says that we are justified by works?

Some assume a "take your pick" attitude and go blithely down the path not knowing how to reconcile the two statements – and, possibly, not caring. The honest person however cannot do this and must either reject the Bible or find a logical way to harmonize the two statements.

Various Works

To understand the Bible we must define its terms correctly. It is necessary to understand accurately how Bible writers use the word “works” (sometimes “deeds”), or we will be confused. A survey of how the Bible uses this word will help us to avoid the confusion of misunderstanding. A failure to understand something correctly leads to incomprehension and perhaps unbelief.

Following is a partial list of “work(s)” mentioned in the Old and New Testaments:

- The work God does – Gen. 2:2; Judges 2:7; Ps. 71:17; 1 Cor. 12:6; John 6:28-29; John 10:37; John 14:10
- The work man does in providing food and shelter – Gen. 3:17-19; Exod. 23:12; Exod. 26:1; Eccl. 2:4; Matt. 21:28
- The work man does in obeying specific commands of God – Gen. 6:13-22; John 9:4; 1 Cor. 15:58
- Work of iniquity (evil) – Ps. 6:8; Ps. 14:1; Jer. 1:16; Ezek. 33:26; Matt. 7:23; Luke 13:27; John 3:19; Rom. 1:27; Eph. 4:19; Rom. 13:12 (“works of darkness”); Gal. 5:19-21 (“works of the flesh”)
- Work of righteousness (good) – Ps. 15:2; Acts 10:35; Matt. 5:16; Rom. 3:27; 1 Cor. 3:13-14; 2 Cor. 9:8; Gal. 6:10; Eph. 2:10; Titus 2:14; James 1:4; James 3:13
- Works that are worthy of repentance – Acts 26:20
- The mighty works (signs, miracles) of Jesus – Matt. 11:23-24; John 10:32; Acts 2:22
- Works of the Law of Moses – Rom. 3:20; Rom. 3:28; Gal. 2:16; Gal. 3:2
- Greater works done by Jesus’ disciples – John 5:20; John 14:12
- Good and bad works by which all men shall be judged – Rom. 2:6; 1 Pet. 1:17; Rev. 20:12-13; Rev. 22:12
- Human works apart from works of God – Rom. 9:11; Rom. 11:6

- Converts to Jesus – 1 Cor. 3:14
- Apostolic signs, and wonders, and mighty works – 2 Cor. 12:12
- Work of sinless perfection – Eph. 2:9; Col. 2:21-23
- The power that works in the saved – Eph. 3:20; Eph. 4:12
- The word of God that works in the believer – 1 Thess. 4:11; 2 Thess. 1:11; 1 Tim. 2:10; 1 Tim. 5:12; 2 Tim. 2:21
- Works that justify – James 2:24; James 3:13
- Works of the devil – 1 John 3:8
- The ungodly works of ungodliness – Jude 1:15

This gives a sample of various "works" mentioned in the Bible. It is a mistake to suppose that the word work(s) always refers to condition of acceptance with God. It does not!

Even a casual glance at this list will convince the thoughtful Bible student this is a complicated subject, having many interrelated parts. It is difficult to deal with because of the need to take different relationships or points of view into consideration.

The mighty acts of Jehovah are works. Creation (Ps. 8:3-6; Ps. 19:1; Ps. 33:4; Ps. 92:5; Ps. 102:25; Ps. 104:24), redemptive acts in history like the Exodus (Judges 2:7-10).

Jesus is our perfect example in all things (1 Pet. 2:21). The Savior went about doing good (Acts 10:38-39; John 4:34; John 5:36; John 10:25-38; John 15:24; John 17:4). His words and his works confirmed his authority and mission.

Humans are sinless at birth, seeing that Jehovah is the Father and Giver of the human spirit (Heb. 12:9; Eccl. 12:7). As the child matures it comes to understand that some things are right and other things are wrong, but chooses to do wrong things and ignore right things. This is called sin – sin of omission and sin of commission. This is the something a person knowingly does to himself. Iniquity separates a soul from its

God (Isa. 59:2). Those who die in sin cannot go where Jesus is; they “shall not inherit the kingdom of God (John 8:21; Gal. 5:19-21).

In his infinite compassion Jehovah sent Jesus to offer himself sacrifice for sins (John 3:16; John 10:18; Matt. 26:28).

We access the grace of God and the blood of the Lamb of God through belief (John 8:24).

“They said therefore unto him, What must we do, that we may work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent” (John 6:28-29).

Saving belief is a work that includes other works. Faith is shown by works (James 2:18). “Faith without works is dead” (James 2:20). Abraham was justified by works produced by faith (James 2:21-22). Works make faith perfect (James 2:22). Sinners are justified by works and not by faith only (James 2:24). Faith without works is dead (James 2:26).

Jesus said, “He that believeth (a work) and is baptized (a work) shall be saved” (Mark 16:16). “Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?” (James 2:22). In baptism the sinner, “is buried with Christ” and is “raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead” (Col. 2:12). In baptism we are buried “with” Christ and we are raised “with” him believing that God will keep his promise to save “he that believeth and is baptized.” Peter tells us that baptism saves (1 Pet. 3:21). In baptism our sins are washed away (Acts 22:16).

The spirit that is born again in the water of baptism (John 3:5) enters the kingdom of God, where faith continues to work, bringing glory to God (Matt. 5:16). The saved “work the work of the Lord” (1 Cor. 16:10), abound “in every good work” (1 Cor. 9:8). Servants of righteousness “end shall be according to their works” (2 Cor. 11:5). The child of God is “created in

Christ Jesus unto good works" (Eph. 2:10); the saint is "fruitful unto every good work" (Col. 1:10). The Christian "works out his own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12). Paul prayed that God the Father may "comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word" (2 Thess. 2:17). Women professing godliness are to adorn themselves "with good works" (1 Tim. 2:10). If a man desires the office of bishop, he desires "a good work" (1 Tim. 3:1). Widows to be enrolled are to be "well reported of for good works" (1 Tim. 5:10). The new covenant lauds the good works of some that are "evident, and cannot be hid" (1 Tim. 5:25). Those described as "a vessel unto honor" are "prepared unto every good work" (2 Tim. 2:21). "The man of God" is "furnished completely unto every good work" (2 Tim. 3:17). Preachers are to be "an ensample of good works" (Titus 2:7), "zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14). Followers of Jesus are to "be ready unto every good work" (Titus 3:1). Paul desired "that they who have believed God may be careful to maintain good works" (Titus 3:8). "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and the love which ye showed toward his name, in that ye ministered unto the saints, and still do minister" (Heb. 6:10). "Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works" (Heb. 10:24). Our Lord Jesus "make you perfect in every good thing to do his will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen" (Heb. 13:21).

The "wise and understanding among you? let him show by his good life his works in meekness of wisdom" (James 3:13). Behave seemly among the pagans, "that, wherein they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they behold, glorify God in the day of visitation" (1 Pet. 2:12). "My Little children, let us not love in word, neither with the tongue; but in deed and truth (1 John 3:18). Jesus knows and commends the works of his disciples on earth (Rev. 2:2, Rev. 2:9, Rev. 2:19; Rev. 3:8). Those who die in the Lord are blessed because "their works follow with them" (Rev.

14:13).

On the last great judgment day, God will render unto every man "according to their works, whether they be good or evil" (Eccl. 12:14; Rev. 20:12-13; Rev. 22:12).

It is because of a present and future judgment that we must avoid the works of the flesh … the works of darkness … the works of the devil. Abstaining from all evil works is critical to the believer.

In the light of what the new covenant has to say about the importance of good works – works of faith – works that justify (James 2:24) – it seems strange that anyone would say that works have nothing to do with salvation … unless, of course, he is blinded by denominational dogma.

The Bible does warn us that we cannot live to maturity and be sinless (Rom. 3:27; Eph. 2:8-9; Rom. 4:2-6). "All sin and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). It also tells us the works of the Law of Moses cannot save us (Rom. 9:32; Gal. 2:16; Gal. 3:10). If eternal salvation could come by the Mosaic Law, then the death of Jesus was needless, because the people had that law for 1,500 years before Jesus was born of a woman (Gal. 2:21). We are also told that we cannot save ourselves by austerities (Col. 2:18).

Some honest person may be misled into wrongly supposing that when the Bible tells us we cannot be saved by our own works because it is not possible for us to live without sin – sooner or later all will sin and fall short of God's glory, that it is saying that even works of faith and righteousness – works of God – do not save. Also some will read Bible passages which say that the works of the Law of Moses cannot save, and mistakenly conclude that works have nothing to do with salvation. This study should clear that up because it gives indisputable proof that there is no justification without works.

It is indisputably true that works are necessary to justification (James 2:24), but it is also true that some works cannot save – the work of living a perfectly sinless life – the work of devising our own scheme of redemption – the works of the Law of Moses – the works of darkness, which are the works of Satan.

So, it is true that works both save us and have nothing to do with our salvation, depending on what kind of works you are talking about.

It is not possible for a reasonable adult to be sinless and therefore, in this sense, one cannot save himself by his own works. We cannot be saved by the works of Satan, nor by the works of the Law of Moses, nor by any human invention. Such works have no power to save and many of them are an offense to God.

Still, it is true that the work of faith (the works produced by faith, see Rom. 1:5; Rom. 16:26), bring the sinner into a right relationship with his Creator, help to maintain that relationship, and will one day be the reason for his promotion to glory (Matt. 25:31-46). To say that works have nothing to do with salvation is to fly in the face of Bible teaching.

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